

**April 23, 2024**

TO: DCHC MPO Board  
FROM : DCHC MPO Staff  
SUBJECT: FY25 Call for Projects Public Comments

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## Summary

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) invited member agencies to submit applications for federal funding from the Unified Planning Work Program and Regional Flexible Funding (RFF) programs in November 2023. Funding applications were due on December 8, 2023. The RFF pool for FY25, FY26, and FY27 consists of four funding sources that come directly to the DCHC MPO: Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (BGDA), Transportation Alternatives Program Direct Attributable (TAPDA), Carbon Reduction Program Direct Attributable (CRPDA), and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ). The call for projects that was conducted by MPO staff is consistent with federal requirements for CMAQ and TAPDA funds and can be applied to all funding sources.

Twenty-one projects, programs, or studies are being recommended for funding through this call. Seven are existing projects that requested additional or continued funding:

- Triangle Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program (Central Pines Regional Council)
- Durham Rail Trail (City of Durham)
- Third Fork Creek Trail Extension (City of Durham)
- R. Kelly Bryant Bridge Trail (City of Durham)
- Cornwallis Road Bike & Pedestrian Improvements (City of Durham)
- 805 Corridor Bus Stops (GoTriangle)
- South Greensboro Street Sidewalk (Town of Carrboro)
- Estes Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements (Town of Chapel Hill)

In addition, ten new projects are being recommended for funding:

- Triangle Mobility Hub (GoTriangle)
- Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail (NCDOT)
- Bicycle Plan Implementation (Town of Carrboro)
- Sidewalk Gap Project (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Davis Drive Path from I-40 to Cornwallis Road (RTP)
- Battery Electric Buses (City of Durham)
- Electric Charging Stations (Chatham County)
- Electric Bus Purchase (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Transit Access Sidewalk for Orange Grove Rd (Orange County)
- Bolin Creek Greenway – Phase 2 (Town of Carrboro)

And three studies or plans are recommended for funding in the UPWP:

- Orange County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (Orange County)
- Durham-to-Roxboro Rail Trail Planning Study (Durham County)
- Chapel Hill Transit High-Capacity Study (Town of Chapel Hill)

**Public Comment**

The draft recommendations were released on March 28, 2024 for a 21-day public comment period. This public notice was distributed through the DCHC MPO website, social media, and emailed to subscribers on the DCHC MPO listserv. The public were asked to email or call with comments, or complete a survey. Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to self-identify to measure equitable engagement.

**Below are the comments received after the agenda had gone out.**

**Public Comments Received After April 11, 2024**

Comment #	Comment	Name	Date Received
1	<p>I'm a Chapel Hill resident that lives adjacent to the future phase 4 portion of the Bolin Creek Greenway, and I'm writing to urge you to consider funding this and the phase 3 sections instead of phase 2 for any upcoming regional flexible funding decisions.</p> <p>While all phases of the proposed greenway are important for connecting our communities to each other and our nearby schools, I believe phases 3 and 4 will connect a larger number of people to the schools and to more points of interest such as downtown Carrboro and Wilson and Umstead Parks. They will also eventually connect these communities to the final portion of Chapel Hill's side of the Bolin Creek Greenway, the upcoming multi-use path on Estes, and also the NS BRT.</p>	Patrick Quirk	4/11/24
2	<p>I'm writing today as a Carrboro resident to share my strong hope that the DCHC-MPO will move the Bolin Creek Phase 3 and Phase 4 project into the RFF program *AHEAD* of Phase 2.</p> <p>My family and I use the Bolin Creek trail and it is an incredible resource in helping us travel more sustainably in and around Chapel Hill/Carrboro. We would love for it to extend into Carrboro and expand its benefits.</p> <p>I want to commend DCHC on the scoring used in the RFF process - it correctly detected that BCG 3/4 will help more people in denser population census blocks, serve a more diverse set of residents, provide superior access to three schools, and appropriately scored nearly double (59 points) the score of BCG Phase 2 (30 points).</p> <p>For daily tripmaking, BCG 3/4 also opens up a lot more utilitarian cycling demand. Of course, there is the access to three schools. While there are</p>	Patrick McDonough	4/12/24

