

***Draft* FY2016-2025**

Transportation Improvement Program

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public involvement for the draft FY2016-2025 MTIP involved numerous strategies as set forth by the DCHC MPO's adopted Public Involvement Policy. The DCHC MPO facilitated the public involvement process to spread awareness of the MTIP and to ensure a variety of local perspectives containing essential insight were appropriately obtained and documented in the MTIP. Various mediums and resources were constructed so that all residents and stakeholders in DCHC MPO area had the opportunity to review the draft FY2016-2025 MTIP and provide input.

2. DCHC MPO'S PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

2.1 Introduction

The DCHC MPO's Public Involvement Policy (PIP) is an umbrella policy, encompassing the plans and programs of the Urban Area's transportation planning process. Public involvement is an integral part of the DCHC MPO's planning efforts. The Public Involvement Policy is comprised of the public involvement programs for all major planning activities, including the MTP, MTIP, Air Quality Conformity Determination, Major Investment Study (MIS), UPWP, MPO provisions for the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and ongoing transportation planning (3-C) process. The policy decision-making body, the MPO Board, also has a standing public process as part of its monthly meetings. The planning

activities mentioned above are therefore subject to the Board's process for public involvement. The PIP also contains a review component to assess the value of the MPO programs on a triennial basis.

The DCHC MPO will seek public input through a menu of techniques, including public notices, comment periods, workshops, charrettes, public hearings, newsletters, surveys, media relations and input from committees and commissions that are appointed by local member governments. The techniques employed will vary depending on the specific planning task. The MPO will hold a forty-five (45) day public comment period for amendments to the PIP and will hold a public hearing every three years to seek input and feedback on the MPO's public involvement efforts. The DCHC MPO's PIP will be consistent with the requirements of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the FTA/FHWA Guidance and Proposed Rule Making (NRM) on Public Participation.

2.2 Purpose of the PIP

The purpose of the DCHC MPO PIP Policy is to create an open decision-making process whereby citizens have the opportunity to be involved in all stages of transportation planning in the DCHC MPO area. This PIP is designed to ensure that transportation decisions will reflect public priorities.

2.3 Objectives of the PIP

1. Bring a broad crosssection of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
2. Maintain public involvement from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development.
3. Use different combinations of public involvement techniques to meet the diverse needs of the general public.
4. Determine the public's knowledge of the metropolitan transportation system and the public's values and attitudes concerning transportation.
5. Educate citizens and elected officials in order to increase general understanding of transportation issues.
6. Make technical and other information available to the public using the MPO web site and other electronically accessible formats and means as practicable.
7. Employ visualization techniques to MPO metropolitan transportation plans, MTIPs, and other project planning activities.
8. Consult with federal and State agencies responsible for land management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, historic preservation and economic development in the creation of MTPs, MTIPs, and project planning.

9. Establish a channel for an effective feedback process.
10. Evaluate the public involvement process and procedures to assess their success at meeting requirements specified in the MAP-21, NEPA, and the Interim FTA/FHWA Guidance on Public Participation.

2.4 General Policy Framework

It is the policy of the DCHC MPO to have a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to DCHC MPO activities at all key stages in the decision-making process. It is also DCHC MPO policy to involve the public early in the planning process, and to actively seek out the involvement of communities most affected by particular plans or projects. Furthermore, it is a goal of the PIP that the MPO's MTIP, UPWP and transportation plans and programs, be developed in a manner that assures that the public, and affected communities in particular, are afforded ample opportunity to participate in the development of such plans.

3. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FOR THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MTIP)

The MTIP is the document that describes the funding and scheduling of transportation improvement projects (highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit capital and operating assistance) using state and federal funds. The MTIP serves as the project selection document for transportation projects and is therefore the implementation mechanism by which the objectives of the Transportation Plan are reached. MAP-21, SAFETEA-LU, and preceding legislation, TEA-21 and ISTEA, mandate an opportunity for public review of the MTIP. The following is the proposed public involvement procedure for the DCHC MPO MTIP.

3.1 Introduction

DCHC MPO will prepare an MTIP, which is consistent with the requirements of MAP-21, and any implementing federal regulations. The MTIP will be developed based on:

1. Revenue estimates provided by the NCDOT; and
2. The DCHC MPO Regional Priority List.

Public Involvement Process

1. The DCHC MPO Technical

Committee (TC) will develop a draft Regional Priority List from the Local Project Priorities of the MPO jurisdictions.

