

DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

10 March 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on March 10, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. remotely via Zoom. The following people were in attendance:

Wendy Jacobs (Chair)	Durham County
Jenn Weaver (Vice Chair)	Town of Hillsborough
Charlie Reece (Member)	City of Durham
Pierce Freelon (Member)	City of Durham
Damon Seils (Member)	Town of Carrboro
Pam Hemminger (Member)	Town of Chapel Hill
Jamezetta Bedford (Member)	Orange County
Michael Parker (Member)	GoTriangle
Lisa Mathis (Member)	NCDOT
Nimasheena Burns (Alternate)	Durham County
Mark Bell (Alternate)	Town of Hillsborough
Amy Ryan (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill
Nish Trivedi	Orange County
Ellen Beckmann	Durham County
John Hodges-Copple	TJCOG
Zach Hallock	Town of Carrboro
Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
Bergen Watterson	Town of Chapel Hill
Sally Greene	Orange County
Sean Egan	City of Durham
Bill Judge	City of Durham
Evan Tenenbaum	City of Durham
Lindsay Smart	City of Durham
David Keilson	NCDOT Division 5
Richard Hancock	NCDOT Division 5
Patrick Wilson	NCDOT Division 7
Stephen Robinson	NCDOT Division 7
Bryan Kluchar	NCDOT Division 8
Julie Bogle	NCDOT TPD
Aaron Cain	DCHC MPO
Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
Anne Phillips	DCHC MPO
Brian Rhodes	DCHC MPO
Dale McKeel	DCHC MPO
Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
Yanping Zhang	DCHC MPO

42 Kayla Mathews DCHC MPO

43 Michael Waldroup Resident

44 Quorum Count: 9 of 10 Voting Members

45 Chair Wendy Jacobs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call of MPO Board Member
46 and Alternates was performed. The Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO
47 Board were identified and are indicated above.

48 **PRELIMINARIES:**

49 **2. Ethics Reminder**

50 Chair Wendy Jacobs read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of
51 interest with respect to matters coming before the MPO Board and requested that if there were any
52 identified during the meeting for them to be announced. There were no known conflicts identified by
53 MPO Board Members.

54 Aaron Cain stated that he will notify MPO Board Members if they have not completed the
55 Statement of Economic Interest and Real Estate Disclosure forms before the next MPO Board meeting
56 on April 14. Chair Wendy Jacobs added that Board Members can open the attachment in the agenda
57 document to complete the required forms.

58 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

59 There were no adjustments to the agenda.

60 **4. Public Comments**

61 There were no public comments.

62 **5. Directives to Staff**

63 Chair Wendy Jacobs stated there were no new directives to staff.

64 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

65 **6. February 10, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes**

66 Michael Parker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Pam Hemminger seconded the
67 motion. The motion passed unanimously.

68 **ACTION ITEMS:**

69 **7. Resolution Honoring Mark Ahrendsen**
70 **Felix Nwoko, LPA Manager**

71 Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that Mark Ahrendsen made significant and transformative
72 achievements for the Technical Committee (TC) Board. Ellen Beckmann read aloud the resolution to
73 honor Mark Ahrendsen.

74 Chair Wendy Jacobs invited attendees to provide comments about the passing of Mark
75 Ahrendsen. Damon Seils stated that Mark Ahrendsen was the Chair of the TC when he first joined,
76 and he was a leader and a mentor. John Hodges-Copple stated that Mark Ahrendsen was
77 instrumental in representing local governments and recognizing regional responsibilities. Charlie
78 Reece praised Mark Ahrendsen's patience and kindness.

79 Chair Wendy Jacobs and Aaron Cain discussed the best way to publicly honor Mark
80 Ahrendsen. Aaron Cain stated he will accept ideas from MPO Members and staff. Aaron Cain added
81 that he will notify attendees about Mark Ahrendsen's funeral arrangements.

82 Damon Seils made a motion to adopt the joint resolution with the Technical Committee
83 honoring Mark Ahrendsen. Charlie Reece seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

84 **8. CMAQ Funding Recommendation**
85 **Anne Phillips, LPA Staff**

86 Anne Phillips stated that she would present highlights about the staff recommendations for
87 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects. Anne Phillips noted that there was originally
88 meant to be one federal call for projects, but then Surface Transportation Block Grants Direct

89 Attributable (STBGDA) COVID-19 relief funds became available. Staff wanted to allow local
90 jurisdictions more time to decide on which projects they wanted to submit for funding and split the
91 call for projects into two separate calls.

92 Anne Phillips stated that this year DCHC MPO received \$2.2M for FY22. Anne Phillips added
93 that the MPO received eight applications for CMAQ funding totaling \$5.8M. Anne Phillips noted that
94 the City of Durham submitted three projects, and five other agencies submitted one project each.

