



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty St., Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215
www.morpc.org

Memorandum

TO: Transportation Policy Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Community Advisory Committee

FROM: Maria Schaper, Transportation Study Director

DATE: Revised September 5, 2024

SUBJECT: Proposed Resolution T-11-24: **“Establishing Priorities for Central Ohio Candidate Projects Submitted in 2024 for TRAC Funding”**

As reported previously, five projects located within MORPC’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area were submitted to ODOT’s Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) for the 2024 funding cycle. TRAC is responsible for committing development and construction funding toward projects that meet the criteria of the Major New Capacity Program (generally projects that cost over \$12 million and increase roadway capacity and/or reduce congestion). ODOT requests input from metropolitan planning organizations like MORPC as part of the application evaluation process. Each funding cycle, MORPC evaluates the TRAC applications that are located within the MPO area.

Information sheets were prepared and posted to our website over the summer with details on the projects. While each of the projects submitted would provide safety, congestion, and economic benefits to local and regional transportation networks, MORPC’s role is to evaluate the projects’ impacts regionally, and relative to each other. For MORPC, the evaluation process includes analyzing and prioritizing each application based on the region’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) goals and objectives. The priorities are then provided to ODOT for consideration by TRAC during the funding selection process.

Resolution T-11-24 establishes MORPC’s priorities for the 2024 TRAC funding requests that fall within MORPC’s MPO area. Facilitating the development and implementation of these projects is an element of implementing the strategies in the 2024-2050 Metropolitan Transportation (MTP). The projects wanting to advance with TRAC funding specifically relate to implementation of these MTP strategies:

- SAF 3: Implement countermeasures that address priority safety locations

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Chris Amorose Groomes
Chair

Michelle Crandall
Vice Chair

Ben Kessler
Secretary

- OP 3: Implement managed lanes along additional freeway corridors
- OP 4: Apply access management along arterial and collector corridors
- RDWY 1: Add capacity, where appropriate, to alleviate existing or anticipated congestion along existing freeways and at interchanges
- RDWY 3: Construct new interchanges, where appropriate, to alleviate congestion or support regional development goals
- RDWY 6: Construct new roadways, where appropriate, to alleviate congestion or support regional or local development goals
- BP 3: Build safe and comfortable infrastructure for walking and bicycling

MORPC accepted comments on the projects from the public, and staff completed a technical evaluation of the projects. This memo provides a summary of how the projects were evaluated and concludes with a recommendation on project prioritization. The priorities will be presented to TRAC at a regional public hearing this fall, and upon adoption of Resolution T-11-24, submitted in writing by September 13.

Project Evaluation Summary

MORPC staff evaluated the five TRAC projects requesting funding based on the 2024-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) goals and objectives. Key elements of the MTP evaluation criteria were used for the evaluation. For the projects being ranked, the analysis results by goal are:

Adopted Goal: Position Central Ohio to attract and retain economic opportunity to prosper as a region and compete globally.

The criteria for this goal focus on congestion relief and the total number of jobs as well as non-retail jobs within one mile of the facility at present and projected in 2050. The SR 315 North Knot ranked highest for this goal due to the high number of existing and projected jobs in the area and projected congestion relief. It was followed closely by the I-71 Hard Shoulder Running which showed the strongest impact on future congestion relief.

Adopted Goal: Protect natural resources and mitigate infrastructure vulnerabilities to maintain a healthy ecosystem and community.

The criteria for this goal considered reductions in emissions (VOC and NOx). The I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges performed the strongest for this goal. All other projects showed no significant changes in emissions.

Adopted Goal: Reduce per capita energy consumption and promote alternative fuel resources to increase affordability and resilience of regional energy supplies.

The criteria for this goal considered reduction in regional vehicle-miles traveled. The I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges showed the greatest reduction of vehicle-miles traveled under anticipated 2050 conditions.

Adopted Goal: Increase regional collaboration and employ innovative transportation solutions to maximize the return on public expenditures.

The criteria for this goal included the number of communities being served by the project, consideration for collaboration with regards to project development and funding the project, and new development in the area. The US 33 Southeast Corridor scored higher than the rest due to anticipated new development, existing funding and Competitive Advantage Program status. The SR 315 North Knot scored well due to anticipated development and support for several regional partners.

Adopted Goal: Provide transportation and mobility options to benefit the health, safety, and welfare of all people.

The criteria for this goal considered the safety/crash ranking analysis, pavement and bridge condition, and Environmental Justice (EJ) populations served. The US 33 Southeast Corridor scored highest for this goal due to the expected safety improvements on the corridor. It was followed by the SR 315 North Knot which serves EJ populations and has expected safety improvements for all road users.

Adopted Goal: Create sustainable neighborhoods to improve all residents' quality of life.

