

DRAFT

Performance and Organizational Review of the Durham–Chapel Hill–Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization

Scope of Services

1. Background

The Durham–Chapel Hill–Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) requires an independent performance review of its financial, administrative, and governance policies; procedures and practices; and organizational and leadership structure. This review is designed to ensure that the DCHC MPO is conducting its activities and using its resources in the most efficient and economical manner; and serving as a leader in transportation planning and policy while being responsive to the priorities of its member jurisdictions and agencies.

The DCHC MPO's Lead Planning Agency (LPA) provides staff support to the organization and is housed in the City of Durham's Department of Transportation. The DCHC MPO manages the metropolitan transportation planning process as required by federal law. The DCHC MPO plans for the area's surface transportation needs, including highways, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. DCHC MPO priorities include (1) promoting the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of transportation systems; (2) serving the mobility needs of people—particularly those in underserved populations—and freight; (3) fostering equitable, environmentally sensitive economic growth and development; and (4) ensuring that transportation is provided in ways that address environmental challenges.

The DCHC MPO serves the City of Durham, Durham County, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Hillsborough, and portions of Orange and Chatham Counties. The DCHC MPO voting structure is described in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and documented in its bylaws. The DCHC MPO designation has not changed since the initial designation by the Governor. In March 2014, the Board updated the MOU, and GoTriangle (formerly the Triangle Transit Authority [TTA]) became a voting member of the Board.

The DCHC MPO Board is the organization's policy board, as prescribed in the MOU and the bylaws. The Board has a key role in making decisions about public investment in transportation services, infrastructure, and planning within the region, and in communicating those decisions to its member jurisdictions and agencies.

The MPO has a Technical Committee composed of technical staff from each MPO member jurisdiction and agency. The Technical Committee provides general and technical review, guidance, and coordination of the transportation planning process. The Technical

Committee and the Board meet monthly. All meetings of the Technical Committee and the Board are open to the public. Attendance is good, and a quorum is always met.

The DCHC MPO wishes to undertake an in-depth review with two key objectives:

- Assess the DCHC MPO's compliance with all statutory requirements and its use of financial and human resources in an efficient and effective manner.
- Assess the DCHC MPO's role in the region as a leader in transportation planning and policy, and determine whether the DCHC MPO's governance and organizational structure is aligned with fulfilling a leadership role beyond its statutory requirements.

The following section presents the suggested work plan and timeline for achieving these objectives. The DCHC MPO is receptive to proposals of alternative work plans and associated timelines, if the applicants feel such alternatives will lead to better outcomes and/or enable the work to be done more efficiently.

2. Suggested Work Plan

2.1. Project Kickoff Meeting

The contractor(s) shall hold a project kickoff meeting with DCHC MPO Board jurisdiction and agency representatives to introduce their team, review overall performance review objectives and clarify responsibilities, identify primary contact persons, and initiate data collection. The contractor(s) shall submit a list of documents and information required to assess compliance with performance audit requirements and follow-up from previous performance audits. The DCHC MPO will provide the contractor(s) with a list of recommended interviewees pertinent to each of the project objectives.

2.2. Review of Action on Prior Recommendations

The contractor(s) will analyze previous certification reviews conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2015 and 2019. Pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) (i)(5) and 49 USC 1607, the FHWA and the FTA must certify jointly the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas at least once every four years. The DCHC MPO is a Transportation Management Area having an urbanized area population of over 200,000. The analysis will assess recommendations from these reports and whether those recommendations that have not been implemented (a) are no longer applicable, (b) are infeasible, or (c) should still be implemented. If a prior recommendation has not been implemented but still has merit, the contractor(s) shall include the prior recommendation in the current report. The contractor(s) will evaluate recommendations that have been implemented or are being implemented. For these recommendations, the contractor(s) should assess the benefits provided (or likely to be provided) by the implementation of the recommendations. Significant accomplishments in implementing prior recommendations should be recognized.

