

47 Quorum Count: 8 of 10 Voting Members

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49 Chair Steve Schewel called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. A roll call was performed. The
50 Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are
51 indicated above. Chair Steve Schewel reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was
52 being circulated.

53

PRELIMINARIES:

2. Ethics Reminder

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

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

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

4. Public Comments

63 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there were any members of the public signed up to speak.

64 Heidi Perry, a resident of 407 Robert Hunt Drive in Carrboro and a member of the Orange
65 County OUT Board and the Carrboro Bicycle Coalition, spoke about her frustration with the fact that
66 the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Strategic Prioritization Office of
67 Transportation (SPOT) scoring criteria favors motor vehicles over other modes of transportation. Heidi
68 Perry stated that widening existing lanes or adding lanes of traffic does not alleviate congestion in the
69 long run, and in fact leads to an increase in fatal and serious injury crashes. She added that while
70 NCDOT's stated mission says nothing about prioritizing one mode over another, NCDOT's scoring
71 system prioritizes projects that temporarily cut motorists' travel time over projects that increase

72 bicycle and pedestrian safety. Heidi Perry discussed the portion of NCDOT's budget that is spent on
73 maintaining existing roadways, noting that adding more lanes of traffic only adds to the burden of road
74 maintenance. She commented that NCDOT only spends \$700,000 on bike projects, and there is no
75 budget for pedestrian safety projects. Heidi Perry stated that we should be working to reduce our
76 dependency on cars, and that perhaps additional travel lanes should be dedicated public transit lanes
77 and bicycle lanes or wide shoulders should be added to rural roads. Heidi Perry asked that the MPO
78 Board consider requesting that NCDOT reevaluate the way it scores projects, its allocation of
79 construction dollars, and its budget for alternative forms of transport so that roads can become more
80 environmentally sensitive and North Carolina can truly become a Vision Zero state.

81 Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that Heidi Perry is pointing to some of the structural difficulties
82 in the process that state uses for scoring projects, and that some of this was out of the hands of the
83 MPO. He added that the MPO could still express an opinion about some of the issues that Heidi Perry
84 discussed and reflected on productive conversations that the MPO has had with North Carolina
85 Secretary of Transportation James Trogdon and his staff. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that it might be
86 a good idea to schedule another conversation with the Transportation Secretary given that the MPO is
87 currently going through the scoring process.

88 Felix Nwoko stated that Transportation Secretary James Trogdon has asked MPOs to come up
89 with comments about NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian policy, and that a DCHC MPO subcommittee is
90 working on this issue and would bring it to the MPO Board in coming months. Felix Nwoko stated that
91 this is an opportunity to convey the MPO's opinion on bicycle and pedestrian issues to NCDOT. Chair
92 Steve Schewel clarified that Felix Nwoko was referring to NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy, and
93 not the scoring process.

94 Lydia Lavelle and Ed Harrison discussed the possibility of bicycle coalitions identifying bicycle-
95 friendly Republicans in the state legislature who might be willing to advocate for bicycle issues. Ellen

96 Reckhow stated that Heidi Perry's comments also reiterated the importance of the MPO being more
97 aspirational in its mode splits as it develops the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

98 Chair Steve Schewel thanked Heidi Perry for attending the meeting and stated that a different
99 kind of conversation with the Transportation Secretary may be necessary. Vice Chair Damon Seils
100 pointed out that while there is a disconnect between the values and vision of NCDOT, policy changes
101 may be limited by state statutes. Barry Jacobs stated that it might be wise to have a session to discuss
102 changes the MPO would like to see before inviting the Transportation Secretary back to an MPO Board
103 meeting.

104 Chair Steve Schewel asked Felix Nwoko and the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) Staff to consider
105 the best opportunity for advancing the goals of the MPO, especially when it comes to mode split, and
106 whether those opportunities are legislative or related to approaching the Transportation Secretary and
107 his staff. Ellen Reckhow pointed out that there are many great examples of metropolitan areas around
108 the country that are committing to bicycle infrastructure, and that the MPO can use evidence from
109 other communities in support of its argument. Michael Parker stated that it is also important to
110 emphasize public transit's role in reducing congestion. He also commented on the transit cap imposed
111 by the legislature and noted that there are clear statutory obstacles that need to be resolved.

112 Ellen Beckmann stated that Julie White, formerly the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors
113 Coalition Executive Director, is now Deputy Secretary for Multi-Modal Transportation at NCDOT, and
114 that she may be interested in visiting the MPO to discuss some of these issues. Chair Steve Schewel
115 asked Felix Nwoko and Ellen Beckmann to consider how to best move forward on this issue.

