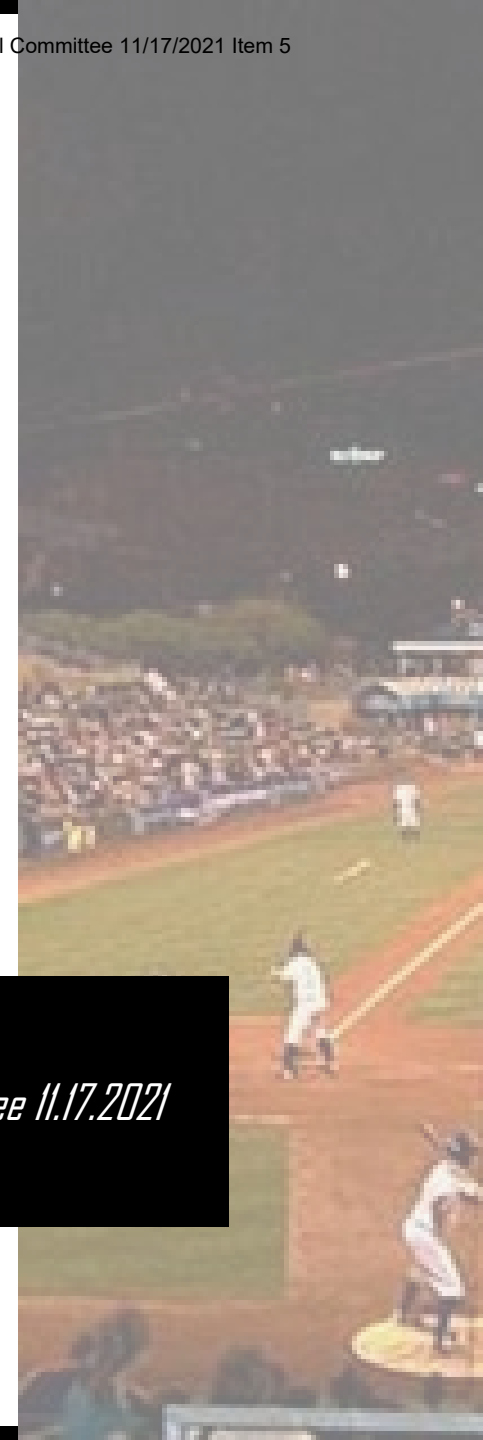
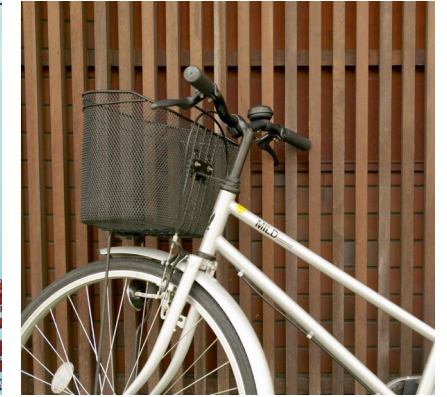


