



TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

MEMORANDUM

DELIVERED VIA: HAND MAIL FAX EMAIL

DATE: November 15, 2013

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

FROM: Jeff Brubaker, Transportation Planner JSB

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

Requested Board actions on the STIP

The Board is asked to take the following actions at this meeting.

Highway projects

Action: Consider approval of the resolution in ATTACHMENT A-1. Section 1 of this resolution is essentially a confirmation, since the listed projects are by default already in the draft P3.0 list and are slated for prioritization. The resolution also offers the Board of Aldermen an opportunity to suggest any additional highway projects, although staff has not identified any additional projects at this time.

The projects are:

- Homestead Rd. – Old NC 86 to NC 86 – bike lanes, sidewalks, transit accommodations, and safety improvements
- Franklin/Main/Merritt Mill/Brewer Ln. – intersection improvements
- Estes/Greensboro – construct roundabout

How might these projects fare in the prioritization? At the Division Needs level, the State scores highway projects as follows:

- Benefit*-cost ratio – 20% (* benefit limited to travel time benefit)
- Congestion – 20% (derived from volume/capacity ratio, weighted for higher-volume corridors)
- Safety – 10% -- function of crash density, frequency, and severity

- MPO input – 25%: based on points assigned by the MPO TAC to projects
- NCDOT division input – 25%: based on points assigned by the division to projects

Additional information

- The MPO is limited to submitting up to 19 *new* highway projects for P3.0.
- All projects submitted to be on the STIP should be in the adopted long-range transportation plan – the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Homestead Rd. project is included in the 2040 MTP. The two intersection improvement projects are considered transportation system management projects (TSM) and are not typically listed individually in the MTP.
- If a case could be made for a former “modernization” project (see Nov. 12 agenda) continuing to be on the highway list because it has significant traffic safety or traffic operations benefits – not merely adding bike facilities and sidewalks – it is possible it could continue to be included on the highway list.
- Other projects on the draft highway list near Carrboro:
 - Seawell School Rd. – Estes Dr. to Homestead Rd. – bike lanes, sidewalks, transit accommodations, and intersection safety improvements
 - Eubanks Rd. – Rogers Rd. to NC 86/MLK Blvd. – bike lanes, sidewalks, safety, and intersection improvements

Bicycle and pedestrian projects

Action: Consider approval of the resolution in ATTACHMENT A-2 submitting the top four bicycle and pedestrian projects, including categorizing at least two projects as Safe Routes to School projects. The four do not need to be ranked 1-4 at this point. But projects (unless they succeed in being Safe Routes-funded) will require a 20 percent non-federal match, which is a new consideration compared to past requests.

The Nov. 12 item provided information about the eight projects (three bicycle and five pedestrian) submitted for the 2014-2020 Local Priority List.

The SRTS funding will apply to projects prior to FFY16 and is reserved for projects within two miles of a K-8 school. All of the projects in the last Local Priority List are within the two-mile distance threshold, so any could be labeled SRTS.

Despite the funding caveat reiterated below, projects will nonetheless have a better chance of being funded if they score highly with the state’s scoring criteria, they are assigned points by the NCDOT Division, and they are assigned points by the MPO. Projects that score highly with the MPO’s own, concurrent project rating criteria may be more likely to be given MPO points, although the final decision resides with the TAC.

The state’s and MPO’s scoring criteria are included in the MPO document in ATTACHMENT D-1. The MPO could change its scoring criteria in early 2014. Input on the MPO’s criteria are not needed at this meeting. Nonetheless, looking at the NCDOT criteria, it can be seen that access to destinations, amount of ROW already acquired, preliminary work completed, a lower

environmental impact, the amount of crashes that have occurred in the vicinity, and population density in the vicinity are all factors that affect how a project scores. Given the small amount of funding available, a bike-ped project is almost guaranteed to fall short if its scores are low on several criteria and does not receive any division or MPO points.

ATTACHMENT D-2 shows how all bike-ped projects scored for P2.0. The highest NCDOT score for a Carrboro project was a sidepath on NC-54 from James St. to Anderson Park, which received the second-highest state score in the MPO, although its MPO score was lower-ranked. Based on a Board resolution on Nov. 22, 2011, the MPO assigned 100 points (the maximum possible) to the Estes Dr. project. However, it did not make the STIP, and that STIP, as has been mentioned, was never adopted.

Recommended projects

Based on the above information, staff recommend that the following four projects should be considered for Board prioritization (with all four being labeled as Safe Routes to School projects):

- Estes Dr. – construct bike lanes and sidewalk on south/east side of road
- S. Greensboro St. – construct sidewalk on west side of road
- NC-54 (James St. to Anderson Park) – construct sidepath on north side of road
- Morgan Creek Greenway – construct multi-use path from University Lake to the western terminus of first Phase 1 of the greenway and a multi-use path spur to BPW Club Rd.

Reiteration of funding availability

The above projects will all be considered in the Division Needs tier. The note about funding levels in the Nov. 12 memo (Nov. 12 Attachment B – pp. 2-3) is reiterated; these projects will be competing for a relatively small amount of funding with many other projects in the Division, including projects that did not score highly enough in higher tiers.

