

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

**12 February 2020**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on February 12, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in the Committee Room, located on the second floor of Durham City Hall. The following people were in attendance:

Wendy Jacobs (Chair)	Durham County
Jenn Weaver (Vice Chair)	Town of Hillsborough
Renee Price (Member)	Orange County
Charlie Reece (Member)	City of Durham
Pam Hemminger (Member)	Town of Chapel Hill
Damon Seils (Member)	Town of Carrboro
Nina Szlosberg-Landis (Member)	NC Board of Transportation
Steve Schewel (Alternate)	City of Durham
Lydia Lavelle (Alternate)	Town of Carrboro
Michael Parker (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill
Mike Fox (Alternate)	NC Board of Transportation
Mark Marcoplos (Alternate)	GoTriangle
David Keilson	NCDOT, Division 5
Richard Hancock	NCDOT, Division 5
Pat Wilson	NCDOT, Division 7
Bryan Kluchar	NCDOT, Division 8
Julie Bogle	NCDOT, TPD
John Grant	NCDOT, Traffic Operations
Nish Trivedi	Orange County
Sean Egan	City of Durham
Bill Judge	City of Durham
Evan Tenenbaum	City of Durham
Bergen Watterson	Town of Chapel Hill
Jomar Pastorelle	Town of Chapel Hill
Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
Zach Hallock	Town of Carrboro
Margaret Hauth	Hillsborough
Joe Geigle	FHWA
John Hodges-Copple	Triangle J Council of Governments
Katharine Eggleston	GoTriangle
Meg Scully	GoTriangle
Jay Heikes	GoTriangle
Cha'ssem Anderson	University of North Carolina
Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO

47	Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
48	Aaron Cain	DCHC MPO
49	Brian Rhodes	DCHC MPO
50	Robert Jahn	DCHC MPO
51	Dale McKeel	City of Durham/DCHC MPO
52		
53	Tom Ten Eyck	Orange County Planning Department
54	Kathy Claspell	Sierra Club
55		

56 Quorum Count: 9 of 10 Voting Members

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59 Chair Wendy Jacobs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call was performed. The

60 Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are

61 indicated above. Chair Wendy Jacobs reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was

62 being circulated. Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that Ellen Reckhow and Vernetta Alston would not be in

63 attendance, and they arranged for their alternates to be present. Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that, per

64 state law, all MPO Board Members and Alternates are required to file a statement of economic interest

65 and real estate disclosure form by April 15.

66 **PRELIMINARIES:**

67 **2. Ethics Reminder**

68 Chair Wendy Jacobs read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of

69 interest with respect to matters coming before the MPO Board and requested that if there were any

70 identified during the meeting for them to be announced. There were no known conflicts identified by

71 the MPO Board Members.

72 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

73 There were no adjustments to the agenda.

74 **4. Public Comments**

75 There were no comments from the public.

76 **5. Directives to Staff**

Chair Wendy Jacobs and Damon Seils discussed that the forming of a committee was ongoing.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**6. January 15, 2020 MPO Board Meeting Minutes**

**7. Change to DCHC MPO Board Meeting Calendar**

**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Aaron Cain proposed that, due to a conflict with Veterans' Day, the MPO Board Meeting originally scheduled for November 11 be moved to November 4. There was discussion that Mike Fox and Nina Szlosberg-Landis would not be able to attend due to a scheduling conflict. After discussion, the Board agreed to move forward with the changing of the November meeting date.

Vice Chair Jenn Weaver made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Damon Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**8. Draft FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program**

**Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

Felix Nwoko stated that the Draft FY2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was released at the previous MPO Board Meeting for public comment and has received one comment. Chair Wendy Jacobs opened and closed the public hearing with there being no one to comment from the public.

