

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

2                           **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

3                                   **February 24, 2021**

4                                   **MINUTES OF MEETING**

5   The Durham-Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Committee met  
6   on February 24, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. through a teleconferencing platform. The following  
7   members were in attendance:

- 8   Ellen Beckmann (Chair) Durham County
- 9   Nishith Trivedi (Vice Chair) Orange County
- 10   Tasha Johnson (Member) City of Durham
- 11   Evan Tenenbaum (Member) City of Durham
- 12   Pierre Osei-Owusu (Member) City of Durham Transportation/Go Durham
- 13   Brooke Ganser (Member) Durham County
- 14   Scott Whiteman (Member) Durham County
- 15   Tina Moon (Member) Town of Carrboro
- 16   Bergen Watterson (Member) Town of Chapel Hill
- 17   Jomar Pastorelle (Member) Town of Chapel Hill
- 18   Zach Hallock (Member) Town of Carrboro
- 19   Kumar Neppalli (Member) Town of Chapel Hill
- 20   Margaret Hauth (Member) Town of Hillsborough
- 21   John Hodges-Copple (Member) TJCOG
- 22   Jay Heikes (Member) GoTriangle
- 23   Julie Bogle (Member) NCDOT TPD
- 24   Kurt Stolka (Member) The University of North Carolina
- 25   Tom Altieri (Member) Orange County Planning
- 26   Bill Judge (Alternate) City of Durham
- 27   Cara Russell (Alternate) Chatham County Planning
- 28   Richard Hancock (Alternate) NCDOT Division 5
- 29   David Keilson (Alternate) NCDOT Division 5
- 30   Steven Robinson (Alternate) NCDOT Division 7
- 31   Bryan Kluchar (Alternate) NCDOT Division 8
- 32   Brian Taylor (Alternate) City of Durham Transportation
- 33   Cha'ssem Anderson (Alternate) The University of North Carolina
- 34   Matt Cecil (Alternate) Chapel Hill Transit/Planning
- 35   Meg Scully (Alternate) GoTriangle
- 36   Ellis Cayton (Alternate) The Raleigh Durham Airport Authority

- 37   Sean Egan City of Durham
- 38   Joe Geigle Federal Highway Administration
- 39   Shelly Parker GoTriangle
- 40   Erin Convery GoTriangle

- 41   Felix Nwoko DCHC MPO
- 42   Brian Rhodes DCHC MPO
- 43   Aaron Cain DCHC MPO

- 44 Anne Phillips DCHC MPO
- 45 Andy Henry DCHC MPO
- 46 Dale McKeel City of Durham/DCHC MPO
- 47 Yanping Zhang DCHC MPO
- 48 Kayla Mathews DCHC MPO

49 Quorum count: 24 of 31 voting members

50 Chair Ellen Beckmann called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

51 **PRELIMINARIES:**

52 **Roll Call**

53 Aaron Cain noted that the roll call could be completed by utilizing the zoom participant  
54 list. Chair Ellen Beckmann mentioned that Mark Ahrendson, retired Transportation Director for  
55 the City of Durham, passed away on February 23, 2021. A moment of silence was held in honor  
56 of Mark Ahrendson.

57 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

58 There were no adjustments to the agenda.

59 **Public Comments**

60 There were no public comments.

61 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

62 **4. Approval of the January 27, 2021 TC Meeting Minutes**

63 There was no discussion of the Consent Agenda.

64 Kumar Neppalli made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Margaret Hauth  
65 seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

66 **ACTION ITEMS:**

67 **5. CMAQ Funding Recommendation (20 minutes)**

68 **Anne Phillips, LPA Staff**

69 Anne Phillips stated that the call for projects was released on January 26, 2021 for  
70 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds and that the DCHC MPO

71 recommendation is due to North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) by March 15,  
72 2021. The total cost amount of funds requested from the eight project applications the MPO  
73 received far surpassed the available \$2,194,011 of CMAQ funds. Anne Phillips added that the  
74 MPO Federal Funding Policy was used as guidance to make the decisions, which has general  
75 guidelines rather than a quantitative scoring method. LPA staff made a recommendation to  
76 move four projects forward considering the nature of CMAQ funds for emissions reductions.