The criteria for this goal considered which projects serve users going to or coming from higher density areas and multimodal elements of the project, such as facilities for transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The SR 315 North Knot performed the best for this goal, followed closely by the Dublin Emerald Connector, both of which serve areas with high existing and future trip density and improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity in the region.

Comments Received from the Public

On June 28, MORPC issued a press release requesting comments from the public on this year's TRAC applications. Comments were due by August 16. The table below summarizes the number of comments received. In all, MORPC received 101 submissions, with some containing multiple comments for specific projects as well as general observations and input.

| Application | In Support | Opposed | Total Comments |
|--|------------|---------|----------------|
| I-71 HSR/SmartLane | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| US 33 Southeast Corridor | 25 | 2 | 27 |
| SR 315 North Knot | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Dublin Emerald Connector | 41 | 5 | 46 |

A mix of opinions on the proposals was submitted during the public comment period. The Dublin Emerald Connector, US 33 Southeast Corridor, and SR 315 North Knot received the most support. The Dublin Emerald Connector was deemed beneficial for relieving congestion from Sawmill Road, expanding bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and economic development. The US 33 Southeast Corridor was deemed beneficial for relieving congestion and improving safety. The SR 315 North Knot was seen as helpful for economic development and expanding travel modes.

Many of the comments in opposition to specific projects were opposed to widening freeways. Several additional comments not addressed to particular projects carried similar sentiments, with additional suggestions of promoting transit and active transportation facilities.

Comments Received from the Community Advisory Committee

On September 4, 2024, staff provided the Community Advisory Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee with information regarding staff evaluation of the projects, public comments received, and the MORPC staff recommendation for project prioritization. The Community Advisory Committee did not have a quorum at its meeting and was unable to make a recommendation. Discussion focused on future TRAC cycles and members of the Community Advisory Committee discussed their support for MORPC to proactively encourage project sponsors to submit projects to the TRAC that add significant transit, pedestrian, or bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, the Community Advisory Committee expressed concern with the goal of congestion reduction, particularly when evaluation of projects that reduce congestion may favor projects that encourage unsustainable growth patterns and single-occupancy vehicle usage.

MORPC Staff Ranking Recommendation

Based on the goal-by-goal evaluation summarized above, the public comments and the phase for which money is being requested, MORPC staff recommends the following priority ranking for the five TRAC applications requesting funding:

- Priority 1: SR 315 North Knot (Request: Planning/Development)
- Priority 2: US 33 Southeast Corridor (Request: Construction)
- Priority 3: I-71 Hard Shoulder Running (HSR)/SmartLane (Request: Construction)
- Priority 4: I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges (Request: Right-of-Way)
- Priority 5: Dublin Emerald Connector (Request: Construction)

Resolution T-11-24 recommends these rankings.

MS: SO

Attachment: Resolution T-11-24

RESOLUTION T-11-24

“Establishing priorities for Central Ohio candidate projects submitted in 2024 for TRAC funding”

WHEREAS, the Transportation Policy Committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is designated as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Columbus metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) selects major new projects to receive funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation’s (ODOT's) major new capacity program; and

WHEREAS, the TRAC has requested that each MPO submit its priorities for projects in that MPO’s planning area; and

WHEREAS, five projects requesting funding have been submitted to MORPC for acknowledgement prior to their submittal to the TRAC (see Attachment A); and

WHEREAS, MORPC members and the public were asked to submit comments on the projects; and

WHEREAS, staff provided the Community Advisory, Transportation Advisory and Transportation Policy committees information regarding the applications, including public comments received for staff recommendation; and

WHEREAS, staff evaluated the projects with regard to the six goals of the 2024-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and along with public comments developed the priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Advisory Committee at its meeting on September 4, 2024, recommended approval to the Transportation Policy Committee; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION:

- Section 1. That the attached listing of projects (Attachment A) be established as the order of priorities for the candidate projects submitted to TRAC from the MORPC transportation planning area for major new capacity program funding.
- Section 2. That the TRAC is strongly discouraged from funding lower priority projects on this list at the expense of higher priority projects.
- Section 3. That it directs MORPC staff to forward these priorities to the TRAC and to present the priorities to the TRAC.

Section 4. That the Transportation Policy Committee finds and determines that all formal deliberations and actions of this committee concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in open meetings of this committee.



