

# BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(4)

## AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: October 4, 2011

**TITLE: 2016-2020 Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable Call for Projects and 2016-2017 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program**

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Planning	<b>PUBLIC HEARING:</b> YES ___ NO <u>X</u> ___
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> A. Resolution B. DCHC-MPO Policy Framework for Federal Funds C. MPO TCC proposed funding schedule for CMAQ 2016-2017 projects	<b>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:</b> Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329

### PURPOSE

The Board of Aldermen is asked to receive an update on federal Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable (STP-DA) funding for the 2016-2020 time period and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for the 2016-2017 time period. The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO) is preparing to issue a 2016-2020 STP-DA Call for Projects, and it is scheduled to submit CMAQ applications to NCDOT at the end of October.

### INFORMATION

#### **2016-2020 STP-DA Call for Projects**

##### *Background*

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) is a federal transportation funding program that provides flexible funding to states for highway, bridge, transit capital, intercity mass transportation, bicycle and pedestrian projects, among other project types. The STP is authorized by federal transportation bills, the most recent of which was SAFETEA-LU in 2005, which has been extended several times by Congress since 2009. States are required to make some of these funds available to be obligated directly by urbanized areas over 200,000 in population. These “direct attributable” (DA) funds are allocated by MPOs to member jurisdictions. DCHC-MPO undertakes this process by occasionally issuing calls for projects.

##### *Time period*

The MPO has recently indicated that it will soon issue a call for projects for the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016-2020 time period, to correspond with the development of the 2014-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). There is not yet a definitive deadline for when

jurisdictions should submit projects; however, it is recommended that the Town begin the process now to be prepared when the deadline is established.

### *Types of projects*

DCHC-MPO adopted policy limits STP-DA funding to bicycle, pedestrian, transit, transportation demand management (TDM), intelligent transportation systems (ITS), and planning. Triangle-area transit agencies participate in calls for projects. Triangle J Council of Governments administers the Triangle's TDM program, in coordination with local jurisdictions. The TDM program encourages Triangle residents to travel by means other than a single-occupancy motor vehicle. It has contributed to alternative transportation encouragement activities in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area.

In addition, the following should be noted:

- STP funding can only be used for projects that have a transportation purpose.
- Federal transportation funding is better described as “contract authority” and not a grant. After funding authorization has been obtained, the managing agency or jurisdiction spends money on the project and then is reimbursed.
- A minimum of at least a 20 percent *non-federal* match is required for most federal-aid transportation projects. Federal law allows some safety projects<sup>1</sup> to be 100 percent federally reimbursable. Some of these types of projects are highway-related and thus are not included in MPO adopted policy for STP-DA eligibility. Non-federal matches can come from local jurisdiction revenues, NCDOT, and in some cases third party in-kind contributions.

### *Funding levels*

The MPO projects that approximately \$5 million per year of STP-DA contract authority will be apportioned between FFY 2016-2020. After accounting for the federal obligation limitation<sup>2</sup>, the total is about \$4.5 million per year. This projection could change based on Congressional changes in transportation legislation.

The MPO has distributed this apportionment over six categories:

- Annual reserve
- Staff and routine planning
- Extra planning
- Transit
- Regional bicycle and pedestrian
- Local discretionary

Planning funds contribute towards MPO staff administrative costs as well as special regional planning projects. The annual reserve has been used for project cost overruns; however, the

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<sup>1</sup> 23 USC 120(c): “traffic control signalization, traffic circles (also known as "roundabouts"), safety rest areas, pavement marking, commuter carpooling and vanpooling, rail-highway crossing closure, or installation of traffic signs, traffic lights, guardrails, impact attenuators, concrete barrier endtreatments, breakaway utility poles, or priority control systems for emergency vehicles or transit vehicles at signalized intersections.”

<sup>2</sup> A ceiling on the amount of federal-aid transportation funding that can be spent in any fiscal year.

MPO has recently discussed eliminating this category because it represents unobligated funding that could be subject to Congressional rescissions. Funding for these categories is approved yearly through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) process and thus they are not part of the call for projects process described here.

Transit funding is currently split between the MPO’s two transit agencies – Chapel Hill Transit and Durham Area Transit Authority. Regional bicycle and pedestrian funds are reserved for bike-ped projects that span multiple jurisdictions or have a regional connectivity benefit.

The local discretionary category is distributed to MPO jurisdictions (Durham, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough) proportionate to population, with each jurisdiction guaranteed a \$500,000 minimum over a seven-year period. Carrboro comprises 5 percent of the MPO municipal population and 6 percent of the MPO’s metropolitan area boundary. Depending on which denominator is used and whether the \$500,000 minimum stays the same or is changed, Carrboro’s total local discretionary suballocation for FFY 2016-2020 is expected to be between \$465,000 and \$891,000.

