DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

11 March 2020

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on March 11, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel Hill Public Library. The following people were in attendance:

Wendy Jacobs (Chair)	Durham County
Jenn Weaver (Vice Chair)	Town of Hillsborough
Renée Price (Member)	Orange County
Vernetta Alston (Member)	City of Durham
Damon Seils (Member)	Town of Carrboro
Ellen Reckhow (Member)	GoTriangle
Steve Schewel (Alternate)	City of Durham
Lydia Lavelle (Alternate)	Town of Carrboro
Michael Parker (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill

David Keilson	NCDOT, Division 5
Richard Hancock	NCDOT, Division 5
Patrick 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
Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
Brooke Ganser	Durham County Planning
Craig Benedict	Orange County
Joe Geigle	FHWA
John Hodges-Copple	Triangle J Council of Governments
Hank Graham	Research Triangle Foundation
Katharine Eggleston	GoTriangle
Meg Scully	GoTriangle
Jay Heikes	GoTriangle
Shelley Curran	GoTriangle
Cha'ssam Anderson	University of North Carolina
Patrick McDonough	HDR

Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
Aaron Cain	DCHC MPO

Robert Jahn	DCHC MPO
Dale McKeel	City of Durham/DCHC MPO
Heidi Perry	Resident
Mike Waldroup	Resident

Quorum Count: 8 of 10 Voting Members

Chair Wendy Jacobs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call was performed. The Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are indicated above. Chair Wendy Jacobs reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was being circulated.

Damon Seils made a motion to excuse Pam Hemminger and Charlie Reece from the March 11, 2020 DCHC MPO Meeting. Ellen Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PRELIMINARIES:

2. Ethics Reminder

Chair Wendy Jacobs read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to matters coming before the MPO Board and requested that if there were any identified during the meeting for them to be announced. There were no known conflicts identified by the MPO Board Members. Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that, per state law, all MPO Board Members and Alternates are required to file a statement of economic interest and real estate disclosure form by April 15, 2020.

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

Ellen Reckhow recommended making provisions to meet remotely due to the threat of COVID 19. Aaron Cain responded that he would look through the DCHC MPO bylaws for provisions to meet remotely and would put it on the April 8 DCHC MPO Board Meeting agenda. There was discussion about allowing meeting remotely linked to a declaration of emergency at the state or local level.

4. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

5. Directives to Staff

Renee Price requested a list of MPO Board Members and Alternates who have not yet signed the statement of economic interest and real estate disclosure. Aaron Cain responded that he will email a list of members who have not yet signed the disclosure statement to the MPO Board.

CONSENT AGENDA:

6. February 12, 2020 MPO Board Meeting Minutes

There was no discussion of the February 12, 2020 MPO Board Meeting Minutes.

Renee Price made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Damon Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

7. FY20 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #2
Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

Felix Nwoko stated that Amendment #2 to the FY2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) proposes to de-obligate a portion of Planning (PL) funds programmed for the Triangle Bikeway Study. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Felix Nwoko discussed that the de-obligated funds will be carried over to the FY21 UPWP, and will be discussed in the next agenda item.

Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the FY20 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #2. Vice Chair Jenn Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Revision to the Approved 2021 Unified Planning Work Program
Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff

Felix Nwoko stated that this revision is necessary to incorporate carry over funds from FY2020 UPWP Amendment 2. Felix Nwoko added that the revised document includes resolutions and Title VI Assurance supporting the proposed revision to the FY2021 UPWP.

Michael Parker made a motion to approve the revision and accompanying resolutions. Ellen Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. SPOT 6 Candidate Project List Public Hearing
Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

Aaron Cain stated that the deadline to submit Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) 6 projects is May 1, 2020. Aaron Cain added that there are four modes in which to submit projects: highway, transit, bicycle/pedestrian (bike/ped), and rail. Aaron Cain continued that the list has already been released for public comment. Chair Wendy Jacobs opened and closed the public meeting with there being no comment from the public.

Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain discussed the Cole Mill Road Extension (#14) submission under the highway project submission list. Andy Henry stated that it was added to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in Amendment #2. Aaron Cain and Ellen Reckhow discussed safety and congestion issues located in northwest Durham that were meant to be addressed with the Cole Mill Road Extension submission.

Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain also discussed the American Tobacco Trail Tunnel in Downtown submission (#6) under the bike/ped submission list. There were discussions about north/south connectivity in downtown Durham, and safety concerns related to crossing railroad lines. Aaron Cain added that the cost is estimated at approximately $10M and scored well in SPOT 5, but not well enough to receive SPOT funding. Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain discussed that certain SPOT 6 submission projects could help infrastructure issues relating to the Commuter Rail Transit or other transit projects.

