



Date: October 22, 2013

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Mark D. Ahrendsen, Director of Transportation
Subject: Agenda Item – City of Durham Local Priority List for Transportation Projects

Executive Summary

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) has requested that its member jurisdictions provide a list transportation projects to be considered for funding in the FY 2016-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Development of the TIP is coordinated with the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) through a process called Prioritization 3.0. The DCHC MPO will be submitting a list of highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and rail projects in January that will be scored by the State and the MPO based on a variety of transportation metrics by May 2014. The MPO will then apply local ranking points to projects by July 2014. The draft TIP is expected to be released by December 2014 with final approval by July 2015. The submission of projects is the first step in the process to develop the TIP.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council approve the list of transportation projects for submission by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization to the NC Department of Transportation’s Prioritization 3.0 process.

Background

Prioritization 3.0 is NCDOT’s third iteration of using a quantitative prioritization process for development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In 2013, the General Assembly codified the prioritization process and set many parameters on the use and distribution of transportation funding in legislation titled Strategic Transportation Investments (H817).

The Strategic Transportation Investments legislation organized transportation funding into three categories: Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and Division Needs. Statewide Mobility includes highway projects mostly on Interstates and the National Highway System (e.g. I-40, US 15/501, NC 147), commercial service airports (e.g. RDU), and major freight rail corridors (e.g. the NC Railroad). Regional Impact includes Statewide Mobility projects and adds highway projects on other NC and US routes (e.g. NC 54, US 501), public bus and rail transit that crosses county lines (e.g. Durham-Orange light rail, Triangle Transit bus). Division Needs includes Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and adds other state roads (e.g. Fayetteville Road), federally funded municipal roads (e.g. portions of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway), other public transit (e.g. DATA), and bicycle and pedestrian projects. Forty percent of the funding is allocated to the Statewide Mobility category for competition statewide based fully on a quantitative analysis. Thirty percent of the funding is allocated to the

Regional Impact category for competition within two paired Divisions (Durham County is in a region with Wake, Person, Granville, Franklin, Vance, Warren, Harnett, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, and Robeson counties) and is distributed by population of the paired Divisions. Regional Impact projects compete based on a quantitative analysis and local input from MPOs, Rural Planning Organizations, and NCDOT Highway Division Engineers. Thirty percent of the funding is allocated to the Division Needs category for competition within a Division (Durham County is in a Division with Wake, Person, Granville, Franklin, Vance, and Warren counties) and is distributed equally to each Division. Division Needs projects compete based on a quantitative analysis and local input from MPOs, Rural Planning Organizations, and NCDOT Highway Division Engineers.

NCDOT's current recommendation is that the MPO's local input points represent 15 percent of the total score for Regional Impact projects. The Division Engineer's local input points would also represent 15 percent of the total score, and the quantitative score represents 70 percent. NCDOT's current recommendation is that the MPO's local input points represent 30 percent of the total score for Division Needs projects. The Division Engineer's local input points would represent 20 percent of the total score, and the quantitative score represents 50 percent of the total score. As a result, it is unlikely that any project will be funded at the Regional Impact level without support from the MPO, and it is extremely unlikely that any project will be funded at the Division Needs level without MPO support. (The MPO has advocated for the MPO receiving a greater share of local input points. This will be decided by the NC Board of Transportation in early November.)

The timeline and process for the prioritization process is:

- By December 1, 2013: Local governments submit lists of projects to the MPO for submission for Prioritization 3.0.
- January 8, 2014: DCHC MPO TAC votes on projects to submit for Prioritization 3.0.
- January 31, 2014 – April 30, 2014: NCDOT applies quantitative scoring methodology.
- May 1, 2014 – July 31, 2014: MPO applies MPO's quantitative scoring methodology.
- By July 31, 2014: MPO votes on application of local input points on Regional Impact and Division Needs projects.

At this time, the MPO is only seeking input on what projects should be submitted for scoring in Prioritization 3.0. In the spring, the MPO will seek input on what projects should be prioritized and receive local input points. The attached lists are not in a priority order and it is not necessary for the City to provide a prioritization of projects at this time.

Prioritization 3.0 will result in a draft STIP which will be released by NCDOT by December 1, 2014. The MPO will also release a draft TIP at that time and seek public input. A final STIP and TIP is expected to be approved by July 1, 2015 by the NC Board of Transportation and the MPO. The STIP and TIP will include funding for federal fiscal years 2016 through 2022.

