

Memorandum

To: MPO Committee Members
From: Sandy Shackelford, Director of Planning & Transportation
Date: July 13, 2021
Reference: Smart Scale Round 5 Staff Recommendations

Purpose:

The MPO has been working to develop a new process to improve public engagement opportunities in its development of Smart Scale project applications. The framework that the MPO has established is to select up to two projects of regional interest that would benefit from additional public engagement and facilitate a process to refine the projects and prepare applications for Round 5 Smart Scale submissions.

Background:

CA-MPO has reviewed its process of identifying and selecting SMART SCALE projects to move forward in Round 5 with the MPO Committees in previous meeting. An overall schedule of project identification and preparation is included for your reference as we move through the selection process.

CA-MPO staff has continued to work with Albemarle County, Charlottesville City, and VDOT staff to develop suggested projects for consideration by the MPO committees and the Policy Board based on previous studies and plans that have been completed that they consider to be beneficial to both localities. In addition, another project was suggested by CTAC that was also added to the list of potential projects as reviewed in June.

Following the schedule and process that has been developed for the CA-MPO SMART SCALE project selection process, the MPO Technical Committee and CTAC will be asked to recommend the projects that will be prepared for SMART SCALE Round 5 applications, with CA-MPO staff supporting additional engagement for up to two of the recommended projects.

The list of potential projects that has been identified by staff for consideration by the MPO Policy Board is as follows:

- District Avenue Roundabout
- Hillsdale Avenue Extension
- Rivanna River Bike & Pedestrian Crossing
- Avon Street Corridor
- 5th Street Corridor

The project that was suggested by a CTAC member is a grade separated ramp between US 250 and US 29 with termini on 250 west of the intersection with US 29 and on US 29 near Seminole Court, referred to as the US 29/250 flyover.

Project slides are attached to this memo for reference and review.

Staff developed goals for the Round 5 process were to develop and submit SMART SCALE projects that:

- Will be competitive based on project costs and benefits;
- Have been vetted through a public process;
- Have demonstrated public support; and
- Are documented in existing plans/studies.

After reviewing each of the projects against the goals that staff had developed early in the process, staff is recommending moving forward with the following projects:

- District Avenue Roundabout
- Rivanna River Bike & Pedestrian Crossing (with additional engagement)
- Avon Street Corridor Multi-Modal Improvements: Extend bike and pedestrian infrastructure from Druid Avenue in Charlottesville to Avon Court Park and Ride in Albemarle
- 5th Street Corridor Intersection and Multi-Modal Improvements: Intersection improvements at 5th Street and 5th Street Station Parkway and extension of bike/pedestrian infrastructure to tie into recently approved Fifth Street Hubs and Trail project

Since the District Avenue roundabout, Avon Street Corridor, and 5th Street Corridor projects were all developed through a study that involved high levels of public engagement, staff is recommending that minimal engagement would be needed as part of the development of those applications. CA-MPO staff would plan to convene at least 1-2 meetings with a stakeholder group for each of these three projects as final applications are developed.

Staff is recommending additional support to develop an application for the Rivanna River Bike & Pedestrian Crossing that would include both technical support and additional public/stakeholder engagement. Staff recommend first exploring whether there are opportunities to further reduce the project costs, and then supporting the project through additional engagement as an application is prepared and submitted.

The Hillsdale South Extension project was not recommended to move forward due to the project expense. It is a project that is on the Constrained List in the Long Range Transportation Plan, but due to the project cost, it is unlikely to score competitively in SMART SCALE. The project could be considered for submission by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission if their four project slots are not otherwise committed closer to the application deadline.

The US 29/250 flyover project was also not recommended to move forward due to a number of factors. A similar project was considered during the development of the Hydraulic Small Area Plan and was not moved forward as a recommendation during the development of that plan. This project has not been vetted through a public process, is not included as a recommendation in any local or regional plans, and the cost of the project makes it unlikely to score competitively through the SMART SCALE process.

Recommendation:

Staff requests a recommendation from the MPO Technical Committee and CTAC to the Policy Board regarding the projects that should be submitted for SMART SCALE Round 5. Additionally, staff requests a recommendation on which of the project(s) should receive additional support during the application development. Table 1 summarizes the staff recommendation.

Table 1. Summary of staff recommended projects.

Project	Cost estimate (in millions)	Public Process	Plan	Staff Recommendation	Additional Engagement
District Avenue Roundabout	\$8.4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Minimal
Hillsdale South Extension	\$34.3	Yes	Yes	No	
Rivanna River Bike/Ped Crossing	\$11.3 - \$15.3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Avon Street Corridor	TBD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Minimal
Fifth Street Corridor	TBD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Minimal
29/250 Flyover	\$50	No	No	No	

If there are any questions or comments, please contact Sandy Shackelford at sshackelford@tjpd.org.

Table 2. Smart Scale Project Selection and Application Development Schedule

March 2021	Initial discussions about potential projects with MPO Committees.
April 2021 – May 2021	Receive requests for projects to be considered as Smart Scale applications from localities, CTAC, MPO Tech, and Regional Transit Partnership.
May 2021	Finalized list of projects requested for consideration from MPO committees and local governments will be presented to the MPO committees for initial review.
July 2021	CTAC and MPO Tech will make recommendations for up to two projects that should be selected for additional public engagement; the MPO Policy Board will select up to two projects that will move forward with additional public engagement.
September 2021	The Policy Board will appoint an advisory committee for each project that is selected as needing additional public engagement.
October 2021 – April 2022	MPO staff will facilitate public engagement process for selected projects.
February/March 2022	MPO staff will facilitate public workshops for all potential Smart Scale projects within the MPO region, coordinating with Charlottesville and Albemarle County.
April 2022	MPO staff will finalize project details with advisory committees based on additional public feedback received through the public workshops.
May 2022	Pre-application deadline.
June – July 2022	MPO staff will work with Charlottesville and Albemarle staff to coordinate requests for resolutions of support, economic development data, and any other supporting documentation needed for application submittals. MPO staff will coordinate with VDOT for any technical documentation that is needed for application submissions.
August 2022	Full application deadline.