

**DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

January 22, 2020

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Committee met on January 22, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, located on the first floor of Durham City Hall. The following people were in attendance:

Nish Trivedi (Chair)	Orange County Planning
Ellen Beckmann (Vice Chair)	City of Durham
Kayla Seibel (Member)	City of Durham Planning
Evan Tenenbaum (Member)	City of Durham
Bergen Watterson (Member)	Chapel Hill Planning
Jomar Pastorelle (Member)	Chapel Hill Planning
Tina Moon (Member)	Carrboro Planning
Zach Hallock (Member)	Carrboro Planning
Margaret Hauth (Member)	Hillsborough
Scott Whiteman (Member)	Durham County Planning
Brooke Ganser (Member)	Durham County Planning
Tom Altieri (Member)	Orange County Planning
Theo Letman (Member)	Orange Public Transportation
Chance Mullis (Member)	Chatham County
Julie Bogle (Member)	NCDOT TPD
John Grant (Member)	NCDOT TPD
John Hodges-Copple (Member)	Triangle J Council of Governments
Jay Heikes (Member)	GoTriangle
Scott Levitan (Member)	Research Triangle Foundation
Kurt Stolka (Member)	University of North Carolina
Matt Cecil (Alternate)	Chapel Hill Transit/Planning
Bill Judge (Alternate)	City of Durham
David Keilson (Alternate)	NCDOT, Division 5
Bryan Kluchar (Alternate)	NCDOT, Division 8
Katharine Eggleston (Alternate)	GoTriangle
Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
Brian Rhodes	DCHC MPO
Aaron Cain	DCHC MPO
Meg Scully	DCHC MPO
Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
Robert Jahn	DCHC MPO
Dale McKeel	DCHC MPO/City of Durham
Allyson Coltrane	Orange County Transit
Shelly Parker	Go Triangle

47 Stephen Robinson NCDOT Division 7
48 Sean Egan City of Durham

49 Quorum Count: 24 of 31 Voting Members

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51

52 Chair Nish Trivedi called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call was performed. The Voting
53 Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Technical Committee (TC) were identified and
54 are indicated above. Chair Nish Trivedi reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet. Aaron Cain
55 announced that Jay Heikes and Katharine Eggleston are the Member and Alternate for GoTriangle,
56 respectively.

57 **PRELIMINARIES:**

58 **2. Adjustments to the Agenda**

59 Aaron Cain requested to discuss item 9, *Submittal Candidates for SPOT 6*, following item 12,
60 *NCDOT Reports*. The TC Board agreed to discuss item 9 following item 12.

61 **3. Public Comments**

62 There were no comments from the public.

63 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

64 **4. Approval of December 18, 2019, Meeting Minutes**

65 There was no discussion of the Consent Agenda.

66 Tom Altieri made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Margaret Hauth seconded the
67 motion. The motion passed unanimously.

68 **ACTION ITEMS:**

69 **5. Election of TC Officers for 2020**

70 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

71 Aaron Cain stated that Nish Trivedi and Ellen Beckmann were nominated for Chair and Vice
72 Chair of the TC, respectively.

73 Margaret Hauth made a motion to re-elect Nish Trivedi for Chair and Ellen Beckmann for Vice
 74 Chair of the TC Board for 2020. Jay Heikes seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

75 **6. Draft FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program**
 76 **Meg Scully, LPA Staff**

77 Meg Scully stated that the DCHC MPO is required by federal regulations to prepare an annual
 78 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that details and guides the urban area transportation planning
 79 activities. Meg Scully added that minor edits were made in the UPWP to reflect comments received from
 80 Orange County and NCDOT.

81 Zach Hallock made a motion to recommend that the MPO Board hold a public hearing and
 82 approve the Draft FY21 Unified Planning Work Program. Jay Heikes seconded the motion. The motion
 83 passed unanimously.

84 **7. Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Update**
 85 **Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle**
 86 **John Hodges-Copple, TJCOG**
 87 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

88 Jay Heikes discussed the background of the Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) project and its next
 89 steps. Jay Heikes stated that the CRT study was conducted to discover if there were scenarios where it
 90 would be eligible for federal funding. Jay Heikes added that another reason the CRT study was
 91 conducted was to identify the additional activities that were needed before the initial project design and
 92 implementation phases. Jay Heikes added that ridership and necessary infrastructure were important.
 93 Jay Heikes stated that the five major categories of the CRT project are; preplanning, planning,
 94 preliminary engineering, final design, and construction. Jay Heikes added that the project is currently in
 95 the planning phase.

