

47
48 Chair Steve Schewel called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A roll call was performed. The
49 Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are
50 indicated above. Chair Steve Schewel reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was
51 being circulated.

52 **PRELIMINARIES:**

53 **2. Ethics Reminder**

54 Chair Steve Schewel read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of
55 interest with respect to matters coming before the Board and requested that if there were any
56 identified during the meeting for them to be announced. There were no known conflicts identified by
57 MPO Board members.

58 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

59 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. There were no
60 adjustments to the agenda.

61 **4. Public Comments**

62 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there were any members of the public signed up to speak. There
63 were no members of the public signed up to speak during the meeting.

64 **5. Directives to Staff**

65 The Directives to Staff were included in the agenda packet for review.

66 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

67 **6. Approval of October 19, 2016 MPO Board Meeting Minutes**

68 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there was any discussion of the October 19, 2016 meeting
69 minutes. Lydia Lavelle and Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that they had sent emails about minor
70 corrections prior to the meeting. Chair Steve Schewel asked for a motion to approve the October 19,

71 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the amended minutes.
72 Bernadette Pelissier seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

73 **ACTION ITEMS:**

74 **7. 2040 MTP Amendment #3 and D-O LRT LPA (Extension to NCCU) – Public Hearing**

75 Andy Henry, LPA Staff

76 Patrick McDonough, GoTriangle

77 At the October 19, 2016 MPO Board meeting, the MPO released an amendment to the Locally-
78 Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit system (D-O LRT) and an
79 amendment to the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for public comment. Both
80 amendments are to extend the D-O LRT from Alston Avenue to a station at the North Carolina Central
81 University (NCCU). Engineering studies have shown that the extension is technically feasible and
82 modeling indicates that the added station will generate high ridership.

83 Andy Henry stated that the MPO Board would vote on the two amendments on December 14,
84 2016. Andy Henry distinguished between the two concurrent public comment processes, the MPO
85 public comment process and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)/GoTriangle public comment
86 process which pertains specifically to the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA).

87 Chair Steve Schewel read a statement describing the two amendments and the two separate
88 public comment periods. Chair Steve Schewel provided instructions for participating in the
89 FTA/GoTriangle public comment process and noted that GoTriangle would be accepting comments
90 until December 7, 2016.

91 Patrick McDonough noted that the extension was in response to comments received during the
92 draft environmental impact statement (EIS), and that were made into commitments as part of the final
93 EIS and the record of decision to study how to connect NCCU to the D-O LRT. Patrick McDonough noted
94 that GoTriangle committed to pursuing the extension as part of the 2045 MTP process. Patrick

95 McDonough emphasized that the amendments were necessary for the project to qualify for federal
96 funding. Patrick McDonough concluded his presentation by reviewing maps of the proposed LRT.

97 Chair Steve Schewel declared the public hearing open.

98 Pamela Thorpe-Young, Director of External Affairs at NCCU, expressed enthusiastic support for
99 the NCCU extension on behalf of NCCU Chancellor Deborah Saunders White and Acting Chancellor
100 Johnson O. Akinleye. Pamela Thorpe-Young requested that the MPO Board amend the transit plan to
101 include the NCCU stop.

102 Jim G. Crawford asked Pamela Thorpe-Young about future enrollment and faculty and staff
103 employment projections at NCCU in order to get a sense of the population that would be served by the
104 extension. Pamela Thorpe-Young stated that there are currently 8,000 students at NCCU and the
105 university anticipates continued student body and faculty and staff growth. She added that the stop
106 would allow NCCU to offer programs and collaborative opportunities throughout the region, and
107 particularly in the City of Durham. Pamela Thorpe-Young concluded that the extension to the line
108 would benefit both on and off-campus students.

109 Chair Steve Schewel expressed his gratitude to Pamela Thorpe-Young and stated that the MPO
110 Board would vote accordingly in December.