77 The City of Durham sent a response memo with an alternate proposal. Anne Phillips  
78 emphasized the importance of not only emissions reductions, but also geographic equity, which  
79 was interpreted as spreading the funding around geographically, although the City of Durham  
80 has interpreted geographic equity as proportional to population.

81 Meg Scully asked that the GoTriangle project title be altered to more accurately reflect  
82 the project and be consistent with the title provided on the application. She stated that the  
83 project encompasses transit access improvements, and should be referred to as “GoTriangle  
84 Transit Access,” rather than “GoTriangle Bus Shelters,” which overemphasizes one aspect of  
85 the project. Meg Scully added that the distribution of CMAQ funds seems consistent with how  
86 the MPO has made decisions in the past and supports the MPO staff recommendation.

87 Bill Judge apologized for the short notice of the City of Durham memo in advance of the  
88 TC meeting. Bill Judge summarized the main concern of emissions reductions scores because  
89 the City of Durham received partial funding for one of their project submittals and was asked to  
90 increase the local match percentage while other projects with lower emissions reductions scores  
91 received full funding. Anne Phillips responded that the Surface Transportation Block Grant  
92 (STBG) Any Area funds that are yet to be distributed should also be considered as another  
93 option for potential funding in the future. Aaron Cain noted that NCDOT set the timelines for  
94 these recommendations, which gave the MPO a short turn around time to choose projects.

95           John Hodges-Copple said it would be helpful to provide more context on all the different  
96 “pots” of funding before these recommendations go to the MPO Board and creating clearer  
97 guidelines in the future would be helpful. John Hodges-Copple mentioned a general discomfort  
98 with the TC disagreeing with the MPO staff recommendation unless there was a strong  
99 technical reason to justify that decision. Tina Moon agreed with John Hodges-Copple's  
100 comments and added that there would be value in further discussing equity in the future at  
101 various levels.

102           Bill Judge responded that geographic equity was stated as an important factor in the call  
103 for projects memo, but would like a better definition of what that means moving forward. He  
104 stated that the secondary criteria of emissions reductions did not appear to carry enough weight  
105 in the MPO staff recommendation. Chair Ellen Beckmann added that the MPO memo lacked  
106 information about how the assessment of the criteria was used and the MPO Board may have  
107 questions so MPO staff should be prepared with more information. Meg Scully said that learning  
108 about how all of the funds collectively are distributed would help provide a more holistic picture  
109 of funding distribution and provide insight into geographic equity beyond population numbers.

110           Dale McKeel pointed out another factor of prioritizing bridging funding gaps for projects  
111 that are ready to go to construction, such as the Estes Drive Project, rather than starting an  
112 entirely new project. Jay Heikes agreed with John Hodges-Copple in supporting MPO staff  
113 recommendation unless there are concerns about the methodology itself. Jay Heikes  
114 emphasized the importance of benefits from projects to the MPO as a whole regardless of the  
115 specific jurisdiction a project is in. Vice Chair Nishith Trivedi reminded the TC that it needs to be  
116 able to provide technical information for each project. Anne Phillips responded to the need for  
117 increased clarity and offered to put together a memo listing strengths of selected projects and  
118 further explain the reasoning behind the staff recommendation.

119 Anne Phillips echoed Dale McKeel's comments of prioritizing projects ready for  
 120 construction rather than starting new ones. Additionally, the four projects selected by MPO staff  
 121 are comprised of two regional projects and two local projects, which creates a fair balance.  
 122 There was consensus that, moving forward, the MPO selection memos should provide detailed  
 123 technical evaluation of projects with a clear ranking system. Aaron Cain reiterated that MPO  
 124 staff was considering geographic equity through a holistic lens of various funding sources, not  
 125 just CMAQ funds.

126 Jay Heikes made a motion to recommend the list of projects outlined by MPO staff to the  
 127 Board along with a memo with more clarity on how the decision was made and more information  
 128 on how projects ranked according to the criteria listed. Pierre Osei-Owusu seconded the motion.  
 129 The motion passed 18-6, with the following members opposing the motion:

- 130 Bill Judge (City of Durham)
- 131 Evan Tenenbaum (City of Durham)
- 132 Scott Whiteman (Durham County)
- 133 Brooke Ganser (Durham County)
- 134 Ellen Beckmann (Durham County)
- 135 Kumar Neppalli (Chapel Hill)

136 Anne Phillips mentioned the Federal Funding Policy is not slated for renewal until 2024,  
 137 but suggested it could be updated sooner with input from a subcommittee to develop a  
 138 quantitative system that accurately reflects the MPO's values. Chair Ellen Beckmann agreed.