96 Andy Henry and Jay Heikes discussed that North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) Division will perform
 97 the Railroad Traffic Capacity (RTC) modeling, and would be reimbursed. Felix Nwoko and Katharine
 98 Eggleston discussed the procedures and expected data points for the RTC modeling. Vice Chair Ellen

99 Beckmann and Katharine Eggleston discussed rail capacity issues as it related to the RTC. John Hodges-
100 Copple discussed possible challenges that CRT might incur to freight rail timeliness. Katharine Eggleston
101 added that resiliency would be a necessary component to the success of the CRT. There was discussion
102 about the infrastructure needs of the CRT project and how information would be related to the
103 necessary stakeholders.

104 Jay Heikes presented information on cost and ridership for different route and frequency
105 scenarios of the CRT project. Jay Heikes recommended that ridership be refined as the CRT project
106 progresses. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and Jay Heikes discussed that GoTriangle has presented
107 information about the CRT to Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO) and
108 staff from Johnston County also has access to information. Jay Heikes added that the Johnston County
109 Board of Commissioners has not yet been briefed on the CRT study. Jay Heikes added that there will be a
110 stakeholder meeting on January 29 at 2 p.m. at the Frontier in Research Triangle Park. Tom Altieri and
111 Katharine Eggleston discussed that there are plans to present the CRT project information to the Orange
112 County Board of County Commissioners in February.

113 Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and Katharine Eggleston discussed that representatives from Orange
114 County have signaled that due to the projected relatively low ridership and high cost, Orange County
115 would likely choose to abstain from funding subsequent phases of the study. Katharine Eggleston added
116 that representatives from Johnston County indicated that they will likely pursue further evaluation of
117 the CRT project. Felix Nwoko and Katharine Eggleston discussed that any additional construction phases
118 of the CRT project would not be included in the submittal to FTA as a single project. John Hodges-Copple
119 discussed capital and operating costs in Orange County and how that might impact their decisions. Felix
120 Nwoko and Jay Heikes discussed potential funding sources. Jay Heikes added that additional financial
121 capacity modeling and assumptions are a likely part of the next phase of study. Vice Chair Ellen
122 Beckmann and Katharine Eggleston discussed the potential for cost sharing agreements for capital costs

123 with NCR. Katharine Eggleston added that cost sharing would be negotiated in a later phase. There was
124 further discussion about access to information undertaken by NCR for the RTC modeling. There was
125 discussion about security concerns surrounding information gathered in the RTC modeling.

126 Jay Heikes stated that elected officials would have to make decisions about cost sharing
127 agreements across counties. Jay Heikes discussed that future phases of the study will increase the
128 amount of funding needed to continue the CRT project. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann, Felix Nwoko, and Jay
129 Heikes discussed the opportunity costs of stakeholder support of the CRT project. Jay Heikes discussed
130 the criteria that Federal Transit Administration (FTA) uses to score transit projects and how the CRT
131 project is projected to score for different scenarios. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and Jay Heikes discussed
132 that all scenarios for the CRT project contain an amount of risk. Jay Heikes presented information
133 comparing different scenarios of the CRT project to other CRT projects across the United States. Jay
134 Heikes stated that other CRT projects that have lower costs also have lower amounts of train service and
135 deal with significantly less freight or inter-city traffic. John Hodges-Copple noted that the low-cost CRT
136 projects also carry fewer riders. Jay Heikes presented information comparing different scenarios in the
137 CRT project to current transit services in the Triangle. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and Jay Heikes
138 discussed alternatives to CRT, including adding buses and bus routes. Jay Heikes discussed land-use
139 scenarios and the Simplified Trips-on-Project Software (STOPS) model.

140 Katharine Eggleston stated that FTA defines four categories of risk; requirement, design, market,
141 and construction. Katharine Eggleston stated that GoTriangle is attempting to mitigate risk. Katharine
142 Eggleston stated that the next phase of study will include Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
143 between the project management partners, which include; the counties, the MPOs, GoTriangle and
144 NCR. Katharine Eggleston added that the MOU will contain information about mitigating risk, scope,
145 federal funding eligibility, and funding commitments.