2.3. Initial Review

The initial review of DCHC MPO administrative, policy, and planning functions should provide the contractor(s) with an understanding of the organization's characteristics, including a familiarity with the leadership, staffing, organizational structure, administrative procedures, and financial management functions performed.

The contractor(s) shall also conduct interviews with Board members and representatives from external stakeholders and partners, such as elected officials, government staff, NCDOT, and GoTriangle to assess the priorities of Board members with respect to the functions described above, satisfaction with how functions are performed, and perceptions of the DCHC MPO's leadership role in the region and the success with which its functions are performed.

2.4. Review of Compliance Requirements

The contractor(s) shall assess how funds allocated to the DCHC MPO are expended in conformance with applicable laws and rules and regulations. This process shall also include a review to determine if the DCHC MPO has:

- a. complied with applicable state and federal laws and regulations;
- b. established goals and objectives for its activities and programs;
- c. developed standards to measure agency performance;
- d. achieved desired program results; and
- e. conducted its activities and used its resources in an efficient and economical manner to advance the priorities identified by the Board.

The contractor(s) shall gather available financial data for fiscal years 2019, 2020, and 2021 to analyze funding sources available, including FHWA, FTA, and local funds and their uses, including personnel, contractual services, and overhead, to translate the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) into a simplified statement of sources and uses for each year, showing any carryover of available funds and available fund balances.

2.5. Review of Nonfinancial Data Collection Practices Used for Performance Measurement Reporting Purposes, as Discussed in the Certification Review, With Particular Attention to the Areas of Interest Identified Below

2.5.1 Public Outreach

The goals of DCHC MPO's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) are to provide timely notice, education, and information to the public regarding planning activities, and to provide the public reasonable opportunity to share views with decision makers. The PIP also affords citizens the opportunity to have their views considered and to receive responses as appropriate.

Evaluation metrics include the number of email and mail responses received compared to that sent, workshop attendance, Twitter and Facebook comments, number of calls, and feedback. Successful activities include holding “pop up” meetings and specialized workshops, interviewing bus riders, and consultant-run corridor study meetings. Public involvement and outreach for the DCHC MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is coordinated with NCDOT’s State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) public involvement and outreach. The DCHC MPO routinely evaluates the effectiveness of its public involvement procedures and endeavors to get more people involved early in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) process instead of waiting until a project alternative goes through their property. The DCHC MPO is currently updating its limited English proficiency document and Title VI civil rights document, and reassessing its PIP to evaluate its effectiveness. The DCHC MPO has stated it wants to “take the MTP to the public.” The organization is interested in using crowdsourcing data for the next MTP update specifically when looking at scenario planning. The DCHC MPO considers and responds to public input by providing direct responses, providing summaries of responses posted to the DCHC MPO’s website, and providing responses to the Board in the agenda packets.

The DCHC MPO maintains a robust, public-facing website. The DCHC MPO considers its website the backbone of its PIP. The website incorporates Google translate, web-based maps, and a traffic data portal, which affords the public access to field-collected data such as volumes, speeds, and bicycle and pedestrian counts. The DCHC MPO plans to migrate much of the information on its website to a cloud-based platform.

2.5.2 Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency

Metropolitan planning organizations must ensure that both the benefits and the burdens of their transportation plans are equitably distributed when comparing environmental justice populations to non-environmental justice populations. To achieve this, they must conduct both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Qualitative analyses usually focus on public involvement efforts, whereas quantitative analyses use data gathered based on specific metrics developed by the organization. The foundation of qualitative analyses is the Transportation Management Area’s demographic profile.

Although DCHC MPO adopted its 2045 MTP in March 2018, the review team found that the DCHC MPO has not yet completed an update of the environmental justice report. Staff indicated that an update may be completed later in 2019. The DCHC MPO also indicated that they are working on enhancing its environmental justice analyses with the development of two environmental justice metrics—one for safety and one for displacement. The draft data for the safety metric was broken out by vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle crashes as they relate to communities of concern versus the DCHC MPO in its entirety. The draft data for the displacement metric was broken out by type of project (widening, new location, and other) and type of displacement (residential, commercial, civic, and school), and compared communities of concern versus the DCHC MPO in its entirety.

