

DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

11 January 2017

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on January 11, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in the City Council Committee Room, located on the second floor of Durham City Hall. The following people were in attendance:

- Steve Schewel (MPO Board Chair) City of Durham
- Damon Seils (MPO Board Vice Chair) Town of Carrboro
- Don Moffitt (Member) City of Durham
- Ellen Reckhow (Member) Durham County
- Barry Jacobs (Member) Orange County
- Pam Hemminger (Member) Town of Chapel Hill
- Jenn Weaver (Alternate) Town of Hillsborough
- Lydia Lavelle (Alternate) Town of Carrboro
- Ed Harrison (Alternate) Town of Chapel Hill

- Richard Hancock NCDOT, Division 5
- Patrick Wilson NCDOT, Division 7
- Julie Bollinger NCDOT, TPB
- Max Bushell Orange County
- Bergen Watterson Town of Carrboro
- Tina Moon Town of Carrboro
- John Hodges-Copple Triangle J Council of Governments
- Danny Rogers GoTriangle
- Geoff Green GoTriangle
- Terry Bellamy City of Durham/DCHC MPO
- Ellen Beckmann City of Durham/Transportation
- Tasha Johnson City of Durham/Public Works
- Bryan Poole City of Durham/Transportation
- Scott Whiteman Durham County
- Kayla Seibel Town of Chapel Hill
- Eddie Dancausse Federal Highway Administration
- Felix Nwoko DCHC MPO
- Andy Henry DCHC MPO
- Meg Scully DCHC MPO
- Aaron Cain DCHC MPO
- Dale McKeel City of Durham/DCHC MPO
- Brian Rhodes DCHC MPO
- Heidi Carter Durham County Commissioners

Quorum Count: 7 of 10 Voting Members

47 Chair Steve Schewel called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A roll call was performed. The
48 Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are
49 indicated above. Chair Steve Schewel reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was
50 being circulated. Chair Steve Schewel recognized Durham County Commissioner Heidi Carter. Chair
51 Steve Schewel welcomed Ellen Beckmann, the new Technical Committee (TC) representative to the
52 MPO Board.

53 **PRELIMINARIES:**

54 **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.

59 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

60 Chair Steve Schewel stated that a report on the new funding plan for the Durham-Orange Light
61 Rail Transit (D-O LRT) would be added to the agenda.

62 **4. Public Comments**

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

65 **5. Directives to Staff**

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

67 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

68 **6. Approval of December 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

69 Chair Steve Schewel asked if there was any discussion on the December 14, 2016 meeting
70 minutes. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that he had submitted minor changes to the minutes. Ellen

71 Reckhow made a motion to approve the December 14, 2016 minutes as amended. Vice Chair Damon
72 Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

73 **ACTION ITEMS:**

74 **7. 2017 Joint Legislative Agenda**

75 Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

76 On November 30, 2016, board members of the DCHC MPO and the Capital Area Metropolitan
77 Planning Organization (CAMPO) reviewed a draft legislative agenda. Board members provided input at
78 that meeting and suggested that each board review the draft individually and bring a revised document
79 back to a joint meeting at a future date. Aaron Cain shared the legislative agenda and the comments
80 that were received at the joint meeting.

81 Chair Steve Schewel asked whether changes had been made in response to the comments, and
82 Aaron Cain stated that permanent changes would be made with the blessing of the MPO Board.

83 Ellen Reckhow, Aaron Cain, and Andy Henry discussed the best way to clarify the language about
84 the removal of the 10% cap on light rail transit funding given that the cap affects more than light rail
85 funding. Vice Chair Damon Seils suggested referring to the statute which specifies a 10% cap on light rail
86 and commuter rail.

87 Ed Harrison, Aaron Cain, and Felix Nwoko discussed whether other MPOs were working to allow
88 state funds to be used for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

89 Vice Chair Damon Seils requested that a final copy of the legislative agenda be circulated when it
90 is complete.

91 Pam Hemminger made a motion approve the legislative agenda inclusive of comments made at
92 the joint meeting and at this MPO Board meeting. Ellen Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion
93 passed unanimously.

