



Date: September 6, 2016

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
From: Terry Bellamy, Transportation Director

Subject: U-5720 US 70 Corridor Upgrade from Lynn Road to west of TW Alexander Drive

Executive Summary

The NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is beginning the planning and environmental study for TIP project U-5720, upgrade of US 70 from Lynn Road to west of TW Alexander Drive. The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) includes a project to convert this section of US 70 to a six-lane limited-access freeway. NCDOT will provide a presentation about the project and their study.

Recommendation

The Transportation Department recommends that the City Council receive a presentation from the NCDOT on TIP Project U-5720, US 70 Corridor Upgrade.

Background

The DCHC MPO is the long-range transportation planning organization for the Durham area. The DCHC MPO's transportation plans have long included a project to convert US 70 to a limited access freeway between Durham and Raleigh.

The DCHC MPO has identified this as a needed project to provide increased traffic capacity for projected population and employment growth in eastern Durham County and overall regional traffic growth between Raleigh and Durham. US 70 serves as an alternative parallel facility for traffic on I-40, NC 147, and I-540. It provides access to commercial developments near Brier Creek, nearby RDU International Airport, and nearby Research Triangle Park.

Conversion to a freeway would limit access points to interchanges and eliminate all driveways. Interchange and grade separation locations will be studied. However, the DCHC MPO's 2040 MTP identifies the following interchange locations: Glover Road Extension (future road between Pleasant Drive and Miami Boulevard), Miami Boulevard, Angier Avenue, Northern Durham Parkway/Aviation Parkway Extension (future road between Page Road and TW Alexander Drive), and TW Alexander Drive. The DCHC MPO's 2040 MTP identifies the following grade separation locations: Lynn Road, Pleasant Drive, and Page Road/Leesville Road Extension.

Currently, much of the corridor is outside of the City of Durham, but it is all within the Urban or Suburban Development Tiers and likely to be considered for annexation as development occurs.

The DCHC MPO and NCDOT's Division 5 requested the inclusion of this project in the FY 2016-2015 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Some segments of the project scored well enough through the Prioritization 3.0 process to be included in the draft STIP. The DCHC MPO and the State Board of Transportation adopted the FY 2016-2025 TIP and STIP in 2015 with the following funding schedule:

- A: Lynn Road to S. Miami Boulevard \$111,020,000 Total Cost
 - Right-of-way 2022
 - Utilities 2022
 - Construction 2024-2026
- B: S. Miami Boulevard Interchange \$25,104,000 Total Cost
 - Right-of-way 2022
 - Construction 2024
- C: S. Miami Boulevard to Leesville Road Unfunded
- D: Leesville Road to TW Alexander Drive Unfunded

The identified funding source is State Highway Trust funds.

The DCHC MPO is currently participating in the Prioritization 4.0 process to produce the FY 2018-2017 STIP. Preliminary results from that process are available and a draft STIP is anticipated in January 2017. There is a one-year delay in construction compared to the current TIP for the two funded segments and the estimated costs have changed.

- A: Lynn Road to S. Miami Boulevard \$95,700,000 Total Cost
 - Right-of-way 2022
 - Construction Starting in 2025 One-year delay from current TIP
- B: S. Miami Boulevard Interchange \$43,300,000 Total Cost
 - Right-of-way 2022
 - Construction Starting in 2025 One-year delay from current TIP
- C: S. Miami Boulevard to Leesville Road \$151,200,000 Total Cost
 - Unlikely to be funded.
- D: Leesville Road to TW Alexander Drive \$81,800,000 Total Cost
 - Unlikely to be funded.

With the current draft schedule for right-of-way beginning in FY 2022 (the first five years of the STIP), the project will be considered committed in the STIP and will not be subject to further rounds of Prioritization.

This project will connect with the improvements on US 70 currently under construction as part of the East End Connector project. The East End Connector will upgrade US 70 to a freeway from Lynn Road to the north and is expected to be open to traffic by July 2019. The connectivity provided by the East End Connector is forecasted to draw additional traffic to US 70 increasing the need for capacity improvements on US 70.

This project will also connect to a corridor upgrade on US 70 to the east. This project, U-5518, is described as upgrading the roadway to improve capacity from west of TW Alexander Drive to I-540. It includes an interchange at TW Alexander Drive and Brier Creek Parkway. Right-of-way is currently programmed in FY 2019 and construction in FY 2021.

Issues and Analysis

As this is a fully state funded project, NCDOT plans to prepare a State Environmental Assessment (State EA). This will analyze the community and environmental impacts of the project, inform the project design, and consider any necessary mitigation for negative impacts caused by the project. There will be coordination with the City of Durham, Durham County, and the DCHC MPO as part of the study. There will be opportunities for public involvement. NCDOT's presentation will provide an overview of this process.

The City of Durham expects to be an active participant in the State EA study and development of the project design. The following topics will be analyzed by the study and there may be issues or impacts to the City and/or its residents:

- City water and sewer utilities – There is a 24 inch water transmission main parallel to US 70 that provides an inter-connect with the Raleigh system. There is the 3 million gallon Angier Avenue elevated storage tank, 1.5 million gallon Page Road elevated storage tank, and a sanitary sewer lift station near the corridor.
- Storm water and erosion control
- Natural environmental impacts
- The location of interchanges and grade separations
- Noise walls
- Direct impacts to businesses and residences on the corridor
- Access to properties, businesses, and residences along the corridor
- Impacts to low-income and minority environmental justice populations
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Accommodation of bus transit service along or parallel to the corridor – GoDurham routes 2A and 15 utilize or cross the corridor.
- Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the corridor and parallel to the corridor

Alternatives

There are no alternatives to the requested action to receive the presentation.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City of Durham at this time. However, this project is likely to include costs to relocate City utilities and amenities or betterments that will require City participation per NCDOT policies such as the inclusion of sidewalks on local streets affected by the project or the aesthetic treatment of noise walls. The planning and environmental study will analyze these potential project elements and costs.

SDBE Summary

NCDOT agreements require that their contracting procedures be followed for these projects. The Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance did not review this item for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

Attachments

Presentation