116 Pam Hemminger stated that the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, NCDOT staff, and
117 MPO staff is working to resolve issues with the proposed roundabout at the Merritt Mill/Main
118 Street/Franklin Street intersection. Pam Hemminger added that she may need to leave the meeting
119 early to attend a ribbon cutting for newly installed solar panels at East Chapel Hill High School.

120 **5. Directives to Staff**

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

122 **CONSENT AGENDA:**123 **6. Approval of August 8, 2017, Meeting Minutes**124 **7. Approval of Amendment #11 to the FY2016-25 Transportation Improvement Plan**

125 Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

126 Ellen Reckhow stated that there were two typos in the minutes related to the spelling of her
 127 name and Ellen Beckmann's name. Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the amended August 8,
 128 2017, MPO Board Meeting Minutes and Amendment #11 to the FY 2016-25 Transportation
 129 Improvement Plan. Don Moffitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

130 **ACTION ITEMS:**131 **8. 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

132 Andy Henry, LPA Staff

133 Matt Day, Triangle J Council of Governments

134 Andy Henry reviewed the schedule for developing the MTP, and noted that the MPO staff is
 135 working closely with local staffs to develop the MTP. He also discussed comments that have been
 136 received on the MTP to date.

137 Chair Steve Schewel opened the public hearing on the 2045 MTP. There were no comments
 138 from the public. Chair Steve Schewel closed the public hearing.

139 Ellen Reckhow stated that she was struck by comments about the strong need for commuter
 140 rail.

141 Andy Henry discussed how Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) and the Capital Area
 142 Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) have contributed to the MTP in terms of modeling and
 143 fiscal constraint.

144 Matt Day provided an overview of the fiscal constraint that is factored into the MTP. Matt Day
 145 discussed how factors like Strategic Transportation Initiatives (STI) framework and the Durham and

146 Orange County Transit Plans shape the assumptions about state and federal funding in the MTP. He also
147 reviewed the assumptions and differences between the constrained, moderate, and aspirational
148 forecasts, and noted that the aspirational forecast would most likely be used as the foundation of the
149 MTP. Ed Harrison asked for and received clarification that Matt Day was discussing funding for projects
150 only within the MPO's boundary. Lydia Lavelle pointed out that the same amount of funding is assumed
151 for transit in the aspirational forecast. She also suggested that the extension of the light rail should be
152 added to the aspirational forecast.

153 Michael Parker pointed out that the aspirational forecast aspires to more roads, and not to
154 things that the MPO is committed to, such as increased funding for transit. Ellen Reckhow concurred
155 with Michael Parker, and noted that there is perhaps an opportunity to apply for federal funding for the
156 commuter rail project. Matt Day clarified that the transit items in the plan were a baseline, and that
157 transit related information could be added to the plan. He stated that the forecast was primarily about
158 the revenue that would be available. Matt Day pointed out that regional- and Division-level STI funds
159 that are shown as highway funds could be used for transit.

160 Andy Henry and Don Moffitt discussed the relationship between the MTP and the
161 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), the potential effect of inaccurate funding projections, and
162 how forecasted funds affect projects in the SPOT process.

163 Vice Chair Damon Seils commented that the term "optimistic forecast" might be more
164 appropriate than the term "aspirational forecast." Vice Chair Damon Seils also stated that Matt Day's
165 reminder that the STI statewide pot is almost entirely for highway funding, and that there are a variety
166 of modes constrained by STI law was helpful. Chair Steve Schewel supported the notion that the forecast
167 should be referred to as "optimistic" instead of "aspirational." Matt Day stated that there was no
168 requirement that the forecast be named "aspirational," and there was continued discussion of whether
169 the forecast should be termed "optimistic."

170 Matt Day discussed the funding available for projects in each decade of the MTP. Don Moffitt
171 and Matt Day discussed the funding projections for projects in the second decade of the MTP. Matt Day
172 reviewed the percentage of funding that would be allocated to different types of projects in the MTP.
173 Michael Parker and Matt Day discussed the 10% cap on rail projects, and Matt Day stated that the
174 forecast already assumes that these types of restrictions are in place. Andy Henry discussed the funding
175 assumptions for each decade of the MTP. Andy Henry and Chair Steve Schewel discussed how changes
176 in legislative policy should be factored into the later decades of the MTP. Ellen Reckhow commented on
177 the socioeconomic data that was used for the projections, highlighting population and job growth in the
178 MPO region, and noted that jobs put a lot of stress on roads and that there may be need for a more
179 optimistic revenue forecast.

