

# DURHAM • CHAPEL HILL • CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

101 City Hall Plaza • Durham, NC 27701 • Phone (919) 560-4366 • dchcmpo.org



**February 9, 2022**

TO: DCHC MPO Board  
FROM : DCHC MPO Staff  
SUBJECT: FY23 Call for Projects Submission Overview, Scoring, and Funding Recommendations

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## **Executive Summary**

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) invited member agencies to submit applications for federal funding from the Regional Flexible Funding (RFF) and local discretionary programs in November 2021. Funding applications were due on December 10, 2021.

The RFF pool for FY23 consists of three funding sources that come directly to the DCHC MPO: Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (STBGDA), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives Program Direct Attributable (TAPDA). The call for projects that was conducted by MPO staff is consistent with federal requirements for CMAQ and TAPDA funds, and can be applied to all three funding sources.

MPO staff recommends funding six projects or programs through this call. Three are existing projects that requested additional or continuing funding:

- Fordham Boulevard Sidepath (Town of Chapel Hill)
- South Greensboro Street Sidewalk (Town of Carrboro)
- Transportation Demand Management Program (TJCOG)

In addition, MPO staff recommend funding in full three new projects:

- Horton Road Sidewalk (City of Durham)
- NC 54-Falconbridge Transit Access (GoTriangle)
- Morgan Creek Greenway (Town of Chapel Hill)

At its January 26, 2022 meeting, the DCHC MPO Technical Committee (TC) recommended that the Board release the staff recommended project list for public comment on a 24-1 vote.

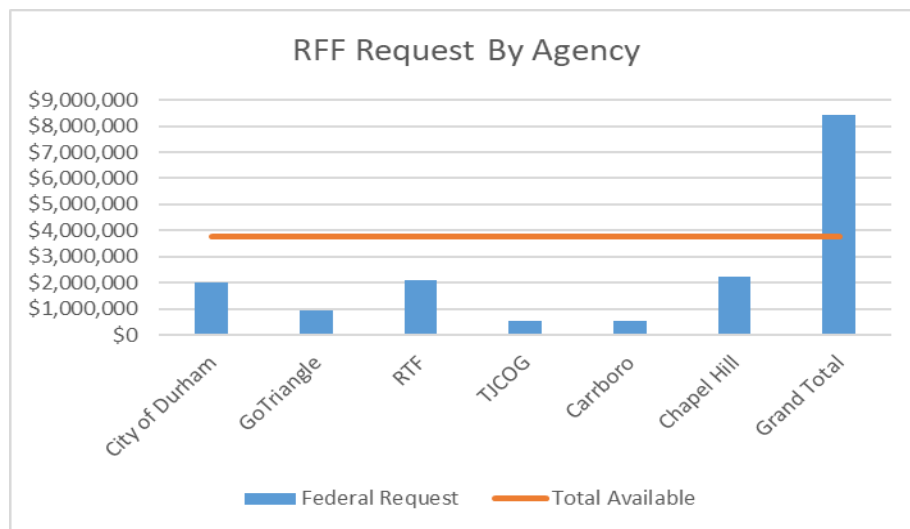
## **Background**

In early 2021, as a result of concerns about the FY22 Call for Projects, the DCHC MPO Board directed MPO staff to develop a more definitive method for evaluating projects for future calls. Using guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), after researching best practices from other MPOs, and in consultation with local agency staff, the MPO developed the Regional Flexible Funding (RFF) program to distribute funding from three sources that come directly to the MPO: Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (STBGDA), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives Program

Direct Attributable (TAPDA). As part of an update to the MPO's Federal Funding Policy, the RFF program was adopted by the DCHC MPO Board on November 10, 2021.

On November 15, 2021, the DCHC MPO announced its FY23 Call for Projects, with applications due by December 10, 2021. Six agencies submitted a total of ten projects for consideration for Regional Flexible Funding (RFF), and one agency submitted a request for local discretionary funding. Of the RFF requests, there were two existing projects, seven new projects, and one ongoing program, the Triangle J Council of Government (TJCOG) Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program.

