



TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

MEMORANDUM

DELIVERED VIA: HAND MAIL FAX EMAIL

DATE: November 8, 2013

TO: David Andrews, Town Manager
Mayor and Board of Aldermen

CC: Christina Moon, Planning Administrator
Patricia McGuire, Planning Director

FROM: Jeff Brubaker, Transportation Planner JSB

RE: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program project selection and prioritization; STP-DA and Transportation Alternatives Program funding

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board with background information in preparation for upcoming transportation project prioritization requests. The process is somewhat complicated, due in part to recent changes to the way that transportation funding is allocated. Staff suggest that the Board focus on “big picture” questions regarding Carrboro’s transportation priorities, consulting the details below as necessary.

This memo is not intended to cover all details relevant to the process; further information may be provided in the November 19 agenda item.

Summary of expected requests for Board action at the November 19 Board of Aldermen meeting

- Approve list of bike-ped projects to submit to MPO. Submit top four (bike and ped are combined). The MPO will submit these projects for SPOT prioritization. The MPO has a December 1 deadline to submit these projects for SPOT prioritization.
- If desired, submit any new highway projects not included on the current draft P3.0 list.
- Staff have not identified any rail (intercity passenger or freight) projects to submit. Transit operators are submitting transit-related projects.
- Approve submittal of an amendment request for the current STP-DA table.
- Approve submittal of new STP-DA and TAP project requests for the FY15-16 period.

2014-2020 STIP Local Priority List

The last time the Board adopted a local priority list was on May 17, 2011. The list was submitted for prioritization by NCDOT and the MPO for the 2014-2020 STIP, but this STIP was never adopted. The list is included in ATTACHMENT C.

STIP and SPOT P3.0 prioritization

Background

NCDOT is in the process of developing the next Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The current STIP is for 2012-18. The next STIP is expected to be adopted by July 1, 2015.

Selection of transportation projects for the STIP is being guided by a prioritization process administered by the SPOT office. Since it is the third such process, the shorthand name for it is SPOT P3.0. P3.0 is being implemented within the statutory confines of Session Law 2013-183, the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) Act, enacted and signed in summer 2013.

The law requires that a workgroup develop project prioritization formulas for each mode of transportation (bike-ped, transit, rail, ferry, aviation, and highway). This P3.0 Workgroup, as it is called, developed these formulas and also recommended minimum funding levels for highway and non-highway projects. Modal formulas are included in ATTACHMENT E, the executive summary of the workgroup's report to a legislative committee.

The MPO also develops its own methodology for ranking STIP projects. It also needs to develop a methodology for distributing STP-DA funds and TAP funds.

Note about funding levels

STI categorizes all transportation projects across the state into three tiers: Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and Division Needs. Most if not all of the projects the Town will submit will compete for funding in the Division Needs category.

The following are factors that explain that the pool of funding for which DCHC-MPO member jurisdictions will be competing for Division Needs funding is expected to be very small compared to needs submitted, and therefore only a few projects submitted by the MPO are likely to be funded.

- According to NCDOT, the expected average annual funding for each NCDOT highway division is \$34 million, with more going to divisions with higher population than average and less to divisions with lower population.
- STI also requires the deduction of any STP-DA and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) expenditures at the division level from the total Division Needs funding allocated to each division.

- Statewide and Regional projects that did not score highly enough in their respective tiers “cascade” down to lower tiers and are eligible to compete for Division Needs funding, similar to relegation in some soccer leagues.
- Orange County is in Division 7, which also includes Guilford, Alamance, Rockingham, and Caswell Counties.

Therefore it is important to note that the submission of any projects to P3.0 far from guarantees that those projects will be included in the STIP.

Highway projects

Schedule

- Nov. 19 – Board of Aldermen direction to staff, if necessary
- Dec. 1 – Town deadline to submit highway projects to MPO
- Dec. 18 – TCC recommendation on projects
- Jan. 8 – TAC votes to submit highway projects for P3.0
- In spring of 2014, the MPO will assign local input points to projects, guided by the MPO’s own ranking methodology. Further Board review can be expected in early 2014.

Some previously submitted highway projects are automatically included in this prioritization process. Others migrated to the bike-ped list.

Highway projects submitted for the previous prioritization process (P2.0) for inclusion in the (never adopted) 2014-2020 STIP are carried forward in P3.0, with a key exception. Five of the six highway projects the Board submitted (ATTACHMENT C) were classified as “modernization” projects. These were projects to install bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit accommodations on arterial roads. The modernization category was seen as beneficial by the MPO and Town because it allowed these “complete streets” projects to nonetheless be in the highway category, better funded than the bike-ped category.

