



Date: April 26, 2011

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy City Manager
From: Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Manager
Ellen Beckmann, Transportation Planner, Transportation Department
Subject: Agenda Item – FY 2014-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Priority List

Executive Summary

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) mutually adopt a seven-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a program of transportation capital and operating assistance projects to be implemented in the next seven years with the use of federal and state funds. The TIP is traditionally updated every two years. The Administration prepares and recommends an update to the list of transportation priority projects to be submitted to the MPO and State for consideration in the development of the next TIP. The DCHC MPO and the State are in the process of approving the FY 2012-2018 TIP and have begun development of the FY 2014-2020 TIP. The local priorities must be submitted to the DCHC MPO by May 18, 2011 for consideration in the MPO's FY 2014-2020 Regional Priority List.

Recommendation

That the City Council approve the "Resolution to Endorse the City of Durham's Project Priority List for the FY 2014-2020 Transportation Improvement Program" (Attachment A).

Background

The DCHC MPO has asked that the member jurisdictions submit local priorities for inclusion in the Regional Priority List for the FY 2014-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by May 18, 2011. The Regional Priority List will be submitted to the NCDOT in two phases. In July 2011, the MPO will submit the project descriptions to NCDOT. In August and September NCDOT's Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) will apply the State's technical ranking methodology and then provide the MPO project scores. The MPO must then submit a MPO ranking to NCDOT by November 2011. The MPO ranking will be based on the MPO's technical ranking methodology, input from the public, and input from TAC members.

NCDOT expects to release the final project rankings in late 2011. After holding investment strategy summits to determine how much funding should be allocated to each project category and applying the Equity Formula that governs the distribution of transportation funding across NCDOT's funding divisions, NCDOT will release the draft FY 2014-2020 STIP in spring 2012. Typically the final STIP is approved about one year after the draft STIP is released.

To identify priority projects for the FY 2014-2020 TIP Local Priority List, staff reviewed the following documents:

- Draft FY 2012-2018 TIP to identify funded and partially funded projects;
- FY 2012-2018 City Priority List to identify desired projects in the last TIP cycle;
- 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan to identify projects in which the planned completion date is before 2025;
- City of Durham Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to identify City-financed projects that might be eligible for state and federal funding. In some cases, City financing might advance the TIP completion date and be reimbursed by the TIP funding sources at a later date;
- Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan;
- DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan;
- DATA Short-Range Transit Plan

Based on the documents above, staff developed the FY 2014-2020 City Priority List (see Attachment B). This list includes both new projects and projects that were submitted for the last TIP but were not funded in FY 2012-2018. The projects are listed in four sections by mode:

- 1) Highway
- 2) Bicycle
- 3) Pedestrian
- 4) Transit

Attachment C is a map displaying the projects in the recommended FY 2014-2020 Local Priority List.

Issues and Analysis

The NCDOT SPOT office will categorize highway projects in two categories: mobility and modernization. Mobility projects are projects that expand highway capacity for vehicles, i.e. road widening and new location roadway construction. Modernization projects are projects that upgrade a roadway's design to current standards without expanding capacity. This could include adding turn lanes, widening narrow lanes, adding shoulders, adding on-road bicycle lanes, etc. NCDOT has asked that all projects to add on-road bicycle facilities that cost over \$1 million be submitted as modernization projects. As a result, some of the modernization projects on the City's list were submitted as bicycle and pedestrian projects for the last TIP development cycle. The previous SPOT ranking is listed on Attachment B.

In addition, highway projects will be categorized into three different tiers: statewide, regional, and subregional. The statewide tier includes NCDOT's Strategic Highway Corridors. In Durham this includes I-40, I-85, NC 147, US 70, US 15-501, and the Urban Loop eligible roadways. The

regional tier includes all US and NC routes not included in the statewide tier. The subregional tier includes all other roadways. Each project type and tier is subject to a different technical ranking methodology by the MPO and by SPOT. Recently, NCDOT has prioritized and put more resources into improvements on the statewide and regional tiers than the subregional tier.

The DCHC MPO will only be able to submit 15 new highway projects in addition to projects that were submitted for the last TIP for Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. In recognition of this, the recommended Local Priority List includes only six new highway projects. Urban Loop projects are not included in this list because these projects have a separate prioritization process. The highway projects are not listed in a recommended priority order. Rather they are grouped by project type and tier.

The DCHC MPO will only be able to submit ten bicycle projects and ten pedestrian projects for Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. Bicycle projects include on-road bicycle facilities under \$1 million and greenway trail projects. The recommended Local Priority List includes six bicycle projects and six pedestrian projects. Since the MPO's list will also include projects from Orange and Chatham counties, all twelve of these projects may not be able to be submitted by the MPO. As a result, the recommended Local Priority List for bicycle and pedestrian projects includes a recommended priority order. Staff will recommend that the highest priority projects be included in the MPO's list.

NCDOT has requested that the transit projects only include capital projects that are needed in FY 2013 through 2015. There is no limit to the number of transit projects that the MPO can submit. Most of the transit capital assistance projects in the TIP are subject to future discretionary federal funding allocations. These transit projects are the priority projects for the discretionary federal funds as the funds become available. Almost all of the public transportation funding requires 10 percent local match. Rural transit projects are not subject to NCDOT and the MPO's ranking system. NCDOT will coordinate directly with the rural systems to assess their resource and funding needs.

Alternatives

The Durham City Council could decide to:

- Approve recommended Local Priority List; or,
- Send the item back to staff for further review; or,
- Not provide a Local Priority List to the MPO.

Financial Impacts

The priority list represents an important opportunity for the City to finance transportation improvements. The State Transportation Improvement Program is the main source of funding for local transportation projects. There is no direct financial impact to the City of Durham at this time. The City will be required to provide matching funds for some projects in the TIP.

SDBE

This item does not require review by the Equal Opportunity Equity Assurance Department.