DCHC
MPO

GOVERNANCE STUDY DRAFT

Review with Technical Committee 11.17.2021





1. Brief Review of DCHC MPO Governance Project
2. Review of Recommendations
3. Comments to Present to MPO Board

AGENDA

11.17.2021

PURPOSE OF DCHC MPO GOVERNANCE STUDY

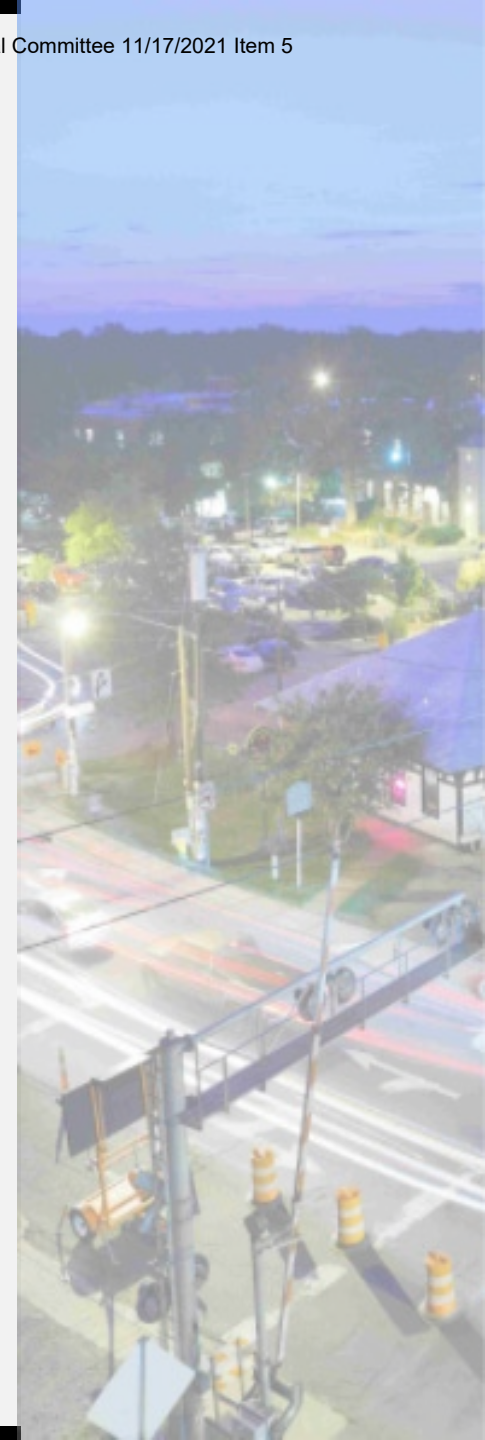
and what it seeks to accomplish

The Governance Study is...

- Intended to ensure that the DCHC MPO is conducting its activities and using its resources in the most **efficient and economical** manner
- Serving as a leader in transportation planning and policy while being **responsive to the priorities** of its member jurisdictions and agencies
- Provide a **suite of recommendations, both minor and visionary**, that address the concerns, ideas, and objectives presented by the MPO membership

The Governance Study is NOT...

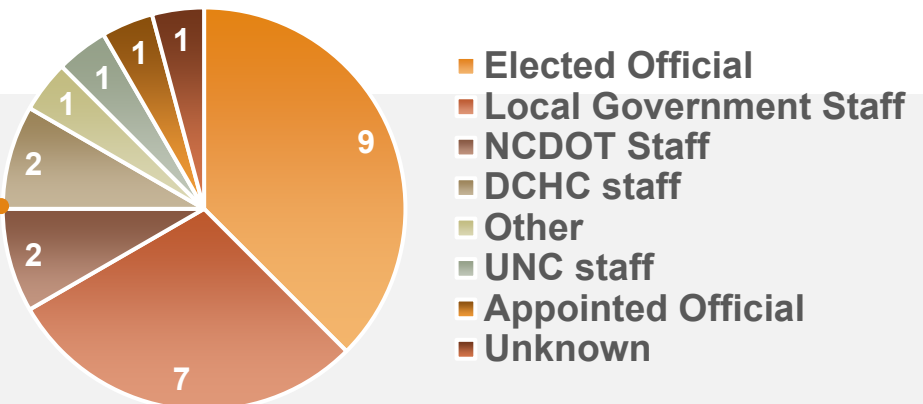
- Assigning individual responsibility, or avoid acknowledging where there have been successes
- Recommending the application of other practices without an understanding the unique nature and goals of DCHC
- Attempting to create detailed recommendations by glossing over important details or before consulting with this board on their objectives for the MPO