2. The Regional Priority List will be published for a minimum three-week (21-day) public comment period and the notice will be published by the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) in a major daily newspaper, as well as other local, minority, or alternative language newspapers as appropriate.
3. The notices for the public comment period and the public hearing will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. available large print documents, audio material, a sign language interpreter, translator or other provisions as requested). The Regional Priority List will be on file in the City of Durham Department of Transportation, Town of Chapel Hill Planning Department, Town of Carrboro Planning Department, Town of Hillsborough Planning Department, Counties of Durham, Orange, Chatham Planning Departments, GoTriangle and the county public libraries for public review and comment.
4. The MPO Board will hold a public hearing on the draft Regional Priority List. The public hearing will be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities and which is

located on a transit route. The MPO Board will approve a final Regional Priority List after considering the public comments received.

5. The DCHC MPO Technical Committee will develop a draft MTIP from the approved Regional Priority List and from revenue estimates provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The TC will forward the draft MTIP to the MPO Board. The MPO Board will publish the draft MTIP for public review and comment.
6. Copies of a draft MTIP will be distributed to MPO Board members and the transportation-related committees of MPO member jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction will also have copies available for public review.
7. The public comments will be assembled and presented to the DCHC MPO Board. The MPO Board will hold a public hearing on the draft MTIP. The public hearing will be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities and which is located on a transit route. Public comments will be addressed and considered in the adoption of the MTIP.
8. The DCHC MPO, as a maintenance area for air quality, will provide additional opportunity for public comment on the revision of the draft MTIP (if the final MTIP is significantly different and/or raises new material issues).
9. The process for updating and approving the MTIP will follow the sequence and procedure as described in appendix D of this MTIP.
10. Amendments to MTIP will be available for public review and comment, if the amendment makes a substantial change to the MTIP. A substantial change is classified as the addition or deletion of a project with an implementation cost exceeding \$1 million. Public comment on project additions or deletions of less than \$1 million may be sought at the discretion of the MPO Board by majority vote. As long as a project's description, scope, or expected environmental impact have not materially changed, the MPO Board may approve changes to project funding without a separate public meeting. More information on the MTIP amendment or modification process is available in Appendix D of this MTIP document.
11. Written public comments and their responses will be published as part of this appendix when the final MTIP document is adopted.

4. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT AND COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT MTIP

General Comments

Comment #1

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on the DCHC Metropolitan Planning Organization FY16-25 Transportation Improvement Program. Our comments are the following.

We are enthusiastic about the nine goals identified in the DCHC MPO 2040 MTP. Three of the goals specifically mention developing a multi-modal transportation system, and one explicitly states the goal of developing safe and equitable means of pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Other goals addressing safety, public transportation and land use integration are also influenced by increasing bicycle ridership and improving conditions for residents choosing to walk and bicycle for both commuting and recreation purposes.

Unfortunately, the objectives stated to achieve these goals, as well as the funding allocated to bicycle and pedestrian projects, are inadequate. The objectives are too general and the lack of specificity allows for these goals to stagnate as a wish instead of an end. We recommend adding specific language to the goals and objectives, so there are measurable steps to increase the percentage of

people commuting by bike and foot, the amount of on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and increased funding levels.

Regarding funding, it appears that only 25% of the TIP goes to “non-highway projects” that includes transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and rail. If the goal truly is to increase multi-modal transportation, this is a woefully inadequate funding structure. The 2016-2025 TIP explains the funding constraints at the state level based on the Strategic Mobility Formula, which allow bicycle and pedestrian projects to only be funded at the Division level, 30 percent of the total budget. While acknowledging such constraints, this formula is simply not acceptable, and we believe that as more people move into the region with the desire to bike and walk rather than drive, the MPO must work diligently with state officials to revise this formula to allow more funding to be used for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

We approve that the DCHC MPO has “a policy to not use STP-DA for highway projects, unless the STP- DA funds are applied to the project for project costs related to incidental bicycle and pedestrian improvements.” Yet regional bicycle and pedestrian projects only account for 26 percent of these funds (as 19 percent is for planning, 20 percent for transit, and 53 percent is for local discretionary funding).

While local discretionary TAP and STP-DA funds can be used for bicycle or pedestrian projects, the screening criteria for TAP funding should state the project

must be used for bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and the MPO should ensure the local spending is being used only for bicycle or pedestrian facilities. We applaud the use of CMAQ funding for bicycle/pedestrian projects in the MPO and hope the MPO continues to use this source of funding similar projects in the future.