Damon Seils made a motion to approve the Draft FY21 Unified Planning Work Program. Pam Hemminger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**9. Durham Transit Plan FY20 Amendment - Bus Stop Construction**

**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Aaron Cain stated that, in the FY20 Durham Transit Tax Annual Work Plan, \$500,000 was programmed for design of 50 bus stop improvements for GoDurham. Aaron Cain continued that progress on this work has proceeded at a pace that construction can be scheduled on 10 stops in FY20 rather than FY21 as previously planned. Aaron Cain added that GoTriangle recommends

proceeding with procurement of amenities for all 50 stops in order to access better prices and ensure amenities are in stock for installation as each stop is ready for construction. Aaron Cain stated that GoTriangle, on behalf of GoDurham, is requesting an additional \$1,029,000 of funding from the Durham Transit Tax Fund to be pulled forward from the future funding pipeline into FY20.

Aaron Cain stated that this is considered a material change to the plan per the existing Interlocal Agreement (ILA) because the request is for more than \$500,000 towards bus service. Aaron Cain continued that the request must be approved by the governing boards of the three parties to the ILA: GoTriangle, DCHC MPO, and the Durham Board of County Commissioners. There was discussion about the timing of approval of amendments. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Aaron Cain discussed that the City of Durham has requested to be a part of the ILA.

Nina Szlosberg-Landis requested that there be more public engagement and a publicity plan for this project and other similar projects. There was discussion that GoTriangle staff would undertake public outreach. There were suggestions of video productions and a 'before and after' social media campaign.

Pam Hemminger made a motion to adopt the resolution to amend the FY20 Durham Transit Tax Annual Work Plan to add \$1,029,000 for construction of bus stop improvements for GoDurham. Damon Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**10. Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Update**  
**Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle**  
**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Katharine Eggleston stated that the purpose of this presentation is to update MPO Board Members, to describe the amendment for the FY20 Work Plan to support further study of the Commuter Rail, and to describe the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Katharine Eggleston described information from the Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) study, which included the distance of the proposed CRT and that an additional rail line would need to be added to existing infrastructure.

Katharine Eggleston explained that there were eight scenarios that were studied, and how each related to such topics as capital costs, operating costs, ridership, geographic areas, and service levels. Katharine Eggleston stated that the CRT scenario from Durham to Garner is expected to reach \$1.4-1.8B in capital costs. Katharine Eggleston added that 7,500 to 10,000 riders are forecasted for 2030. Katharine Eggleston discussed scoring for federal funding. Katharine Eggleston stated that Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding is based on four kinds of risk: requirements, design, market, and construction. Katharine Eggleston stated that county boards and MPO boards will also be briefed on this material before the MOU is signed, which is scheduled for the first week of April.

Katharine Eggleston and Michael Parker discussed risk associated with designing and adding infrastructure for downtown Durham. Katharine Eggleston stated that conversations with North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) are ongoing to resolve infrastructure needs. Katharine Eggleston discussed proposed FTA evaluation metrics. Michael Parker and Katharine Eggleston discussed that representatives from local jurisdictions are able to express concerns to GoTriangle. There was discussion that cities and municipalities would not be included in the MOU. Katharine Eggleston described the public engagement process, including local engagement and feedback from stakeholders. Charlie Reece and Katharine Eggleston discussed the response to City of Durham Transportation Director Sean Egan's letter to GoTriangle to address issues with the CRT project. Charlie Reece and Katharine Eggleston discussed that the MOU addresses how the railroad will address freight versus passenger issues. There was discussion that NCRR owns the rail corridor.

Marc Marcoplos stated that, due to the projected high cost and low amount of ridership in their jurisdiction, Orange County will not be a part of the continuing study phase, although there is interested in a potential for a phase two extension. There was discussion about that the two time horizons used for data purposes in the FTA submission are 2020 and 2040. Michael Parker and

Katharine Eggleston discussed the differences between the MOU and the concurrence process. Mike Fox and Katharine Eggleston discussed the coordination of NCDOT projects with the CRT project.

Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that lessons have been learned from the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DOLRT) project. Chair Wendy Jacobs added that there is potential for major economic development in Durham, specifically RTP, which would further increase the need for alternative modes of transportation. Charlie Reece and Katharine Eggleston discussed cost-sharing agreements between Wake and Durham counties. Charlie Reece added that further conversations between the City of Durham and GoTriangle will be vital for the success of the CRT. Charlie Reece discussed the opportunity cost of funding the CRT, and reminded the MPO Board that choosing to fund CRT would impact the funding of other transportation projects. Charlie Reece discussed that the findings of American Public Transportation Association (APTA) cautioned against another billion dollar project, and warned that GoTriangle did not have the resources to for such a project. Katharine Eggleston responded that GoTriangle is working with stakeholders to ensure that the necessary frameworks are in place to the project is delivered on time and on budget.