Chris Amorose Groomes, Chair
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

9/12/24

Date

Prepared by: Shelby Oldroyd

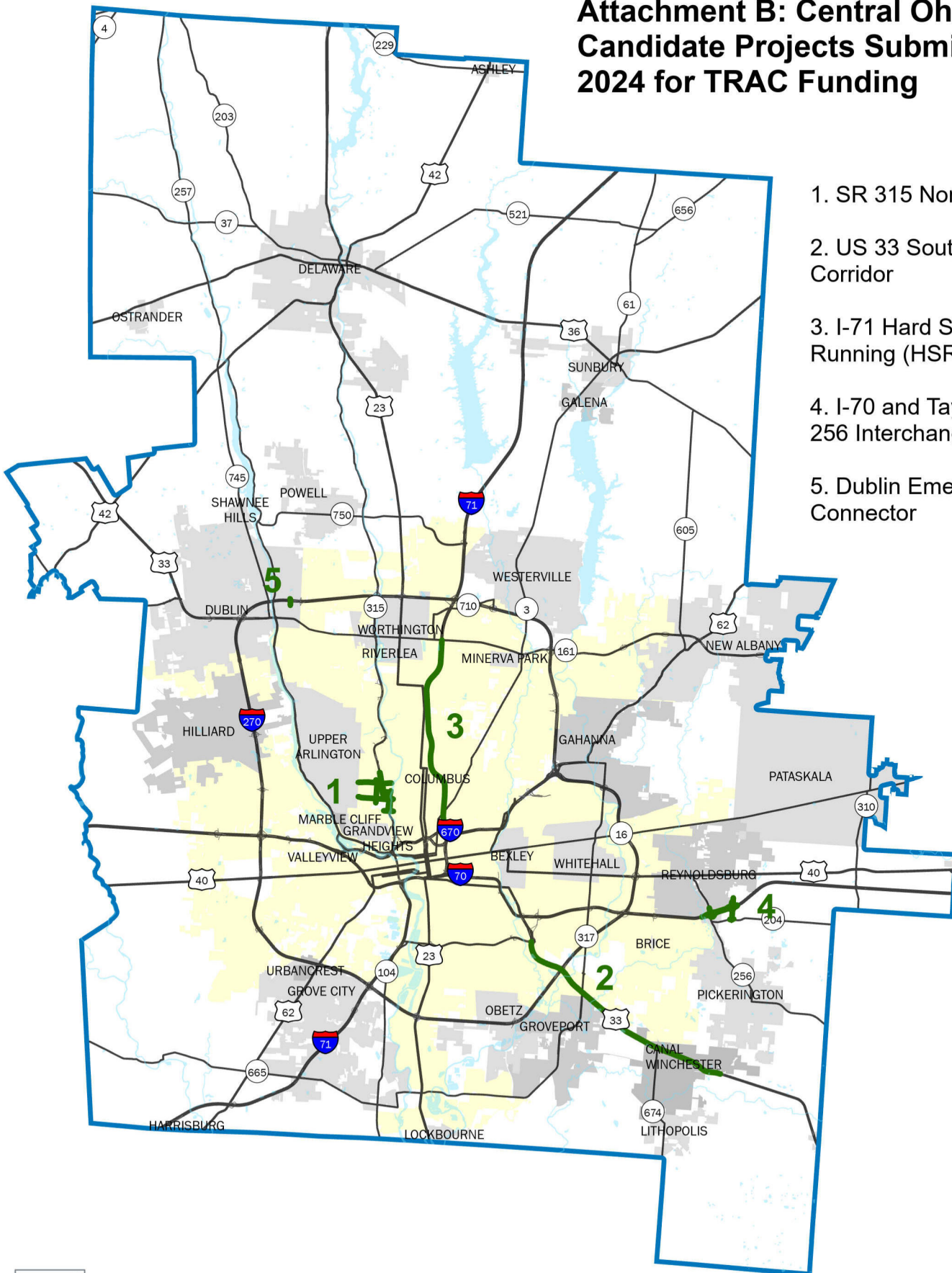
Attachments:

- A. Priorities for the 2024 TRAC Major/New Program Candidate Projects
- B. 2024 TRAC Major/New Program Candidate Projects Map

Priorities for the 2024 TRAC Major/New Program Candidate Projects

| Rank | Project | Tier Request | 2024 TRAC Funding Request | Total Project Cost |
|-------------|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | SR 315 North Knot | Tier II | \$7.8 million | \$247 million |
| 2 | US 33 Southeast Corridor | Tier I | \$145 million | \$167 million |
| 3 | I-71 Hard Shoulder Running (HSR)/SmartLane | Tier I | \$100 million | \$154 million |
| 4 | I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges | Tier II | \$7 million | \$124 million |
| 5 | Dublin Emerald Connector | Tier I | \$5 million | \$40.7 million |

1. SR 315 North Knot
2. US 33 Southeast Corridor
3. I-71 Hard Should Running (HSR)/SmartLane
4. I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges
5. Dublin Emerald Connector



The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources made available to us which we believe to be reliable.
8/28/2024