The DCHC MPO needs to consider that the identified communities of concern, which are based on the demographic profile in the environmental justice report, may have changed since the completion of the report in 2014, which relied on data from 2013 and earlier. The DCHC MPO must update its demographic profile before finalizing its environmental justice analyses, due to the potential change in communities of concern.

2.5.3 Congestion Management Process

Performance measures in the Congestion Management Process include volume-to-capacity ratio and level of service. As noted in the 2019 certification review, a transition to travel time data and volume data is underway. These performance measures provide a generalized analysis of roadway segments and allow for further data collection and analysis, if needed.

2.5.4 Management and Operations Considerations

The DCHC MPO's MTP includes management and operations strategies supported by specific goals and measurable objectives. Mechanisms for measuring management and operations goals and objectives are under development. The MTP and the TIP do not currently include a documented methodology for assessing the costs associated with maintaining and operating the existing federal-aid transportation system.

2.5.5 Transportation Safety and Security

The DCHC MPO incorporates Performance Management (PM) PM1, PM2, and PM3, and complies with the new planning factors. The planning factors serve as a basis for identifying projects for inclusion in the MTP and the TIP. Safety performance measures are incorporated in the planning process from traffic accident reports. Performance metrics include (1) fatalities, (2) serious injuries, (3) crash rates, (4) crash hot spots, (5) collision inventories, and (6) pedestrian injuries. Roadway design plans consider accident patterns and how to reduce conflicts.

Safety is considered in determining which projects will be included in the MTP and the TIP. NCDOT has funds set aside for making safety improvements along roadways, including guardrails, rumble strips, enhanced lighting, turn lanes, better pavement marking, and signs. Highway Safety Improvement Program projects located within the DCHC MPO are included in the TIP. Most of these projects originate with NCDOT and are routinely included in the TIP when project requests are taken.

The DCHC MPO is developing a Transportation Safety/Security Plan and an Incident Management Plan protocol to improve transit, pedestrian, bicyclist, and highway safety. The plan will depict a snapshot of the accident types, severities, and locations using the National Transit Database, which is operated by the FTA, and the Traffic Engineering Accident System and Intelligent Traffic Systems architecture maintained by NCDOT. The plan will identify safety and security deficiencies such as the need for placing cameras in

buses and terminals to guide development of new strategies and campaigns for improving overall transportation safety. The DCHC MPO is also developing an Americans With Disabilities Act Transition Plan, and access to its website for persons with hearing impairments.

2.5.6 Public Transit Planning

The DCHC MPO goal for the TIP notes a commitment to a “balanced transportation system” that “will provide opportunities for greater use of alternative modes of transportation, including public transit, bicycling, and pedestrian movement.” This policy goal is reflected in the DCHC MPO’s longstanding policy to direct STP-DA and TAP funds to nonhighway projects, such as transit. CMAQ funding is also made available to transit on equal terms with other modes. The DCHC MPO has worked closely to develop performance metrics for the region’s transportation system that emphasizes the importance of person-throughput, as opposed to vehicle level of service, and other measures that prioritize personal mobility over vehicular mobility. For example, the DCHC MPO’s Mobility Report Card provides measures of the number of passengers carried by different modes on certain key roadways in the region.

The DCHC MPO also has a strong record of emphasizing environmental justice issues and prepares regular reports on these issues, including identifying areas where higher levels of transit service for transit-dependent populations may be appropriate. The DCHC MPO and GoTriangle planning staff have collaborated closely on major corridor projects as well as local and state funding for other transit projects. DCHC MPO staff have helped coordinate major transit initiatives such as the region-wide, multi-agency procurement of fare boxes.

2.5.7 Data Collection Improvement Recommendations

The contractor(s) shall develop recommendations and a basis for adjustment of existing statistics, where appropriate. Recommendations shall address controls, accuracy, documentation, internal consistency, and procedural improvements. Where material differences exist between the contractor(s)’s verification values and reported values, adjustments to existing statistics should be recommended.