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Work Completed

- Four Peer Studies (CAMPO, Nashville, Charlotte, Richmond)
- Eleven Staff Interviews / Financial Review
- Five Meetings with Advisory Committee
- Draft Report Edits and Updates (e.g., survey)
- Third-Party Review (*Jeff Kramer, Center for Urban Transportation Research, USF*)
- **24 Survey Responses**
- **Draft Recommendations (57 in 8 categories)**



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Findings / Highlights *(but there is a lot to unpack)*

- 70% of Survey Respondents gave a “7” score or lower (out of 10) when asked if the goals of MPO staff and elected officials align
- There is some, perhaps growing, sentiment that the missions of the City of Durham and that of the MPO are too intertwined in practice and not sufficiently objective in representation
- Staffing areas of expertise as well as state legislation do not mirror the desires of the DCHC MPO to focus more heavily on walking, biking, and transit modes / projects
- The DCHC MPO spends a lot of energy on communication and disadvantaged groups, but more can be done
- NCDOT’s IMD (Integrated Mobility Division) and private sector partners are relationships that could see the most improvement in the near future



How to Read the Report if you have...

5 minutes: Read the summary

15 minutes: Read the summary and the recommendations section

Longer: Context elements, survey results, interviews, and recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Comments

- DCHC MPO is doing a very good job of meeting or exceeding federal requirements, including certification compliance
- Staff talents are focused on technical skills but more policy-focused efforts will require additional or different skills
- Some concerns over the degree of integration and potential for bias between MPO (regional) and Durham (city) functions

Recommendations

- Keep federal compliance practices in place now, perhaps adding considerations of succession training
- Conduct separate, formal review process of both voting / quorum goals and practices as well as LPA oversight with the goals of achieving more jurisdictional representation, objectivity, and efficiency
- Improve and Update Policy Board Member (and staff) orientation package, including organization chart, staff role(s), ongoing refresher opportunities



RECOMMENDATIONS: POLICY & ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTIONS

Comments

- Survey results as well as some interviews suggested that staff goals and MPO goals are not sufficiently in alignment
- Presentations are generally good, as are agenda review times, but both the agenda information and presentations could be improved to provide consistent information at various levels of detail
- There were numerous comments about doing more with walking, bicycling, and transit modes, which are stymied in part because of state-level legislative actions in the near past

Recommendations

- Actuate the role of the MPO Board in the hiring of key staff and development of budgets and workplans
- Informal gatherings not related to a burning issue and refresher “clinics” on topics of interest would help strengthen internal MPO communications
- Conduct pre-Board conference calls to review the agenda in advance
- Develop presentation guides, and modify agendas to have an expanded consent agenda and high-level summaries
- Pursue NC legislative action, preferably with other large MPOs
- Require presentation, technical writing, and similar training for MPO front-line staff every two years, starting in 2022



RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFFING

Comments

- DCHC MPO Staff is generally responsive to inquiries, although some stakeholders expressed the need to articulate staff roles more clearly
- Capacity and Staff expertise are sufficient to meet the (expanding) basic requirements for a progressive MPO, but not for tackling major, long-term challenges in top of those requirements
- Similarly, optimal usage of funding for MPO staff support to local jurisdictions would be boosted by discontinuing the (cumbersome) practice of funding local government staff positions

Recommendations

- Strategic hires could include transit, full-time bike-pedestrian planner, public relations/engagement officer, project manager, funding / financing specialist (or combination of these last two)
- Opportunities for and clarification of in-kind labor matching or other local financing options would be highly beneficial, particularly for smaller member governments
- The practice of subsidizing local government staff doing regional planning work should be discontinued, with project exceptions, to help ensure that MPO funds are being used most efficiently and with oversight by the MPO Board on projects that benefit the region



RECOMMENDATIONS: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Comments

- More opportunities for pre-meeting collaboration, especially on cross-jurisdictional or controversial projects, is needed (also a function of MPO staff capacity and priorities)
- Expanding the role of the MPO in public transportation, an important goal for many DCHC MPO members, is likely to receive greater support and attention
- Interactions with NCDOT for multimodal planning and programming would be useful (partially a function of NCDOT staff capacity and siloed roles)