111 Chair Steve Schewel declared the public hearing closed.

112 Andy Henry stated that he would bring this item back to the MPO Board in December along
113 with two sets of documents, a resolution for each of the amendments and a short document detailing
114 specific changes to the 2040 MTP, in preparation for the vote.

115 No further action was required by the MPO Board.

116 **8. SPOT P4.0 Division Needs Tier Project Priorities and Local Input Points**

117 Dale McKeel, LPA Staff

118 The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) Board
119 adopted a motion to do the following during its October meeting: 1) Extend public review and comment

120 period to November 9; 2) Grant DCHC MPO Lead Planning Agency (LPA) Staff the flexibility to coordinate
121 with other MPOs, RPOs, and divisions on the assignment of Local Input Points for the Division Needs
122 tier, and make modifications to preliminary assignment of points to maximize the number of funded
123 projects; 3) Request that Division 8 put Local Input Points toward the NC 751/O'Kelly Chapel Road
124 intersection; 4) Request that Division 7 put Local Input Points toward (a) Estes Drive Bike-Ped, (b) Jones
125 Ferry Rd Sidewalk, and (c) Barnes Street Sidewalk, in that priority order; and (5) Request that Division 5
126 put Local Input Points toward the Duke Belt Line Trail and not put points on the NC 751 widening
127 between NC 54 and Auto Park Blvd.

128 Dale McKeel stated that the deadline for entering points was extended until November 14, 2016
129 because of Hurricane Matthew. He also reviewed the different project level types of the Strategic
130 Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) program.

131 Dale McKeel stated that the MPO put 100 points towards the improvements to the NC
132 751/O'Kelly Chapel Road intersection and recommended that Division 8 put points on that project as
133 well. The MPO has been in touch with the division engineer and Division 8 is considering the request.
134 Local resident Charles Ritter wrote to the MPO and requested that they focus on safety improvements
135 to O'Kelly Chapel Road proper instead of improving the intersection due to the high number of accidents
136 that have occurred on the road. Dale McKeel commented that no project was submitted to SPOT for
137 improvements to the road itself. In response to a question from Chair Steve Schewel about how to
138 proceed, Dale McKeel recommended that the LPA Staff look into the concerns that were raised in
139 Charles Ritter's email and consider them during the next round of SPOT projects. Dale McKeel also
140 suggested that the LPA Staff should communicate their findings about the situation to Division 8. Vice
141 Chair Damon Seils and Dale McKeel discussed the role that the local jurisdiction might play in this
142 process moving forward. Jim G. Crawford discussed how regional growth has affected O'Kelly Chapel
143 Road and measures that have been taken to respond to concerns about the safety of the road. Dale

144 McKeel noted that there have been ongoing discussions between Division 8 and the MPO about some of
145 the specific issues pertaining to O’Kelly Chapel Road such as the American Tobacco Trail crossing, and
146 that the MPO is working with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to find
147 solutions to these concerns.

148 Dale McKeel stated that the MPO requested that Division 7 put points on three bicycle and
149 pedestrian projects. Since the last MPO Board meeting, the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization
150 (TARPO) has voted to donate sixty-five local points to the DCHC MPO for operation improvements to NC
151 54, a project that spans both the DCHC MPO and TARPO region. The Technical Committee (TC)
152 recommends accepting the donated points and the MPO is now requesting that Division 7 put points on
153 this project as well.

154 Dale McKeel, Ed Harrison, and David Bonk discussed the source of NCDOT funding for bicycle
155 and pedestrian projects at the division level.

156 Vice Chair Damon Seils and Dale McKeel discussed what the operational improvements to NC 54
157 might entail and other projects that were proposed for the relevant section of NC 54.

