

DURHAM • CHAPEL HILL • CARRBORO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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



March 8, 2023

TO: DCHC MPO Board
 FROM : Kelly Fomenko, LPA Staff
 SUBJECT: FY24 Call for Projects Public Comments

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 2022. Funding applications were due on December 9, 2022. FY24 is the last year that jurisdictions will receive a direct allocation of local discretionary funds and these funds must be obligated by FY26.

The RFF pool for FY24 consists of four funding sources that come directly to the DCHC MPO: Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (BGDA), Transportation Alternatives Program Direct Attributable (TAPDA), Carbon Reduction Program Direct Attributable (CRPDA), and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ). 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 funding sources.

MPO staff recommend funding ten projects or programs through this call. Five are existing projects/programs that requested additional or continuing funding:

- Alston Avenue Sidewalks (City of Durham)
- Hillandale Road Bike & Pedestrian Improvements (City of Durham)
- Morenne Road Bike Lanes & Sidewalks (City of Durham)
- Bicycle Detector Loops (Town of Carrboro)
- Fordham Boulevard Sidepath (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Triangle TDM Program (TJCOG)

In addition, MPO staff recommend funding five new projects:

- Downtown Chapel Hill Bus Stop Improvements (Chapel Hill Transit)
- Orange County Bus Stop Improvements (GoTriangle)
- 805 Corridor/NC 54 Bus Stop Improvements (GoTriangle)
- Cameron Avenue Protected Bike Lanes/ Cycle Track (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Downtown Hillsborough Parking Study (Town of Hillsborough)

Public Comment

The draft recommendations were released on February 13, 2023 for a 21-day public comment period. This public notice was distributed through the DCHC MPO website and social media, as well as through a press release and emailed to subscribers on the DCHC MPO listserv. The public were asked to email or call with comments, or complete a survey. Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to self-identify to measure equitable engagement.

Public Comments Received

Comment #	Comment	Response
1	The Hillandale Bike/Ped project is critical. First, it is a corridor used daily for emergency vehicles going to and from Duke Hospital. Second, several bikers have been killed on Hillandale and others injured since there is little to no shoulder and a very steep ditch with a high traffic count. I would argue that the conditions in this corridor are more critical to address than the Morrenne Road project that is somewhat similar.	<i>It is a goal of DCHC MPO to promote safety, health, and well-being within our regional vision, and it is an important factor in the scoring of these projects.</i>
2	I am strongly in support of the City of Durham Hillandale Road Bike & Pedestrian Improvements. We anticipate over 1000 more housing units in our neighborhood (LaSalle St, Coke Plant & Indian Trail) properties. Plus the new Hotel (Marriot?) that is going in Hillandale at Hillsborough. The bike/ped will facilitate non-car travel to Duke Hospital/VA Hospital. Durham is growing rapidly and we need a plan on how people will get around. This bike/ped improvement has been a long time coming.	<i>Connectivity is an important factor for DCHC MPO projects. We appreciate your feedback on the importance of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.</i>
3	Glad to see some attempts to be more broad based.	<i>We appreciate your support.</i>
4	I love seeing sidewalk improvements in and around Durham. As a home with only one car - I appreciate safe access for pedestrians and often walk for groceries, etc. Improved sidewalks will hopefully improve pedestrian traffic and accessibility.	<i>Connectivity is an important factor for DCHC MPO projects. We appreciate your feedback on the importance of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.</i>
5	The best way to reduce congestion in downtown Hillsborough is having fewer people relying on cars. Downtown businesses are difficult to access due to thru traffic from commuters and parents transporting kids between school and home/activities. Invest resources instead to expanding bus services and school buses. Incentivize families who already have access to buses to actually use them. Penalize families who have access to the system but prioritize their convenience over the environment and	<i>Thank you for your feedback in regard to transportation in Hillsborough and Orange County. Your comments will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board.</i>

