

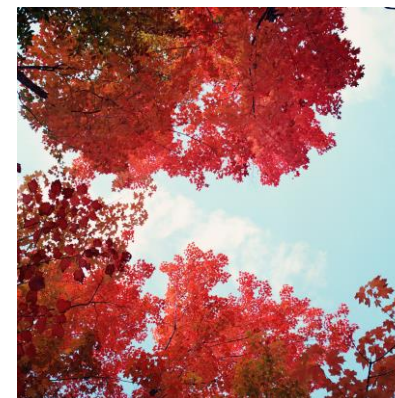
DCHC  
MPO

# GOVERNANCE STUDY DRAFT

*Presentation to MPO Board*

*01.12.2022*





1. Brief Review of DCHC MPO Governance Project
2. Review of Recommendations
3. Comments to Present to MPO Board

# AGENDA

1.12.2022

# PURPOSE OF DCHC MPO GOVERNANCE STUDY

*and what it seeks to accomplish*

## The Governance Study is...

- Intended to ensure that the DCHC MPO is conducting its activities and using its resources in the most **efficient and economical** manner
- Serving as a leader in transportation planning and policy while being **responsive to the priorities** of its member jurisdictions and agencies
- Provide a **suite of recommendations, both minor and visionary**, that address the concerns, ideas, and objectives presented by the MPO membership

## The Governance Study is NOT...

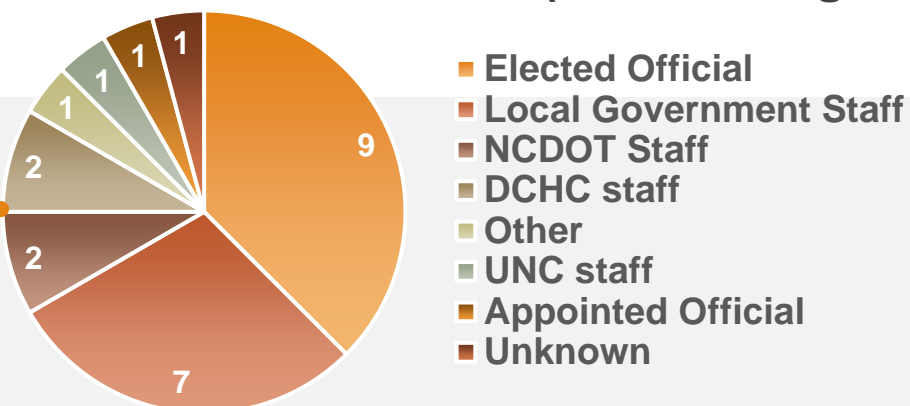
- Assigning individual responsibility, or avoid acknowledging where there have been successes
- Recommending the application of other practices without an understanding the unique nature and goals of DCHC
- Attempting to create detailed recommendations by glossing over important details or before consulting with this board on their objectives for the MPO



# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

## Work Completed

- Four Peer Studies (CAMPO, Nashville, Charlotte, Richmond)
- Eleven Staff Interviews / Financial Review
- Five Meetings with Advisory Committee
- Draft Report Edits and Updates (e.g., survey)
- Third-Party Review (*Jeff Kramer, Center for Urban Transportation Research, USF*)
- 24 Survey Responses
- Draft Recommendations (57 in 8 categories)





# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

## Findings / Highlights *(but there is a lot to unpack)*

- 70% of Survey Respondents gave a “7” score or lower (out of 10) when asked if the goals of MPO staff and elected officials align
- There is some, perhaps growing, sentiment that the missions of the City of Durham and that of the MPO are too intertwined in practice and not sufficiently objective in representation
- Areas of expertise and state legislation do not mirror the level of interest of the DCHC MPO to focus more heavily on walking, biking, and transit
- The DCHC MPO spends a lot of energy on communication and disadvantaged groups, but more can be done
- NCDOT's IMD (Integrated Mobility Division) and private sector partners are relationships that could see the most improvement in the near future
- The DCHC MPO Staff have been very good to work with, and made several improvements we can point out during this presentation

## How to Read the Report if you have...

*5 minutes: Read the summary*

*15 minutes: Read the summary and the recommendations section*

*Longer: Context elements, survey results, interviews, and recommendations*





# RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## Comments

- DCHC MPO is doing a very good job of meeting or exceeding federal requirements, including certification compliance
- Staff talents are focused on technical skills but more policy-focused efforts will require additional or different skills
- Some concerns over the degree of integration and potential for bias between MPO (regional) and Durham (city) functions