158 Ellen Reckhow stated that at the last Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) meeting, there was
159 a group discussion about long and short term improvements to NC 54. Ellen Reckhow asked whether
160 any of the short term improvements discussed by the RTA group would be included in the operational
161 improvements. Dale McKeel stated that he was unfamiliar with the work of the group and Patrick
162 McDonough clarified the parameters of the NC 54 project. Ellen Reckhow and Patrick McDonough
163 discussed the challenges that might arise in trying to make improvements to ease the congestion on NC
164 54. Dale McKeel clarified that the section of NC 54 being discussed was west of Carrboro, and primarily a
165 two-lane rural roadway.

166 The MPO requested that Division 5 not put points on the NC 751 project between NC 54 and
167 Auto Park Boulevard and instead put points on the Duke Belt Line Trail.

168 Chair Steve Schewel acknowledged Charles Ritter's comment about the O'Kelly Chapel Road
169 project and declared the public hearing open. There were no public comments. Chair Steve Schewel
170 declared the public hearing closed.

171 David Keilson, NCDOT Division 5, stated that although it seemed that the Duke Belt Line Trail
172 would fall below the estimated funding cut off, Division 5 has received new information and is working
173 to see if it can accommodate putting points on the project without negatively impacting other projects.
174 Ed Harrison and David Keilson discussed how project size affects the likelihood of funding. Chair Steve
175 Schewel clarified that the new information means that the Duke Belt Line Project would not fall below
176 the cut off, and David Keilson stated that there was now at least a small possibility that this would be
177 the case. David Keilson and Chair Steve Schewel discussed the timeline for finalizing point allocations. Ed
178 Harrison and David Keilson resumed their discussion of the effect of project size on funding.

179 Ellen Reckhow and David Keilson discussed whether the NC 751 widening was still being
180 included in the division's point allocation. Ellen Reckhow described a recent experience on NC 751 and
181 concluded that the proposed widening would only speed traffic up for one stretch of the road and would
182 lead to a bottleneck at the light of NC 751 and NC 54.

183 Ellen Reckhow commented on the rise of popularity of bicycling and noted that the Belt Line
184 Trail project would improve the safety of bicyclists in the downtown area. Chair Steve Schewel
185 reiterated his support for the Duke Belt Line project.

186 Pat Wilson, NCDOT Division 7, stated that his division would support all three bicycle and
187 pedestrian projects suggested by the MPO, in addition to the NC 54 operational improvements project.
188 Pat Wilson added that the division would also support the Orange Grove Road extension project in
189 Hillsborough. Ed Harrison inquired whether the division had the funding for all of these projects, and Pat
190 Wilson stated that while these projects have to be programmed, funding is available.

191 Jennifer Britt, NCDOT Division 8, stated there were no updates for Division 8. Jennifer Britt
192 stated that she asked the division engineer about the NC 751/O’Kelly Chapel Road project, but has not
193 yet received a response. Jim G. Crawford highlighted some of the problems with O’Kelly Chapel Road
194 and noted that any kind of expedited study would be helpful. Jennifer Britt stated that the speed limit
195 has been lowered to 45 mph in the area and that there is currently a project on O’Kelly Chapel Road to
196 do pavement markings and insert rumble strips.

197 Pam Hemminger made a motion to approve the final Local Input Points Assignment and approve
198 requests to Division 5, 7, and 8 on the assignment of Division Local Input Points. Vice Chair Damon Seils
199 seconded the motion. Vice Chair Damon Seils noted that the resolution needed to be amended to refer
200 to “division” needs instead of “regional” needs and Dale McKeel agreed that this was the case. The
201 motion carried unanimously.

202 Bernadette Pelissier made a motion to accept the donation of Local Input Points for NC 54
203 operation improvements from TARPO. Pam Hemminger seconded the motion. The motion carried
204 unanimously.

205 **9. Election of DCHC MPO Board Officers for 2017**

206 Steve Schewel, Board Chair

207 Felix Nwoko, LPA Manager

208 Chair Steve Schewel asked for volunteers for a committee to nominate officers for the 2017
209 MPO Board. Bernadette Pelissier, Ellen Reckhow, Jim G. Crawford, and Don Moffitt volunteered to
210 serve on the nominating committee.