Nina Szlosberg-Landis stated that the structure of how the railroad is owned and operated in North Carolina is different than any other state. Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that the APTA study is being considered as the CRT moves forward. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that public engagement be better publicized for critical stakeholders to be included in ongoing project planning.

This item was for informational purposes only, and no further action was required.

**11. SPOT 6 Candidate Project List for Public Review**  
**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Aaron Cain stated that, on January 22, 2020, the Technical Committee (TC) reviewed the list of candidate projects for submittal for Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) 6. Aaron Cain stated that the submission deadline for projects is May 1, 2020, and decisions for application of local input points will be in late fall of 2020 or early winter of 2021. Aaron Cain added that DCHC MPO is able

177 to submit 24 projects for each mode, including; highway, bike/ped, transit, and rail. Though the number  
178 of bicycle/pedestrian (bike/ped) projects is above the limit of 24, Divisions 5 and 7 have in the past  
179 agreed to submit a few projects on behalf of DCHC, but Division 7 staff has stated recently that there  
180 may not be support for bicycle/pedestrian or any other projects in Orange County due to the  
181 disagreement over the widening of NC 54 west of Carrboro.

182 Mike Fox discussed the SPOT process, and the different philosophical approaches to assigning  
183 points. Mike Fox discussed congestion issues in and around Carrboro and Chapel Hill. Mike Fox discussed  
184 the need for partnership within the region. Lydia Lavelle stated that she and Damon Seils have discussed  
185 the issue with Mike Fox.

186 Vice Chair Jenn Weaver stated that there is still some confusion about if Division 7 will support  
187 local projects in Orange County if the DCHC MPO continues to support Carrboro's stance on NC 54. Marc  
188 Marcoplos requested that an Orange County representative be present in further discussions between  
189 Carrboro and Mike Fox or representatives from Division 7.

190 Mike Fox stated that it is more difficult for bike/ped projects to receive funding because of the  
191 relatively small amount of state funding able to be allocated to these projects due to legislative  
192 restraints. Mike Fox asked if there were any bike/ped projects funded in Orange County in SPOT 5.  
193 Aaron Cain responded that two bike/ped projects were funded despite Division 7 not contributing any  
194 points. Mike Fox stated that Division 7 looks at each project strategically when allocating points.

195 Mike Fox discussed his preference for maximizing the allocation of points. Renee Price asked if it  
196 would be possible for NC 54 to be widened if DCHC MPO did not add points. Mike Fox responded that it  
197 is possible if the project scores highly enough to be funded without the DCHC MPO support. Mike Fox  
198 discussed past instances of working with local jurisdictions when conflict occurred. Mike Fox added that  
199 he respected Carrboro's right and ability to control the nature of their community, but transportation  
200 could be negatively impacted if NC 54 is not widened.

201 Nish Trivedi stated that Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO) has  
202 added NC 54 widening into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Nish Trivedi added that  
203 continuing vehicle traffic is an increasing trend.

204 Pam Hemminger discussed issues regarding traffic coming into Chapel Hill and how it impacts  
205 major employers such as University of North Carolina (UNC) and UNC Hospital. Pam Hemminger added  
206 that multimodal transportation and transit options would be a preferred topic of conversation in future  
207 discussion of NC 54 widening. Pam Hemminger suggested that representatives from Chapel Hill and UNC  
208 also be present during further negotiations. Pam Hemminger and Aaron Cain discussed that the motion  
209 to release include an amended list of the Chapel Hill bike/ped projects.

210 Mike Fox stated that data supported NC 54 widening due to traffic volumes. Nina Szlosberg-  
211 Landis stated that the recent Complete Streets policy allows for transit and bike/ped facilities to be  
212 incorporated into highway projects. Damon Seils stated that the Complete Streets policy allows for an  
213 opportunity to fund transit and bike/ped facilities, but there is not a requirement to fund alternative  
214 modes of transportation. There was discussion about the scope of the NC 54 widening project.

