

DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

May 13, 2015

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on May 13, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in the City Council Committee on the second floor of Durham City Hall. The following attended:

Mark Kleinschmidt (MPO Board Chair)	Town of Chapel Hill
Steve Schewel (Member)	City of Durham
Ellen Reckhow (Member)	Durham County
Barry Jacobs (Member)	Orange County
Jim W. Crawford (Member)	NC Board of Transportation
Lydia Lavelle (Alternate)	Town of Carrboro
Ed Harrison (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill
Brandon Jones	NCDOT Division 5
Mike Kneis	NCDOT, Division 5
Patrick Wilson	NCDOT, Division 7
Julie Bollinger	NCDOT, TPB
Tom Altieri	Orange County
Bergen Watterson	Town of Carrboro
Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
David Bonk	Town of Chapel Hill
John Hodges-Copple	Triangle J Council of Governments
Patrick McDonough	Go Triangle
Mark Ahrendsen	City of Durham/DCHC MPO
Dale McKeel	City of Durham/DCHC MPO
Ellen Beckmann	City of Durham
Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
Lindsay Smart	DCHC MPO
Toni Glover	Durham County
Dave Charters	GoTriangle
Greg Northcutt	GoTriangle
Katherine Eggleston	GoTriangle
Natalie Murdock	GoTriangle
Donnie Brew	FHWA
John Kent	Citizen
Lauren Horsch	Durham Herald Sun
TC Anderson	TC's of Durham
Bret Martin	Orange County
Sport Durst	Sport Durst Automotive
Brad Schulz	GoTriangle
Tom Bodo	City of Durham

Chris Lukasina

CAMPO

Quorum Count: 7 of 11 Voting Members

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt called the meeting to order at 9:05 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 Mark Kleinschmidt reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was being circulated.

PRELIMINARIES:

Ethics Reminder

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to matters coming before the Board and requested that if there were any identified during the meeting for them to be announced.

There were no known conflicts identified by Board members.

Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Ellen Reckhow requested an opportunity to speak about local infrastructure in light of the train crash in Philadelphia. Chair Mark Kleinschmidt added this item to the agenda after the GoTriangle Light Rail discussion.

Public Comments

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt asked if there were any members of the public signed up to speak. There were no members of the public signed up to speak during the open public comments period of the meeting.

Directives to Staff

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

6. Approval of April 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt asked if there was any discussion on the April 8, 2015 meeting minutes. There were no proposed revisions. Chair Mark Kleinschmidt asked for a motion to approve April 8, 2015 meeting minutes. Lydia Lavelle made a motion to approve the minutes and Barry Jacobs seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

7. Update on the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project and Draft EIS

Patrick McDonough, GoTriangle

Dave Charters, GoTriangle

Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle

Patrick McDonough of GoTriangle provided a presentation to the MPO board about the status of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, currently in the planning stages. The presentation included a discussion of project updates, updated cost estimates, and the “five key decisions” surrounding the project. The “five key decisions” include where to locate the Duke Medical Center/VA Hospital station, how to cross Little Creek, how to cross New Hope Creek, where to locate the Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility (ROMF), and whether or not to proceed with planning and constructing the project.

95 In regard to the Duke Medical Center station location, Patrick McDonough outlined two
96 possibilities, but stated that Duke University and the VA hospital have both requested the station to
97 be built near the intersection of Trent Road and Flowers Drive.

98 Patrick McDonough outlined the possible routes for crossing Little Creek, as well as concerns
99 from local residents, business owners, the Friday Center, and the Army Corps of Engineers. This
100 discussion included potential cost ranges that consider topography, acquisition, and environmental
101 impacts. Costs could range anywhere from \$14 to \$54 million dollars.

102 Ellen Reckhow asked about the location of Downing Creek, which is a neighborhood affected
103 by some of the potential construction options. Patrick McDonough showed the location on a map.
104 Mark Kleinschmidt provided further clarification about routing options in relation to Downing Creek.