In short, we believe the vision of the MPO clearly articulates a vision for a multi-modal future where it is easy for residents across the MPO to access destinations not only by car but by bus, bicycle and/or foot. Yet to remain competitive as a region, the MPO must take drastic steps to more quickly achieve this vision. We ask that the MPO, and the 2016-2025 TIP, better address the needs and desires of the residents in this region and take bolder steps to increase the amount of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region.

DCHC MPO Response to General Comment #1

Thank you very much for your thorough read of the FY2016-2025 TIP and the 2040 MTP and for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO is in complete agreement that the results of the state's Strategic Mobility Formula to program and fund projects in the FY2016-2025 TIP do not achieve the goals of the MPO as outlined in the 2040 MTP. As your comments pointed out, the STI law guides the distribution of funding for highway and non-highway project at the statewide, regional, and division level

and the MPO doesn't have the ability to increase funding levels for specific projects or project types. The MPO's policy to use STP-DA and TAP funding for non-highway projects is designed to assist MPO jurisdictions and agencies with planning, preliminary engineering (PE) and design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and capital purchases related to non-highway projects. Please note that the STP-DA and TAP funding that are spent on planning and local discretionary activities are often the planning, PE, and right-of-way phases for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The MPO will be starting the 2045 MTP development process in the winter 2015/2016. We hope to be responsive to your comments and suggestions to develop more specific and measurable goals and objectives during the 2045 MTP planning process. We invite you to participate in the process to assist us with identifying more meaningful goals and objectives.

I-40 and it's Interchanges

Comment #1

When I-40 was built in Orange County back in the 1980's several opportunities were missed that should be addressed with this project:

1) There should be a wildlife underpass under the [I-40] roadway where it crosses New Hope Creek, presently in four, wildlife unfriendly, box culverts, just south of the New Hope Church Road interchange north of Chapel Hill. I-40 is a 24-7 barrier

to wildlife in Orange County, and the USDOT FHWA Eco-logical Program has recently funded work with the NC Natural Heritage Program that backs this up.

With regard to item 1) wildlife underpass, the USDOT FHWA Eco-logical Program funded work with the NC Natural Heritage Program that backs this up was written by Dr. Stephen Hall entitled Statewide Assessment of Conservation Priorities at the Landscape Level, Upland and Interbasin Habitats, Eastern Piedmont Region. There's also associated with this work a PowerPoint presentation which uses New Hope Creek as an example, which I am attaching.

2) There should be a wildlife friendly bike-pedestrian underpass [for I-40] along Dry Creek, just north of the US 15-501 interchange.

With regard to item 2) A bikes and pedestrians tunnel (preferably wildlife passage friendly) along Dry Creek, as part of a Chapel Hill to Durham bike and pedestrian route and similar to the existing tunnel along Ellerbe Creek under I-85 in north Durham.

3) Also, with existing conditions, there should be a bike-pedestrian track added laterally and parallel to the flow of traffic (beyond the existing side "rail") on the Erwin Road bridge over I-40.

4) And there should be special erosion control measures taken on this project given the high quality aquatic habitat in New Hope Creek down stream of:

a) (any) work on a reworking of the

I-40/NC 86 interchange (area drains to Old Field Creek, a tributary of New Hope Creek) and

b) what the 6-lane-ing project on I-40 will entail up stream of this sensitive, high quality New Hope Creek habitat area.

See NHCC OS Master Plan (<http://newhopecreek.org/pdf/masterplan.pdf> , see pdf page 52 of Plan for "Component 5, Dry Creek from New Hope Creek to Erwin Rd." For best view rotate 90 degrees counterclockwise, or 270 CW. Text on Component 5 is at pdf pages 53 and 54. Text beginning on pdf page 53 includes the following language:

"Presently [1991], the large amount of fill on the Interstate 40 roadbed precludes creating a connection from east to west along Dry Creek, a condition that will continue until Interstate 40 is widened or modified in a way that offers the opportunity to build an acceptable pedestrian underpass.

At present, Interstate 40 can be crossed only at the bridge at Erwin Road. A trail and underpass as described in this component would provide a connecting link between the Chapel Hill and Durham greenway systems.

Acquire floodplain lands along both sides of Dry Creek to use as a wildlife habitat area.

Develop a bicycle and pedestrian trail between the greenway trail systems of Durham and Chapel Hill utilizing the Erwin Road overpass and, in the event

that future plans permit, employing a pedestrian underpass at Dry Creek (going under Interstate 40).”

Note the Dry Creek tunnel idea is also in the present Chapel Hill Open Space Plan.

