

2045 MTP – Amendment #2

Public Comments

Mr. Henry —

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Amendment #2 to the DCHC 2045 MTP.

The update to NCDOT's Complete Streets policy is exciting, and I applaud the MPO's efforts to rapidly update the MTP to take advantage of the policy change to reflect that on certain facilities a shared use path "**may be suitable for this project**" on the highway table. However, for many of the projects on which this designation is provided, a shared use path or other protected facility is not only suitable, but it is the only reasonable facility that would be acceptable to residents and local governments given the characteristics of the roadway. For example, on 2035 projects 111, 240, and 73, all of which are projects to "modernize" US 15-501 between Chapel Hill and Durham, a shared-use or other protected facility path is obviously the only acceptable facility. The same holds true for the NC 54 projects (69.4, 69.3, 70.3, 69.1, and 69.2) given the ultimate cross-section of the roadways and the anticipated traffic volume.

Therefore, I recommend that the legend on the Roadway Project List be updated to read "**shared use path or other protected facilities required along this project**." It is reasonable that all of these facilities have separated facilities, even if similar streets within the region have on-street non-buffered facilities, as our existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is inadequate in many ways and should not be a model for future projects. Moreover, these facilities are currently major transportation corridors, and all of these road widenings or "modernizations" are intended to and will increase vehicle throughput and likely speed, thus increasing the need for protected facilities,

However, if you do not believe all of the starred projects necessarily need separated facilities, then a second category could be added for projects that require shared use paths or protected facilities, while the existing category remains to identify those facilities that a shared use path may or may not be required.

In light of the interest in a bicycle facility adjacent to I-40, I also recommend that the designation be added to all I-40 projects and potentially other interstate projects, including I-85 and I-885, as well as any road that is proposed to be widened to 6 lanes or more.

Moreover, I would recommend strengthening the update to the "**Bicycle Facilities**" section of the document to reflect that protected facilities of some sort, whether they be shared use paths or otherwise, **are not only the preferred facilities along major arterials or higher-speed roads but are the only types of facilities that are acceptable along roadways within DCHC**. An on-road, unprotected facility is never acceptable along any road with a design speed and posted limit greater than 35 mph, or any multi-lane roadway. Some exist today, but they are quite inadequate (try the bike lanes along US 15-501 south of the James Taylor Bridge for an example). While today these types of facilities are sometimes retrofitted along existing rights-of-way due to cost or other issues, these compromises should not be made for major NCDOT projects.

The updated NCDOT Complete Streets policy represents a remarkable change to how transportation facilities have been designed and developed within this state. However, old habits die hard, and regional organizations need to be at the forefront to make sure that these important policy changes are fully reflected in the projects that are constructed in the future. We are fortunate, in a way, that many major roadways in our area are scheduled for projects in the next couple of decades, and we need to take full advantage as a region to build out key bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Thanks again.

Very truly yours,

Geoff Green