211 Chair Steve Schewel suggested that the committee convene after the MPO Board meeting and
212 officially appointed the committee.

213 No further action was required by the MPO Board.

214 **REPORTS:**

215 **10. Report from the DCHC MPO Board Chair**

216 Steve Schewel, DCHC MPO Board Chair

217 Chair Steve Schewel read a poem, "To Be of Use" by Marge Piercy, to the MPO Board.

218 **11. Report from the DCHC MPO Technical Committee Chair**

219 David Bonk, DCHC MPO TC Chair

220 There was no report from the DCHC MPO TC Chair.

221 **12. Reports from LPA Staff**

222 Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

223 Felix Nwoko stated that the joint meeting with Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
224 (CAMPO) would occur at the Friday Center on November 30, 2016 at 9 a.m. Felix Nwoko reviewed the
225 tentative agenda for the joint meeting and noted that he was trying to find speakers to discuss the
226 implications of the disconnect between the two MPOs regarding the commuter rail. Felix Nwoko noted
227 that the removal of the 10% cap and the corridor cap would be discussed as part of the legislative
228 agenda.

229 Ellen Reckhow inquired whether the LPA Staff was going to do preliminary work on the MPO
230 legislative agenda, and Felix Nwoko clarified that they would and that there would be a draft legislative
231 agenda on the removal of the two caps. Felix Nwoko noted that CAMPO is also thinking through these
232 issues and that he hoped to have a draft agenda that would be presented at the joint November 30th
233 meeting to the MPO Board shortly.

234 Ellen Reckhow brought up an issue which was raised at the North Carolina Association of County
235 Commissioners (NCACC). She stated that rural areas feel like they are not receiving enough funding, as
236 there is too much focus on urban congestion. Ellen Reckhow pointed out that there was not enough
237 funding to go around and that many needs are unmet all around. Ellen Reckhow stated that she hoped
238 that the need for more resources would be discussed as part of the MPO's legislative agenda. Jim W.
239 Crawford agreed that the lack of funding is a serious issue and stated that he was trying to convince the
240 legislature to approve a penny sales tax and reduce the gas tax. Jim W. Crawford discussed how more
241 energy efficient cars have reduced revenue from the gas tax, and noted that a penny sales tax would

242 grow with the economy and would be better suited to the needs of a growing population. Ellen Reckhow
243 and Jim W. Crawford discussed whether Virginia recently passed a sales tax for roads.

244 Bernadette Pelissier proposed a discussion of public/private partnerships to resolve some of
245 these funding issues. Felix Nwoko and Bernadette Pelissier discussed whether increasing funding for
246 roads might take the form of a statewide transportation bond. Chair Steve Schewel stated that the MPO
247 should advocate for more funding and not necessarily focus on how to acquire funds. Chair Steve
248 Schewel asked Bernadette Pelissier to talk more with Felix Nwoko in order to help him to prepare for a
249 funding discussion.

250 Ed Harrison commented that those attending the meeting at the Friday Center, particularly
251 attendees from Wake County, would face heavy morning traffic and that this might help support the
252 case for LRT. Vice Chair Damon Seils noted that the Friday Center is very accessible by public
253 transportation.

254 **11. NCDOT Reports:**

255 David Keilson, NCDOT Division 5, stated that a meeting between the Department of
256 Transportation, the City, and Traffic Engineering staff has been scheduled to discuss how to address
257 congestion at Exit 13 of the Durham Freeway. David Keilson noted that changes should already be in
258 place to help ease the congestion at the NC 98 exit of US 70. Ellen Reckhow asked for details about
259 these changes and David Keilson stated that he did not currently have the relevant details.