94 **8. Release of Division Rankings from SPOT 4.0**

95 Dale McKeel and Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

96 On December 13, 2016, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) released the
97 division rankings from Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) P4.0. Dale McKeel had
98 reviewed the list of projects that were and were not funded at the December MPO Board meeting. Dale
99 McKeel stated that NCDOT recently released the draft STIP. Dale McKeel reviewed the next steps in this
100 process, and noted that one-on-one meetings between NCDOT staff and the MPO Board would be held
101 on March 8, 2017.

102 Vice Chair Damon Seils and Dale McKeel discussed whether bus expansion for several routes in
103 Chapel Hill had been funded. Dale McKeel stated that he did not believe that the Chapel Hill bus
104 expansion had been funded, but that he would confirm that this was the case.

105 This item was informational and no further action was required by the MPO Board.

106 **9. Draft FY2018 United Planning Work Program**

107 Meg Scully, LPA Staff

108 The DCHC MPO is required by federal regulations to prepare an annual Unified Planning Work
109 Program (UPWP) that details and guides the urban area transportation planning activities. Funding for
110 the UPWP is provided on an annual basis by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the
111 Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The UPWP must identify MPO planning tasks to be performed with
112 the use of federal transportation funds, including highway and transit programs.

113 Meg Scully reminded the MPO Board that the MPO initiated a cost sharing of the local match
114 required for the Local Planning Agency (LPA) planning activities. Meg Scully walked the MPO Board
115 through the UPWP document, drawing attention to the summary of accomplishments from the 2016
116 UPWP and the first quarter of FY2017. Meg Scully highlighted the emphasis areas that the MPO would
117 be focusing on in FY2018. Meg Scully drew attention to federal, state, and local funding sources. Meg
118 Scully stated that funds for the LPA are primarily used for staff salaries, operations, and consultants.

119 Meg Scully shared the schedule for the next steps in this process.

120 Meg Scully stated that the Town of Chapel Hill would increase its funding participation in the
121 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBGP) by \$40,000 based on a re-evaluation of what the Town
122 expects its level of effort to be among task codes in FY2018.

123 Chair Steve Schewel, Meg Scully, and Felix Nwoko discussed the work of the LPA Staff, primarily
124 which tasks are the most time-consuming.

125 Chair Steve Schewel and Felix Nwoko discussed whether the sample size of the Travel Behavior
126 Survey was sufficient. John Hodges-Copple explained the relationship between the Triangle Regional
127 Model (TRM) and CommunityViz.

128 Barry Jacobs made a motion to release the UPWP for public comment. Ellen Reckhow seconded
129 the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

130 **10. Approval of Amendment #6 to the FY2016-25 Transportation Improvement Program**

131 Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

132 Amendment #6 to the DCHC MPO FY2016-2025 TIP includes two requests from the Town of
133 Chapel Hill. The first is to amend project EB-5721, US15-501 Bicycle and Pedestrian Sidepath Willow to
134 Cleland, to use Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) rather than Safe Routes to School
135 (SRTS) funds and alter the project timing. The second is a request for a small increase in STBGP funds
136 and delay of Right-of-Way (ROW) by one year for project C-5179, North Estes Drive. Aaron Cain
137 described the content of the amendment and reasons for modifying the funding source.

138 Ed Harrison asked if this amendment was a result of SRTS funding no longer being available, and
139 Aaron Cain confirmed that this was the case.

140 Aaron Cain stated that a similar amendment pertaining to a Durham project would be brought
141 before the MPO Board in February 2017.