	community livability. Expand broadband access so remote work is a viable option for more people in Orange county. Adopt zoning that will create walkable communities so we don't all need cars to participate in community and earn wages.	
6	It is disappointing to see in the 2/8/23 DCHC MPO memo that the City of Durham's Hillandale Road Bike & Pedestrian Improvements project "could not receive full funding due to existing funding cap, which states no jurisdiction can receive more than 65% of all available funding." DCHC MPO should remove the 65% cap to enable full funding of the highest rated projects in the future.	<i>We appreciate your feedback. The existing funding cap was created so that all member agencies have a chance to receive funding to support a robust, multimodal, regional system. Your comments will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board for consideration when the policy is due for review.</i>
7	This comment only pertains to the Hillsborough parking study. As the town evaluates parking capacity and future needs, please consider alternatives for managing cars other than additional parking—for example a park and ride lot or additional bus service or dedicated/protected bike and pedestrian walkways. This is especially important for large events. The town shouldn't add parking capacity to accommodate the highest volume times like the project description says—it should offer multiple ways of getting into town. I live south of the historic district, near the Macdonald's on Churton street. Instead of driving, I would opt to take a bus but there is no convenient bus service into town. I would also ride my bike but it does not feel safe to be in with all the cars. Hillsborough should limit parking within the historic district because we need to drive less if we're going to address climate change. If parking is limited and there are more ways to get into town, people will drive less. I know this is a shift in our mindset and requires a change in behavior, but it needs to be done. This is how it is in other places around the world, like many European communities. So, rather than just looking at parking, I hope this study will consider alternatives and ways to reduce driving and climate impacts. The study should also consider additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the parking that is offered. Thanks!	<i>We appreciate your feedback on the Hillsborough area transportation system. Your feedback will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board.</i>

8	Please do something to improve Roxboro Street around the intersection with Club Boulevard. One of the worst intersections in the Triangle, not just for drivers but especially for all the people who live in that area who walk and use transit.	<i>We appreciate your feedback and your comments will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board.</i>
9	<p>This comment only pertains to the Hillsborough parking study. As the town evaluates parking capacity and future needs, please consider alternatives for managing cars other than additional parking—for example a park and ride lot or additional bus service or dedicated/protected bike and pedestrian walkways. This is especially important for large events. The town shouldn't add parking capacity to accommodate the highest volume times like the project description says—it should offer multiple ways of getting into town. I live off NC10 near Brumley. Instead of driving, I would opt to take a bus but there is no convenient bus service into town. I would also ride my bike but it does not feel safe to be in with all the cars. Hillsborough should limit parking within the historic district because we need to drive less if we're going to address climate change. If parking is limited and there are more ways to get into town, people will drive less. So, rather than just looking at parking, I hope this study will consider alternatives and ways to reduce driving and climate impacts. The study should also consider additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the parking that is offered. Thanks!</p>	<p><i>Note: This comment appears to be a duplicate of comment #7. However, the contact information for both comments are different.</i></p> <p><i>We appreciate your feedback on the Hillsborough area transportation system. Your feedback will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board.</i></p>

10	<p>The Town of Hillsborough should not undertake the proposed parking study. Additional parking will not improve our downtown. Parking spaces will not generate enough revenue to compensate for the lost economic gains. It is so much better for downtown businesses, aesthetics, and the town's tax revenue if people are arriving by bus, walking, or biking. The proposed reason for the study is to manage congestion downtown generally and during large events. Well then I say do not subsidize and incentivize car traffic with cheap/free parking. It is a massive waste of our most valuable land to build many times more parking spaces than are needed for the sake of a few large events a year. Churton St is one of the most beautiful places in the triangle. Except for the hwy that runs through the middle of it. There need to be fewer cars there for people to really congregate. I could not sit outside a restaurant on Churton st without a constant firm grip on my 3 year old for fear that he would wander 3 meters away into heavy traffic. I live 4 miles east of town on nc-10 and have biked myself into town, but the main impediment is that I cannot possibly take my family on that route, it is too unsafe to risk being forced off the road with a child onboard. Connect neighborhood streets with multiuse paths. Improve the bus route between chapel hill and hillsborough and other routes in the area. People will plan their lives around using it if they are convinced it will be there for them. But no one is going to risk getting stuck waiting an hour on the bus in the middle of the day. It's just a waste to have a bus system that is essentially incomplete. All of this would be a waste and will never be done if you add parking spaces, because driving will continue to be the most immediately convenient thing for people to do, without seeing the bigger picture of lost revenue and plain ugliness. And it may even look like you solved your congestion problem when people stop going there in favor of more person focused areas in Chapel Hill in Durham. I look at the rest of the applications in Durham and Chapel Hill and they are mostly bus, bicycling, pedestrian focused. Hillsborough should do the same only more so.</p>	<p><i>We appreciate your feedback on the Hillsborough area transportation system. Your feedback will be shared with the DCHC MPO Board.</i></p>
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