Recommendations

- Apart from making a strategic hire for a transit planner, is to continue the focus on clarifying and strengthening relationships with GoTriangle, PART, and counties including GoWake
- Similarly, encourage NCDOT staff representing the Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) to attend more Technical Committee and MPO Board meetings, especially as NCDOT improves staff levels



RECOMMENDATIONS: FUNDING

Comments

- There are few, if any, MPOs that feel that their funding levels are adequate (Hampton Roads, VA being one possible exception), although the role of MPOs as regards funding is starting to change
- State and Federal funding levels, especially for Division Tier projects, are highly competitive and in short supply
- Policy and legislative actions at the state level are creating limitations on how fast DCHC MPO can achieve multimodal and safety goals

Recommendations

- Reallocate or hire for funding capacity, and consider funding / financing a real goal for the MPO
- Create a New Funding Source(s), perhaps through an affiliated regional management agency
- Incentivize more cross-jurisdictional projects that require interagency collaboration, including funding support



RECOMMENDATIONS: DATA SHARING & MANAGEMENT

Comments

- The recent and ongoing changes to the MPO's website are very positive
- With such a strong technical capacity, working with local jurisdictions to communicate and refine data sets would help local planning efforts
- Data needs to be communicated at the right level for the audience: interactive maps for officials and public; data downloads in GIS or flat file format for staff users
- Continue to supplement data sources

Recommendations

- Conduct third-party review of updated website, possibly including user survey, to ensure ease of use and functionality
- Create data portal for advanced data users, including for demographic and other data to support efforts to reach disadvantaged or vulnerable populations
- Prioritize information by function to limit clicks to reach the right place
- Consider how to communicate all this to policymakers and the public, especially at meetings, through expanded use of graphics and accessible language



RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Comments

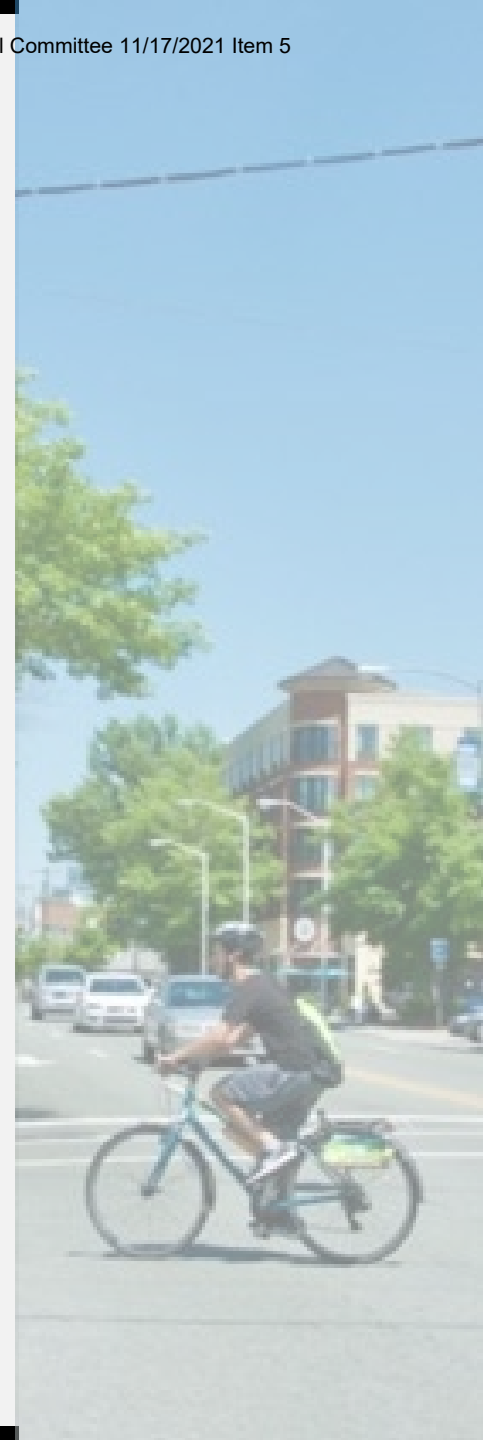
- The DCHC MPO values engagement of the general public and especially disadvantaged populations extremely highly, and there is always room to grow and learn new techniques
- There is a real desire to achieve a good feedback between the actions that the MPO is taking to engage the public and how well those efforts are working to help create an ecosystem of continuous innovation and improvement