*DCHC MPO Response to
Comment #1 on I-40 and it's
Interchanges*

Thank you very much for the comments that you have submitted regarding wildlife underpasses for I-40, bicycle and pedestrian underpasses for I-40, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along Erwin Road, and erosion control measures to protect the natural resource of the New Hope Creek and its tributaries. The MPO has incorporated these comments into the adopted FY2016-2025 MTIP document as they are valuable suggestions that should be considered during future phases of the specified projects. The MPO has also provided these comments to our partners at the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, as the funding and programming for Interstate and State-owned roadways are controlled by these partners. Additionally, the MPO encourages you to remain involved and engaged as the projects move forward from long-range plans into more near-term planning, design, and public involvement phases.

NC Highway 54

Comment #1

I write to provide input on transportation priorities such as included in the draft 2016-2025 MTIP. My input here will address plans associated with upgrades to NC 54 between I-40 in Durham and Meadowmont in Chapel Hill. I live beside this NC 54 corridor, on Celeste Circle in the Eastwood Park neighborhood, and much of my understanding of transportation plans in this corridor come from the Collector Street Plan Meetings, the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study Report, and from my reading of projects U5774A through U5774F.

Overall it appears that NC 54 will be widened from 4 to 6 lanes (project U5774C), and it is unclear whether this upgrade will include the superstreet arrangement recommended in the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study Report. Also, there will be upgrades to the intersection of NC 54 with I-40 (project U5774F), and the intersection of NC 54 at Farrington Road will be converted to an overpass (project U5774E).

A couple of land use issues are in the works that will be relevant to future transportation needs. This spring, the City of Durham Planning Department held meetings to consider changes to Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designations for areas surrounding future light rail transit stations. Notably, the planned location of the Leigh Village Station is within about a half mile of NC 54. Our neighborhood will

be located between NC 54 and the Leigh Village station. Based upon results of the meetings held this spring, the City plans to designate our neighborhood FLUM as Residential. Also, the City currently plans to designate over 200 acres surrounding Leigh Village as Compact Neighborhood Tier in order to stimulate development in the area. In other efforts taken to encourage the light rail initiative, a sales tax increase to support rail was approved in Durham and Orange Counties, and the State has dedicated around 125 million dollars towards the project. Leigh Village and light rail developments are likely to be progressing when transportation improvements are being made to the NC 54 Corridor, and these developments, including population growth and park and ride facilities, will impact service on NC 54.

Following is my specific input towards the transportation plans:

1.) The Corridor Study Report recommends installation of hardscaping/landscaping between NC 54 and the Service Road (also called Nelson Highway) in our neighborhood when NC 54 is upgraded. Landscaping/hardscaping should be a high priority as it is needed to shield our neighborhood from noise and visual pollution caused by the highway traffic. During the Corridor Study, I spoke with Mr. Joey Hopkins, with the NCDOT, and he considered it likely that the noise levels associated with NC 54 beside our neighborhood will require mitigation. There is a signalized intersection connecting our neighborhood with NC

54 at Huntingridge Road. The Corridor Study recommends atrophy of this intersection. Ideally, the short road connecting the Service Road with NC54 at Huntingridge Road will be removed and replaced with landscaping/hardscaping, to achieve a continuous barrier between our neighborhood and the upgraded highway.

2.) Across highway NC 54 from our neighborhood is Falconbridge Mall. Construction of the mall created many acres of impervious surface. Unfortunately, stormwater from much of the Falconbridge Mall area is channeled under NC 54 into our neighborhood. Once in our neighborhood, it traverses a ditch on private property. Mr. Graham Summerson with the City of Durham Stormwater Division considers this ditch to be highly unconventional in its design, at functional capacity, and in need of continual maintenance. On the properties where the ditch is located, it is at an elevation higher than the homes. Consequently, when it is breached in heavy rains, homes are prone to flooding.

It would be of considerable benefit if, during the upgrades to NC 54, the stormwater channel from Falconbridge Mall were re-directed to flow more directly downhill towards the Upper Little Creek without crossing under NC 54 and Nelson Highway into our neighborhood. Stormwater currently flows under NC 54 from the south (Falconbridge Mall) to the north (Eastwood Park), then downhill to Upper Little Creek in the Corps of Engineers Land. From there

it flows back from north to south under NC 54. Preventing the Falconbridge Mall stormwater from ever being directed north of the Service Road (Nelson Highway) would be of enormous benefit to our neighborhood. This appears to be a realistic possibility, since the slope of NC 54 from Falconbridge Mall towards Upper Little Creek is downhill, and there are stormwater conveyances on both sides of NC 54, and also between the lanes of NC 54.

