

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2004

TITLE: Regional Transportation Alliance Resolutions

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ NO <u>X</u> ___
ATTACHMENTS A. Resolution on Toll Financing for the Triangle Parkway B. Resolution on I-40 HOV Lanes C. Resolution on the Triangle Mobility Compact D. Additional Information on the Triangle Parkway E. Brooking Institution on HOV and HOT Lanes	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

The Regional Transportation Alliance has submitted three resolutions to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for consideration. The TAC has requested that local governments review, comment on, and consider adopting the attached resolutions. The attached Resolution A would endorse the consideration of tolls to finance the construction of the Triangle Parkway. Resolution B supports the construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes along I-40 and the use of tolls as one method of financing the project. Resolution C would endorse the Triangle Mobility Compact.

INFORMATION

The Regional Transportation Alliance has been organized by the Greater Wake County Chamber of Commerce and other regional employers to promote transportation improvements within the Research Triangle Area. The Regional Transportation Strategy group has been organized by the Regional Transportation Alliance to bring together local government officials and regional business leaders to discuss transportation issues. The Strategy group includes representatives from the Triangle Regions Chambers of Commerce, major regional employers, the chairs of Wake, Durham and Orange County and the Mayors of Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Cary.

Over the past several months the Transportation Strategy group has been discussing options for increasing funding for transportation projects in the three county region. In May 2004, the Study submitted three resolutions to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee for consideration: support for the use of tolls to construct the Triangle Parkway; consideration of toll financing for the implementation of high occupancy vehicle lanes along I-40 and; support for the identification and implementation of local funding options for transportation project (Attachments A, B, and C).

On May 12, 2004, the Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed resolutions and asked that action be deferred until local jurisdictions had an opportunity for review and comment.

Resolution A: Triangle Parkway Toll Facility

Adoption of Resolution A would support the consideration of toll financing to construct the Triangle Parkway, which would extend the existing Durham Freeway (NC 147) south from I-40 to I-540 (see Attachment D).

The proposed resolution supports the use of tolls to finance the construction of the extension of NC 147. If constructed as a toll facility, alternative routes, such as NC 55, would provide commuters with choices other than using the toll facility. The North Carolina Turnpike Authority was created by the North Carolina legislature to evaluate proposed transportation projects using tolls for financing and to select up to four projects for implementation.

The Regional Transportation Strategy group has presented its proposal for considering tolls to finance the construction of the Triangle Parkway to the North Carolina Turnpike Authority. It is uncertain when the Authority will select possible projects for implementation.

Resolution B: I-40 High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

Adoption of Resolution B would support the construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes along I-40 between Chapel Hill and Raleigh and proposes that the project consider the use of free flow electronic tolls for financing. The construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes along I-40 in Orange and Durham counties is included in the adopted 2025 Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Regional Transportation Plan.

High occupancy lanes along I-40 have also been identified in the NC 54/I-40 Transit Study as a critical component in providing regional transit service between Carrboro, Chapel Hill, southern Durham County, and the Research Triangle Park/RDU Airport. This transit link is also included in the approved 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. While the Resolution supports the implementation of high occupancy vehicle lanes from Orange County into Wake County it also identifies the western portion of the I-40 corridor, in Durham and Orange County, as a higher priority. This is consistent with the adopted 2025 Plan.

The attached resolution also supports the implementation of high occupancy vehicle lanes with the use of electronic tolling to finance the project. The 2025 Regional Plan identifies the need for alternative means to finance the construction of high occupancy vehicles lanes and other regional transportation improvements. One possible financing method would be to implement a high occupancy toll program, which would allow single occupant vehicles to use the high occupancy express lanes during specific time period if they pay a toll. The toll would be collected using electronic methods, such as transponders, which would allow the monitoring of use of the express lanes by time of day and allow for more efficient billing. This electronic toll collection would avoid much of the delay associated with more traditional toll collections procedures and

would not inconvenience those high occupancy vehicles using the express lanes. The tolls would be used to offset construction costs and ongoing maintenance expenses.

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization is working with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop an action plan for constructing high occupancy vehicle lanes along I-40. Part of that action plan will be the development of a strategy to finance the project. Both Metropolitan Planning Organizations will also be reviewing proposals to construct the I-40 high occupancy vehicles lanes and associated financing options in the development and approval of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.

Resolution C: Triangle Mobility Compact

Adoption of Resolution C would endorse the Triangle Mobility Compact, and commit the Town to work with other local governments, Triangle business and community organizations to “encourage, identify and implement the local revenue sources needed to help the Triangle and other metropolitan regions in North Carolina gain more control over our regional mobility future.”

The 2025 Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Regional Transportation Plan includes an assumption that new revenue sources would need to be made available to provide funding for transportation improvements, particularly public transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects. Resolution C supports the proposal to allow local areas within North Carolina to implement revenue options to supplement federal and State transportation revenues. The Regional Transportation Alliance has been working to prepare legislation for consideration by the North Carolina General Assembly that would provide local areas with the option to approve new tax sources to provide funding for transportation improvements. The Alliance anticipates submitting draft legislation to the General Assembly in 2005.

The North Carolina Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission for Urban Mobility will resume meetings after the close of the current 2004 General Assembly short session. At that time it is anticipated that the Commission will consider the issue of financing the transportation needs of North Carolina urban areas. Funding sources that have been proposed include a local option gasoline tax of 5 percent and an additional motor vehicle fee of \$20. Note that Mecklenburg County currently has an additional half-cent sales tax, approved by a voter referendum in 1998, which generates additional funding dedicated to transit and highway improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

The resolutions present options for increasing funding for transportation projects in Wake, Durham, and Orange counties.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board review, comment, and consider adopting the attached resolutions.

Note: Much of the information in this abstract is taken from a similar report to the Chapel Hill Town Council in June.