139 **6. US 15-501 Corridor Study (10 minutes)**  
 140 **Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

141 Andy Henry said the MPO Board asked staff to select a consultant to finish the 15-501  
 142 Corridor Study. The request for information (RFI) based on the scope of services will be  
 143 released later today (February 24, 2021). Andy Henry also mentioned the need for a selection  
 144 committee comprised of himself and a representative from the Town of Chapel Hill and from

145 NCDOT to review the proposals. The proposed project budget is \$50,000 and the proposed  
 146 timeline predicts the consultant will begin in early May 2021. Ideally, the final 15-501 Corridor  
 147 Study would be adopted in November 2021.

148 Andy Henry will present this item to the MPO Board at the March 10, 2021 meeting. This  
 149 item was for discussion purposes, no further action was required by the TC.

150 **7. CTP Amendment #3 (20 minutes)**

151 **Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

152 Andy Henry mentioned that over the past several months, MPO staff and NCDOT staff  
 153 have worked with local planners to identify changes to be included in the Comprehensive  
 154 Transportation Plan (CTP) Amendment #3. The need for this amendment stems from the  
 155 addition of side paths to many arterial roads in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP),  
 156 along with other roadway changes. Andy Henry stated that because there is so much  
 157 information in the amendment, the best option would be to have a subcommittee review the  
 158 format and schedule in conjunction with NCDOT staff. After the subcommittee has provided  
 159 input, then local staff will once again review project details. Vice Chair Nishith Trivedi thanked  
 160 MPO staff and member jurisdictions for their help with this amendment process. Bill Judge  
 161 proposed a meeting with Durham City and County to review East Durham changes that may not  
 162 need to be discussed by the full subcommittee.

163 This item was for discussion purposes, no further action was required by the TC.

164 **REPORTS FROM STAFF:**

165 **8. Report from Staff**

166 **Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

167 Felix Nwoko had no additional report.

168 **9. Report from the Chair**

169 **Ellen Beckmann, TC Chair**

170 Chair Ellen Beckmann had no additional report.

171 **10. NCDOT Reports**

172 **Joey Hopkins (David Keilson, Richard Hancock), Division 5 – NCDOT**

173 David Keilson gave an update on the Alston Avenue project and the Old Durham/Old  
174 Chapel Hill project.

175 **Wright Archer (Pat Wilson, Stephen Robinson), Division 7 – NCDOT**

176 Stephen Robinson had no additional report.

177 **Brandon Jones (Bryan Kluchar, Jen Britt), Division 8 - NCDOT**

178 Bryan Kluchar made a correction to project U-6192.

179 **Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division – NCDOT**

180 Julie Bogle had no additional report.

181 **John Grant, Traffic Operations – NCDOT**

182 There was no additional report.

183 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

184 Sean Egan asked about the timing of the split letters for Federal 5307 and 5339 funds  
185 for FY21. Felix Nwoko said the MPO is still working on the 5307 letter and that it should be  
186 completed soon. Felix Nwoko stated that split letters for 5339 are traditionally done every two  
187 years, but combining the 5339 with the 5307 this year could be possible. Sean Egan stated that  
188 a combination this year would be ideal to further capital purchases for GoDurham. Felix Nwoko  
189 said both split letters will be brought to the March TC meeting.

190 Sean Egan asked if there was interest in a resolution from the MPO Board recognizing  
191 the passing of Mark Ahrendsen and his contributions to the MPO and expressing condolences  
192 to his family and colleagues. Felix Nwoko made a symbolic “motion” to draft a statement in  
193 honor of Mark Ahrendsen prior to the March MPO Board meeting. Bill Judge seconded the  
194 motion. The motion passed unanimously.

195

**Adjourn**

196

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Ellen Beckmann

197

at 10:35 a.m.

198

**Next meeting: March 24, 9 a.m., meeting to be held by teleconference**