Agency	Funding Request Type	Project	STIP #	Phase(s) Requested	Phase Year	Federal	Local	Total
City of Durham	RFF_New	Horton Road Sidewalk	N/A	PE, CON	FY23-25	\$964,534	\$241,133	\$1,205,667
City of Durham	RFF_New	University Drive Bike-Ped	N/A	PE, CON	FY23-25	\$1,051,945	\$262,986	\$1,314,931
GoTriangle	RFF_New	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	N/A	CON	FY23	\$930,320	\$232,580	\$1,162,900
Research Triangle Foundation	RFF_New	Burdens Creek Greenway	N/A	PE, CON	FY23-24	\$1,385,419	\$346,355	\$1,731,774
Research Triangle Foundation	RFF_New	Davis Drive Modernization	N/A	PE, CON	FY23-24	\$717,960	\$179,490	\$897,450
Town of Carrboro	Local Discretionary	S. Greensboro St Sidewalk	C-5650	PE, ROW, CON	FY22-24	\$380,800	\$95,200	\$476,000
Town of Carrboro	RFF_Existing	S. Greensboro St Sidewalk	C-5650	PE, ROW, CON	FY22-24	\$560,000	\$140,000	\$700,000
Town of Chapel Hill	RFF_Existing	Fordham Blvd Sidepath	EB-5721	CON	FY22-24	\$160,000	\$40,000	\$200,000
Town of Chapel Hill	RFF_New	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	N/A	CON	FY23	\$796,000	\$199,000	\$995,000
Town of Chapel Hill	RFF_New	Morgan Creek Greenway	N/A	ROW, CON	FY23-24	\$1,270,000	\$1,100,000	\$2,370,000
TJCOG	RFF_Existing	Triangle TDM		Program	FY23	\$568,065	\$142,016	\$710,081
						<b>\$8,785,043</b>	<b>\$2,978,760</b>	<b>\$11,763,803</b>



All project submittals aim to improve safe bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access and infrastructure, and therefore align with the goals and objectives of the proposed 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

### **Local Discretionary Funding**

Local discretionary funding is comprised of Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (STBGDA) funds that remain after the MPO's member agencies have made their annual Unified Planning Work Program

(UPWP) requests. STBGDA provides flexible funding that communities can use to improve or construct roadways, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and to implement transit capital projects.

Agencies will continue to receive local discretionary funding through FY24. All local discretionary funds must be obligated by September 30, 2026. After this date, unobligated local discretionary funds will be added to the RFF pool.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>FY23 Local Discretionary<sup>1</sup></b>
Chatham County	\$43,687
City of Durham	\$350,974
Durham County	\$0
Orange County	\$105,156
Town of Carrboro	\$634,896
Town of Chapel Hill	\$252,132
Town of Hillsborough	\$89,873

#### Local Discretionary Request and Recommendation

The Town of Carrboro was the only agency that requested local discretionary funding. Carrboro requested \$380,000 in local discretionary funds for its existing South Greensboro Street Sidewalk project. LPA staff is recommending that Carrboro receive its local discretionary request as Carrboro has the funds available, South Greensboro Street Sidewalk remains a high priority for the town, and the town will be able to provide local matching funds of \$95,200 from Orange Transit Tax funds.

#### Regional Flexible Funding

The RFF pool consists of Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (STBGDA), and Transportation Alternatives Program Direct Attributable (TAPDA) funding. For CMAQ and STBGDA, the table below shows the available funding for FY23 once formula funding had been taken into account, per the current Federal Funding Policy. The TAPDA funds represent FY22 and FY23 dollars, as no call for projects for TAPDA funds was previously conducted for FY22.

<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Amount</b>
CMAQ	\$2,194,011
STBGDA	\$773,230
TAPDA	\$806,568
<b>Total (RFF)</b>	<b>\$3,773,809</b>

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted for FY23 UPWP requests.

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MPO staff recommends that the following projects receive RFF based on the results of the scoring rubric; the MPO's policy goals related to Vision Zero, zero disparities, and zero emissions; and local priorities.

### Existing Projects

Two existing projects were submitted for RFF. These projects had similar scores using the existing project scoring rubric. Because of the availability of STBGDA funds from previous years that were not programmed, MPO staff is recommending that both projects receive their funding requests, a total of \$720,000. The use of these previously unprogrammed funds will allow for more funding than was originally expected to be available for the FY23 RFF.