95 Anne Phillips stated that MPO staff followed the DCHC MPO federal funding policy updated
96 in 2015. Anne Phillips noted that the policy was vague in its recommendation for allocating funding
97 for CMAQ projects, specifically there is no quantitative guidance. Anne Phillips explained that MPO
98 staff considered emissions benefits and the regional model was used to calculate those benefits.
99 Anne Phillips continued that shovel-ready projects were given special consideration. Anne Phillips
100 added that other funding sources available to projects was also a consideration. Anne Phillips noted
101 that MPO staff also considered geographic equity when making funding decisions. Anne Phillips
102 noted that the emission reduction estimates were recalculated for transit projects, because of
103 concerns about the accuracy of the initial calculations.

104 Anne Phillips stated that staff recommended four projects: (1) City of Durham Bike Facilities
105 Two project will add buffered bike facilities to Club Boulevard and the Blackwell Corcoran border in
106 Durham. Anne Phillips stated that the City of Durham ranked this as their highest priority. Anne
107 Phillips stated that the (2) GoTriangle Transit Access improvements projects will add transit access
108 improvements at US 15-501 and Eastowne Drive. Anne Phillips related that it serves as an
109 employment hub, and it connects with GoTriangle regional routes. Anne Phillips stated that the (3)
110 TJCOG Transportation Demand Management (TDM) project scored the highest and benefits the
111 entire MPO region. Anne Phillips stated that the (4) Chapel Hill Estes Drive Bike/Ped Improvements

would provide bike/ped facilities along north Estes Drive between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Caswell Road. Anne Phillips added that it was a shovel-read project.

Anne Phillips stated that the projects that were not selected include transit projects like the (I) Electric Bus Purchase from Chapel Hill Transit. Anne Phillips added that the (II) Bike/Ped Improvements project in Chapel Hill was not selected because another project from Chapel Hill was recommended for funding. Anne Phillips stated that (III) Wayfinding from the City Durham scored well on emissions. Anne Phillips continued that the assumption that was part of calculation was that 10 percent of drivers in downtown Durham would become lost without wayfinding, but staff thought that this was high due to consumer use of GPS. Anne Phillips stated that the (IV) Neighborhood Bike Facilities improvements from City of Durham scored fourth in emissions. Anne Phillips added that (V) South Greensboro Street improvements in Carrboro did not score well, and it would not be ready until the fall 2022, making it a better candidate for FY23 CMAQ funding.

Anne Phillips stated that the TC voted 18 to 6 in favor of staff recommendation. Anne Phillips noted that, due to the impending deadline, the MPO staff will not have additional time to for further deliberation on the CMAQ funds.

Anne Phillips continued that there will be a call for projects using STBGDA funds on March 31 and CMAQ funding is not representative of how all federal funds will be distributed in FY22. Anne Phillips discussed how funding is suballocated based on population.

Charlie Reece proposed that the MPO Board follow the City of Durham recommendation, which was to fund the Durham Bike Facilities Two project at a higher level than MPO staff's recommendation. Charlie Reece recommended that the term "geographic fairness" be used instead of "geographic equity." There was agreement among the MPO Board that there should be more funding for alternative modes of transportation.

135 Damon Seils stated his support for staff's recommendation and the decision from the TC.

136 Damon Seils continued that GoTriangle's proposal, unlike other proposals, would have less access to
137 sources of other funding.

138 Michael Parker stated his support for the majority TC recommendation due to their
139 expertise. Michael Parker added that the GoTriangle project is going to be on the edge of Orange
140 County and near Durham County while serving both counties. Pam Hemminger added that transit will
141 be more important as job centers emerge and expand. Jamezetta Bedford stated that transit
142 ridership has been down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it would be important to fund transit
143 initiatives.

144 Pierce Freelon noted that no one from Durham County or the City of Durham voted to affirm
145 MPO staff's recommendations in the TC Board vote. Pierce Freelon asked further clarification about
146 the term equity. Anne Phillips responded that the MPO Federal Funding Policy was originally written
147 in 2013, when equity was not used to refer to racial equity as it is today. Lisa Mathis discussed the
148 need to meet the needs of rural populations as well as urban populations. Lisa Mathis discussed
149 infrastructure week.

150 Javiera Caballero and Aaron Cain discussed that quantitative scoring was a part of the
151 criteria, but there were other considerations per the federal funding policy. Aaron Cain added that
152 both quantitative as well as qualitative measures were used to make the funding recommendation.
153 Javiera Caballero stated that she was uncomfortable using the term equity outside of racial
154 connotations. Vice Chair Jenn Weaver stated that smaller jurisdictions are often overlooked in
155 quantitative determinations and qualitative measurements were also important. Vice Chair Jenn
156 Weaver stated that she supported the determination of staff and the TC Board.

157 Jamezetta Bedford stated that the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) tool kit
158 discusses that the key questions that are meant to be asked on analysis and strategies questions is

159 who will benefit and not benefit from a proposal. There was discussion that minorities and lower
160 income residents primarily ride the bus, and therefore the GoTriangle Access Improvements project
161 will best serve those communities. Jay Heikes added in the chat feature that GoTriangle is at a
162 disadvantage because their only dedicated funding sources is the vehicle rental tax, which has been
163 diminished due to COVID-19.

