

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(4)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2005

TITLE: Review and Comment on Draft 2007-2013 State Transportation Improvement Program

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___NO__X__
ATTACHMENTS: A. 2007-2013 STIP Resolution B. Estes Drive Resolution C. Adopted 2007-2013 STIP Local Priority List D. Estes Drive Memorandum E. Smith Level Road Letter F. Signal System Information G. Draft 2007-2013 Regional STIP	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 2007-2013 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Two resolutions have been prepared for the Board's consideration (Attachments A and B).

INFORMATION

The STIP includes cost estimates and funding schedules for highway, bicycle, pedestrian, rail, public transit, and aviation projects over a seven year period. The STIP is typically updated every two years, but this new draft was prepared one year after the 2006-2012 STIP was finalized in order to move the STIP cycle to odd-numbered years. The next STIP cycle will be for years 2009-2015.

The N.C. Board of Transportation released the draft 2007-2013 STIP on September 11, 2006. The estimated cost for the projects in the STIP is \$12.2 billion. The Board of Transportation is scheduled to adopt the final 2007-2013 STIP in January 2007. Attachment G is the draft STIP for the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO Area.

PROCESS

The process for developing the Transportation Improvement Program is as follows:

1. The Town of Carrboro adopts a local project priority list (Attachment C), which is forwarded to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO).
2. Using the local priority lists, the DCHC MPO releases a regional project priority list, which is forwarded to the N.C. Department of Transportation.

3. 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. 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. Representatives from the DCHC MPO and NCDOT meet to reconcile differences between the DCHC draft MTIP and the NCDOT draft MTIP.
6. The final MTIP is adopted by the DCHC TAC and the N.C. Board of Transportation.

WHAT'S IN THE DRAFT TIP FOR CARRBORO

This table compares the status of Carrboro projects in the FY 2006-2012 TIP with the FY 2007-2013 TIP. This table is included in order to compare the progress of projects in Carrboro from the current TIP to the proposed draft TIP. This table compares the total estimated cost, date of right-of-way acquisition, and construction date for Carrboro Projects:

Project Number	Project Name	Total Estimated Cost		Right-of-Way		Construction	
		FY 2006-2012	FY 2007-2013	FY 2006-2012	FY 2007-2013	FY 2006-2012	FY 2007-2013
E-4008	Roberson Place Bike Path	\$157 K	\$268 K	In Progress	In Progress	In Progress	In Progress
E-4545	Old Fay Rd Sidewalk	\$73 K	\$100 K	N/A	N/A	2005	2007
E-4710	Seawell Sch Rd Bike Lanes	\$650 K	\$650 K	N/A	N/A	2007	2007
E-4780	Jones Ferry Road Sidewalk	\$24 K	\$24 K	N/A	N/A	2005	2007
E-4781	Carr Court Sidewalks	\$98 K	\$98 K	N/A	N/A	2005	2007
E-4942	Main Street Sidewalk	\$7 K	\$7 K	N/A	N/A	2006	In Progress
U-2803	Smith Level Rd Improvements	\$5.175 M	\$6.725 M	2007	2010	2010	2012
U-2805	Homestead Rd Improvements	\$10.6 M	\$10.6 M	Not Funded	Not Funded	Not Funded	Not Funded
U-2909	Estes Dr. Improvements	\$7.6 M	\$7.6 M	Not Funded	Not Funded	Not Funded	Not Funded
U-3100B	Old Fay Rd Improvements	\$2.6 M	\$1.8 M	2012	2012	Not Funded	Not Funded
U-4704	Signal System Improvements	\$4.6 M	\$4.6 M	N/A	N/A	Not Funded	2011
U-4449	Real-Time Transit Information System	\$1.248 M	\$1.248 M	N/A	N/A	In Progress	In Progress
C-4931	Shared Ride Feeder Service	N/A	\$ 54 K	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Z-4007B	Brewer Lane Railroad Crossing Signal	\$95 K	\$95 K	N/A	N/A	N/A	In Progress

OBSERVATIONS

Estes Drive.

There is still no funding for the Town's perennial high priority project, Estes Drive. In 2004 and again in 2006, both the Town and the MPO requested that this project be constructed in two phases, with Phase 1 being from Greensboro to Seawell School Road. Phase 2 would be from Seawell School Road to NC 86 (Martin Luther King Boulevard) and would be postponed until plans for Carolina North are more firm (a previous Carolina North plan called for the section of Estes Drive east of Seawell to be relocated). This request is not reflected in the TIP. Additional background information on Estes Drive is provided by Attachment D.