Recommendations

- Update the Public Participation Plan to include new performance metrics, best practices, and targets
- Work with a partner like a university to help DCHC MPO and local / regional governments build and maintain a database of participants
- Add a K-12 public school system representative to the TC (new)
- Create a performance dashboard, preferably on the MPO website
- Acquire third-party tools that are free or inexpensive to review policies and projects through an equity lens (including health-related impacts)

YOUR COMMENTS & IDEAS

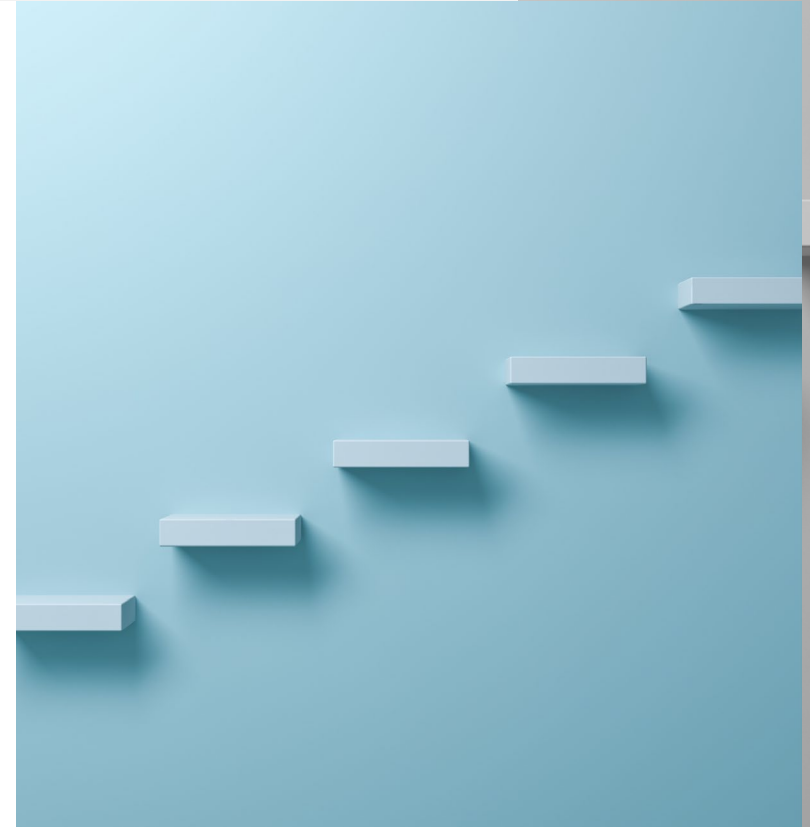
What do we need to communicate to the MPO Board in December?