164 Chair Wendy Jacobs and Anne Phillips discussed the STBGDA funding and the eligibility of
165 projects. Anne Phillips responded that DCHC MPO funding policy is opaque in its guidelines for the
166 distribution of STBG-Any Area funding. Ellen Beckman suggested that a TC subcommittee can be
167 created to develop a provisional quantitative scoring mechanism for STBG-Any Area funding. There
168 was discussion about recommending \$400,000 of funding for the City of Durham bike/ped facilities.
169 Aaron Cain responded that the MPO Board can express their preference, but there would be concern
170 over the precedence of the MPO Board directing staff how to perform analysis.

171 There was discussion about updating DCHC's Federal Funding Policy and Chair Wendy Jacobs
172 asked about how the census would impact the policy. There was discussion that the basic population
173 numbers will be available by the end of summer 2021, but more specific data about the urbanized
174 area (UZA), which is used in the development of the MPO boundary, would not be available until at
175 least 2022.

176 Damon Seils made the motion to approve the resolution authorizing submission of the
177 recommended CMAQ projects to NCDOT. Pam Hemminger seconded the motion. The motion passed.

178 Damon Seils made a motion that the MPO Board direct staff to review the MPO's federal
179 funding policy as part of the ongoing governance study that the MPO is beginning soon and bring
180 back to the MPO Board at an appropriate time. Pam Hemminger seconded the motion. The motion
181 passed unanimously.

182 **9. US 15-501 Corridor Study**
183 **Andy Henry, LPA staff**

Andy Henry stated that the MPO Board asked staff to solicit and select a consultant to finish the US 15-501 corridor study. Andy Henry stated that MPO staff has budgeted \$50,000. Charlie Reece and Andy Henry discussed that the budget would be negotiable with the consultants pending their offers.

Michael Parker highlighted the need to hire a consultant who has expertise in the alternative modes of transportation. Andy Henry responded that there are 15 firms from the MPO's on-call list and will give special consideration to firms who have experience in bicycle and pedestrian planning. Andy Henry added that firms have already asked about subconsultants who have further expertise in alternate modes of transportation. Damon Seils requested that the firms understand the history of the US 15-501 corridor study. Damon Seils asked that the selected firm has experience in community engagement, especially with marginalized groups.

Chair Wendy Jacobs asked about the timeline of this project. Andy Henry responded that the firm would be chosen by May 2021 and the summer would be dedicated to community engagement. Andy Henry continued that the draft report would be drafted by fall 2021. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Andy Henry discussed that North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects have slowed down due to budget shortfalls.

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

REPORTS:

10. Report from the MPO Board Chair **Wendy Jacobs, Board Chair**

Chair Wendy Jacobs and Aaron Cain discussed the GARE template. Chair Wendy requested that equity considerations be included in the new agenda memo template.

11. Report from the Technical Committee Chair **Ellen Beckmann, TC Chair**

Ellen Beckmann thanked the MPO Board for their consideration of the CMAQ funding recommendation. Ellen Beckmann discussed the importance of consensus in jurisdictions within the MPO going forward. Ellen Beckmann and Damon Seils discussed additional collaboration between Orange and Durham counties in current projects, including county transit plans.

Sally Greene discussed plans for the Orange County Planning Policy Committee, and she stated that she looks forward to furthering collaboration with Durham, regional staff, and the MPO Board. Sally Greene and Ellen Beckmann discussed working together in future projects.

12. Report from LPA Staff

Felix Nwoko, Andy Henry, LPA Staff

Felix Nwoko stated that there are no additional updates.

13. NCDOT Report

David Keilson, Division 5, stated that, for the Alston Avenue project, the Alston Avenue and Holloway Street intersection will reopen within the next three weeks. Charlie Reece stated that the City of Durham would be contacting Division 5 regarding pedestrian safety issues on state roads. Pam Hemminger asked about construction updates for the work near Wegmans in Chapel Hill. David Keilson stated that finishing the work around Wegmans was delayed until after its opening, but it has since been completed.

Pat Wilson, Division 7, stated that there are no additional updates. Damon Seils noted that Division 7 will be receiving a memo from the Carrboro Town Council regarding the renewed discussions about the downtown pedestrian slow zone. There was discussion about the repaving of E. Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill. Bergen Waterson stated that the Town Manager from Chapel Hill would contact Division 7 regarding the one-year delay request for the E. Franklin Street repaving. Damon Seils requested that the Town of Carrboro be added to the communication.

Bryan Kluchar, Division 8, stated that there are no changes to project information in the packet.

233 Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division, stated that there are no additional updates.

234 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

235 **20. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

236 Lisa Mathis praised the DCHC MPO for their dedication to transportation and serving their
237 residents. Lisa Mathis asked if the MPO Board would be interested in a board report. Chair Wendy
238 Jacobs responded that she would take recommendations from MPO Board members.

239 **ADJOURNMENT:**

240 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at
241 10:57 a.m.