Agency	Project	STIP #	Phase Requested	Phase Score	Federal	Local	Total	Original Project Cost	Current Project Cost	Difference	% Increase over Original Budget	% Increase Score	Previously Received Shortfall Funds	Previously Received Shortfall Score	Total
Town of Carrboro	S. Greensboro St Sidewalk	C-5650	PE, ROW, CON	1	\$560,000	\$140,000	\$700,000	\$1,442,500	\$1,780,836	\$338,336	23%	3	0	3	7
Town of Chapel Hill	Fordham Blvd Sidepath	EB-5721	CON	3	\$160,000	\$40,000	\$200,000	\$969,000	\$1,481,500	\$512,500	53%	2	1	3	8

### Transportation Demand Management and New Regional Flexible Funding Projects

#### Triangle Transportation Demand Management Funding Recommendation

The TJCOG TDM program has requested \$568,065 in funding from the RFF program. Because TDM is a program and not a capital project, it is not scored using the rubrics in the Federal Funding Policy (though per NCDOT guidelines the TDM program must be rated against other projects for emissions in order to receive CMAQ funds). Rather, the Federal Funding Policy identifies TDM as a funding priority for RFF, and for CMAQ funding specifically. According to the policy:

*TDM offers high air quality benefits and competes favorably for CMAQ funding. TDM has also been identified as a joint policy priority by the DCHC and CAMPO boards. CMAQ funds will be used for DCHC MPO's share of the TDM program.*

Given that TJCOG's request is within three percent of the previous year's request, LPA staff is recommending that the TDM program receive its request of \$568,065 using FY23 CMAQ funds.<sup>2</sup> TJCOG will provide a match of \$142,016 non-federal dollars for these funds.

TJCOG will submit an application to NCDOT for CMAQ funds. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) makes all final funding decision related to CMAQ funding.

<sup>2</sup> A TDM funding request that exceeds three percent of the previous year's request requires detailed justification to the Technical Committee and the MPO Board.

### New Projects Funding Recommendation

LPA staff recommends that the three projects that received the highest score using the new project scoring rubric also receive their funding requests.

Agency	Project	Phase Requested	Phase Year	Federal	Local	Total
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	PE, CON	FY23-25	\$964,534	\$241,133	\$1,205,667
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	CON	FY23	\$930,320	\$232,580	\$1,162,900
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	ROW, CON	FY23-24	\$1,270,000	\$1,100,000	\$2,370,000
TJCOG	Triangle TDM	Program	FY23	\$568,065	\$142,016	\$710,081
				<b>\$3,732,919</b>	<b>\$1,715,729</b>	<b>\$5,448,648</b>

The remaining \$40,890 of RFF was not sufficient to partially fund a project and will be returned to the RFF pool for FY24.

### Selection Criteria

#### **Connectivity**

All projects met the criteria laid out in the rubric, and scored 10 points in this category.

#### **Access to Transit**

All projects improved access to transit. Six of seven projects had a transit stop directly on the project corridor and received 10 points. One project, Research Triangle Foundation's Davis Drive Modernization, had a transit stop approximately .25 miles away, and therefore scored 8 out of 10 points following the guidance laid out in the rubric.

#### **Population and Employment Density**

MPO modeling staff determined the population and employment density within a half mile buffer of each project. Per the previous direction of the Technical Committee, the population and employment of each jurisdiction were used to normalize density scores.

Agency	Project	Population	Employment	Area (Square Miles)	Score
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	3171	2710	115	8
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	3326	5434	115	10
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	1427	2732	115	6
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	110	2320	2	7
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	0	5002	2	3
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	1804	518	22	2
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	4419	1514	22	5

### Project Phase

Projects that have advanced further along in their development phase are prioritized on this criterion. Points were assigned based on the rubric:

Construction with partial funding = 30

Construction phase with no funding = 25

Right-of-Way = 20

Design = 15

Area Planning or Feasibility Study = 10

Agency	Project	Phase	Project Phase
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	PE, CON	15
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	PE, CON	15
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	CON	30
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	PE, CON	15
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	PE, CON	15
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	CON	25
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	ROW, CON	20

### Priority Points

Agencies were given 15 points to assign to their projects. An individual project could not receive more than 10 priority points. Priority points allow applicants to convey which projects are most important to their agency, and

are not intended to allow agencies to ensure specific funding outcomes. As such, agencies received preliminary scores for their projects and not scores for all projects before they were asked to assign priority points.