3.) Creation of a new intersection which directly connects Crossland Drive with NC 54 is recommended by the Corridor Study Report and the Collector Street Plan. This link will be needed for several reasons. A great deal of new traffic will use Crossland Drive since it will constitute the terminus of Southwest Durham Drive. Southwest Durham Drive was originally planned to connect with Meadowmont Lane, but this plan was voted against by the local TAC, and by default, Crossland Drive became the point of intersection of Southwest Durham Drive and NC 54. Thus, considerable traffic will travel between Crossland and NC 54. Currently, the only avenue of access between Crossland and NC 54 is via the Service Road and the link at Huntingridge Road. The Service Road is a local street and Southwest Durham/Crossland Drive will be a collector street. It would be inappropriate to link the heavy traffic of a collector street with NC 54 via a local street. Furthermore, the close spacing between the Service Road and NC 54 would make heavy use of the intersection at Huntingridge Road inefficient and unsafe. The signalized

intersection at Huntingridge Road is planned to be atrophied. Consequently a new intersection linking Crossland Drive with NC 54 is absolutely essential.

It is unclear whether the planned upgrades to NC 54 in U5774C include an intersection at Crossland Drive, but this intersection should be included. It should be noted that replacement of the Farrington Road/NC 54 intersection with an overpass (project U5774E) will create a much greater need for the Crossland/NC 54 intersection.

4.) The project U5774E includes upgrades to the intersection where Celeste Circle on the north and Falconbridge Road on the south intersect with NC 54. This project is not funded. The project is ambitious and calls for a grade separation and appears to require modifications to the Falconbridge Mall property. While it may not be possible to do this project in its entirety, some upgrades to the intersection, especially on the Celeste Circle side, appear to be needed. This need arises from the anticipated Light Rail Transit Node to be developed at Leigh Village. An important connection between the Leigh Village Node (including park and ride facilities) and NC 54 will be via an intersection at Celeste Circle. Without upgrades to this intersection, it will be inadequate as it currently exists. This intersection will be the main path by which Leigh Village traffic travels to and from I-40, as described in the Corridor Study Report. Also, this intersection will take on much of the traffic diverted when the Farrington Road/NC 54 intersection

is converted to an overpass (U5774E).

5.) Overall, service on NC 54 is expected to continue to deteriorate with time based upon anticipated growth in traffic use, and local development. Upgrade of NC 54 as a superstreet-type of facility is recommended by the Corridor Study to prevent traffic from worsening in the future. Widening of NC54 alone will be associated with worsening function.

6.) The Corridor Study Report recommends that a pedestrian/bike path along the north side of NC 54 be constructed when NC 54 is upgraded. This path is to include a boardwalk-style structure traversing the Corps of Engineers wetlands. This path should be given high priority. Non-vehicular travel along NC 54 in the project area is dangerous at present, and non-vehicular travel in the area is inhibited due to the lack of facilities.

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #1 on NC Highway 54

Thank you very much for your thorough read of the FY2016-2025 TIP, the 2040 MTP, and the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study, and for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO is in agreement with many of your comments, particularly that landscaping/hardscaping should be a high priority to shield the neighborhoods from noise and visual pollution caused by the highway traffic and also that stormwater runoff should be carefully reviewed by the City of Durham and NCDOT and mitigation efforts be included in any future projects along the NC 54

corridor. The MPO has circulated your comments related to stormwater runoff to the appropriate representatives at the City of Durham and NCDOT.

U-5774E is the intersection improvement project for NC 54 and Farrington Road and this project is currently scheduled for right-of-way in 2023 and construction in 2024. Preliminary design is underway for the entire U-5774 project and the MPO has provided the comments expressing the need for a connection from Crossland Drive to NC 54 to NCDOT. NCDOT will review and consider the connection during these early phases of project development.

U-5774C is corridor improvements along NC 54 from SR 1110 (Barbee Chapel Rd) to I-40. This segment of the project is scheduled for right-of-way in 2023 and construction will begin in 2024 but specific improvements or intersections are not identified in the description at this time. As NCDOT progresses with planning and design for the corridor, more detailed information on specific improvements will be made available.

The MPO is agreement that a pedestrian/bicycle path along NC 54 should be considered a high priority during the construction of improvements to NC 54.

Finally, the MPO encourages you to remain involved and engaged as the improvement projects to NC 54 move forward from long-range plans into more near-term planning, design, and public involvement phases.