Under P3.0 four of these five projects can no longer be in the highway category. Currently, the Homestead Rd. project is still included, likely because it contains safety and operational improvements such as a center turn lane. The remaining (non-modernization) project, Franklin/Main/Merritt Mill/Brewer Lane intersection improvements, *is* included in the P3.0 highway list. So is another intersection improvement included in the previous (2011-2017) list: construction of a roundabout at Estes Dr. Ext. and Greensboro St. The excluded four projects therefore have migrated to the bike-ped list.

Local governments need to submit any new highway projects to the MPO by December 1.

Staff has not identified any additional highway projects to recommend beyond those already included. In the past, some Board members have expressed interest in studying additional roundabout possibilities, including in the northern area of town, but no specific intersections are identified at this time.

Summary table of Carrboro highway project priorities

2014-2020 Local Priority List Priority #	2014-2020 LPL Description	Status for this prioritization round (*all project lists are currently in draft form)
1	Estes Dr. – Add bike lanes and transit accommodations on both sides of the road, and a sidewalk on the south side of the road, from Greensboro St. to Town limits.	No longer in highway list, in bike-ped list
2	Homestead Rd. – Add bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit accommodations on both sides of the road from Seawell School Rd. to Old NC 86.	Still in highway list, <i>also</i> in bike-ped list
3	Old NC 86 – Add bike lanes and transit accommodations on both sides of the road, and a sidewalk on the east side of the road, from Hillsborough Rd. to Homestead Rd.	No longer in highway list, in bike-ped list
4	Old NC 86 – Add bike lanes and transit accommodations on both sides of the road, and a sidewalk on the east side of the road, from Homestead Rd. to Eubanks Rd.	No longer in highway list, in bike-ped list
5	Eubanks Rd. – Add bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit accommodations on both sides of the road from Old NC 86 to Rogers Rd.	No longer in highway list, in bike-ped list
6	Franklin/Main/Merritt Mill/Brewer intersection improvements – Make changes to improve operation and safety for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.	Still in highway list
N/A (priority #12 in 2011-17 list)	Estes Dr. Ext./Greensboro St. – Construct roundabout	In highway list

Transit projects

Schedule

- November 29 – Deadline to submit transit projects to the MPO for SPOT 3.0.

Local transit providers are responsible for submitting transit-related priority recommendations to the MPO. More information can be provided by staff about transit projects if needed.

Bicycle and pedestrian projects

The Town submitted three (3) bicycle and five (5) pedestrian projects for P2.0, but now needs to resubmit bike-ped projects to the MPO. Up to four (4) projects can be submitted. At least two of these should be considered Safe Routes to School eligible projects.

Schedule

- Nov. 19 – Board approval of list of bike-ped projects
- Dec. 1 – Deadline to submit bike-ped projects to MPO
- Dec. 18 – TCC recommendation on projects
- Jan. 8 – TAC votes to submit 20 bike-ped projects for P3.0
- In spring 2014, the MPO will assign local input points to projects, guided by the MPO’s own ranking methodology. Further Board review can be expected early 2014.

The MPO will receive 36 projects total from its member jurisdictions, who are asked to submit their top four (4) projects, except for Durham and Durham County, who can submit their top eight (8). This is less projects than the MPO allowed member jurisdictions to submit on the 2014-2020 LPL, but in reality, it is very unlikely more than four projects from any one jurisdiction would rank highly enough to get funded.

The STI prohibits NCDOT from providing financial support for independent bike-ped projects scheduled for construction to begin after FY2015. Therefore, any projects that are programmed in the STIP will require a non-federal match, with one exception.

The exception to this is that for FY15, NCDOT has remaining Safe Routes to School funds (possibly \$16 million) that were authorized under the previous federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU. Unlike the TAP authorized by the current federal legislation, MAP-21, these SRTS funds carried the benefit of being able to fund up to 100% of project costs, instead of the usual 80% max. federal participation. This 100% level was how the Elm St. sidewalk project, connecting to Carrboro Elementary, was funded. NCDOT has indicated that these funds will be rolled into P3.0 and the next STIP.

This affords the opportunity for the Town to designate at least two of its four projects as “Safe Routes to School” projects, so that if they are selected by P3.0, 100% of their costs can be covered. Staff recommends that the Board does this.