146 **8. Durham Transit Plan FY20 Amendment - Bus Stop Construction**
147 **Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle**

148 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

149 Aaron Cain stated that \$500,000 was programmed for the design of 50 bus stop improvements for
150 GoDurham in the FY20 Durham Transit Tax Annual Work Plan. Aaron Cain continued that work has
151 proceeded at a pace so that construction can be scheduled for 10 bus stops in FY20 rather than in FY21 as
152 previously planned. There was discussion that GoTriangle, on behalf of GoDurham, is requesting
153 approximately \$1M of funding from the Durham Transit Tax Fund to be pulled forward from the future
154 funding pipeline into FY20.

155 Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann made a motion to recommend that the Board approve amending the
156 FY20 Durham Transit Tax Annual Work Plan to add \$1,029,000 for construction of bus stop improvements
157 for GoDurham. Zach Hallock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

158 **9. Submittal Candidates for SPOT 6**

159 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

160 Aaron Cain discussed the submittal candidates for Strategic Prioritization Office (SPOT) 6. Aaron
161 Cain stated that there are 24 submissions for projects that are based on preliminary scores and discussions
162 with local jurisdictions. Aaron Cain discussed overall scoring and projects that received preliminary scores.

163 Aaron Cain discussed the submissions for SPOT 6 highway projects. Bergen Watterson and Aaron
164 Cain discussed eliminating the Elliot Road project (H140638) from the list of SPOT 6 submissions. Bergen
165 Watterson and Aaron Cain discussed that carryover projects are not currently listed because they are
166 automatically submitted by NCDOT. Aaron Cain stated that discussions about NC 86 and US 70 bypass
167 project (H111036) are ongoing. Aaron Cain also stated that Old Fayetteville Road and NC 54 intersection
168 improvements (H140374-E) had previously been categorized as a carryover project, but it has not currently
169 been confirmed by NCDOT. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann requested that the Roxboro Road and Horton Road
170 intersection (H170312) be removed from the submission list because it would likely receive other sources
171 of funding. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and Aaron Cain discussed projects with interchanges on US 70, and
172 the need to have further discussion with Division 5 about adding those projects to the U-5720 project.

173 Zach Hallock and Aaron Cain discussed changes to the intersection of NC 54 and Main Street carryover
174 project in Carrboro. Aaron Cain requested that Zach Hallock send him specific language for the
175 modification. Aaron Cain requested that any further suggestions to the current list be sent to him by
176 January 24. Chair Nish Trivedi requested that the Lebanon Road and Middle Creek intersection
177 improvement project be added to the submission list.

178 Aaron Cain stated the plan was to submit 24 projects for SPOT 6; however, Divisions 5 and 7 have
179 historically added additional slots to the list, which totaled approximately 30 slots. There was discussion
180 that Division 7 was unlikely to add points for any mode if DCHC MPO did not add points on the project to
181 widen NC 54 in Carrboro. There was discussion about this issue being deliberated at the MPO Board
182 Meeting on February 12. Aaron Cain added that, without support from Division 7, the project list would
183 therefore need to be reduced; likely from Orange County. There was discussion about consolidating
184 H150278 and H190428 and removing H111036. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann requested adding a Hebron
185 Road extension project to the highway SPOT 6 submittal list, if it is not currently listed. Aaron Cain
186 recommended having further discussions while noting that the project is not currently in the MTP.

187 Aaron Cain discussed submissions for SPOT 6 bike/ped projects. Tom Altieri, Chair Nish Trivedi,
188 and Aaron Cain discussed the Old 86 bicycle project (B170402). Aaron Cain recommended that there be
189 further discussions to resolve issues surrounding including or removing the project from the SPOT 6
190 submittal list. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann recommended changing language from the American Tobacco
191 Trail project (B170485). Aaron Cain stated that project descriptions can be changed until April 30, 2020.
192 Aaron Cain stated that MPO staff will need independent cost estimates from local jurisdictions that can be
193 accomplished through the NCDOT cost estimation tool. Aaron Cain added that Dale McKeel will send
194 information regarding process directions.