Comment #2

I own 209 Celeste Circle off highway NC 54. We are at the end of the street drainage system and have experienced flooding as a result. The drainage from the commercial office at the corner is sent into the neighborhood. When water exceeds capacity for the ditch in front of our houses on Celeste and the ditch between Celeste and Nelson highway, we have water running:

- over our driveway
- through the front yard
- between the house and the detached garage

Our house is on a slab with no crawl space. We had interior water damage as a result of overflow in the past.

Please help ensure that future development is accountable for a drainage system that does not dump it into our neighborhood.

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #2 on NC Highway 54

Thank you very much for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO has circulated your comments and conveyed the urgency of the stormwater runoff issues to the appropriate representatives at the City of Durham and NCDOT.

Comment #3

I am writing to you as a homeowner in the Eastwood Park subdivision alongside HWY 54 between George King and Farrington roads.

I request that you consider changing how storm water drainage flows from the Falconbridge shopping center. Currently it is diverted under NC 54 and into our neighborhood, which leads to flooding in our neighborhood during heavy rains. Please consider diverting it more appropriately in which it will not have an impact to homeowners.

Please work to try to limit our street to one access point in the event a large neighborhood, Leigh Village, were to be built behind our neighborhood. Having 2 access points, at the East end and West ends would cause extra cross through traffic in our neighborhood and greatly diminish the safety of our neighborhood.

I also request that you design an appropriate buffer with trees and shrubs between nelson highway and NC 54 to limit air and noise pollution in the neighborhood.

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #3 on NC Highway 54

Thank you very much for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO is in agreement with many of your comments, particularly that landscaping/hardscaping should be a high priority to shield the neighborhoods from noise and visual pollution caused by the highway traffic and also that stormwater runoff should be carefully reviewed by the City of Durham and NCDOT and mitigation efforts be included in any future projects along the NC 54 corridor. The MPO has circulated your comments and conveyed the urgency of the stormwater runoff

issues to the appropriate representatives at the City of Durham and NCDOT.

The MPO encourages you to remain involved and engaged as the improvement projects to NC 54 move forward from long-range plans into more near-term planning, design, and public involvement phases. Your input and suggestions regarding cross through traffic in your neighborhood would be valuable input to share again during future phases of projects along NC 54.

Comment #4

Thank you for returning my call this afternoon. I am interested in commenting on transportation priorities regarding U-5774. However, first I would like to confirm what is entailed in the plan U-5774 C. This includes upgrades to NC 54 from Barbee Chapel Road to I-40. This section passes my neighborhood of Eastwood Park/Celeste Circle. I think you said that the upgrades were described in the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study Report.

What exactly do the upgrades in U-5774 C include? There were many transportation components in the Corridor Study Report. These included increasing the number of lanes from four to six, including superstreet turns, creating an intersection at Crossland Drive and NC 54, atrophy of the signalized intersection of Huntingridge Road with NC 54, and others. It is unclear what will be done at the Farrington/Celeste Circle intersection with NC 54 since the planned intersection in the Report is not funded.

In addition to the actual roadway improvements were recommendations for landscaping/hardscaping between NC 54 and the Service Road in Eastwood Park, and a pedestrian/bike facility along NC 54 which would include a boardwalk through the Corps of Engineers Land.

I would appreciate if you could fill me in on these details so that we can make informed comments to the MPO.

It is wonderful to see progress planned on dealing with the traffic and other issues on NC 54. We are in support of this project and have the following comments:

1) Storm water issues

a. Eastwood Park is already overloaded by storm water runoff that was diverted under NC 54 from the shopping center on the south side of NC54 between Farrington and Falconbridge roads. This water is overrunning our private ditch and flooding a number of homes on the south side of Celeste Circle. This storm water should be fun down between the East and west lanes of 54 to Little Creek and in no event can Eastwood Park sustain any further runoff from the widening of 54.

b. Eastwood Park is also overloaded by storm water runoff coming from the Farrington Road area north of 54. Developing the Farrington Road overpass must also consider this storm water runoff into the plan and ensure that additional runoff there is not diverted uphill from Eastwood Park.

