

Improvements to NC 54 west of Carrboro – Project History and Timeline

- Fall 2013 – Orange County BOCC endorsed a list of priority projects which included the widening of NC 54 from Orange Grove Road to Old Fayetteville Road in Carrboro to be submitted to SPOT 3.0.
- Summer 2014 – The release of scores from SPOT 3.0 showed that the NC 54 widening project did not score well enough to receive funding.
- January 2015 – Orange County sent a letter to Carrboro reiterating their interest in the widening project and hoping to work to understand Carrboro’s reservations related to the project.
 - This letter emphasized the fact that the latest AADT (at that time) counted by the DCHC MPO on NC 54 west of Old Fayetteville was 17,000 vpd which exceeds the expected daily capacity of this type of facility which is 12,500 vpd.
 - The letter also identified that “User input on the subject corridor reveals the complete lack of usable gaps in traffic streams at rural collector and local street intersections during peak periods” was a major reason for Orange County including it as a major project recommendation in its CTP.
- Summer 2015 – Orange County again proposed submitting a project to SPOT 4.0 that would propose widening NC 54 to four lanes.
- Fall 2015 – Aldermen Seils and Mayor Lavelle submit their memo to the DCHC MPO identifying specific questions requesting additional analysis of the corridor before submitting a widening project
- Spring 2018 – The City of Graham and the DCHC MPO fund a corridor study for NC 54 and select VHB as the consulting firm.
- Fall 2018 – Final study recommendations are presented to Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Graham, Orange County, Alamance County, BGMPO, TARPO, and DCHC MPO
- Winter 2018 – DCHC MPO board does not accept the results and requests additional information to better answer the questions posed in the fall of 2015.
 - The DCHC MPO would contract VHB to conduct additional work to address the unanswered questions in a Phase 2 study.
- Spring 2019 – Work on the Phase 2 study begins
- Fall 2019 – Results of the Phase 2 study were/will be presented to Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Orange County, and the DCHC MPO.
- Spring/Summer 2020 – Staff of jurisdictions within the DCHC MPO will discuss on which local projects to place points for SPOT 6.0
- December 2020 – SPOT 6.0 project submission deadline

- Future – The project for NC 54 widening can still be advanced by the BGMPO, TARPO, and NCDOT Division 7 as the corridor (submitted as a single project) is only partially within the DCHC MPO’s jurisdiction (approximately 20%).
 - This means that if the project scores well enough under the SPOT 6.0 criteria and if BGMPO, TARPO, and NCDOT Division decide to put local points on the project (of the total local points, only 20% would come from DCHC MPO) it may still be accepted into the STIP.
- Implementation – The timeline of STIP projects is dependent on how well they score in the SPOT process. If the score is high enough, the project would be added to the Approved STIP, and the Design work for this project could begin as early as 2023.
 - If the score is lower it can be accepted into the Developmental STIP (to start in 2029 or later) and would need to be rescored in SPOT 7.0 (and score better relative to other projects) in order to be moved into the Approved STIP.