195 Aaron Cain discussed submissions for SPOT 6 transit projects. Aaron Cain and Vice Chair Ellen
196 Beckmann discussed language used in the description of commuter rail project submissions and how the

197 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process occurs. Scott Whiteman and Aaron Cain discussed that
198 there is currently no assumption of state funding for transit projects, but it is a possibility. John Hodges-
199 Copple and Aaron Cain discussed the level of cost estimates that are being used and the best strategies
200 that could be used by DCHC MPO in order to achieve maximum funding. Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann and
201 Aaron Cain discussed potential high-capacity transit project submittals. Aaron Cain recommended further
202 discussions with Sean Egan and Scott Whiteman. Aaron Cain added that scoring for high capacity transit is
203 greatly impacted by service expansion and increased ridership. There was discussion about bundling
204 projects together in order to increase overall ridership. Aaron Cain stated that certain projects would not
205 necessarily help ridership if bundled or added to another project. Aaron Cain continued that he will follow-
206 up with the Divisions for the submission of transit projects to maximize the number of competitive
207 projects in SPOT 6.

208 Aaron Cain discussed submissions for SPOT 6 rail projects. Aaron Cain stated that there are
209 currently 19 rail projects identified for SPOT 6 submittal. John Hodges-Copple and Aaron Cain discussed
210 projects that could be identified for passenger as well as freight improvements. Aaron Cain discussed the
211 benefits of submitting applicable rail projects for Statewide Mobility funding.

212 Jomar Pastorelle made a motion to recommend that the MPO Board release the proposed lists, as
213 amended, for public review. Tom Altieri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

214 **REPORTS:**

215 **10. Reports from the LPA Staff**

216 Felix Nwoko, Andy Henry, LPA Staff

217 Aaron Cain stated that Meg Scully has accepted new employment at GoTriangle. Andy Henry
218 stated that the steering committee for the US 15-501 study will meet in the City of Durham's Department
219 of Transportation conference room at 10:30 a.m. on January 22. Andy Henry added that there is a
220 Community Visualization application meeting on February 7, but there is not yet a location. Dale McKeel

221 announced that there will be a bicycle and pedestrian workshop that will be located in Raleigh on March
 222 26.

223 **11. Report from the DCHC MPO TC Chair**

224 Nish Trivedi, DCHC MPO TC Chair

225 Chair Nish Trivedi stated that Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO) is
 226 planning to complete their Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) by summer 2020.

227 **12. NCDOT Reports**

228 David Keilson, Division 5, stated that there is no additional report.

229 Stephen Robinson, Division 7, stated that the interchange project at I-40 and NC 86 (I-3036AC) has
 230 been removed from executive hold, and is continuing with the preliminary engineering phase. Chair Nish
 231 Trivedi asked if all three projects that encompass the I-40 widening project (I-30306A, B, & C) have been
 232 removed from suspension. Stephen Robinson responded all three projects were lifted from suspension.

233 Bryan Kluchar, Division 8, stated that there will be a three-day public drop-in period for Division 8
 234 in Carthage, NC, on February 3-5.

235 Julie Bogle stated that there was no additional report from NCDOT Transportation Planning
 236 Division.

237 There were questions about how NCDOT chooses how projects are removed from the suspension
 238 list and why local jurisdictions have been not received reimbursements for federally funded projects. There
 239 was discussion about adding an agenda item to the MPO Board to discuss writing a letter to NCDOT to
 240 discuss how projects are chosen to be released from suspension. Aaron Cain recommended that staff from
 241 their respective jurisdictions explain the situation to their MPO Board representatives. Bill Judge added
 242 that SPOT Safety projects are also suspended.

243 Vice Chair Ellen Beckmann made a motion to recommend that MPO staff draft and the MPO Board
 244 sign and send a letter to NCDOT requesting information regarding the prioritization of the local project

245 reimbursements and of taking projects off of the hold list. Evan Tenenbaum seconded the motion. The
246 motion passed unanimously.

247 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

248 Chair Nish Trivedi stated that informational items were included in the agenda packet. Aaron Cain
249 stated that the Joint DCHC MPO and CAMPO Board Meeting will meet at Apex Town Hall at 9 a.m. on
250 January 30.

251 **ADJOURNMENT:**

252 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Technical Committee, the meeting was
253 adjourned at 11:02 a.m.