180 Chair Steve Schewel and Andy Henry discussed the timeline for approving the fiscally-
181 constrained plan. Chair Steve Schewel asked the MPO Board to consider whether more optimism should
182 be factored into the optimistic scenario. Andy Henry added that looking at the preferred option, which
183 would be brought before the MPO Board in October, might help with this decision.

184 Ellen Reckhow commented on the projected growth of the area and the need to plan for more
185 public transit. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that the MTP cannot go beyond what is realistically, if
186 optimistically, projected with regards to revenue. He added that the MPO should be talking to legislators
187 and lobbying for more funding for its aspirations.

188 Andy Henry called attention to a chart showing the difference between anticipated project costs
189 and the project budget for the three decades of the MTP. There was discussion of the STI statewide 4%
190 non-highway project minimum. Andy Henry discussed items that have not yet been factored into the
191 budget, such as roads that will be privately built and local jurisdiction impact fees. Chair Steve Schewel
192 and Andy Henry discussed the implications of the preferred option being similar in scale to the 2040
193 MTP. Vice Chair Damon Seils asked for and received confirmation that Andy Henry was assuming the

194 optimistic scenario. Ed Harrison pointed out that the phrase “non-highway minimum” is odd and may be
195 confusing to the public. Andy Henry clarified that the types of caps discussed in the presentation were
196 regional- and Division-wide respectively. There was continued discussion of the fact that the caps are
197 somewhat confusing.

198 Chair Steve Schewel stated that the optimistic fiscally-constrained forecast should remain truly
199 fiscally-constrained, and that changes in legislation should not be assumed at this point. Lydia Lavelle
200 suggested two fiscally-constrained optimistic scenarios, A and B, where option B would consider
201 changes in the legislative caps. Barry Jacobs pointed out that two optimistic scenarios might show what
202 is being lost because of legislative action, and would therefore be educational. Michael Parker stated
203 that MTP should be structured to preserve the MPO’s future options in terms of applying for state and
204 federal funding.

205 Chair Steve Schewel and Andy Henry reviewed the three existing forecasts, and the factors that
206 would go into creating the two optimistic forecasts. Vice Chair Damon Seils emphasized that it is
207 important to understand why forecasting tools are useful, and pointed out that an optimistic B forecast
208 might not be particularly valuable. There was continued discussion of whether an optimistic B forecast
209 would be useful. Ellen Reckhow suggested changing inputs as it relates to land-use and jobs to avoid a
210 mismatch between demand and supply.

211 Chair Steve Schewel summarized the discussion about creating two optimistic scenarios. Andy
212 Henry stated that it would be a lot of additional work to come up with highway lists for an additional
213 forecast. Andy Henry discussed how the goals and objective and performance measures were developed
214 for the MTP.

215 Chair Steve Schewel and Andy Henry discussed whether there was sufficient emphasis on racial
216 and socio-economic equity in the MTP’s current goals and objectives. There was continued discussion of
217 the wording that should be used to emphasize economic equity in the MTP.

218 No further action was required by the MPO Board.

219 **9. SPOT P5.0 Project Submittals**

220 Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

221 Aaron Cain stated that the deadline for submitting SPOT 5.0 project is September 29, 2017.

222 Chair Steve Schewel recognized Durham County Commissioner Wendy Jacobs.

223 Aaron Cain stated that the MPO would be submitting 24 highway projects, 23 bicycle and
224 pedestrian projects, 21 transit projects, and 11 rail projects. He discussed Chapel Hill's recent decision to
225 swap a bicycle and pedestrian project at Ephesus Church Road/Pope Road with a project at Fordham
226 Boulevard near Eastgate Shopping Center, and changes that were made to a Durham project at a
227 Roxboro Street underpass that would better facilitate the proposed two-way conversion of Roxboro
228 Street. Aaron Cain stated that the Roxboro Street project would be submitted as both a highway and a
229 rail project. Chair Steve Schewel confirmed that the action was to approve the list of projects for final
230 submittal to the SPOT 5.0 process.

231 Michael Parker and Aaron Cain discussed why the Fordham Boulevard project referenced the
232 Legion Road extension even though the latter project was not being submitted. Vice Chair Damon Seils
233 asked for and received confirmation that the final description of two Carrboro projects would be
234 updated to reflect the outcome of recent discussions between MPO staff and Carrboro staff.

235 Ed Harrison and Aaron Cain discussed the jurisdiction of Pope Road, and bicycle lane and
236 sidewalk gaps on Pope Road. There was discussion of the length of sidewalk on Pope Road, and how
237 proposed nearby development related to the Durham-Orange Light Rail (D-O LRT) project would affect
238 pedestrian traffic on Pope Road. Ed Harrison and Bergen Watterson discussed what was being included
239 in the Pope Road project. Aaron Cain promised to have further discussions with Durham County about
240 the Pope Road project, and noted that Durham County would have to provide the local match and
241 potentially manage the project. Barry Jacobs and Aaron Cain discussed the parameters of the NC 86/US
242 70 project. There was discussion of the two-way conversion of the Downtown Durham Loop project.