142 Vice Chair Damon Seils made a motion to approve amendment #6 to the FY2016-25 TIP. Barry
143 Jacobs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

144 **11. Bicycle Safety on Old NC 86 - Letter to NCDOT**

145 Dale McKeel, LPA Staff

146 On December 14, 2016, the MPO Board requested that the Chair and LPA Staff draft a letter to
147 NCDOT about bicycle safety issues on Old NC 86 between the Carrboro town limits and the intersection
148 with Homestead and Dairyland roads.

149 Dale McKeel discussed the aims of the letter and comments he received from Pat Wilson on
150 how to improve the letter. Dale McKeel also described previous attempts to fund the project through
151 the SPOT process.

152 Ed Harrison discussed the legality of “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs.

153 Pam Hemminger stated that the intent of the letter gets lost as it is currently written and
154 proposed that the MPO write two separate letters.

155 Dale McKeel stated that he needed to revise the letter to incorporate Pat Wilson’s comments.

156 Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that the language of the letter should make clear why the MPO
157 did not assign points to the Old NC 86 project during the SPOT process. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated
158 that two requests should be made clear in the letter, one about signage and sharrows and the other
159 about what options are available on corridors like NC 86 when existing processes do not offer a solution.

160 Ellen Reckhow commented that the letter was disjointed, but that it could be edited to be more
161 coherent. She suggested noting that the letter was a result of comments received during a public
162 comment period to add needed context.

163 Dale McKeel and Lydia Lavelle discussed whether the project on NC 86 might be eligible for
164 SPOT Safety funds.

165 Ellen Reckhow stated that the conclusion of the letter should broadly address bicycle safety on
166 other secondary roads.

167 Pam Hemminger made a motion to authorize Chair Steve Schewel to sign a revised version of
168 the letter. Ellen Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

169 **12. Discussion of Equity Issues regarding Managed Lanes**

170 Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

171 Steve Schewel, MPO Chair

172 Barry Jacobs, Orange County Board of Commissioners

173 As NCDOT and its consultant teams complete their feasibility studies for the addition of
174 managed lanes on I-40 and NC 147, concerns have been raised by MPO Board members regarding the
175 equity of this strategy for lower-income users of these roads. Felix Nwoko stated that the MPO Board
176 could write a letter to NCDOT and the consultants working on the I-40 and NC 147 projects in order to
177 express their views and desires regarding managed lanes.

178 Chair Steve Schewel stated that he liked Felix Nwoko's idea of a letter to NCDOT and the
179 consultants. Chair Steve Schewel stated that his takeaway from the report on this issue is that there are
180 ways in which managed lanes can be implemented that can be more equitable than other solutions,
181 such as a gas tax. Chair Steve Schewel highlighted some of the remedies identified in the report and
182 noted that an implementation strategy that includes a subsidy for low-income users might be most
183 favorable.

184 Barry Jacobs noted that there is not a lot of experience in the US on how to manage the equity
185 issues posed by managed lanes. He stated that organizations, such as the Institute for Transportation
186 Research and Education at the University of North Carolina and the Justice Center in Raleigh, might be
187 helpful in formulating an approach to these equity issues. Barry Jacobs commented that New York City is
188 facing similar equity issues when it comes to subway fare pricing. Barry Jacobs discussed problems that
189 might arise in identifying low-income users of managed lane facilities.

190 Chair Steve Schewel expressed concern that low-income people are less likely to have a
191 transponder and that this might make it difficult to subsidize smart cards. Chair Steve Schewel reiterated
192 his support for a letter to NCDOT and the consultants that conveys that the MPO's support for managed
193 lanes will be contingent on a solution to equity issues.

194 Lydia Lavelle stated that it might be wise to reach out to the new Secretary of Transportation on
195 this issue. Felix Nwoko stated that it is important to convey that the MPO has philosophical issues with
196 managed lanes and that he liked the idea of reaching out to think tanks for guidance. Chair Steve
197 Schewel asked Felix Nwoko to draft a letter to NCDOT and the consultants and bring it back to the MPO
198 Board. Chair Steve Schewel stated that he liked Lydia Lavelle's idea of personally reaching out to folks on
199 this issue.