	<p>lots of commercial centers from Estes Drive to the east of Umstead Park that can be reached from the existing BCG, connecting up BCG 2 without BCG 3/4 being there will add nothing in this respect. Once BCG 3/4 is in place, a large swath of North Carrboro will be able to not only access the schools, but downtown Chapel Hill/Carrboro (via the Tanyard Branch trail and Northside neighborhood), the shopping center at MLK &amp; Hillsborough Rd/Umstead Rd, East Franklin Street with the stairs/bike wheel well by Sunrise Biscuit Kitchen, and University Place, not to mention Caffe Driade for coffee on the way.</p> <p>Both segments of the BCG under consideration are worthy projects, but as funds are limited, DCHC can support the Town's recent widely inclusive public process by funding the project with the most benefits, interest and broad community support.</p> <p>Please fund Bolin Creek Phases 3 and 4!</p>		
3	<p>I wish to express my strong support for prioritizing funding for Phases 3 &amp; 4 of the Bolin Creek Greenway project (over Phase 2) in the MPO regional flexible funding plan. Having served on Carrboro Town Council from 2019-2023, our 6-1 decision in October 2023 to move forward with the Creekside alignment for Phases 3 &amp; 4 was one of my proudest votes over my four years in office. Below are highlights of the comments that I shared prior to my vote in October that still hold true today.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>... The Creekside has the potential to deliver the most powerful benefits to the community. It can offer community members of every age, physical ability, and socioeconomic background safe and affordable spaces to commute, recreate, reflect, socialize, and enjoy the awesome beauty of Bolin Forest. This view is very consistent with the findings from a very inclusive community survey shared earlier this evening that included 1,735 respondents.</p> <p>Here are the five drivers in my decision to support the Creekside alignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It would not really add any new impervious surface along Bolin Creek because it's already a functionally impervious surface. The greenway would be retrofitted into an OWASA sewer easement that is already beaten-down and hard-packed over many decades of use by hikers, mountain bikers, and OWASA trucks. Town staff and NC water quality officials considered the trail to be impervious in 2009; it's only worsened over the past 14 years.</li> <li>2. Compared to Upland Forest, the Creekside alignment would require very few trees to be cut down. Trees were already removed when building the sewer easement decades ago; and the easement must stay cleared of trees to allow OWASA utility trucks easy access to sewage pipes for routine maintenance. On the Chapel Hill side, only 15 trees were cut down, all less than a</li> </ol>	Susan Romaine	4/13/24

foot in diameter, to build its greenway in its nearly identical sewer easement some 25 years ago.

3. As the local chapter of the Sierra Club noted in a recent memo to Council, the Creekside Alignment could actually improve environmental conditions in and along the creek. That's because those using the trail would no longer be dodging puddles, rocks, and roots and braiding the 25-50 ft wide easement; their feet and tires would be confined to a narrower 10-15 ft wide greenway. In other words, it would be possible to shrink the impervious surface and reclaim space for a buffer filled with native plants, hardwoods, rocks, and ground cover – slowing the runoff, reducing erosion and sedimentation, and stabilizing the stream. There is a large body of research that says riparian zones can actually be improved by just these kinds of narrow, paved paths along a creek, so long as they are combined with seeded shoulders and other vegetation.
4. The Creekside alignment is flat and off-road, making it accessible for community members from ages 8 – 80, who are walking or rolling using bicycles, wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, skateboards, and scooters. For those at the younger end of the scale, this opens up all kinds of opportunities as a Safe Route to School. The long lines of parents idling their cars during school pick-up and drop-off hours could easily be replaced by more rows of racks brimming with bicycles at Chapel Hill High, Smith Middle, and Seawell Elementary Schools; especially among the 229 students living in the No Transportation Zone at these three schools. For some of these students, daily commutes using active transportation will turn into life-long routines. It's hard to think of a better investment in climate mitigation, as well as the physical and mental health of young people.
5. The Creekside Alignment most closely aligns with the very core of our Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan. It connects us. It connects the largest number of Carrboro neighborhoods (including those near Greensboro St and Hillsborough Rd) to each other; and to schools, parks, jobs, civic and social engagements, and our downtown. The endless possibilities of these new connections – from Estes Park Apartments to Lake Hogan Farms - were mentioned over and over again in the community survey. So was the exciting possibility of one day leveraging Carrboro's Bolin Creek Greenway by connecting it to Chapel Hill's greenway at Estes Drive [which has been awarded \$1 million to further build out its greenway network].