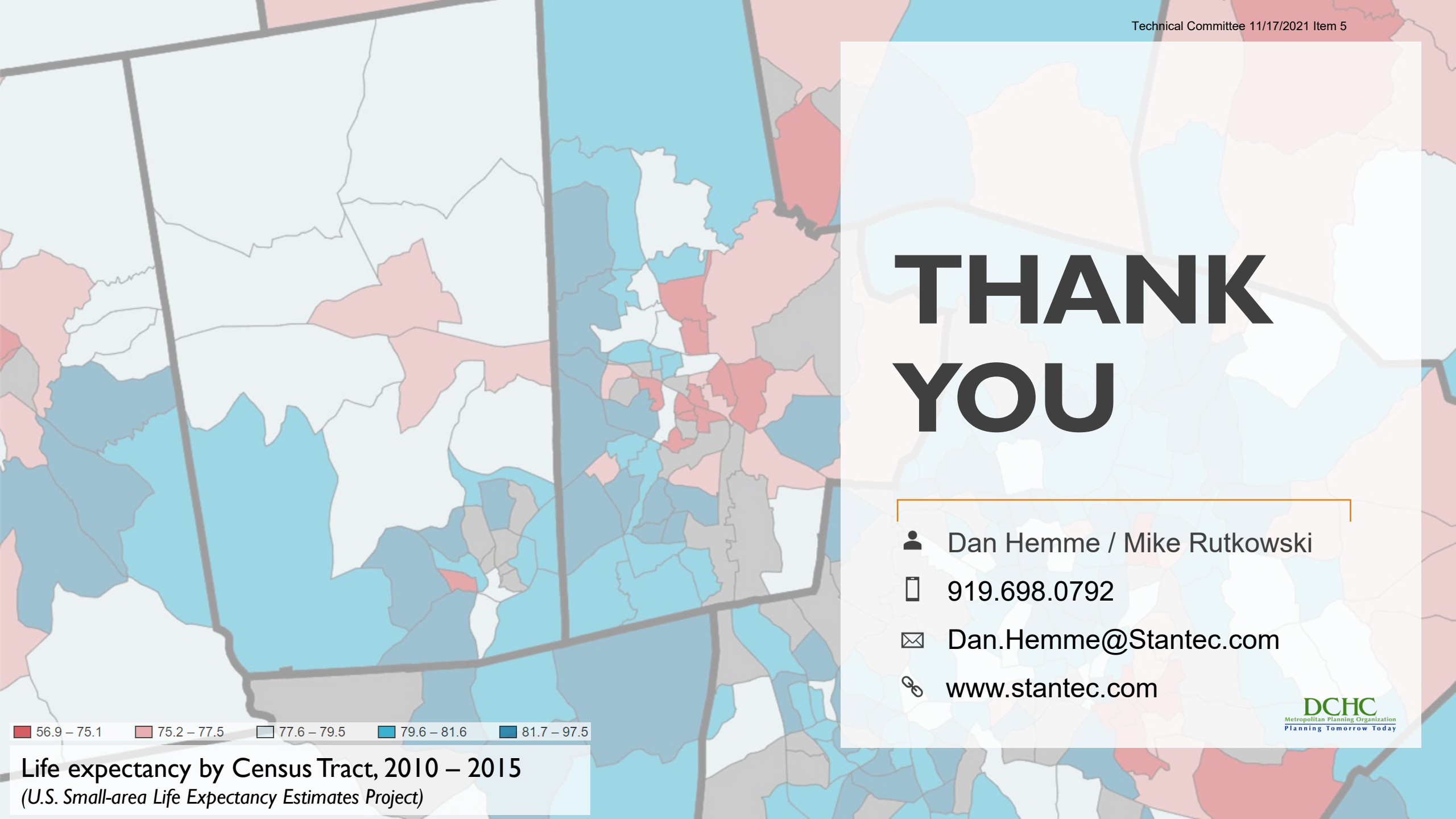


NEXT STEPS





Getting to Completion

1. Review and Revise
2. Present to MPO Board (12.2021)
3. Final Report (12.2021)





THANK YOU

-  Dan Hemme / Mike Rutkowski
-  919.698.0792
-  Dan.Hemme@Stantec.com
-  www.stantec.com

Life expectancy by Census Tract, 2010 – 2015
(U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project)

■ 56.9 – 75.1 ■ 75.2 – 77.5 ■ 77.6 – 79.5 ■ 79.6 – 81.6 ■ 81.7 – 97.5