



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY

September 29, 2021

The Honorable Wendy Jacobs, Chair
Durham / Chapel Hill / Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization
101 City Hall Plaza
Durham, North Carolina 27701

Dear Commissioner Jacobs:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding discontinuation of the Prioritization 6.0 process and the upcoming programming of the Draft 2024-2033 STIP.

We appreciate your organization's commitment to the STI process and investment of time and analysis in each round of prioritization and programming. We recognize that local priorities can evolve over time and have viewed our tradition of one-on-one priority sessions as an opportunity to calibrate STI requirements and constraints with local priorities to the extent possible within the law. While the cessation of P6.0 does have considerable impact on the process, our current STIP development timeline includes coordination with our Planning Organization partners in the development of the Draft 2024-2033 STIP. This would occur after the STI workgroup has recommended, and the Board of Transportation has approved, a protocol for determining which projects are eligible for programming consideration for the next draft STIP.

Regarding the suggestion to delay high-cost roadway projects in favor of priority transit and bicycle-pedestrian projects, current STI law limits the scope within which such swaps can be considered to the same funding category. All bicycle-pedestrian and many transit projects are funded in the Division Needs category, while the majority of area projects having the highest estimated costs are funded in the Statewide Mobility category. The only way to accelerate a bicycle-pedestrian project, for example, would be to delay a Division Needs funded roadway project and the only such Pn.0 project in the greater Durham area of a size that would allow for accelerating multiple bicycle-pedestrian projects is U-5823, Woodcroft Parkway Extension. If there is a desire to consider this option, I request that you begin the conversation with Division Engineer Brandon Jones.

To your specific questions, we offer the following responses:

- Since the North-South BRT project in Chapel Hill is not a currently programmed STI-funded project, it will not be eligible for STI programming in the draft 24-33 STIP. You may wish to contact the Integrated Mobility Division to see if there are opportunities for securing non-STI State funding for grant-matching purposes.

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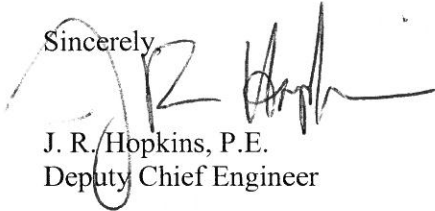
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- As noted above, the STI workgroup and the Board of Transportation will establish a framework for programming of the next draft STIP. They are working to have this framework established early next year. We will be better able to speak to the impact on uncommitted projects once their work is completed. To the extent the MPO has overriding concerns about not being able to advance uncommitted projects, there is the option to prioritize those projects as part of the STBGDA selection process and fund them in that manner.
- Regarding the proposed infrastructure bill being debated in Congress, it is too early to know the precise extent to which the bill would augment STI funding, and in what years. However, the expectation is that any additional formula allocation funding beyond current apportionments would increase the STIP budget by that same amount. How much of that would be available for programming purposes would be determined once all applicable deductions (e.g. PE allowance, STI exempt funding, inflation, overrun factors) are made to the STIP budget. Again, the programming of these funds would follow the protocol vetted by the STI workgroup and Board of Transportation.

I appreciate you taking the time to ask these questions and share your concerns. We look forward to working collaboratively with the MPO as we develop the Draft 2024-2033 STIP.

Sincerely,



J. R. Hopkins, P.E.
Deputy Chief Engineer

JRH/mts

Cc: Mike Fox, Chair – North Carolina Board of Transportation
Ronnie Keeter, P.E. – Chief Engineer
Brandon Jones, P.E. – Division 5 Engineer
Wright Archer, III, P.E. – Division 7 Engineer
Patrick Norman, P.E. – Division 8 Engineer
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