Thank you for considering this request to prioritize Phases 3 & 4 of the Bolin Creek Greenway Project over Phase 2. Phases 3 & 4 will connect more members of our community; it will connect to a much larger

	geographical area; and it will promote safer, cleaner routes to school and work across Chapel Hill and Carrboro.		
4	<p>I'm writing to urge your support for funding Bolin Creek Phases 3 and 4 instead of Phase 2 in the MPO for Carrboro. This initiative is critical for our community's environmental sustainability and resident well-being.</p> <p>The Creekside alignment, comprising Phases 3 and 4, has consistently garnered overwhelming support from Carrboro residents. It offers safe biking and walking routes to schools and parks, as advocated by the school district and endorsed by over 1,000 residents and the Sierra Club.</p> <p>This alignment minimizes environmental impact by utilizing existing infrastructure and has been deemed logistically feasible, with endorsements from key stakeholders like UNC. Furthermore, it promotes inclusivity and accessibility by connecting diverse neighborhoods and meeting ADA standards.</p> <p>By reducing car dependency and promoting sustainable transportation options, the Creekside Greenway will alleviate traffic congestion, lower emissions, and improve community health. It will also enhance educational and recreational opportunities by connecting schools, parks, and libraries.</p> <p>Given the overwhelming community support and the demonstrated environmental and social benefits, I urge you to prioritize funding Bolin Creek Phases 3 and 4.</p> <p>Let's invest in a greener, healthier, and more connected future for Carrboro.</p>	Brian Crawford	4/14/24
5	<p>I'm writing to you today to encourage support for the Bolin Creek Phases 3 and 4 instead of Phase 2 in the MPO for Carrboro.</p> <p>This project hits four critical areas for funding and will help Carrboro meet many of its sustainability and master plan goals far better than Phase 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phases 3 and 4 are more important to implement sooner for environmental and service impact reasons. The school district supports Phases 3 and 4 for safer routes to schools.</li> <li>2. Over 1,000 residents signed a petition advocating for the creekside alignment of the greenway (phases 3 and 4), reflecting overwhelming community support.</li> <li>3. The Creekside alignment is environmentally sound, utilizing existing infrastructure without extensive tree removal, and receiving endorsements from the local chapter of the Sierra Club.</li> <li>4. The Creekside alignment is inclusive, maximizing connections across Carrboro and benefiting diverse neighborhoods, while also being the most logistically feasible option, preferred by UNC and not conflicting with other existing trails.</li> </ol> <p>With the community support and the demonstrated environmental and social benefits, please prioritize Bolin Creek Phases 3 and 4.</p>	Kelly Kilburn	4/14/24