2) Entrance and Egress for Eastwood Park, Chapel Creek and George King residents

a. Exiting from Eastwood Park and Chapel Creek onto NC 54 Eastbound during rush hour is currently only possible due to the stoplight at Huntingridge Road. When that stoplight is not functioning properly, it is impossible to safely turn left across traffic. If that intersection is changed, provisions need to be made for safe entrance and egress to Eastwood Park, at George King Road or Crossland Drive

b. The Intersection of Celeste Circle @ 54 crossing Nelson Highway is the primary entrance for most residents when traveling westbound on NC 54. Please leave that entrance in place.

i. Also, the 2 stop signs on Nelson Highway and the stop sign on Celeste indicate a 4 way stop, when it is actually only a 3 way stop. This causes confusion and is a huge potential for accidents as traffic turning into Celeste does not have a stop sign. Vehicles leaving the medical complex, traveling west on Nelson Highway don't realize they are pulling in front of traffic exiting 54 at a higher rate of speed.

c. Access to the planned Leigh Village will also require upgrades to the NC 54/Celeste Circle intersection and construction of an intersection between NC 54 and Crossland Drive. These upgraded and new intersections

are also called for in the Corridor Study Report and the Collector Street Plan. These upgraded intersections will be needed for two reasons. One reason is capacity. Increased capacity will be needed for the anticipated growth of Leigh Village, and because the planned improvements to NC 54 include atrophy of the NC 54/Farrington Road intersection (and replacing it with an overpass).

3) Noise and visual buffers

a. We strongly favor the installation of landscaping/hardscaping between the upgraded highway and our neighborhood. This would function as a barrier to visual and noise pollution, and a landscaping/hardscaping barrier is recommended in the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study Report. Noise from the highway is significant and will only increase over time.

4) NC 54 Bike and pedestrian traffic

a. We support a pedestrian/bike path along NC 54. The Corridor Study Report suggests that together with the upgrades to NC 54, such a path should be constructed on the northeast side of the highway (our side of NC54), and include a boardwalk-type structure traversing the Corps of Engineers wetlands. Non-vehicular travel along NC 54 in the project area is dangerous at present.

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #4 on NC Highway 54

Thank you very much for your thorough read of the FY2016-2025 TIP, the 2040 MTP, the NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study, and the Collector Street Plan, and for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO is in agreement that stormwater runoff should be carefully reviewed by the City of Durham and NCDOT and mitigation efforts be included in any future projects along the NC 54 corridor. The MPO has circulated your comments and conveyed the urgency of the stormwater runoff issues to the appropriate representatives at the City of Durham and NCDOT.

The MPO understands the access issues related to Eastwood Park, Chapel Creek George King, and Crossland Drive that you have described and has circulated these issues to NCDOT for their review and consideration for any future improvements along NC 54.

The MPO is in agreement that a pedestrian/bicycle path along NC 54 should be considered a high priority during the construction of improvements to NC 54.

Finally, the MPO encourages you to remain involved and engaged as the NC 54 projects move forward from long-range plans into more near-term planning, design, and public involvement phases. Your on-going engagement with NCDOT and the MPO, and your input during the planning and preliminary design phases will help keep the priority issues that you have mentioned on the forefront for these projects.

Comment #5

Are there any images/plans for the road widening project H090531-C / U-5324C? Will there be barriers built between this widened road and the Woodcroft subdivision?

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #5 on NC 54

Thank you very much for your review of the FY2016-2025 TIP and for the question that you have submitted. Just for reference, U-5324C recently received a new ID number, U-5774H. The MPO replied to your email to request clarification on the barriers that you asked about. At the time of the development of this appendix, no response had been received. This appendix will be updated if a response to the MPO's email is received prior to adoption of the FY2016-2025 MTIP.

Hillsborough Projects Comments

Comment #1

C-5184 - I am in great support of connecting the Riverwalk/Gold Park to Occoneechee Mountain State Park. Thanks to the group for making this a priority.

U-5549 - Downtown Access - The plan mentions removing on-the-street parking in downtown Hillsborough. I would hope that not all street parking would be removed. I believe that helps contribute to the small-town feel that is popular in Hillsborough.

U-5845 - Please include sidewalks and bike lanes (at least on one side of the road) from I-40 (Waterstone/Hospital) down to the Eno River during the S. Churton Street expansion. I have talked to MANY people in Hillsborough who would do that walk regularly (it's only about 2 miles) - my husband and I would do this as well. It would be a lovely way to get to downtown Hillsborough from the rapidly developing Waterstone/hospital area.

P-5701 - The railway station is very exciting!

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #1 on Hillsborough Projects

Thank you very much for your thorough read of the FY2016-2025 TIP and for the comments that you have submitted on these four specific projects. The MPO, local representatives, and elected local officials all collaborate to identify and prioritize projects for communities in our area and greatly appreciate the support and positive feedback that you have provided.

In regards to your comment on U-5549, the Town of Hillsborough has confirmed that not all on-street parking will be removed as part of this project.