243 Ellen Beckmann and Aaron Cain discussed whether the North Durham Parkway, US 70 to NC 98, could
244 end at US 70 to Sharon Road, and whether making the project shorter might make it more competitive.

245 Pat Wilson discussed the decision to submit the Franklin Street/Merritt Mill Road/Brewer Lane
246 project as a bicycle and pedestrian project at the Division level, in addition to submitting it as a highway
247 project. Vice Chair Damon Seils confirmed that the project would be submitted as both a bicycle and
248 pedestrian project and a highway project. Vice Chair Damon Seils and Pat Wilson discussed the
249 implications of submitting the project as both a highway project and a bicycle and pedestrian project.
250 Vice Chair Damon Seils asked Aaron Cain whether submitting the Franklin/Merritt Mill Road/Brewer
251 Lane project as both a bicycle and pedestrian project and a highway project would affect the submittal
252 of any other bicycle and pedestrian projects. Aaron Cain explained that the Division would be submitting
253 the project as a bicycle and pedestrian project, which would not affect the number of projects
254 submitted by the MPO. Vice Chair Damon Seils and Aaron Cain discussed whether there were any
255 concerns about submitting the project twice. Lydia Lavelle stated that she appreciated having a second
256 option for the project. Don Moffitt and Aaron Cain discussed the projects that are the highest priority
257 for Durham.

258 Don Moffitt made a motion to approve the list of project to be submitted to SPOT 5.0. Ellen
259 Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

260 **REPORTS:**

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

262 Steve Schewel, DCHC MPO Board Chair

263 Chair Steve Schewel stated that John Hodges-Copple is working on scheduling a meeting
264 between the chairs and vice chairs of DCHC MPO and CAMPO, and that the meeting should be
265 scheduled shortly.

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

267 Ellen Beckmann, DCHC MPO TC Chair

268 Ellen Beckmann stated that she has been asked to be on the NCDOT working group tasked with
269 updating NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy.

270 **12. Reports from LPA Staff**

271 Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

272 Felix Nwoko stated that a kick-off meeting was recently held for the NC 54 corridor study and
273 that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the US 15-501 corridor study would be released shortly.

274 Dale McKeel reminded the MPO Board of the upcoming Greenways Summit that would be held
275 in Durham from October 1-3, 2017.

276 **13. NCDOT Reports:**

277 Richard Hancock, NCDOT Division 5, stated that Mike Holder has retired as Chief Engineer, and
278 that Tim Little, previously Division Engineer of Division 4, will be the new Chief Engineer. Richard
279 Hancock stated that a public meeting would be held for the US 501/Latta/Infinity project on September
280 28. He also discussed potential uses for the \$1.7 million of high impact/low cost funds that have been
281 allotted to each Division. Richard Hancock discussed upcoming closures related to the East End
282 Connector project and the Alston Avenue project. He stated that the Division has had some difficulty
283 mobilizing the contractor for the Herndon/Barbee roundabout, and that the project will now have a
284 late November completion date. Richard Hancock also mentioned that there were some complaints
285 about noise and light related to the nighttime work on the Old Chapel Hill Road project, and that the
286 Division was discussing this issue with City of Durham staff.

287 Pat Wilson, NCDOT Division 7, stated that the Division is currently working on modifying the
288 design of the Franklin Street/Merritt Mill Road/Brewer Lane intersection project to possibly include
289 bicycle and pedestrian improvements. He added that the cost estimate for the project would be shared
290 with staff when it becomes available. Pat Wilson added that the Division has received the design for
291 the fence for the pedestrian bridge over I-40 on Orange Grove Rd. He stated that the project would be

292 advertised at the end of the September with a bid opening in mid-October. Pat Wilson promised to
293 provide an update on the project at the November MPO Board meeting.

294 There was discussion of whether it would be possible to contact the members of the public
295 who brought the unsafe conditions of the pedestrian bridge over I-40 on Orange Grove Road to the
296 MPO Board's attention to let them know that action is being taken on the matter.

297 There was no report from NCDOT Division 8.

298 There was no report from NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch.

299 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

300 **14. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

301 Chair Steve Schewel thanked local staff, MPO staff, NCDOT staff, and TJCOG staff for the work
302 that they do.

303 **ADJOURNMENT:**

304 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at
305 10:29 a.m.