Chair Wendy Jacobs asked what the best language to use for the facilities dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians that run parallel to roads. There was discussion that sidepath and multi-use path are different terms for the same facility as described above, and protected bike lanes are facilities that are located on a road but include a vertical separation such as a bollard. Bryan Kluchar stated that the Complete Streets Program uses the term sidepath.

Damon Seils and Dale McKeel discussed that NCDOT has reported that they are considering projects that include vertical separations for protected bike lanes on a case by case basis. There was discussion about how vertical separations are justified and accepted by the SPOT office. Aaron Cain stated that each jurisdiction informs MPO staff about which facility they prefer for each project, and NCDOT will then score individual project submissions accordingly. Nish Trivedi discussed the response of the NCDOT to provide funding for bike or side paths as they relate to highway projects. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Ellen Reckhow discussed consistency among projects, but also allowing for specificity for individual projects to meet particular needs.

Aaron Cain stated that only 4% of the $60M at the Division 5 level was dedicated to non-highway projects in SPOT 5 and none of it went to bike/ped projects because the available funding was allocated to transit projects. Aaron Cain stated he has been coordinating with Divisions 5, 7, and 8 on highway project submissions for SPOT 6. Aaron Cain added that he has been in discussions with the Rail Division concerning project submissions for SPOT 6. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that acronyms be identified in the SPOT 6 submission documents.

There was discussion about the need to specify electric buses in the SPOT 6 submission list. Aaron Cain and Chair Wendy Jacobs discussed that electric buses are more expensive and require additional infrastructure. Damon Seils and Aaron Cain discussed that the associated transit agency or jurisdiction is involved in submitting projects to MPO staff. Aaron Cain stated that he will follow-up with transit agencies to verify preferences for electric or non-electric vehicles. Michael Parker and Aaron Cain discussed SPOT scoring for electric versus non-electric vehicles. Michael Parker and Renee Price discussed alternative modes of funding to assist project submissions. Sean Egan stated that GoDurham has purchased electric buses with the assistance from federal funding sources. Sean

Egan stated that future plans including using other federal funding programs to purchase additional electric buses. Jay Heikes added that it will be necessary to provide infrastructure facilities that accommodate different types of electric buses. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested adding information to a future DCHC MPO Board meeting about Volkswagen transit funds.

Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the SPOT 6 Candidate Project List, and to allow minor revisions by the Chair and Vice Chair. Damon Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. FY20 Durham Transit Work Plan Amendment - CRT Study
Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle
Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

Aaron Cain stated that action items #10 and #11 will be presented together.

Katharine Eggleston stated that GoTriangle has been studying the approximately 37-mile route for the Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) project from Durham to Garner. Katherine Eggleston added that GoTriangle identified another scenario for a route running from Durham to Clayton, if Johnston County agrees to contribute funding for the next phase of the project. Katharine Eggleston identified New Starts as a federal funding source for the upcoming phase of study. Katherine Eggleston stated that either route would have 20 weekday roundtrips with 8-2-8-2 service. Katherine Eggleston identified evaluation as of the railroad infrastructure improvements to include adding one additional track to the current rail corridor. Kathrine Eggleston stated that evaluation of potential risk will also be crucial to the CRT. Katherine Eggleston stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) categorize risk by: project requirements, design, market, and construction. Katharine Eggleston stated that building consensus among partners and stakeholders will be essential to a successful project. Katharine Eggleston discussed key focus areas including; local engagement, railroad buy-in, capacity building, FTA funding eligibility, and a cost share agreement.

Katharine Eggleston stated that funding for the CRT in the Durham Work Plan is currently listed at $465,000 but GoTriangle is requesting an additional $2.235M in order to fulfill the $2.7M of the cost share balance with Wake County.

Steve Schewel asked about the timeline for the federal funding process. Katharine Eggleston responded that the next phase of study would be approximately 12-18 months, and then it will be decided whether or not to proceed to the implementation phase.

Chair Wendy Jacobs asked about design risks. Katharine Eggleston stated that the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) owns a 200-foot wide corridor and a second track would need to be added. Katharine Eggleston continued that areas such the downtown areas of Durham and Cary would have complexities due to issues such as grade crossings, low clearance bridges, and urban development. Katharine Eggleston added that an additional risk factor would be associated with community engagement and buy-in. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Katharine Eggleston stated that a community engagement plan is scheduled to be drafted during a 60-day period following the signing of the MOU.