Agency	Project	Priority Points
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	10
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	5
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	10
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	10
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	5
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	5
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	10

### Environmental Justice and Equity

Projects received points based on whether they were located in overlapping communities of concern as identified in the most recent DCHC MPO Environmental Justice Report, and the number of overlaps in each community of concern. At least 60 percent of the project needed to be in a community of concern to receive these points. In cases where the project was in multiple overlapping communities of concern, the overlapping community of concern within the majority of the project was used.

Agency	Project	Number of Overlaps	Score
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	5	15
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	5	15
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access <sup>3</sup>	2	6
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	0	3
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	0	3
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	2	6
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	3	9

### Safety

MPO modeling staff used a quarter mile buffer for each project and used 2015-2019 NCDOT collision data to determine the number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. Alternate corridors were used for greenway projects.

<sup>3</sup> For transit projects, demographic data for the route(s) that serve the project location are used in place of demographic data for a specific geographic area.

The number of crashes were normalized to vehicle miles traveled. Per the RFF scoring rubric, scores are relative and the points awarded accordingly.

Agency	Project	Total KAB Injuries	VTM	Scores
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	16	20670	15
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	2	48620	4
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	2	36000	8
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	0	6450	0
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	0	15105	0
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	0	4536	0
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	6	22780	12

### Emissions/VTM Reduction

MPO modeling staff calculated the emissions reduction benefit for each project using the methods normally used for CMAQ calculations. Projects received a variable score from 0-15 based on emission calculations. The highest scoring projects selected to receive funding, the Triangle Transportation Demand Management program and Horton Road Sidewalk, will be prioritized for CMAQ funding per the 2021 Federal Funding Policy.

Agency	Project	VTM Reduced	CO (Reduced Kg/Day)	VOC (Reduced Kg/Day)	NOx (Reduced Kg/Day)	Total (kg/Day)	Score
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	82	0.815	0.036	0.028	0.879	11
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	591	5.860	0.256	0.200	6.317	13
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	13	0.129	0.006	0.004	0.139	7
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	11	0.105	0.005	0.004	0.113	5
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	6	0.060	0.003	0.002	0.065	1
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	10	0.097	0.004	0.003	0.104	3
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	22	0.210	0.010	0.007	0.227	9
TJCOG	Triangle TDM	51,605	502	29	103	634.000	15

## Total Score

Agency	Project	Connectivity	Transit Access	Pop/Emp Density	Project Phase	Priority	EJ	Safety	Emissions	Total
City of Durham	Horton Road Sidewalk	10	10	8	15	10	15	15	11	94
GoTriangle	NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access	10	10	6	30	10	6	8	7	87
Town of Chapel Hill	Morgan Creek Greenway	10	10	5	20	10	9	12	9	85
City of Durham	University Drive Bike-Ped	10	10	10	15	5	15	4	13	82
Town of Chapel Hill	Ephesus Road Sidewalk	10	10	2	25	5	6	0	3	61
Research Triangle Foundation	Burdens Creek Greenway	10	10	7	15	5	3	0	5	55
Research Triangle Foundation	Davis Drive Modernization	10	8	3	15	10	3	0	1	50

Based on the results of the scoring rubric, LPA staff is recommending that the MPO Board approve funding for the three highest scoring projects:

- The City of Durham's Horton Road Sidewalk;
- GoTriangle's NC 54 Falconbridge Transit Access Improvements; and
- The Town of Chapel Hill's Morgan Creek Greenway.

These projects make the best use of available RFF, are priorities for the MPO's member agencies, and best meet the goals and objectives that the MPO Board adopted for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

## Next Steps

Below is the timeline for MPO Board approval of a FY23 Call for Projects funding recommendation:

**Board Releases Scores and Funding Recommendation for Public Comment:** February 9

**TC Votes on Funding Recommendation:** February 23

**MPO Board Votes on Funding Recommendation:** March 9

**CMAQ Applications due to the North Carolina Department of Transportation:** March 30

Once the MPO Board votes to approve a funding recommendation, LPA staff will work with funding recipients and NCDOT staff to add projects to the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).