<p>6</p>	<p>I am writing today to urge you to re-include Bolin Creek Greenway Phases 3 &amp; 4 on the list for flexible funding.</p> <p>I am very familiar with the sewer easement along Bolin Creek, as I live just around the corner from it, and spend many hours in the Carolina North Forest. I am aware of the current state of the creek, and of the possibilities and opportunities having a defined accessible greenway would bring.</p> <p>Bolin Creek Greenway phases 3 &amp; 4 will provide a much needed transportation corridor. It will offer a Safe Route to School for many neighborhoods in Carrboro, including the Estes Park Apartments complex, which houses many lower income families. It will benefit parents who have been frustrated by bus issues (lack of drivers, long waits, buses that never showed up) the past two years that have made it necessary for them to drive their children to school because there was no safe way to bike or walk there. This project will connect Carrboro neighborhoods north of town with a safe, off-road transportation system to bring them to the center of town. And, it will provide a connection to Chapel Hill's Bolin Creek Greenway. It will actually serve more people than phase 2 of the Greenway.</p> <p>And there are some larger reasons we need to expand accessibility to our greenways now.</p> <p>Life expectancy in the US was 47 years in 1900, 68 years in 1950, and by 2019 it had risen to nearly 79 years. But it fell to 77 in 2020 and dropped further, to just over 76, in 2021. Why is life expectancy falling? The three top reasons given are COVID 19 related deaths, drug overdoses, and accidental injuries. I would argue that many of these could have been avoided with a healthier lifestyle. We know that COVID was worse for those with other comorbidities, including heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other existing conditions that are made worse from an unhealthy diet and an unhealthy lifestyle.</p> <p>So let's look at lifestyles. In 1969, nearly 50 percent of all children in the United States (and nearly 90 percent of those within a mile of school) walked or bicycled to school. Today, that number has plummeted to fewer than 15 percent. During the morning commute, driving to school represents 10–14 percent of traffic on the road, and the pollution from the cars idling at the schools is harmful to students' lungs and health.</p> <p>The mental health crisis in our country is getting worse. Over 50 million adults are experiencing a mental illness. One in eight adults are on antidepressants. One in ten youth are experiencing depression that affects their ability to function at school or at home. Nature connectedness is</p>	<p>Heidi Perov</p>	<p>4/14/24</p>
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	<p>associated with lower levels of poor mental health; in particular lower depression and anxiety levels.</p> <p>Putting in a greenway that serves as a Safe Route to School has many benefits. In addition to removing cars from the road and thereby lowering vehicle miles traveled (VMTs), children get fresh air AND exercise while biking or walking to school. Plus, studies show that children who walk or bike to school do better in class.</p> <p>We do not yet know the cost of the proposed greenway, but we do know that the cost of a greenway is far, far less than the cost of a highway widening, which you hear no one questioning. The greenway decreases car use and VMTs, while a road widening increases both (which also goes against our climate action goals).</p> <p>In our increasingly hot summers, temperatures on greenways are much lower than on the streets. This makes biking and walking along a greenway very attractive. A greenway route also removes riders and walkers from the pollution emitted by motor vehicles (including dangerous pollutants from tires, which exist even with electric vehicles).</p> <p>The current condition of the crude, rocky trail along this sewer easement prevents many from accessing it, including families with strollers, those using wheelchairs, and others with physical challenges. An accessible greenway will make this forest available to all residents, for recreation, and also for transportation.</p> <p>I know that both projects (Phase 2 and Phases 3 &amp; 4) were originally on the list. I am not sure why the latter was pulled. I have been told that understaffing at Carrboro may have played a role, but for whatever reason, please revisit your decision to remove this project. Please put Bolin Creek Greenway 3 &amp; 4 back on the funding list. Our children and future generations deserve it.</p>		
7	<p>I'm a Carrboro resident and I'd like for my kids to ride their bikes to high school. Please fund the design for Phases 3 &amp; 4 of the Bolin Creek Greenway in the regional flexible funding plan.</p>	Melanie Joiner	4/14/24
8	<p>I am writing to express my support for funding for the Bolin Creek Greenway Funding for Phases 3 and 4 in the MPO funding.</p> <p>My name is Bruce Sinclair and I have lived along the path of the proposed greenway for almost 30 years. I am a former treasurer of Friends of Bolin Creek and I have served terms on both the Carrboro and Chapel Hill Environmental Boards, some as chair, and am currently the vice chair of the Carrboro Planning Board.</p>	Bruce Sinclair	4/15/24

	<p>I have been strongly in favor of the proposed plan since it's proposal about 16 years ago and was involved in the development of the conceptual plan. Even before that, one of the reasons we bought our house 30 years ago along the creek was that we saw an opportunity for our children to walk or bike safely to school along the creek. Unfortunately, the condition of the trail was too degraded for that to be a viable option and it has only degraded further.</p> <p>In the last sixteen years of advocating for the greenway, I have seen many of my co-supporter's health fail and pass on without ever being able to benefit from such a wonderful public amenity. I fear that my health may not hold up long enough for me to ever see it come to fruition. I am very sad that a whole generation of citizens, especially those with mobility issues, have been denied healthful access vital resource.</p> <p>I hope and pray that this project can be completed with all possible speed going forward.</p> <p>To that end, I support prioritizing Phase 3 and 4 over Phase 2 as it will allow the best connectivity between the Chapel Hill and Carrboro and provide the most cost-efficient way of implementing the conceptual plan.</p>		
9	<p>My name is Tim Hoffman and I am emailing in support of the Bolin Creek Greenway. Specifically, I am writing in support of adding Bolin Creeks Phase 3 and 4 to the MPO's regional flexible funding plan. While Phase 2 is in the funding package, I believe that Phase 3 and 4 should be prioritized due to overwhelming public support. I hope that you will prioritize Phases 3 and 4 for funding.</p>	Tim Hoffman	4/16/24
10	<p>I write you to request you add Bolin Creek's Phases 3 and 4 to the MPO's regional flexible funding plan. Phases 3 and 4 ought to be included because then kids will be able to walk to and from school safely in nature. It is also very clearly what Carrboro residents want based on polls, petitions, and public comments. I hope that you will prioritize Phases 3 and 4 for funding.</p>	Tristan Baval-Marques	4/16/24