260 Pat Wilson, NCDOT Division 7, stated that a public meeting for the Greensboro Street and Estes
261 Drive project in Carrboro will be held on Monday, November 14, 2016, to discuss a potential
262 roundabout. Pat Wilson stated that Ephesus Church Road is closed due to an ongoing project. Good
263 weather has been conducive to getting work done on the project. Ed Harrison noted that speed tables
264 have been put in due to this project. Ed Harrison, Pam Hemminger, and Pat Wilson discussed a
265 breakdown in communication that occurred leading up to this project and measures that were taken to

266 reroute traffic from relevant areas. Ed Harrison commended the project team leader, John Howell, for
267 being responsive to individuals in neighborhoods affected by this project. Pat Wilson noted that John
268 Howell would be transitioning to Alamance County after the completion of the project.

269 David Bonk asked for updates on the Mt. Carmel Church Road/Bennett Road project and the
270 investigation of improvements at the Merritt Mill/Franklin Street intersection.

271 Pat Wilson stated that there were some historical and archeological issues associated with the
272 Mt. Carmel Church Road/Bennett Road project, and the design of the project was adjusted accordingly.
273 Pat Wilson stated that the archeological folks are fine with the design and that the division is awaiting
274 information from the historical folks. Pat Wilson noted that once the division gets the historical
275 information, they can finalize the design and purchase the necessary right-of-way in order to meet the
276 June 2017 let date.

277 Pat Wilson stated that the division is exploring alternatives and looking at costs pertaining to
278 the Merritt Mill/Franklin Street project. Pat Wilson discussed some budgetary issues pertaining to
279 project, and noted that attempts were being made to keep Chapel Hill in the loop. Pat Wilson stated
280 that the staff recently met and are trying to get better costs for the right-of-way and construction of
281 the project. Pam Hemminger asked about the specific alternatives that were being considered and Pat
282 Wilson explained how costs associated with one potential solution, a roundabout, would drive up
283 overall project costs exponentially. Pat Wilson noted that one alternative, although unfavorable, may
284 be to do nothing until a different type of project could be considered for the next round of SPOT.

285 Vice Chair Damon Seils noted that this would affect both Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Vice Chair
286 Damon Seils asked for and received clarification about the time of the meeting.

287 Pam Hemminger asked for an update about the roundabout at Pope Road, Old Durham Road,
288 and Old Chapel Hill Road. Dale McKeel stated that this was part of the Old Durham - Old Chapel Hill

289 Road project and that the Durham section of the project, which extends from Garrett Road to Pope
290 Road, is scheduled to be let in February 2017.

291 Jennifer Britt, NCDOT Division 8, stated that the O’Kelly Chapel Road project has been let, and
292 that Clark Pavement received the contract. She noted that the project, which is for 6-inch wide edge
293 line and rumble/thermo markings, is expected to be complete by July 30, 2017. Jennifer Britt stated
294 that the resurfacing contract for Farrington boat access is about 50% complete. Jennifer Britt also
295 noted that the construction of a southbound left turn lane on NC 751 at New Hope Church Road was
296 just let and the scheduled completion date is February 27, 2018.

297 Julie Bollinger, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, discussed the impact of the Reorganization
298 Through Reduction (RTR) program on her branch. She noted that they have lost nine people and eight
299 vacancies through the voluntary RTR program, and that they will lose an additional two people in order to
300 meet the goal of reducing the department by eleven people. Julie Bollinger stated that planning staff has
301 been reduced from thirty to twenty-two in her division. Julie Bollinger stated that a reorganization plan
302 should be available by November 14, 2016.

303 Julie Bollinger noted that duties might shift for some members of her branch and that the division
304 may rely more on consultants in the future, but that this should not affect the MPO in a noticeable way.

305 There was no report from NCDOT Traffic Operations.

306 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

307 **12. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

308 Ed Harrison read an excerpt from a Garrison Keillor essay about a public figure.

309 Chair Steve Schewel introduced Aaron Cain, a new member of the MPO staff.

310 **ADJOURNMENT:**

311 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at

312 10:22 a.m.