105 Patrick McDonough then discussed the options for crossing New Hope Creek, including
106 utilities, conditions, cost ranges (\$45-\$87 million dollars), differentiators, business concerns,
107 wetlands, park lands, and water resource impacts.

108 Patrick McDonough then discussed the potential ROMF locations. Five potential locations
109 were considered, with overall costs ranging from \$62-\$145 million dollars. Considerations included
110 leading track, right-of-way, historic sites, topography, and alignment. Building on Alston Avenue
111 would be the most expensive and would likely require HAZMAT cleanup and potential loss of jobs.

112 Steve Schewel asked about coordination with the Durham Planning Department, which
113 would be discussing the project at a meeting scheduled later in May.

114 Barry Jacobs asked about how the Durham-Orange LRT technology would interface with
115 Wake County bus rapid transit technologies. Ed Harrison commented about GoTriangle's current
116 ridership capacities. Patrick McDonough responded that the current LRT plans are relatively future-
117 proof and would accommodate future changes and connections across jurisdictions.

118 Ellen Reckhow stated that she wanted GoTriangle to revisit potential LRT routes. Barry
119 Jacobs furthered that it might be better for the region to decide on one rapid transit technology
120 before making the decision on whether or not to build the Durham-Orange LRT project. Chair Mark
121 Kleinschmidt asserted that the technologies do interface, whether or not they are the same.

122 Ellen Reckhow again asked about changing LRT routes or potentially changing from LRT to
123 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) instead. Patrick McDonough clarified that after considerable research, LRT
124 technology has higher startup cost but better capacity, speed, and range that make it a better choice
125 for the region. Ed Harrison commented that he thought LRT better suits the region's needs.

126 Chair Mark Kleinschmidt stated that different transit technologies do not preclude the
127 possibility of incorporating BRT in appropriate corridors. He stated that the discussion was not about
128 either/or, but rather about selecting the appropriate technology for the right corridor.

129 Barry Jacobs stated that he thought it would be helpful to have an informational page about
130 how LRT was decided upon, since the discussion was held eight years ago, which makes it difficult to
131 remember. Ellen Reckhow concurred.

132 Chair Mark Kleinschmidt stated that citizens need to understand that the project is part of a
133 long-range plan that cannot change every few years. Because LRT involves a 15-20 year build-out, it
134 is essential that the community commit to the technology that was researched to be the best fit or
135 nothing would ever be built to suit the transit and congestion mitigation needs of the growing
136 region.

137 Mark Ahrendsen furthered that the decision to build Durham-Orange LRT is independent of
138 Wake County since this route is not intended to connect to Wake. Future connections may be
139 considered. This led to a greater discussion about LRT versus BRT, community opposition, cost
140 savings, average trip lengths, and LRT efficacy.

141 Ellen Reckhow stated that the Durham plan considered commuter rail prior to LRT and
142 pointed out that connection to RTP is important due to the increased development. RTP is expected
143 to double employment in coming decades and add residences. Ellen Reckhow stated that the
144 easternmost station does not extend eastward enough for many potential riders.

145 Chair Mark Kleinschmidt stated that if RTP wants to expand considerably and incorporate
146 rapid transit into that future that they should acquire transportation corridors as part of their
147 expansion. Chair Mark Kleinschmidt furthered that this individual project cannot meet the needs of
148 all commuters in the region. Rather, it will provide an option to a heavily traveled corridor, and
149 decrease overall congestion which helps the region at large. The connection to RTP needs to be
150 addressed eventually, but that does not undermine the importance of the current project.

151 Dave Charters from GoTriangle discussed updates to the planned route through downtown
152 Durham. An elevated track over Swift Avenue is planned due to traffic analysis results and the
153 importance of business access.