2.5.8 Evaluation of Performance Indicators

The contractor(s), after reviewing the performance data, shall identify declines in performance, highlight areas for further investigation, and make recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the DCHC MPO.

2.6. Assessment of the Current Role of the DCHC MPO in Regional Transportation Planning and Advocacy

- a. Based on internal and external interviews, document reviews, and the like, assess the degree to which the DCHC MPO is serving as a regional leader in planning,

policy formulation, and advocacy with particular reference to the areas of climate change mitigation, social and racial equity, and adoption of novel modalities and technologies.

- b. Based upon the above as well as benchmarking of comparable metropolitan planning organizations in North Carolina and elsewhere, validate or suggest modifications to the DCHC MPO's goals.
- c. Identify specific areas in which the DCHC MPO can or should improve to ensure alignment with goals and desired role.
- d. Recommend changes to the DCHC MPO's leadership and organizational structure, if needed.

2.7. Detailed Review of DCHC MPO Functions

The contractor(s) shall be responsible for reviewing the various functions of the DCHC MPO. These functions will mostly consist of:

- a. general management and organization;
- b. personnel management and training;
- c. administration and budget;
- d. marketing and public information;
- e. regional transportation planning; and
- f. policy formulation and communication with particular regard to novel technologies and modalities; and climate change mitigation.

The contractor(s) shall interview Board members, member representatives, and senior management to determine the extent to which performance aligns with membership priorities and review each functional area and shall highlight areas where improvements could be made by implementing alternative procedures.

2.8. Prepare Recommendations and Cost Evaluation Methodology

The contractor(s) shall review internal financial and administrative controls and determine the following whether there is clear responsibility for developing and implementing controls of administrative costs, maintenance practices, maintenance costs, security costs, and accident prevention methods.

2.9. Calculate and Document Funding Available for Additional Initiatives

The contractor(s), where feasible, shall quantify the estimated funding available currently or in future years to enable implementation of recommendations.

2.10. Preparation and Presentation of Draft and Final Report

The contractor(s) shall document the study process, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in a comprehensive report to be submitted in draft form to the project

management team for review and comment prior to production of a final report. The contractor(s) shall provide management with regular briefings on the progress and interim results of the audit as specified during the project kickoff meeting. The results of data collection efforts and staff contacts will be documented. Specific recommendations for management or performance improvements are to be made based on the findings. The process will consist of the following steps:

2.10.1 Exit Interviews With Project Management Team to Review Findings and Preliminary Recommendations.

2.10.2 Prepare Draft Report

Upon completion of the audit process and the exit interviews, the contractor(s) shall prepare a draft report for submission to project management team. The report will contain, at a minimum, a letter of transmittal, an executive summary, findings/results, and conclusions and recommendations. The contractor(s) shall review the draft report with the project management team.

2.10.3 Present Results to the DCHC MPO Board

Upon the completion of the changes made in the previous task, the contractor(s) will present the results to the Board and solicit feedback from Board members.

2.10.4 Issue Final Report and Executive Summary

The contractor(s) shall include input received from the project management team revised draft report.

3. Period of Performance

The LPA anticipates that the contract award and notice to proceed will be issued in October 2020. All work must be completed by January 2021.

3.1. Estimated Proposed Schedule and Deliverables:

Milestone	Completed By
Kickoff meeting	October 13, 2020
Preliminary findings report	December 7, 2020
Exit interviews	December 2020
Draft report	December 23, 2020
Revised Draft Report to Board	January 13, 2021
Final Report to Board	January 29, 2021

4. THE CONSULTANT SHALL DELIVER:

Preliminary findings
Draft report to project management team, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended changes to DCHC MPO's role in region• Recommended changes to DCHC MPO's leadership and organizational structure, if any• Recommended changes to Board reporting structure and processes• Action plan for achieving recommended changes including timelines, resource requirements, and timelines
Revised draft report with project management team comments addressed
Board presentation
Final report including elements referenced above