200 Ellen Reckhow, Felix Nwoko and Chair Steve Schewel discussed whether a toll-free carpool
201 option might be more equitable. Chair Steve Schewel stated that it might be helpful to be general in the
202 letter, but to convey that equity issues are important to the MPO. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that
203 while a toll-free carpool option was a mitigating factor, this may be an opportunity for the MPO to
204 express values around privileging certain kinds of transportation projects over others. Vice Chair Damon
205 Seils noted that equity could be addressed through not allocating funds to these kinds of projects at the
206 expense of transit and other kinds of transportation modes.

207 Barry Jacobs pointed out that NCDOT did mention social equity issues in their discussion of toll
208 lanes, but that this may just be pro forma. Barry Jacobs commented that is important that NCDOT
209 provide more than a pro forma approach to equity issues.

210 Ed Harrison stated that the Triangle Expressway did not originally allow public transit to use
211 their facilities toll-free, and that it is important to reiterate that public transit should be toll-free on any
212 new facilities.

213 Ellen Reckhow stated that a toll-free option for carpools might be beneficial for other parts of
214 the transportation network.

215 Chair Steve Schewel asked Vice Chair Damon Seils to help the LPA Staff to draft the letter to
216 NCDOT and the consultants. Chair Steve Schewel thanked Barry Jacobs for bringing this issue to the
217 MPO Board's attention.

218 This item was information and no further action was required by the MPO Board.

219 **13. Funding for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT)**

220 Danny Rogers, GoTriangle

221 In November of 2016, GoTriangle estimated a need of \$250 million dollars in additional local
222 funding sources to fund the D-O LRT. The February 2017 New Starts Financial Plan will eliminate the
223 need for this additional local funding. Danny Rogers discussed the assumptions of the original financial
224 plan, and the difference between the base case and downside cases or “what if” scenarios that needs to
225 be addressed in the FTA application. Danny Rogers described how financial advisors from Public
226 Financial Management (PFM) Group structured the debt in the new plan in order to improve cash flow.
227 Danny Rogers described the FTA process for evaluating the financial plan. Danny Rogers discussed how
228 inflation has affected cost estimates for the project.

229 Vice Chair Damon Seils asked for clarification about whether certain figures in the presentation
230 were in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars or base year dollars. Vice Chair Damon Seils stated that the
231 distinction between base year dollars and YOE dollars is important when communicating with people
232 who have concerns about the escalating costs of the project. Ellen Reckhow asked Danny Rogers to look
233 into whether at one point current year dollars were being used. Chair Steve Schewel stated that the
234 MPO Board would have to do some of the work in explaining the difference between base year dollars
235 and YOE dollars.

236 Ellen Reckhow and Danny Rogers discussed the FTA required maintenance reserve fund.
237 Danny Rogers discussed the required contingency funds for the project.

238 Barry Jacobs and Danny Rogers discussed how two additional years would affect the financing
239 costs for the project.

240 Ellen Reckhow, Danny Rogers, and Chair Steve Schewel discussed the funds that are currently
241 committed to the project.

242 There was discussion of how the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) from local
243 jurisdictions regarding the allocation of additional funds for the D-O LRT were used in the FTA
244 application.

245 Danny Rogers discussed how the Chapel Hill Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project fits into the new
246 financial plan. There was additional discussion of funding for the Chapel Hill BRT.

247 Danny Rogers discussed differences in revenue projections between the original and the new
248 financial plans. Danny Rogers described the two sensitivity analyses that were required by FTA. Vice
249 Chair Damon Seils asked whether there was a sensitivity analysis that included both a 10% cost increase
250 and a pessimistic sales tax revenue projection, and Danny Rogers stated that this was not required by
251 FTA.