In 2005, bike lanes were constructed on a portion of Estes Drive in Chapel Hill between Seawell School Road and Martin Luther King Blvd as a "Moving Ahead" project funded and managed by NCDOT. This project has been positively received and Carrboro Town staff have received numerous requests that the bike lanes be extended to Greensboro Street. However, the extension of bike lanes and sidewalks to Greensboro Street would be very expensive, in part due to the amount of right-of-way that would need to be acquired in some sections.

Carrboro and NCDOT staff have discussed whether NCDOT could fund bike lanes on Estes Drive between the Town limits and Hillcrest Street. On this section of Estes it appears that bike lanes (as well as sidewalks) could be constructed within the existing right-of-way. The Town of Carrboro is planning to build a sidewalk using bond funds on the south side of Estes Drive from Greensboro Street to the railroad tracks. If NCDOT is able to fund bike lanes, this would need to be coordinated with the sidewalk. Town staff has prepared a resolution for the Board's consideration requesting funding for bike lanes on Estes Drive between Hillcrest Street and the Town limits (Attachment B).

Off-Road Path from Estes Drive to Williams Street

In addition to bike lanes, in order to complete a bicycle connection between Estes Drive and Greensboro Street, an off-road path could be built connecting Williams Street to Estes Drive along an OWASA sewer easement. Participants in the Earth Action Fest on April 30, 2006 advocated a plan for a trail in this location, and this trail was also referenced in the Adams Tract Management Plan (though the trail was not formally a part of that plan).

The Town has not prepared a feasibility study or cost estimate for an off-road path between Estes Drive and Williams Street. It appears that the Town already owns the property on which a path could be built. The construction of a path would need to be coordinated with OWASA.

In order to fund this project, the Town could apply for future funding from the NCDOT bicycle program, an NCDOT enhancement grant, or MPO STP-DA funds. To fund the program more immediately, the Town could request that the needed funds be transferred from the Seawell School Road Bicycle Improvement Project (E-4710). Since the Seawell School Road project is partially in Chapel Hill, the transfer of funds would need to be supported by the Town of Chapel Hill as well.

Smith Level Road

In the draft STIP, right-of-way acquisition for Smith Level Road has moved from 2007 to 2010, with construction moving from 2010 to 2012. With Carrboro High School opening in August 2007, Town staff recommends that the Board request that the dates for right-of-way and construction not be changed in the STIP.

Also note that in early August, the Town Manager sent a letter to NCDOT's Director of Preconstruction expressing concern that little progress is being made and requesting assistance in moving the project forward (Attachment E). The Town has not received a response.

Old Fayetteville Road

In order to expedite the completion of adding bike lanes and sidewalks to Old Fayetteville Road between McDougle schools and NC 54, NCDOT has proposed to classify the project as a bicycle-pedestrian project rather than a highway project. This would simplify the environmental documentation for the project and the design and management of the project would be handled by the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Division. There has been discussion of requiring that the project be funded from STP-DA, enhancement, or CMAQ funds if the project is classified as a bicycle-pedestrian project, but Town staff recommends that the state Highway Fund remain as the funding source for the project.

Signal System

The STIP contains \$4.6 million in funding for a new signal system to serve Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Chapel Hill currently maintains the signals in Carrboro. The Town of Chapel Hill believes there is an urgent need to upgrade the signal system, as discussed in Attachment F. The draft STIP proposes that this project be funded in 2011.

Project Descriptions

The local priority list adopted by the Board of Aldermen on March 1, 2005 contained project descriptions to clarify that the Town desires bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit accommodations on projects. The descriptions in the STIP typically do not include the description requested by the Town. The proposed resolution requests that the descriptions be changed.

Also note that the Roberson Place Bikepath and Real-time Transit Information System are included in the draft STIP. Since these projects will be completed prior to January, it is likely they will be removed from the adopted STIP.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Aldermen should review the draft TIP and adopt a resolution providing comments to the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO Transportation Advisory Committee. Town staff has included several suggested comments in the attached resolution (Attachment A). The Board may also wish to adopt a resolution requesting funding for Estes Drive bike lanes (Attachment B).