

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: **March 2, 2004**

TITLE: Review of Draft Regional Priority List for the 2006-2012 State Transportation Improvement Program

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___NO__X__
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Adopted Local Priority List C. Regional Priority List D. Local Priority Lists from Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Orange County	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is for the Board of Aldermen to review and comment on the draft regional priority list for the 2006-2012 State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A resolution has been prepared for the Board's adoption (Attachment A).

INFORMATION

The Transportation Improvement Program includes cost estimates and funding schedules for highway, bicycle, pedestrian, rail, public transit, and aviation projects over a seven year period. The Board of Transportation updates the State TIP every other year. The 2004-2010 TIP was adopted in June 2003, and the 2006-2012 is scheduled to be adopted in June 2005. The following list describes the steps for developing the Transportation Improvement Program (currently we are at step 2):

1. *Fall 2003* - The Town of Carrboro adopts a local project priority list, which is forwarded to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO). Carrboro adopted a local priority list on October 21, 2003 (Attachment B).
2. *Winter 2004* - Using the local priority lists, the DCHC MPO ranks the project based on a series of objective criteria and prepares a draft regional project priority list, which is released for public comment. Once comments have been received and any changes have been made to the draft list, the regional priorities are forwarded to the N.C. Department of Transportation and representatives from the DCHC MPO and NCDOT meet.
3. *Spring 2004* - The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) develops the draft statewide Transportation Improvement Program, which includes a draft Metropolitan TIP (MTIP) for the DCHC MPO area.

4. *Fall 2004* - Both NCDOT and the DCHC MPO hold public hearings and receive public comments on the draft TIP. The DCHC Transportation Advisory Committee will adopt its own version of the draft MTIP.
5. *Winter 2005* - Representatives from the DCHC TAC and NCDOT meet to reconcile differences between the DCHC draft MTIP and the NCDOT draft MTIP.
6. *Spring 2005* - The final MTIP is adopted by the DCHC TAC and the N.C. Board of Transportation.

PLACEMENT OF CARRBORO'S PROJECTS ON THE REGIONAL LIST

The Regional Priority List is enclosed as Attachment C. The projects on the regional list are divided into Tiers of project that received the same score on the priority list. The Tier number assigned to Carrboro projects is listed on the Carrboro Priority List (Attachment B).

In reviewing the priority list, please note that Orange County is in a different NCDOT highway division than Durham County or Chatham County. State funding formulas are based on highway divisions, so projects in Orange County do not directly compete with projects in Durham and Chatham counties for funding. The local priority lists for Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Orange County are enclosed as Attachment D.

RECOMMENDED COMMENTS

Town staff recommend that the Carrboro Board of Aldermen provide the following comments to the MPO on the draft regional priority list for the 2006-2012 Transportation Improvement Program:

1. Rearrange the Carrboro projects in the regional priority list as necessary to match the order in the local priority list.

Rationale: This rearrangement will allow Carrboro's projects on the regional list to be in the same priority order as they were on the local list. For instance, the regional list currently has the Old Fayetteville Road project (# 4 on the local list) ranked higher than Homestead Road and Seawell School Road (# 2 and 3 on the local list).

2. Divide the Estes Drive project into two phases. Phase 1 would be from Greensboro Street to Seawell School Road and Phase 2 would be from Seawell School Road to Airport Road.

Rationale: The recent Carolina North plans show the portion of Estes Drive between Seawell School and Airport roads being removed. If the Estes Drive project is divided into two phases, NCDOT may be willing to move forward on the section from Greensboro to Seawell while delaying action on the section east of Seawell School Road.

3. Add the Fixed Guideway Connection to Carolina North / Horace Williams Property (connection utilizing existing railroad right-of-way from University Power Plant to Carolina North) to Carrboro's priority list.

Rationale: The fixed guideway connection has received strong support from the Carrboro Horace Williams Advisory Committee.

4. Add the TTA Phase II project (UNC Hospitals to Duke Medical Center) to Carrboro's priority list.

Rationale: Though this project is not in Carrboro, it will provide an important link for Carrboro citizens to other parts of the region.

5. For all road projects, add to the project description that the project will include transit accommodations.

Rationale: This is to clarify that transit planning is an important part of all road projects in Carrboro.

6. Ensure that points have been assigned consistently to all projects on the regional list and ask the MPO to continue to refine the methodology for ranking projects on the regional list.

Rationale: The current ranking methodology has worked well but there are areas where improvement may be possible. For example, the current methodology does not work well for some types of projects, such as the Chapel Hill signal system.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Aldermen should review the regional priority list and adopt a resolution providing comments to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee. A resolution containing comments is enclosed as Attachment A.