Summary table of Carrboro bicycle and pedestrian project priorities (now to be combined into one list)

Bicycle

<i>2014-2020 Local Priority List Priority #</i>	<i>2014-2020 LPL Description</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	Broad St. to Seawell School Rd. – Construct a multi-use path between Broad St. and Village Dr. and between Village Dr. and Seawell School Rd.; install on-street bicycle facilities on Village Dr.	The construction of a multi-use path, part of the Campus-to-Campus Connector route, is mainly within the Town of Chapel Hill corporate limits. The Town of Chapel Hill is planning to construct a parallel path connecting McMasters and Jay Sts.
2	Morgan Creek Greenway – Construct a multi-use path from University Lake to the western terminus of the first phases of the greenway and a multi-use path spur to BPW Club Rd.	Phase 1 and Alt. Phase 1 expected to be completed in 2015 using STP-DA. CMAQ application was submitted for BPW connector; project on CMAQ list but unfunded. In CIP.
3	NC 54 from James St. to Anderson Park – Construct a side path on the north side of the road to accommodate two-direction bicycle transportation.	Project scored highly with NCDOT in P2.0. Private development application for Lloyd property, where about half of this project would be located

Pedestrian

<i>2014-2020 Local Priority List Priority #</i>	<i>2014-2020 LPL Description</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	W. Main St. – Install improved pedestrian crossings and sidewalks from Hillsborough Rd. to Jones Ferry Rd.	Project scored highly with NCDOT and MPO in P2.0. Small scope. Road diet recently completed. May be too small for STIP-level project.
2	S. Greensboro St. – Add sidewalks on the west side of the road from the northern end of Old Pittsboro Rd. to Merritt Mill Rd.	Recently discussed in regard to transit access funding and prioritized #1 by Board for that funding. In CIP. Private development application for 501 S. Greensboro St. (Rogers-Triem). Some interest among neighbors in a sidewalk.
3	N. Greensboro St. corridor from Weaver St. to Shelton St. – pedestrian improvements	May be too small for STIP-level project.
4	Estes Dr. – Construct a sidewalk on the south	Highest MPO score for a Carrboro

ATTACHMENT B

	side of the road from N. Greensboro St. to the Town limits.	project in P2.0. Low NCDOT score – likely due primarily to narrow ROW.
5	Old NC 86 – Construct a sidewalk on the east side of the road from Homestead Rd. to Eubanks Rd.	P2.0 – high MPO score, low NCDOT score. Project is partially outside of Town limits.

New bicycle and pedestrian projects – preliminary

<i>2014-2020 Local Priority List Priority #</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Notes</i>
N/A	Homestead Rd. – Install protected bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road from Lake Hogan Farms Rd. to Stratford Dr.	This was submitted preliminarily by staff based on Board member comments at a previous 2013 meeting. Protected bike lanes physically separate cyclists from motor vehicle traffic.

STP-DA and TAP funding

The MPO is requesting two major actions from member jurisdictions: submittal of any STP-DA funding amendment requests for existing STP-DA projects by November 20, and submittal of new STP-DA and TAP project requests for the FY 15-16 period by December 1.

Schedule

- Nov. 19 – Approve current STP-DA project amendment request
- Nov. 19 – Approve STP-DA/TAP project requests for FY15-16

The Town has used, and is using, STP-DA funds for several past and current multi-use path and sidewalk projects. Current projects include:

- Homestead-Chapel Hill H.S. MUP
- Morgan Creek Greenway (design of Phases 1, Alt. 1, and 2; construction of Phases 1 and Alt. 1)
- Rogers Road sidewalk
- Bike loop detectors

Recent past projects include the Wilson Park Multi-use Path and Roberson Place Bike Path.

The MPO is requiring that all currently-scheduled STP-DA funding be obligated by September 30, 2014. This means that their construction funding has been authorized by FHWA. Town staff expect to meet this deadline, working with consultants and stakeholders such as UNC, for the four current four projects. However, two other projects have not yet been started. These STP-DA allocations are so small compared to the staff time costs of administering them that they may not be cost-effective to pursue:

- S. Greensboro St. sidewalk – allocation of \$46,640 for the segment between the south end of Old Pittsboro Rd. and Public Works driveway. Recent discussions with the Board have envisioned a larger sidewalk project whose cost would dwarf this relatively small

funding allocation and require other funding strategies. This funding is almost certainly not sufficient to cover the cost of even the small segment envisioned when it was allocated.

- Bel Arbor-Plantation Acres Multi-use Path - \$67,000. Though an important bike-ped connection, the relatively small amount may not be cost-effective as an STP-DA project.

It is unlikely these small projects could be obligated by September 30, 2014. More information will be provided at the November 19 meeting regarding options for addressing these funding allocations while preserving the funding.

The Board will also be asked to provide direction/approval for submittal of FY15-16 STP-DA projects at the November 19 meeting.

The Board became familiar with the TAP program at the October 1, 2013, meeting, and that information is not repeated here. TAP program funding distribution will be considered simultaneously with STP-DA funding by the MPO.

Staff can answer questions on STP-DA and TAP funding at the meeting, if necessary.