

1 **DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD**

2 **November 9, 2016**

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4 **MINUTES OF MEETING**

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6 The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on  
7 November 9, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in the City Council Committee Room, located on the second  
8 floor of Durham City Hall. The following people were in attendance:  
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10	Steve Schewel (MPO Board Chair)	City of Durham
11	Damon Seils (MPO Board Vice Chair)	Town of Carrboro
12	Jim G. Crawford (Member)	Chatham County
13	Don Moffitt (Member)	City of Durham
14	Ellen Reckhow (Member)	Durham County
15	Bernadette Pelissier (Member)	GoTriangle
16	Barry Jacobs (Member)	Orange County
17	Pam Hemminger (Member)	Town of Chapel Hill
18	Jim W. Crawford (Member)	NC Board of Transportation
19	Lydia Lavelle (Alternate)	Town of Carrboro
20	Ed Harrison (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill
21		
22	David Keilson	NCDOT, Division 5
23	Ed Lewis	NCDOT, Division 7
24	Patrick Wilson	NCDOT, Division 7
25	Jennifer Britt	NCDOT, Division 8
26	Julie Bollinger	NCDOT, TPB
27	Max Bushell	Orange County
28	Bergen Watterson	Town of Carrboro
29	David Bonk	Town of Chapel Hill
30	Geoff Green	GoTriangle
31	Katharine Eggleston	GoTriangle
32	Patrick McDonough	GoTriangle
33	Tammy Bouchelle	GoTriangle
34	Meghan McKoid	GoTriangle
35	Terry Bellamy	City of Durham
36	Ellen Beckmann	City of Durham
37	Hannah Jacobson	Durham City/County Planning
38	Eddie Dancausse	Federal Highway Administration
39	Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
40	Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
41	Dale McKeel	DCHC MPO
42	Brian Rhodes	DCHC MPO
43	Margaret Scully	DCHC MPO
44	Pamela Thorpe-Young	NCCU
45	Chandra Christmas-Rouse	Duke
46	Taruna Tayal	VHB

47  
48 Quorum Count: 9 of 10 Voting Members

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

55 **PRELIMINARIES:**

56 **2. Ethics Reminder**

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

61 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

62 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. There were no  
63 adjustments to the agenda.

64 **4. Public Comments**

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

67 **5. Directives to Staff**

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

69 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

71 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there was any discussion of the October 19, 2016 meeting  
72 minutes. Lydia Lavelle and Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that they had sent emails about minor

73 corrections prior to the meeting. Chair Steve Schewel asked for a motion to approve the October 19,  
74 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the amended minutes.  
75 Bernadette Pelissier seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

76 **ACTION ITEMS:**

77 **7. 2040 MTP Amendment #3 and D-O LRT LPA (Extension to NCCU) – Public Hearing**

78 Andy Henry, LPA Staff

79 Patrick McDonough, GoTriangle

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

86 Andy Henry stated that the MPO Board would vote on the two amendments on December 14,  
87 2016. Andy Henry distinguished between the two concurrent public comment processes, the MPO  
88 public comment process and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)/GoTriangle public comment  
89 process which pertains specifically to the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA).

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

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

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

100 Chair Steve Schewel declared the public hearing open.

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

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

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

114 Chair Steve Schewel declared the public hearing closed.

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

118 No further action was required by the MPO Board.

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

120 Dale McKeel, LPA Staff

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

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

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

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

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

151 Dale McKeel stated that the MPO requested that Division 7 put points on three bicycle and  
152 pedestrian projects. Since the last MPO Board meeting, the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization  
153 (TARPO) has voted to donate sixty-five local points to the DCHC MPO for operation improvements to NC  
154 54, a project that spans both the DCHC MPO and TARPO region. The Technical Committee (TC)  
155 recommends accepting the donated points and the MPO is now requesting that Division 7 put points on  
156 this project as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

209 Steve Schewel, Board Chair  
210 Felix Nwoko, LPA Manager

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

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

216 No further action was required by the MPO Board.

217 **REPORTS:**

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

219 Steve Schewel, DCHC MPO Board Chair



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

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

222 David Bonk, DCHC MPO TC Chair

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

224 **12. Reports from LPA Staff**

225 Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

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

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

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

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

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

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

257 **11. NCDOT Reports:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

308 There was no report from NCDOT Traffic Operations.

309 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

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

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

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

313 **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

315 10:22 a.m.