



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
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Memorandum

TO: Transportation Policy Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Community Advisory Committee

FROM: Nick Gill, Transportation Director

DATE: August 21, 2023

SUBJECT: Proposed Resolution T-12-23: “Establishing Priorities for Central Ohio Candidate Projects Submitted in 2023 for TRAC Funding”

As reported to you previously, ten (10) projects were submitted to the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) for the 2023 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). Information sheets (attached) were prepared and posted to our website over the summer with details on the projects.

Resolution T-12-23 establishes MORPC’s priorities for the 2023 TRAC funding requests that fall within MORPC’s Metropolitan Organization Planning (MPO) area. Facilitating the development and implementation of these projects is an element of implementing the strategies in the 2020-2050 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
- OP 3: Implement managed lanes along additional freeway corridors
- OP 4: Apply access management along arterial and collector corridors
- TRAN 3: Implement high capacity transit service along additional 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 4: Add capacity, where appropriate, to alleviate existing or anticipated congestion along existing arterial and collector corridors

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-12-23, submitted in writing by September 15.

Project Evaluation Summary

MORPC staff evaluated the six TRAC projects requesting funding based on the 2020-2050 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. Both the I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phase 2D and Phase 3 ranked highest for this goal, primarily due to the high number of existing and projected jobs in the area. The LinkUS W Broad St BRT line also exhibit strong access to existing and projected jobs. The I-71 Hard Shoulder Running and the I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges 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 a relatively negligible difference in regional emissions reduction.

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 2050 anticipated conditions. All other projects exhibited a small increase in vehicle-miles traveled.

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, new development in the area and whether any phase of the project was already constructed or under construction. The LinkUS W Broad St BRT scored higher than the rest due to anticipated new development and the coalition of LinkUS planning partners. The I-70/I-71 Phase 2D and 3 projects scored high due to anticipated development and existing constructed phases of the overall Innerbelt improvements.

Adopted Goal: Use public investments to benefit the health, safety, and welfare of people.

The criteria for this goal considered the safety/crash ranking analysis, pavement and bridge condition, and Environmental Justice (EJ) populations served. The LinkUS W Broad St BRT also scored highest for this goal, owing its location connecting downtown Columbus with communities west of the city and expected safety improvements for all road users. It was followed by the I-270/I-71 Interchange (North), I-71 Hard Shoulder Running, and the Alum Creek Drive projects.

Adopted Goal: Create sustainable neighborhoods to improve 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 I-70/I-71 Phase 2D and 3 projects performed the best for this goal, followed closely by the LinkUS W Broad St BRT, all 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 July 5, MORPC issued a press release requesting comments from the public on this year's TRAC applications. Comments were due by August 11. The table below summarizes the number of comments received. In all, MORPC received 12 submissions, with some containing multiple comments for specific projects as well as general observations and input.

Application	In Support	Opposed	Total Comments
I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phase 2D	0	0	0
I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phase 3	0	0	0
LinkUS W Broad St BRT	3	0	3
I-71 Hard Shoulder Running (HSR)/SmartLane	0	2	2
I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges	6	1	7
Alum Creek Drive (SR 317 to Groveport Rd)	2	0	2
I-270 & I-71 Interchange (North)	0	2	2
I-71/Sunbury Parkway and Interchange	0	1	1
I-70 Widening (Licking County)	1	2	3
SR 161/SR 37 Widening	0	2	2
Total	12	10	22

A mix of opinions on the proposals was submitted during the public comment period. The LinkUS W Broad St BRT, I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges, and Alum Creek Drive received the most support. The LinkUS W Broad BRT project was deemed beneficial for shifting travel modes away from single-occupancy vehicles to transit, while the I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges and Alum Creek Drive were seen as helpful for congestion relief, expanding bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and economic development.

Many of the comments in opposition to specific projects conveyed a similar message of prioritizing investment in multimodal improvements over widening freeways and expanding interchanges. Several additional comments not addressed to particular projects carried the same sentiment, with additional suggestions of promoting transit-only travel lanes on freeways and arterials, incorporating active transportation facilities where possible, and reducing carbon emissions.

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 ten TRAC applications requesting funding:

- Priority 1: I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phase 2D & I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phase 3
- Priority 2: LinkUS W Broad St BRT
- Priority 3: I-71 Hard Shoulder Running (HSR)/SmartLane
- Priority 4: I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges
- Priority 5: Alum Creek Drive (SR 317 to Groveport Rd)
- Priority 6: I-270 & I-71 Interchange (North)
- Priority 7: I-71/Sunbury Parkway and Interchange
- Priority 8: SR 161/SR 37 Widening & I-70 Widening (Licking County)

Note that staff considered both Downtown Ramp Up projects the highest priority and would defer to ODOT to decide which phase to fund should funding not be available for both projects. In the same manner, the project development requests for the SR 161 widening and I-70 widening are similar in nature and were combined into one priority.

Resolution T-12-23 recommends these rankings.

NG:EL

Attachment: Resolution T-12-23

RESOLUTION T-12-23

“ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR CENTRAL OHIO CANDIDATE PROJECTS SUBMITTED IN 2023 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, ten 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 evaluated the projects with regard to the six goals of the 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and along with public comments developed the attached priorities; 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, the Community Advisory Committee at its meeting on August 28, 2023 and the Transportation Advisory Committee at its meeting on August 30, 2023 meeting 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.

Resolution T-12-23

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, Interim Chair
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

9/14/23

Date

Prepared by: Elliott Lewis

Attachments:

A. Establishing Priorities for Central Ohio Candidate Projects Submitted in 2023 for TRAC Funding

Priorities for the 2023 TRAC Major New Capacity Program Candidate Projects

Rank	Project	Tier Request	2023 TRAC Funding Request	Total Project Cost
1	I-70/I-71 Downtown Ramp Up Phases 2D and 3	Tier I	\$125 million & \$75 million	\$138.9 million & \$92 million
2	LinkUS W Broad St BRT	Tier I	\$39.05 million	\$313.95 million
3	I-71 Hard Shoulder Running (HSR)/SmartLane	Tier I	\$50 million	\$99 million
4	I-70 and Taylor Rd/SR 256 Interchanges	Tier II	\$7 million	\$127 million
5	Alum Creek Drive (SR 317 to Groveport Rd)	Tier II	\$3.59 million	\$51.13 million
6	I-270 & I-71 Interchange (North)	Tier I	\$22.5 million	\$38.01 million
7	I-71/Sunbury Parkway and Interchange	Tier I	\$15 million	\$101.5 million
8	SR 161/SR 37 Widening & I-70 Widening (Licking County)	Tier II	\$7 million & \$5 million	\$150 million & \$100 million