215 Nina Szlosberg-Landis and Aaron Cain discussed the at-grade improvements of a rail project on  
216 Blackwell Street. There was discussion about how the Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) project would impact  
217 the goals of the Blackwell Street rail project.

218 Mike Fox stated that James Trogon would be stepping down as the Secretary of  
219 Transportation, and Eric Boyette is presumed to take Trogon's place but will first need to be confirmed  
220 by the North Carolina State Senate. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that the High Capacity Transit (HCT)  
221 acronym be defined within the SPOT 6 list for public review.

222 Damon Seils made a motion to approve of submitting the project candidate lists for SPOT 6 for  
223 public review, including the amended bike/ped list from the Town of Chapel Hill, and hold a public



hearing at the March 2020 DCHC MPO Board meeting. Pam Hemminger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**12. Letter to NCDOT Secretary Trogon regarding Prioritization of Removal of Projects from the Suspension List**

**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Aaron Cain stated that NCDOT has recently begun to remove projects from that suspension list that was enacted in fall 2019, but there has been no explanation as to how or why projects are chosen to be removed from that list. Aaron Cain added that locally managed projects are included in the suspension list with no date given for reinstatement of reimbursements.

Aaron Cain stated that the DCHC MPO TC instructed MPO staff, on January 22, to draft a letter for the MPO Board Chair's signature regarding the prioritization of removal of projects from NCDOT's suspension list. Aaron Cain added that the TC recommended that the MPO Board formally request an explanation on the methodology of removing projects from the suspension list, and to also state formally that reinstatement of reimbursements to local governments for locally managed projects should be the top priority.

Chair Wendy Jacobs asked if there were options to contact NCDOT representatives before sending a letter to the Secretary of Transportation. Richard Hancock stated that priority has been given to certain projects that use time-sensitive funding sources. There was discussion that the Chief Engineer at the NCDOT Division level would be the most appropriate avenue to pursue questions about prioritization of projects released for the suspension list. Nina Szlosberg-Landis stated that she would facilitate these conversations. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that this item be added to the MPO Board meeting on March 10.

No formal action was taken by the MPO Board at this time.

**13. Discussion of Joint Board Meeting**

**Wendy Jacobs, Chair**

**Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that there was discussion at the Joint DCHC MPO and CAMPO Board meeting about there being increased interest from jurisdictions and requests to be a part of a regional multimodal transit system. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Nina Szlosberg-Landis discussed that state-level transportation policy changes are needed, and a coalition of MPOs and RPOs is needed in order to bring about change. Nina Szlosberg-Landis requested to have a work session at the next Joint meeting regarding planning for state-level transportation policy change.

Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that she noticed on one of the slides presented at the Joint Meeting that there were gaps in service between proposed BRT routes. Damon Seils added that the North-South BRT project in Chapel Hill was awarded a rating by the FTA that makes it eligible for federal funding. Chair Wendy Jacobs added that other BRT projects in Raleigh are not also eligible for federal funding.

No action is necessary for this item; it is for discussion and informational purposes only.

#### **REPORTS:**

##### **14. Report from the MPO Board Chair** **Wendy Jacobs, Board Chair**

There was no additional report from Chair Wendy Jacobs.

##### **15. Report from the Technical Committee Chair** **Nish Trivedi, TC Chair**

There was no additional report from Nish Trivedi.

##### **16. Report from LPA Staff** **Felix Nwoko, Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

There was no additional report from LPA staff.

##### **16. NCDOT Report**

Richard Hancock, Division 5, stated that there was no additional report.

Pat Wilson, Division 7, stated that there was no additional report.

Bryan Kluchar, Division 8, stated that there was no additional report.

275 Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division, stated that information regarding the Complete  
276 Streets Policy has been added to connect.ncdot.gov. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that the MPO  
277 Board be sent a link for the Complete Streets information.

278 John Grant stated that there was no further report from NCDOT Traffic Operations.

279 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

280 **17. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

281 There was no discussion of informational items.

282 **ADJOURNMENT:**

283 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at

284 11:26 a.m.