252 Danny Rogers discussed the schedule for the next steps in funding and implementing this
253 project.

254 Chair Steve Schewel thanked Danny Rogers and his staff for their work on this project, for
255 submitting the application on time to FTA, for coming up with a new base case, and for the addition of
256 the North Carolina Central University (NCCU) station.

257 Ellen Reckhow stated that it would be wise to look into providing more local funds for the
258 project given some of the lingering uncertainties that Danny Rogers outlined in his presentation.

259 Barry Jacobs and Danny Rogers discussed why it is unwise to pursue cost cutting at this time.

260 Danny Rogers reviewed the assumptions that have informed the base plan that was submitted
261 to FTA.

262 Vice Chair Damon Seils and Danny Rogers discussed the role that borrowing will play in funding
263 this project. Vice Chair Damon Seils asked Danny Rogers to share project updates with the Carrboro
264 Board of Aldermen. Lydia Lavelle suggested that updates be shared with every member of all of the local
265 boards.

266 Pam Hemminger commended Danny Rogers for presenting a new base case that relates to the
 267 original plan. Pam Hemminger and Danny Rogers discussed whether it would be possible to break out
 268 sales tax projections by year.

269 Don Moffitt inquired whether the overall amount of borrowing needed to fund the project has
 270 increased, and Danny Rogers confirmed that this was the case. Chair Steve Schewel and Danny Rogers
 271 discussed how increased borrowing might affect the commuter rail project. Danny Rogers stated that
 272 conversations with Wake County about the commuter rail will occur as the Durham and Orange County
 273 Transit Plans are updated in the coming months.

274 Chair Steve Schewel and Danny Rogers discussed how new elements in the financial plan, such
 275 as the NCCU station and the Hillsborough station, will affect the 77/23 split between Durham and
 276 Orange counties.

277 Danny Rogers, Geoff Green, and Chair Steve Schewel discussed how the LRT scored in SPOT 3.0
 278 and how it might have scored in SPOT 4.0.

279 Chair Steve Schewel inquired whether increasing GoPass revenue was built into the assumption
 280 about light rail funding, and Danny Rogers stated that he thought that this was the case.

281 This item was informational and no further action was required by the MPO Board.

282 **REPORTS:**

283 **14. Report from the DCHC MPO Board Chair**

284 Steve Schewel, DCHC MPO Board Chair

285 There was no report from the DCHC MPO Board Chair.

286 **15. Report from the DCHC MPO Technical Committee Vice Chair**

287 **Ellen Beckmann, DCHC MPO TC Vice Chair**

288 Ellen Beckmann stated that the LPA Staff was meeting every other week with GoTriangle to
 289 work on updating the Bus and Rail Investment Plans. Five subcommittees are also meeting to

290 prepare for these meetings with GoTriangle. Ellen Beckmann stated that the staff is also working on
291 the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) draft while it is out for public comment.

292 Ellen Reckhow, Ellen Beckmann, and Geoff Green discussed the point at which policy making
293 boards would be given an opportunity for input on the updates to the Bus and Rail Investment Plans.

294 **16. Reports from LPA Staff**

295 Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

296 Felix Nwoko reminded the MPO Board that the deadline for submitting an updated Statement of
297 Economic Interest to the North Carolina Ethics Commission is April 15, 2017.

298 **17. NCDOT Reports:**

299 There was no report from NCDOT Division 5.

300 Pat Wilson, NCDOT Division 7, stated that he wanted to let MPO Board members from Chapel
301 Hill and Carrboro know that members of his staff would be meeting with town staffs on Friday, January
302 13, 2017, to discuss the project at Franklin Street, Merritt Mill, and Brewer Lane.

303 There was no report from NCDOT Division 8.

304 There was no report from NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch.

305 There was no report from NCDOT Traffic Operations.

306 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

307 **18. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

308 There were no informational items to report.

309 **ADJOURNMENT:**

310 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at
311 11:26 a.m.