154 Steve Schewel asked about the specifics of the route path, which was answered by Dave
155 Charters.

156 Dave Charters then explained that the Alston Avenue station would be moved a quarter mile
157 west from the desired location east of Alston Avenue. This is due to railroad limitations. This
158 prompted a discussion about the East Durham community, and what low-income and minority
159 communities would have quality access to the station. Bus service is expected to be added to Alston
160 Avenue to assist with access to the LRT station.

161 Ellen Reckhow asked about the distance to Fayette Place, which Dave Charters responded
162 was about two blocks.

163 Katharine Eggleston from GoTriangle talked about discussions with the East Durham
164 community. After several comments and questions from the MPO Board, it was agreed that there

are better ways to explain the station location in real terms to residents. There was also a discussion about future links to NCCU.

Lydia Lavelle asked about communication with NCCU. NCCU's chancellor is in support of the LRT project but urges GoTriangle to provide bus links from the LRT line to campus.

Steve Schewel thanked the GoTriangle representatives for their presentation but stated that he was still not convinced that the proposed Alston Avenue station is the best location. He furthered that this proposed location requires additional discussion, especially in regard to Brenntag and future connections.

Katharine Eggleston discussed traffic analyses and treatments designed to ease congestion in along the NC-54, University Drive, and Erwin Road corridors. Katharine Eggleston also informed the MPO Board about the proposed changes to Pettigrew Street, which includes making traffic one-way for a segment between Chapel Hill Road and Dillard Street.

Ellen Reckhow asked about making the Downtown Loop two-way instead of one-way, as it is currently configured. This precipitated a discussion, which concluded that the transit plan cannot assume any project that is not included in the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which the loop is not.

Ed Harrison asked if widening Erwin Road would be covered by projects costs. After discussion, the answer was determined to be yes.

The GoTriangle representatives opened the floor for questions. Ed Harrison asked if the segment along NC-54 could be elevated. Patrick McDonough responded that the segment did not meet traffic count criteria that justify the additional costs of elevating tracks. There was further conversation about crossing Barbee Chapel Road.

The MPO Board then opened the floor for community comment. TC Anderson of TC's of Durham Car Wash addressed the MPO Board about his perspective on the railway routing over New

189 Hope Creek. TC Anderson stated that he was a supporter of LRT, but that he thought the NHC-1
190 route option would hurt his business by making it less visible and adding a gate that complicates
191 access to his property. Chair Mark Kleinschmidt thanked TC Anderson for his comments.

192 Sport Durst of Sport Durst Automotive reiterated that NHC-1 could harm business in the
193 corridor, including his own car dealerships. Sport Durst pointed out that he employs hundreds of
194 workers and pays considerable sums of money in local taxes, which could be disrupted by NHC-1.
195 Chair Mark Kleinschmidt thanked Sport Durst for his comments and stated that all community
196 comments would be taken seriously in planning the LRT route.

197 Patrick McDonough introduced Chris Lukasina from CAMPO, who discussed different transit
198 options for bus and fixed-guideway LRT. Ellen Reckhow asked about the frequency of rail in the
199 Capital Area MPO. There was a conversation about how the DCHC MPO should have more discussion
200 about lessons learned from Capital Area MPO transportation planning.

202 **8. Grow American Act Infrastructure Funding**

203 **Ellen Reckhow, Durham County**

204 Ellen Reckhow stated that the United States generally invests much less funding into public
205 infrastructure than many other nations, which has the potential to create safety concerns. Ellen
206 Reckhow informed the MPO Board that Congress is considering the Grow America Act, which would
207 increase transportation infrastructure spending, and suggested that the MPO could send a letter of
208 support to House and Senate representatives encouraging them to support the legislation. Both Chair
209 Mark Kleinschmidt and Mark Ahrendsen agreed that such a letter could be a good opportunity and
210 asked the MPO Board if there was any opposition. Finding none, Ellen Reckhow was encouraged to
211 write a draft letter for the board to approve at a later date.

