

Steering Committee Comments on 4/24/15 Draft Document, with TARPO Responses

My only comment is on page 6-1. CMAQ is an acronym for Congestion MITIGATION and Air Quality, as opposed to Congestion Management.

Response: corrected

In the appendices, it may be easier to include a jurisdiction column at the front end of all the tables (not the priority network, but the other project tables). Also, in the column for cost, it may be helpful to include the year for future use.

Response: In Appendix A, the projects are already organized by county, because the Project IDs are shown in alphabetical/number order and these IDs begin with "C" for Chatham County, "L" for Lee County, "M" for Moore County, and "O" for Orange County. The table is already very full, so it would be difficult to add an additional column for information that's already there (if you know how to find it). To make it clearer, text was added to the beginning of the appendix explaining how the project IDs are arranged by county. As for cost, it would be difficult to go back and add that information into the database at this point in time – however, the costs are all based on the locally-developed plans, so people should be able to refer back to those plans to determine the dates of the cost estimates. A note was added to the table on pages 4-1 and 4-2 to point this out.

Maybe a link to where a reader could see a visual of the bike/ped improvements you define.

Response: Pictures added for most of the types (except those that should be self-explanatory). Links added to slideshows for bike boulevards and traffic calming, which are more complex.

Am I missing it, or is there any language regarding gaps we have found within the network?

Response: Section 4, page 4-1 explains how the steering committee reviewed the maps for gaps/connections/revisions, and how these changes were incorporated into the maps. The gaps that were identified should have been addressed with recommendations shown in the maps (so there should not be any remaining gaps that we know of).

The NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Division is working with NC State University's Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) to develop a 5-year strategic plan for the division. The plan will primarily be based on the long-range goals of Walk Bike NC (the statewide bike/ped plan adopted in 2014). Upon completion of this plan, some of these strategies can be considered in future TARPO Bike/Ped Plan updates.

Response: Noted. The action step under Objective 1.1 was revised to reflect that future updates should consider the outcomes of plans developed at the state level.

National statistics are referenced throughout the report. See a few examples of reference sources cited below that can be used to obtain local data for this report.

- The section titled “Health Facts” (page 3-1) – you should reference local data if available. Include data from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics or local County Health Departments.
- The section titled “Economic Benefits of Walking and Bicycling” (page 3-2) – possible reference source (AAA Carolinas) will give North Carolina data.
- “Environmental Benefits of Bicycling and Walking” – possible source is EPA (NC Division).

Response: The “Benefits” section has been extensively revised to include more information taken from North Carolina sources and local-level data.

Objective 1.3 (page 2-1) ~~“Work with NCDOT to ensure~~ Ensure the recommendations from local plans are accurately shown in CTP maps, and work with NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch to improve ~~the~~ bicycle and pedestrian documentation in CTP reports relative to recommended bicycle and pedestrian improvements.”

Response: changes made to document

Objective 1.4 (page 2-3) Information related to public involvement activities should be available to all members of the community, including those without access to a computer. Information should also be provided for non-English speaking residents. Public Involvement Plan should include working with local governments to post notices in public libraries, newspapers, town/county government offices, etc. to alert members of the community of various public involvement activities. A method for collecting comments from this segment of the population should also be implemented.

Response: TARPO staff agrees that it is important to address these issues through the adoption process for this plan, and notes that we will follow the requirements of our Public Involvement Plan. Some clarifying language on this issue was added to Objective 1.4.

Objective 1.5 (page 2-3) “Educate ~~people~~ local officials and the public about the benefits of bicycle and pedestrian transportation.” and “Educate ~~people~~ local officials and the public about the process for funding and constructing bicycle and pedestrian projects.”

Response: changes made to document

Appendix A-D (project table)– Might be a good idea to insert a “project schedule” column with information provided in the STIP. This could help minimize potential questions about when projects are scheduled for R/W, mitigation, construction, etc.

Response: At this time, TARPO staff is not comfortable placing schedule information in the document, primarily because schedules are constantly changing and the information would likely be outdated very soon (possibly even before the time of plan adoption). As an alternative, TARPO does maintain an online database with current information on all programmed projects at http://www.tarpo.org/topics/project_gateway.shtml. A reference to this online database was added to the document.

On the acknowledgements page, I would put the DOT folks last on the list.

Response: All the acknowledgements are listed in alphabetical order, which seems to be the fairest method for listing these.

Objective 2.1, first bullet – “Participate in project prescoping and scoping...” Note: PDEA will coordinate with local planners 6 months ahead of scoping meeting to start Community Impact Assessment process.

Response: noted and changed

It would be nice if local corporations wanted to sponsor/fund new bike/ped facilities.

Response: language added to Section 6 (funding) to make note of this possibility

At the end of Section 2, under “Implementation” – “Each of the action steps above represents an action that could be taken by TARPO and its local planning partners ~~in order~~ to implement an improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure network in the TARPO region.”

Response: text changed

How do we work in environmental challenges (i.e. not enough shoulder to put in more paved shoulder, which would require additional environmental work)?

Response: an action step was added under Objective 2.2 to discuss this, and language was added to the section on Implementation.

Health Benefits of Biking and Walking – I think we talked about getting local NC data. Maybe points from Dr. Peterson.

Response: The “Benefits” section has been extensively revised to include more information taken from North Carolina sources and local-level data.

“Social Justice Benefits of Walking and Bicycling” – Is this social justice or environmental justice?

Response: changed heading to “Social Justice/Environmental Justice Benefits of Walking and Bicycling”

Online maps are nice.

Response: noted

Page 4-3, Paved Shoulder description – maybe say 4 feet is desirable. Resurfacing, we try to get 2 feet because we don’t want to get involved in moving ditch.

Response: text changed from “typically at least 4 feet” to “minimum 4 feet is recommended wherever possible”

Add cycle tracks and contra lanes to the list of facility types

Response: descriptions have been added for these facilities, with the note that they are not currently planned anywhere in the region but could be used in the future.

Use Wikimaps for public input

Response: staff is looking into this, and making every attempt to successfully do this. Regardless of whether the Wikimaps format works out, there will still be some mechanism for people to provide comments through the website.

Need to review the “Implementation” section

Response: Added an additional paragraph to the Implementation section to discuss the need for follow-up, tracking of performance, and future revisions to the plan.

Objective 1.4– How will the public input be used?

Response: an additional action bullet was added to note that the public comments should be used to inform decision making on plan adoption, project selection, and project design.

The document uses the word “regularly” in many objectives, but does not define this. Perhaps this could be addressed with some sort of annual status report.

Response: Added language to Objective 1.7 about producing an annual report documenting project status and any necessary plan updates.

Add school districts to the list of agencies in Objective 4.6.

Response: text changed

In section 3, can we add some benefits that are shown in local/state materials and plans (such as local bike & ped plans)? Can we pull some local data (for example, DHHS data or local health assessments)? Can we use economic benefit studies such as the ones done on the Outer Banks or for the American Tobacco Trail? Is it possible to incorporate the Housing+Transportation Index/Score? What about the Transportation Deserts study that was done in Chatham County?

Response: The “Benefits” section has been extensively revised to include more information taken from North Carolina sources and local-level data.

Add cycle tracks to the list of project types and definitions in Section 4

Response: added

Add a regionwide map of the priority network

Response: added to Section 4