Steve Schewel stated that he sent a letter to Shelley Curran, President and CEO of GoTriangle, which stated his concerns for the CRT in the City of Durham. Katharine Eggleston responded that GoTriangle is in the process of developing a plan and schedule for the engagement process for the City of Durham and Durham County. Michael Parker suggested broadening stakeholder groups to include chambers of commerce. Ellen Reckhow added comments from a public engagement meeting she attended reflected distrust due to the discontinuation of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DORLT) project. Shelley Curran stated that GoTriangle has hired a consulting firm to develop a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan due to its importance for the CRT project. Ellen Reckhow and Shelley Curran discussed that GoTriangle plans to present the plan to the MPO Board in May 2020. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Shelley Curran discussed that, per the MOU, the agreements with impacted cities must be executed within 60 days after the MOU is signed. Vernetta Alston, Shelley Curran and Aaron Cain discussed Engage Durham's involvement in the comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan. Steve Schewel and Katharine Eggleston discussed the working relationship between GoTriangle staff and the City of Durham staff and how to achieve processing of documents within a timely manner. Ellen Reckhow suggested that the MPO Board have an increased role during the upcoming phase.

Katherine Eggleston discussed an agreement work plan, which would include agreements between jurisdictions during the design phase to support construction. Katherine Eggleston stated that additional agreements would involve support of the operations and maintenance of the system. Katherine Eggleston discussed securing resolutions and support for moving forward with the project concept for boards of all the affected local governments and major institutions, which would include Duke University, RTP, and North Carolina State University (NCSU). Michael Parker suggested broadening the definition of major institutions to include a wider range of private institutions. Katharine Eggleston discussed that GoTriangle is the project sponsor for most of the outlined tasks, but will be supported by the parties addressed in the MOU.

Katharine Eggleston discussed federal requirements in industry standards, such as wheelchair access to commuter rail. Kathrine Eggleston discussed engaging with NCRR to create buy-in for detailed corridor screening and obtaining field surveys. Kathrine Eggleston examined land availability for park-and-ride stations. Chair Wendy Jacobs, Ellen Reckhow, and Katharine Eggleston discussed integrating multimodal access to the commuter rail stations. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Ellen Reckhow discussed alternative solutions for potential shortages of parking access for the commuter rail.

Katharine Eggleston reviewed maintenance facilities and implementing project concurrence plans. Katharine Eggleston and Michael Parker discussed the updated cost estimate and how cost will be expressed related to the implementation scale and the resulting economy of cost. Ellen Reckhow, Chair Wendy Jacobs, and Katharine Eggleston discussed the concept of equity within the MOU and the CRT project. Michael Parker discussed the role of the governing boards, including the DCHC MPO, and other stakeholders in oversight of the CRT project. Steve Schewel suggested reminding residents that the CRT project and other transit improvements were voted affirmatively by referendum. Vernetta Alston requested that GoTriangle update the MPO Board on how roles will be defined in upcoming planning meetings. Ellen Reckhow discussed the need for transparency. There was discussion that GoTriangle will present information to the MPO Board every other month.

Michael Parker made a motion to adopt the resolution to program an additional $2,235,000 for the next phase of study for commuter rail. Renee Price seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Memorandum of Understanding for Next Phase of Study on Commuter Rail Transit
Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle
Aaron Cain, LPA Staff

This action item was discussed with the previous action item. Please see above.

Ellen Reckhow made a motion to adopt the GTCR MOU. Renee Price seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS:

12. Report from the MPO Board Chair
Wendy Jacobs, Board Chair

Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that there are ongoing plans to coordinate a meeting to determine how NCDOT is choosing projects that were placed on the list of suspended projects.

13. Report from the Technical Committee Chair
Nish Trivedi, TC Chair

There was no additional report from Nish Trivedi.

14. Report from LPA Staff
Felix Nwoko, Andy Henry, LPA Staff

Aaron Cain thanked Bergen Watterson for providing a location to hold the DCHC MPO Board Meeting due to a malware issue at the City of Durham. Aaron Cain stated that the COVID 19 virus may cause disruption for the April 8 DCHC MPO Board Meeting.

Andy Henry stated that the 15-501 Corridor Study is ongoing. Andy Henry added that there are some design issues in Chapel Hill, which were highlighted by Pam Hemminger. Andy Henry added that the design alternatives are scheduled to be finished by mid-March 2020, and will then be discussed with Chapel Hill and NCDOT Division 7.

15. NCDOT Report

David Keilson, Division 5, stated that the East End Connector project (U-0071) is progressing, but the southbound ramp onto NC 147 will be closed for one month starting March 11, and there will be weekend lane closures. Ellen Reckhow asked about the configuration of NC 147 merging onto I-40. David Keilson responded that different configurations are being studied, but a final decision has not yet been made.

David Keilson stated that utilities are being relocated for the Old Chapel Hill Road project (EB-4707A), and construction is anticipated to start in April 2020.

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

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

Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division, stated that the NC Moves 2050 Plan is currently in its future needs phase. Julie Bogle described a handout sheet, which provided information regarding investment needs, and the schedule for future phases of the NC Moves 2050 Plan. Ellen Reckhow requested information regarding committee recommendations for NCDOT funding options.

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

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

16. Recent News, Articles, and Updates

The DCHC MPO Board and attendees sang *Happy Birthday* to Mayor Steve Schewel.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.