9. FY2016-2025 TIP Development

Lindsay Smart, LPA Staff

Lindsay Smart briefed the MPO Board on the MPO Technical Committee discussion about the NCDOT draft TIP response, since a formal response was not yet made available. Lindsay Smart discussed the possibility that the MTIP and STIP may not match. Lindsay Smart displayed the TIP development schedule to the MPO Board, and opened the floor for suggestions to be delivered to the Technical Committee at their upcoming meeting later in May. Lindsay Smart also stated that DOT has responded to some questions posed by the Technical Committee, but discussions would continue concerning funding.

Mark Ahrendsen stated that the Technical Committee was making progress on addressing all necessary questions with DOT. Lindsay Smart furthered that some DOT decisions needed to be appealed and that there may be some changes to project schedules.

Ed Harrison pointed out the importance of pedestrian projects, since they accomplish improve quality of life and serve multiple purposes with relatively low cost.

Lindsay Smart stated that the TIP is expected to be adopted in August and that development is underway.

Steve Schewel asked about the Duke Beltline Trail, which led to a discussion about programming this project despite issues with NCDOT interpretation about consistency with STI.

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt made a comment about state prioritization, which prompted CAMPO member Chris Lukasina to address the MPO Board about the specifics of the SPOT work groups and local priority score weighting.

Jim W. Crawford made a comment that future NCDOT funding may not be a good for the DCHC MPO as current NCDOT funding. This comment precipitated a discussion about how challenging current NCDOT processes are, since the DCHC MPO is divided between three regions and

three districts, complicating coordination. MPO Board members discussed the possibilities of changing the processes involved in applying for funding from NCDOT.

10. CTP and MTP Update

Andy Henry, LPA Staff

Andy Henry provided an update on the development of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and Municipal Transportation Plan (MTP). Andy Henry began a brief introduction of the importance of each plan. The CTP is not financially constrained, while the MTP has financial constraints and only shows projects with funding. Consequently, the CTP includes more projects.

Ellen Reckhow asked if the plans promote Complete Streets. Andy Henry responded that a Complete Streets methodology is adopted for the CTP and that each roadway project is intended to be multi-modal, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Andy Henry then discussed the CTP and MTP products. CTP products include maps and tables, problem statements, a multi-modal intent, public input, environmental considerations, Complete Streets projects, historical site considerations, and replacements for thoroughfare plans for development review. The MTP has a 20 year planning horizon, includes land use policy, budget, and air quality conformity. Products include a joint plan with CAMPO; updated goals, targets, and objectives; performance measures; updated land use models; transportation and land use scenarios; multi-modal intent; maps and tables; and a financial plan.

Ed Harrison asked why the CTP project list incorporates so many projects of which the MPO Board is already aware. Andy Henry responded that smaller jurisdictions do not have as many unfunded projects. There was then a discussion about CTP and MTP scheduling and opportunities for local review and public input.

REPORTS:**11. Report from the DCHC MPO Board Chair****Mark Kleinschmidt, DCHC MPO Board Chair**

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt stated that he had nothing to report to the MPO Board.

12. Reports from LPA Staff**Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

Felix Nwoko quickly briefed the board on a recent meeting of LPA staff concerning the status of tasks for projects in the FY 2014-2015 Unified Planning Work Program. Felix Nwoko directed the Board's attention to the attached memorandum that discussed current and upcoming tasks associated with the Unified Planning Work Program. Felix Nwoko also reminded the MPO Board of the upcoming TMA Certification Review with FHWA and FTA that is scheduled for May 21 and May 22nd.

11. NCDOT Reports:

There were no reports from NCDOT Division 5, Division 7, or Division 8.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**12. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

Chair Mark Kleinschmidt directed the MPO Board's attention to the attached news articles. Additionally, he reminded all in attendance that May is National Bike Month and encouraged bicycle ridership and participation in planned events.

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ADJOURNMENT:

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

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11:31 a.m.