

DURHAM • CHAPEL HILL • CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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April 12, 2023

TO: DCHC MPO Board
FROM : Kelly Fomenko, LPA Staff
SUBJECT: Guidance on SPOT P6 Carryover Projects for FY2026-2035 P7 Cycle

Summary

The Strategic Prioritization of Projects (SPOT) occurs once every two years leading up to the adoption of a new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). SPOT is currently in its seventh iteration, known as Prioritization 7.0 or P7, and this cycle will determine which projects will receive new funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for FY2026-2035.

The workgroup that is established with each prioritization cycle has a unique situation in front of them this cycle as the previous cycle (P6) was cancelled amidst project scoring and the adoption of a new STIP was postponed. The upcoming FY2024-2033 STIP will be adopted without project inputs from the P6 cycle and existing projects continue to experience issues with rising costs due to inflation.

The P7 workgroup began meeting in Fall 2022 and has been meeting monthly to discuss critical items such as updated scoring procedures and how P6 projects will factor into this year's project list submissions. At the February meeting, the workgroup determined that carryover projects for the P7 cycle would be defined as:

- 1) in the adopted FY2024-2033 STIP and not scheduled for delivery
- 2) with completed environmental documents
- 3) siblings of programmed parents, and
- 4) **two P6 new submittals (per partner discretion)**

The SPOT office then sent out correspondence on March 8, 2023 asking all organizations to designate their two projects as carryovers by March 31, 2023. DCHC MPO has received an extension to April 14, to allow review and approval time by the Board for their April 12 meeting. This document will provide guidance from the SPOT office on this process.

Carryover Project Selection Process

The SPOT Office has developed a copy of the P6 scoring spreadsheet that details the process for developing the initial list of designated projects as well as the overall list of eligible projects to choose from. It is available on the [Prioritization Data page](#) in the "Prioritization 7.0" folder.

- "Process" tab – contains the process for developing the overall list of new P6 projects and identifying the highest scoring projects

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- “P6 New Submittals” tab – contains the overall list of eligible projects to choose from
 - Column S (“P6 Submitter”) can be used to filter by submitter
 - Columns N-Q can be used to filter by project location, regardless of submitter

By default, the 2 highest scoring Highway projects per P6 submitter have been initially designated as the Carryover projects. These are highlighted in yellow in the “P6 New Submittals” tab.

- Note that the Highway mode was selected for initial use, since that is the mode for which the most project submittal slots are typically used.
- The highest scoring projects were selected since those would have the best chances of being funded in P7. These are based on column V (“Max Score”) that uses the max of Statewide Mobility Quantitative Score, Normalized Regional Score, and Normalized Division Score.

However, each submitting organization is free to designate 2 alternative projects from **within their area** as the Carryovers for their organization (regardless of the submitter), as long as the projects are in the “P6 New Submittals” tab. This means that organizations may designate a variety of projects as their 2 Carryovers, including:

- The initially designated projects (highlighted in yellow)
- A lower scoring Highway project that they submitted
- A Non-Highway project that they submitted
- A project of any mode that is in their area but submitted in P6 by a different organization

The following has also been provided by the SPOT office:

- If you would like to designate a project that was initially submitted in P6 by an organization other than yours, please coordinate with that organization and include documentation of that coordination in your response to the SPOT office along with your designated projects. This is to ensure that the same project is not identified by multiple submitters.
- As these will be Carryover projects for P7 (not new submittals), the SPOT office is not requiring that MPO Boards approve the project designations, nor do we believe this requires public involvement. However, we acknowledge that many Planning Organizations may have processes in place that will require your board to act and/or seek public input.

Technical Committee Discussion

The TC met on April 5th for a special session ahead of the April Board meeting due to the limited timeframe available to choose these two P6 carryover projects. This meeting did not meet the in-person requirements for quorum, therefore the recommendations made are considered unofficial but provide general guidance for the Board in taking action.

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It was discussed that given the opportunity to choose projects from any mode, it would be beneficial to the MPO if transit or bicycle and pedestrian projects were chosen over highway projects. The TC also discussed the funding tiers and how a project at the statewide tier has a better chance of receiving funding over regional or division level projects. Since transit projects can be scored at the regional and division levels but bicycle and pedestrian projects can only be scored at the division level, it was discussed that transit projects would be better choices for carryover so that the chosen projects can compete regionally where there is more funding available. As a matter of regional coordination and in fairness to all MPO members, it was discussed that one project should be Durham County-centric and the other Orange County-centric to cover a broader area within the MPO boundaries.

The two projects that were determined to fit the discussed criteria are as follows:

1. **T193141 Durham-Carrboro BRT:** High quality transit service along the 15/501 corridor between Durham and Carrboro also serving Chapel Hill. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service with dedicated lanes and other BRT functionality.
2. **T192947 North-South BRT w/ Pittsboro:** Provide high quality bus rapid transit service from Eubanks park-and-ride in Chapel Hill to Chatham Park in Pittsboro via NC 86 and US 15-501. Serve downtown Chapel Hill, UNC campus, UNC hospital, Southern Village, Fearington Village, and Pittsboro.

Recommendation

LPA staff recommend that the Board discuss and approve the carryover projects from P6 for the P7 cycle.