

National Highway System

DCHC MPO Review

What is this review?

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has requested that the MPO review the National Highway System (NHS) map for the MPO's planning area and recommend any additions, deletions or modifications by April 24, 2015.

What is the National Highway System?

The National Highway System consists of roadways important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. It includes the interstate system as well as other important roadways. A roadway must be classified as Other Principal Arterial and above on the Federal Functional Classification in order to be eligible for the NHS and meet several other criteria.

The following Federal Highway Administration Web page provides details on the NHS:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/qandas/qanhs.cfm>

Which DCHC MPO roadways are on the NHS?

For an active map, NCDOT's Online GIS mapping tool (<http://ncdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/>) has the current depiction of the NHS and Federal Functional Classification roadways. Select the Functional Classification map (includes latest update) on the home screen. Once in that map click Modify Map (top right), then Add (top left), search for NHS, and add that layer.

There are also three PDF maps attached: one showing the NHS in the DCHC MPO area; one showing the NHS in the greater Triangle area; and, one showing the Federal Functional Classification in the DCHC MPO area. The NHS maps show the proposed addition of the Triangle Expressway to the NHS.

What is "enhanced" NHS?

On October 1, 2012, Section 1104 of MAP-21 added to the NHS those roads that were at that time functionally classified as Other Principal Arterial, but not yet part of the NHS. The NHS was expanded to about 230,000 total miles and these additions have become known as "enhanced" NHS or MAP-21 Principal Arterials.

What NHS changes does staff recommend?

Staff recommends that the Triangle Expressway, from I-40 to NC 540, be added to the NHS. The Triangle Expressway meets the NHS criteria: It is:

- classified as an Other Principal Arterial in the Federal Functional Classification;
- carrying a significant proportion of interregional traffic;
- connected to other NHS routes on each end; and,
- likely to be designated on the interstate system as I-880.

Why doesn't the MPO designate all Principal Arterials for the NHS?

The DCHC MPO has a few roadways that were classified as Other Principal Arterial after the October 1, 2012 "enhanced" NHS was designated, and therefore are not on the NHS. Staff does not recommend adding these roadways to the NHS because they will likely not meet the current NHS criteria, especially the criterion to serve significant proportions of interstate or interregional traffic. In addition, NHS roadways are subject to many federal requirements that local government and adjoining neighborhoods might find imposing.

What are these NHS requirements?

These requirements include design standards, contract administration, State-FHWA oversight procedures, Highway Performance Monitoring System reporting, National Bridge Inventory reporting, national performance measures data collection, and outdoor advertisement/junkyard control.

How is the NHS related to the N.C. Strategic Transportation Initiative (STI)?

STI currently makes all NHS routes that were on the system prior to July 1, 2012 eligible for statewide funding. Therefore, all non-Map 21 NHS roadways (or so-called "enhanced" NHS) are not eligible. It is unclear if this law will change for any new NHS routes added through the current review.