In regards to you comment on U-5845, the MPO has circulated this request to NCDOT. The planning and design for this project are currently underway by NCDOT. The MPO encourages you to remain involved and engaged with local representatives, local elected officials, and

NCDOT during the planning process for this project. Your continued engagement will help emphasize the need for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along S. Churton Street between I-40 and the Eno River.

Riverwalk Trail, Hillsborough

Comment #1

To me it is a huge misappropriation of funds to use limited resources to extend Riverwalk from Gold Park to the bridge over the Eno (project # C-5184, Riverwalk Trail) when there is no safe pedestrian connection of Riverwalk to West Hillsborough. The people most endangered by the lack of pedestrian access are people pushing baby carriages. There are more of these all the time in West Hillsborough. A four bedroom house was recently built next to my house in West Hillsborough, and a family recently moved in less than a block away who often push their baby in a carriage. These people need a safe way to walk to Riverwalk more than hikers along the Mountain to the Sea Trail need an easier way to get to Riverwalk. My personal suggestion of the most appropriate use of funds at this time would be to purchase land along Eno Street that could provide pedestrian access between Collins Street and Nash Street. Other people may have other ideas about the best way to make the connection, but I think there is wide agreement that connecting Riverwalk to West Hillsborough for pedestrians is a more important priority than the connection between Gold park and the

Eno River bridge. I suggest that for now money not be spent on Riverwalk Trail, project number C5184, and that the funds be set aside so that more time can be given to formulate the best way to connect West Hillsborough to Riverwalk.

DCHC MPO Response to Comment #1 on Riverwalk Trail in Hillsborough

Thank you very much for your thorough read of the FY2016-2025 TIP and for the comments that you have submitted. The MPO is in agreement with the need for safe connections to the Riverwalk and to the entrance of Gold Park for Hillsborough residents. The need for safe connections to the Riverwalk Trail and Gold Park were discussed by the MPO Board during their August 12, 2015 meeting. Your input and suggestions are invaluable in helping to identify projects that are priorities to your community.

The MPO appreciates your engagement and encourages you to remain involved and engaged with local representatives, local elected officials, and the MPO in future planning processes. Your continued engagement will help the safe connections to the Riverwalk and Gold Park move forward as priority projects for the Hillsborough community.

Riverwalk Trail and Gold Park, Hillsborough

Comment #1

I feel that the safety of pedestrian traffic should be the highest priority among

improvements to Gold Park and the Riverwalk.

Gold Park and the connecting Riverwalk are a wonderful resource that is becoming observably more and more popular, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian mishap at the Gold Park entrance.

A simple *walking* field trip from the *west* by a few commissioners to the vehicle entrance of Gold Park will make it obvious that something needs to be done soon, before someone gets hurt.

There is a sidewalk the parallels the driveway into Gold Park that simply ends on Dimmock's Mill Road, with no connecting sidewalk. There is no safe way for pedestrians to enter or exit here without walking on the pavement of Dimmock's Mill, which is narrow and curvy, with vehicles whizzing around the blind turn.

On top of that, the Gold Park entrance is flanked by two serious physical hazards:

- 1) On the north - The narrow railroad overpass, both lanes of which are too narrow to safely accommodate both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 2) On the south - A deep creek culvert, right on the curve.

There is a scary sheer drop off of approximately 10 feet to the rocks below on each side of the road. There is absolutely no shoulder and no guard rail on the precipice. The edge of the road is the drop off. People walking here must walk on the road in the narrow curve to avoid the drop off.

I feel that there is a high probability that someone, likely a child, will plummet over the edge, whether from simple misstep or from trying to avoid careening traffic. I'm surprised that it hasn't happened already. (This is a particularly hazardous place for bicycles too.)

Please, please make the entrance of Gold Park safe for pedestrians and bicycles before tragedy makes it imperative.

*DCHC MPO Response to
Comment #1 on Riverwalk Trail and
Gold Park in Hillsborough*

Thank you very much for the in-depth comments that you have submitted. The detailed explanation of the safety risks associated with the entrance to Gold Park is extremely helpful to the MPO and to others who are not as intimately familiar with that particular location. The MPO is in agreement with the need for safe connections to the Riverwalk and to the entrance of Gold Park for Hillsborough residents.

The MPO appreciates your detailed comments and encourages you to remain involved and engaged in future planning processes. Your continued engagement with local officials and the MPO will help these priority projects move forward in the long-range planning process and ensure that the safety improvements that you carefully described are included during project scoping.