MPO policy (*Attachment B*) states that the transit, regional bicycle and pedestrian, and local discretionary allocations are approved bi-annually by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) of the MPO, taking into consideration the recommendation of the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC).

*Carrboro STP-DA Projects*

The table below shows the past, present, and future Carrboro STP-DA projects. The middle columns represent the funding allocated through the STP-DA process to each project.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>Non-federal</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Completion year (actual or exp.)</b>
PTA / Shetley Bike Paths	\$40,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	~1996
Downtown Circulation Study	\$40,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	2005
Hanna Street sidewalk	\$55,564	\$13,891	\$69,455	2006
Bolin Forest Drive sidewalk	\$15,960	\$3,990	\$19,950	2006
Roberson Place Bike Path	\$134,956	\$33,739	\$168,695	2007
Bolin Creek Greenway Concept Plan	\$56,000	\$14,000	\$70,000	2010
Morgan Creek Greenway Concept Plan (including connector path study)	\$44,000	\$11,000	\$55,000	2010
Wilson Park Multi-use Path	\$168,684	\$42,171	\$210,855	2012
Bolin Creek Greenway – Phase 1B (Homestead-Chapel Hill H.S. Multi-use Path)	\$590,000	\$147,500	\$737,500	2013
Rogers Road sidewalk	\$428,960	\$107,240	\$536,200	2013
Morgan Creek Greenway – Phases 1 and 2	\$600,000	\$120,000	\$720,000	2013
Jones Creek Greenway	\$214,000	???	\$214,000	???
Bike Loop Detectors	\$30,000	\$7,500	\$37,500	2012
S. Greensboro Sidewalk	\$46,640	???	\$46,640	???
Bel Arbor-Plantation Acres Multi-use Path	\$67,000	???	\$67,000	???
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,531,764</b>	<b>\$521,031</b>	<b>\$3,052,795</b>	

## CMAQ 2016-2017 program of projects

### *Background*

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program is a federal transportation funding program created by Congress in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The program supports transportation investments that reduce congestion and improve air quality in order to meet national air quality standards. A more thorough background on the program can be found here: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq). A background on how CMAQ funds are administered in North Carolina is included in the following PDF: [http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/PDF/AQ\\_NCDOT\\_CMAQ\\_Process\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/PDF/AQ_NCDOT_CMAQ_Process_2011.pdf).

### *Carrboro projects*

The deadline for submitting applications for CMAQ projects to the MPO was August 17. Therefore, there was not an opportunity for Board review prior to submittal, and staff based project applications on past Board actions and approved plans.

Two applications were submitted, as described in the table below. The projects have already been evaluated based on agreed-upon criteria by the MPO, including emissions benefits. The table shows the ranking and funding status given to each.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Adopted plans</b>	<b>MPO rank (out of 9)</b>	<b>Funding status</b>	<b>FY</b>
Downtown Multi-use Path	Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan Possible connection to Campus-to-Campus Bike Connector, Route A	4 <sup>th</sup>	Federal - \$128,409 (80%) Non-federal - \$32,102 (20%)	2017
Carrboro High School Multi-use Path	Morgan Creek Greenway Conceptual Master Plan (Phase 4)	9 <sup>th</sup>	Currently unfunded	-

The group of projects to be submitted to NCDOT is scheduled to be presented for review by the TAC on October 12, in order to meet NCDOT's October 31 deadline for submitting projects. There is a minimum project cost threshold of \$100,000.

### **FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT**

No fiscal or staff impacts accrue from receiving the update. An estimated 25 hours of staff time will be necessary to facilitate the STP-DA project selection process.

As discussed above, the STP-DA funding category has been an important source of funds for Carrboro transportation projects since the 1990s.

The STP-DA grant awards generally require a non-federal match equivalent to at least 20 percent of the total grant amount (except for project types discussed above). For fiscal years 2016-2020 the estimated allocation of STP-DA funds for the Town is between \$465,000 and \$891,000, which would require matching funds of \$93,000 to \$178,200.

The grant funds under CMAQ if made available in FY 2016 would total \$812,164 and require matching funds of \$203,041.

Since STP-DA funding is allocated directly to jurisdictions through MPOs and NCDOT, funded projects are locally administered. Given local administrative responsibilities, staff believe that larger capital projects will be the most cost-effective. The required administrative costs related to smaller capital projects (e.g. minor safety upgrades at a single intersection, pavement marking or signage upgrades, short sidewalk or bike facility segments, etc.) may eclipse the total amount of federal-aid funding. In the past, some jurisdictions have created a “catch-all” category to lump together several smaller projects in order to reduce marginal administrative costs. However, a cost-benefit consideration should still be applied to these catch-all projects.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board of Aldermen consider the draft resolution in *Attachment A*.