The MPO has also requested that local governments include in this list projects that the government would like to be considered for the MPO's Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable (STPDA) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds. These are federal funds that the MPO receives directly and can allocate to projects independent of NCDOT's Prioritization process. The MPO has a policy to only use these funds on non-highway projects. The MPO will be programming STPDA and TAP funding in federal fiscal years 2015 and 2016, and plans to approve funding for projects in early spring 2014. All projects on the bicycle and pedestrian and transit lists are

recommended for consideration by the MPO in programming FY 2015 and 2016 STPDA and TAP funds.

Issues/Analysis

The table of recommended highway projects includes projects that are already in the NCDOT Prioritization database and several new projects that were taken from the DCHC MPO's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Per NCDOT's guidelines, all projects previously submitted for earlier Prioritization processes will remain in their database. The DCHC MPO can submit up to 14 new highway projects. If the DCHC MPO removes up to five existing highway projects, the MPO can submit up to five additional new projects. MPO staff believes that there are at least five projects within the MPO that can be removed so the MPO will likely be submitting a total of 19 new highway projects for Prioritization 3.0.

The table is ordered with Statewide Mobility projects first, then Regional Impact, then Division Needs. The new projects listed are taken directly from the DCHC MPO's approved 2040 MTP. Some of these projects may end up being wholly or partially built by developers as required by Durham's development review process. Submission by the MPO does not mean that the project will be fully publicly funded.

Staff recommends requesting that three highway projects be removed from the Prioritization database. These are projects that were previously submitted for earlier Prioritization processes that were not included in the MPO's financially constrained 2040 MTP. Since TIP projects must be included in the MTP in order to be funded, it would be inconsistent for the City and the MPO to request that these projects be considered at this time. These are listed at the bottom of the table.

The table of recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects includes sixteen projects in Durham County for consideration by the MPO. NCDOT has set a limitation of 20 bicycle and pedestrian projects that each MPO can submit for Prioritization 3.0. An initial compilation of bicycle and pedestrian requests in the MPO included more than 70 project requests. In order to begin the process of narrowing down the MPO's bicycle and pedestrian submission list to 20, the MPO has set a limit of eight projects per jurisdiction in Durham County. The first eight projects on this recommended list are proposed to be submitted by the City of Durham. The second eight projects on this recommended list are proposed to be submitted by Durham County. Many of the Durham County projects are partially or wholly in the City of Durham.

The Strategic Transportation Investments legislation prohibits the State from using State funds on bicycle and pedestrian projects. As a result, projects funded through Prioritization 3.0 will require a 20 percent local match by the local jurisdiction. These projects will also be required to be managed by the local jurisdiction. While counties are now able to use local funds on transportation construction projects and could manage a project, Durham County has not historically done this. As a result, all of these bicycle and pedestrian projects would likely require a 20 percent local match from the City and management by City staff.

NCDOT has also requested that MPOs include bicycle and pedestrian projects that are eligible for federal Safe Routes to School funding. Safe Routes to School funding is only eligible to be used on projects that provide access to elementary and middle schools. The staff recommendation includes several projects that could be eligible. Safe Routes to School projects are 100 percent federally funded.

Staff selected these 16 projects based on several factors including the ranking in the Durham Walks pedestrian plan and Durham Bicycle Plan. In addition, staff selected projects that would likely score better based on NCDOT's quantitative scoring methodology. In general, the NCDOT methodology favors projects on higher speed roads with crash histories, serving multiple destinations, and with high residential and employment density nearby.

These sixteen bicycle and pedestrian projects will also be considered for funding with STPDA and TAP funding by the MPO.

The table of recommended transit projects includes projects for the Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA) for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. Only expansion projects are subject to the Prioritization 3.0 process. These projects were directly pulled from DATA's Designing Better Bus Services plan. NCDOT has not set any limitation on the number of transit projects that the MPO can submit.

Replacement vehicles are considered maintenance and are not subject to Prioritization 3.0. However, replacement vehicles may be considered by the MPO for STPDA funding or other federal funding. Replacement vehicles are shown at the bottom of this list and will be considered by the MPO for STPDA funding in fiscal years 2015 and 2016.

The table of recommend rail projects includes two projects in Durham that were selected from the draft Durham Traffic Separation Study.

Alternatives

The City could choose not to approve the list of transportation projects. The MPO would then proceed to select projects based only on staff input and the City's Transportation Advisory Committee members.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City of Durham at this time. If projects are funded in the TIP, they may require a 20 percent local match to the federal funding and may require staff resources to manage.

SDBE Summary

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

Attachments

Attachment 1 –City of Durham Local Priority List Bike and Ped Projects

Attachment 2 – City of Durham Local Priority List Rail Projects

Attachment 3 – City of Durham Local Priority List Highway Projects

Attachment 4 – City of Durham Local Priority List Transit Projects