



Date: September 4, 2012

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
Mark D. Ahrendsen, Director, Transportation Department
From: Andy Henry, Transportation Planner
Subject: Agenda Item – Provide Comments on Alternatives Analysis for 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 LRTP) and Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Executive Summary

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is responsible for long range transportation planning for Durham County and parts of Orange County and Chatham County. The MPO is updating their long range transportation plans including the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP) and the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The 2040 MTP must include all highway, transit and other transportation projects that are to be financed by state and federal funding, and be fiscally constrained, which means expected revenue sources must cover all the costs. The CTP is a state requirement and is not fiscally constrained, which effectively allows the CTP to include projects that are envisioned beyond the year 2040. The schedule to complete the planning process includes:

1. Complete Deficiency Analysis – completed
2. Release Alternatives Analysis – August 17, 2012
3. Release Preferred Option (draft Plan) – October 10, 2012
4. Approve the plans – December 12, 2012
5. Approve Air Quality Conformity Analysis – April 10, 2013
6. Receive federal approval – June 15, 2013

At this point, the Alternatives Analysis has been released for public comment, and staff is seeking City Council comments on the major projects in the Alternatives Analysis to assist with the selection of projects to be included in the Preferred Option (draft Plan).

Attachment A is a copy of the *2040 MTP and CTP – Alternatives Analysis Report (August 17, 2012)*.

Attachment B is a presentation that presents the plan development process, summarizes the Alternatives Analysis Report and identifies the major transportation projects in the City of Durham.

Recommendation

Receive the staff presentation and provide comments on the transportation projects in Alternatives Analysis Report.

Background

The DCHC MPO approved the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in December 2008 and the subsequent Air Quality Conformity Report in April 2009. The Plan became official on June 15, 2009 upon receiving approval from the United States Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. The 2035 LRTP had a cost of approximately \$8 billion. The major projects included:

1. High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll (HOV/HOT) lanes on I-40 (from the Wake/Durham County line to US 15-501).
2. Widening of I-85 (from US 70 to Red Mill Rd.) and widening of NC 147 (from East End Connector to I-40).
3. Freeway upgrade of US 15-501 (from US 15-501 bypass to I-40) and of US 70 (Wake/Durham County line to East End Connector).
4. Northern Durham Parkway (mostly new roadway).
5. Light Rail Transit (from Downtown Durham to UNC-Chapel Hill and to Downtown Raleigh).
6. Improved local bus service, including bus connector service to rail stations, new routes, express service and shorter headways (i.e., time between bus arrivals).
7. Over seventy additional roadway improvements and widenings.
8. Bicycle and pedestrian facility projects.

Federal regulations require that the DCHC MPO update its long range transportation plan, which is now called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), at least every four years and have a minimum 20-year planning horizon. The DCHC MPO must adopt the 2040 MTP and receive federal approval by June 15, 2013; otherwise the MPO will be in a lapse and no additional transportation projects that use federal funding can be started until there is an approved plan.

Issues/Analysis

The objective of the Alternatives Analysis is to study how sets of projects meet travel demand. At this point, the MPO has released the Alternatives Analysis Report and requested comments from the public and local elected officials. The Alternatives Analysis proposes several sets of transportation projects and transit services to address future transportation needs (year 2040), and presents performance measures, congestion maps, and other data to distinguish how each Alternative (i.e., a set of projects) or an individual project meets those needs. There are three project sets in the Alternatives:

1. Highway Intensive – emphasizes highway investments such as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and freeway upgrades to address transportation needs.
2. Transit Intensive – emphasizes rail transit and bus transit improvements to address transportation needs. This Alternative includes the services in the Durham County Bus and Rail Investment Plan plus additional rail and bus services.
3. Moderate – proposes a more balanced approach that would continue the current transportation investment trend with some shift to non-automobile modes. This alternative includes most of the highway projects from the 2035 LRTP and matches the Durham County Bus and Rail Investment Plan.

These Alternatives are modeled with two land use scenarios for the year 2040: one scenario based on the Durham County comprehensive plan; and another scenario that assumes more intensive, mixed use development around rail stations called transit oriented development.

The Alternatives include the following major projects in the City of Durham. Staff is asking City Council to focus their comments on these and other projects in the Alternatives Analysis Report. *[CTP]* indicates that the project is likely to be only in the CTP because anticipated 2040 MTP revenues will not cover the costs.

High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll Lanes (HOV/HOT), New Roads and Road Widening

1. East End Connector (EEC)
2. US 70 widening and upgrade to freeway (EEC to Wake County line)
3. I-85 widening (US 70 to Red Mill Rd.)
4. Northern Durham Parkway (US 70 to Roxboro Rd.)
5. Roxboro Road (Duke St. to Goodwin Rd.)
6. US 15-501 upgrade to freeway (US 15-501 Bypass to I-40)
7. HOV/HOT on I-40 (Durham/Wake County line to NC 54)
8. HOV/HOT on I-40 (NC 54 to I-40/-85 Interchange in Orange County) *[CTP]*
9. HOV/HOT on Durham Freeway (Alston Ave. to I-40) *[CTP]*
10. HOV/HOT on I-85 (US 70 to Red Mill Rd.) *[CTP]*

Fixed Guideway Transit

1. Light Rail Transit (Downtown Durham to Duke Medical Center to UNC-Chapel Hill)
2. Regional Rail Transit (West Durham to Research Triangle Park to Wake County)
3. Upgrade Regional Rail to Light Rail (e.g., more frequent service) (Alston Ave to RTP to Wake County) *[CTP]*
4. Extend Regional Rail (West Durham to Mebane) *[CTP]*

Bus Transit

1. Improved headways on local routes (i.e., wait time between bus service)
2. New express service to outlying communities (e.g., Roxboro)
3. Bus feeder service to rail stations
4. Peak hour park and ride service

Based on public and local elected officials' comments and staff analysis of the Alternatives, the MPO will develop a Preferred Option and release it on October 10, 2012 for another cycle of public input. The Preferred Option is the draft 2040 MTP. It is not anticipated that any one of the Alternatives, in its entirety, will become the Preferred Option. The Preferred Option will likely include projects from all of the Alternatives. The 2040 MTP must be fiscally-constrained, which means the expected funding revenues must cover the expected costs. Projects that are not able to be included in the 2040 MTP might become part of the CTP, which is a vision plan that has a horizon beyond 2040 and does not have to be fiscally-constrained.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is the governing board for the DCHC MPO. The TAC is composed of elected officials from the member jurisdictions, including two members from the Durham City Council, and one member from the North Carolina Transportation Board.

Alternatives

1. Receive Presentation and offer comments – the comments would be considered in developing the Preferred Option.
2. Receive Presentation but defer comments to a later date – the DCHC MPO is scheduled to release the Preferred Option on October 10, 2012. Comments received after this date will not be considered in developing the Preferred Option.
3. Do not receive the Presentation – the DCHC MPO will develop the Preferred Option without comments from City Council.

Financial Analysis

This agenda item does not have a direct impact on the City budget. However, to develop a fiscally-constrained 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP), it will be assumed that local funding sources such as the one-half cent sales tax for transit will be used to fund transit services in the plan.

SDBE Summary

This item does not require review by the Office of Equal Opportunity /Equity Assurance.

Attachments

- Attachment A: *2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plan – Alternatives Analysis Report (August 17, 2012 - Revised).*
- Attachment B: Alternatives Analysis presentation.