Historically, the Town has benefitted from several STIP projects, such as the construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Main St., Hillsborough Rd., Old Fayetteville Rd., and (currently) Smith Level Rd. However, given the current funding context for non-auto facilities, the Town may have a better likelihood of successfully funding a project through the STP-DA and TAP processes, where federal dollars are suballocated directly to the MPO, with the usual caveat that these funds require a minimum 20 percent non-federal match.

Funding years

The STIP will include funding for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2016-2022. FFY16 begins on Oct. 1, 2015.

Requested Board actions on STP-DA and TAP funding

Approval of amendment request for current STP-DA allocations

Action: Consider approval of the resolution in ATTACHMENT A-3 reallocating STP-DA funding to the Rogers Road sidewalk. This will prevent the loss of STP-DA funding due to its non-obligation.

The MPO is requesting that member jurisdictions make any current STP-DA amendment requests prior to the TCC meeting on November 20.

Staff recommend reallocating small allocations of STP-DA funding for two projects – S. Greensboro St. sidewalk and Bel Arbor-Plantation Acres Multi-use Path – to the Rogers Road sidewalk project.

The difficulties and lack of cost-effectiveness of using STP-DA funding for such small allocations was explained in the Nov. 12 memo. In the case of the S. Greensboro St. sidewalk, the Board has recently adopted a resolution prioritizing it first among four potential projects to receive half-cent sales tax transit stop access funding. There is significant neighbor support for the project as demonstrated by a petition presented by a resident at the Nov. 12, 2013, Board meeting. The \$46,640 allocation was believed at the time of allocation (2008) to be suitable for the construction of a short sidewalk segment on S. Greensboro leading south from the bus stop near the southern end of Old Pittsboro Rd. However, given the increased engineering and construction costs for completing federally-funded projects, it is very unlikely that that amount of funding would come close to covering the cost of even that short segment. Therefore the administratively-necessary reallocation of this small amount of funding should not be taken to influence the larger-picture question of a sidewalk along the corridor.

Staff recommend the reallocation to the Rogers Road project because local funds are already allocated to cover additional costs beyond the local funding committed to providing the match for STP-DA funds. The additional funding could be expected to help in completing the project by addressing its currently-projected shortfall.

Item	Amount
Current cost estimate, assuming higher-end easement acquisition costs	(\$1,199,840)
Current STP-DA allocation	\$428,960
Current local match for STP-DA	\$107,240
Additional local funds allocated – some of which could match additional STP-DA funding	\$550,470
<i>Additional funds needed</i>	<i>\$113,170</i>
<i>Additional funds provided by STP-DA reallocation (ATTACHMENT A-3)</i>	<i>\$113,640</i>

Approval of a preliminary list of STP-DA project priorities for FY 15 and 16

Action: Consider approval of the resolution in ATTACHMENT A-4 submitting to the MPO a preliminary list of projects to be funded by STP-DA and TAP funding in FY 15 and 16.

The MPO would like member jurisdictions to submit projects by December 1. This would allow for a schedule of approving a distribution policy and list of projects by the TAC in February (TCC recommendation in January). This schedule is recommended for local budget considerations: member jurisdictions need to know what STP-DA revenues to plan for in their FY 2015 budgets.

Information about the Transportation Alternatives Program was provided at the Oct. 1, 2013, Board meeting.

Modes

Current MPO policy stipulates that bicycle, pedestrian, transit projects be eligible for STP-DA funding.

Size of projects

Staff recommend that the projects included be either additional funding for existing projects or large enough allocations to justify the costs and staff time for administering the projects. The exact level of funding does not need to be submitted at this time.

Non-federal match requirement

As usual, the projects will require a minimum 20 percent non-federal match.

Total expected annual STP-DA funding

The total expected annual STP-DA funding for the whole MPO is about \$4.8 million. As noted on Oct. 1, there is a total of approximately \$700,000 in TAP funds for FY 13 and 14 combined. Both funding sources are dependent on Congressional reauthorization or extension of MAP-21, the current federal transportation bill, beyond FFY 14.

Additional Board review

Since the TCC recommendation is expected in January, and TAC consideration in February, the Board would have the opportunity to provide additional feedback at a January meeting, which could then be submitted to the MPO.

Projects recommended for a preliminary list

- S. Greensboro St. – north end of Old Pittsboro Rd. to Public Works Driveway – construct sidewalk on the west side of the road
- Morgan Creek Greenway – provide additional funding for the construction of the greenway
- Jones Creek Greenway – provide additional funding for the construction of the greenway, extending the Twin Creeks Greenway south and west (supplementing currently allocated

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds) as planned for Phase 2 of the Bolin Creek Greenway

Note about a previous consideration of STP-DA projects

The Board last considered STP-DA project prioritization in October 2011, after MPO staff indicated a Call for Projects was forthcoming. The TAB had recommended a preliminary list of projects on November 17, 2011. However, the Call for Projects was delayed by the MPO, who urged member jurisdictions to focus on completing their current STP-DA projects before allocating more funds for new projects.

Additional information from the MPO

More information is available in ATTACHMENT E, a memo included in the Nov. 13 TAC meeting packet.