## Recommendations

- Keep federal compliance practices in place now, perhaps adding considerations of succession training
- Conduct separate, formal review process of both voting / quorum goals and practices as well as LPA oversight with the goals of achieving more jurisdictional representation, objectivity, and efficiency
- Continue to improve and Update Policy Board Member (and staff) orientation package, including up-to-date organization chart, relationships with other entities, staff role(s). Require (or be more aggressive with promoting) ongoing refresher opportunities



# RECOMMENDATIONS: POLICY & ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTIONS

## Comments

- Survey results as well as some interviews suggested that staff goals and MPO goals are not sufficiently in alignment
- Presentations are generally good, as are agenda review times, but both the agenda information and presentations could be improved to provide consistent information at various levels of detail
- There were numerous comments about doing more with walking, bicycling, and transit modes, which are stymied in part because of state-level legislative actions in the near past

## Recommendations

- Actuate the role of the MPO Board in the hiring of key staff and development of budgets and workplans
- Informal gatherings not related to a burning issue and refresher “clinics” on topics of interest would help strengthen internal MPO communications
- Conduct pre-Board conference calls to review the agenda in advance
- Develop presentation guides, and modify agendas to have an expanded consent agenda and high-level summaries
- Pursue NC legislative action, preferably with other large MPOs
- Require presentation, technical writing, and similar training for MPO front-line staff every two years, starting in 2022





# RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFFING

## Comments

- DCHC MPO Staff is generally responsive to inquiries, although some stakeholders expressed the need to articulate staff roles more clearly
- Capacity and Staff expertise are sufficient to meet the (expanding) basic requirements for a progressive MPO, but not for tackling major, long-term challenges in top of those requirements
- Similarly, optimal usage of funding for MPO staff support to local jurisdictions would be boosted by discontinuing the (cumbersome) practice of funding local government staff positions

## Recommendations

- Strategic hires could include transit, full-time bike-pedestrian planner, public relations/engagement officer, project manager, funding / financing specialist (or combination of these last two)
- Opportunities for and clarification of in-kind labor matching or other local financing options would be highly beneficial, particularly for smaller member governments
- The practice of subsidizing local government staff doing regional planning work should be discontinued, with project exceptions, to help ensure that MPO funds are being used most efficiently and with oversight by the MPO Board on projects that benefit the region





# RECOMMENDATIONS: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

## Comments

- More opportunities for pre-meeting collaboration, especially on cross-jurisdictional or controversial projects, is needed (also a function of MPO staff capacity and priorities)
- Expanding the role of the MPO in public transportation, an important goal for many DCHC MPO members, is likely to receive greater support and attention
- Interactions with NCDOT for multimodal planning and programming would be useful (partially a function of NCDOT staff capacity and siloed roles)

## Recommendations

- Apart from making a strategic hire for a transit planner, is to continue the focus on clarifying and strengthening relationships with GoTriangle, PART, and counties including GoWake
- Similarly, encourage NCDOT staff representing the Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) to attend more Technical Committee and MPO Board meetings, especially as NCDOT improves staff levels



# RECOMMENDATIONS: FUNDING

## Comments

- There are few, if any, MPOs that feel that their funding levels are adequate (Hampton Roads, VA being one possible exception), although the role of MPOs as regards funding is starting to change
- State and Federal funding levels, especially for Division Tier projects, are highly competitive and in short supply
- Policy and legislative actions at the state level are creating limitations on how fast DCHC MPO can achieve multimodal and safety goals

## Recommendations

- Reallocate or hire for funding capacity, and consider funding / financing a real goal for the MPO
- Create a New Funding Source(s), perhaps through an affiliated regional management agency
- Incentivize more cross-jurisdictional projects that require interagency collaboration, including funding support



# RECOMMENDATIONS: DATA SHARING & MANAGEMENT

## Comments

- The recent changes to the MPO's website are very positive
- With such a strong technical capacity, working with local jurisdictions to communicate and refine data sets would help local planning efforts
- Data needs to be communicated at the right level for the audience: interactive maps for officials and public; data downloads in GIS or flat file format for staff users
- Continue to supplement data sources

## Recommendations

- Conduct third-party reviews of the website, possibly including user survey, to ensure continued ease of use and functionality
- Create data portal for advanced data users, including for demographic and other data to support efforts to reach disadvantaged or vulnerable populations
- Prioritize information by function to limit clicks to reach the right place
- Consider how to communicate all this to policymakers and the public, especially at meetings, through expanded use of graphics and accessible language

# RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



## Comments

- The DCHC MPO values engagement of the general public and especially disadvantaged populations extremely highly, and there is always room to grow and learn new techniques
- There is a real desire to achieve a good feedback between the actions that the MPO is taking to engage the public and how well those efforts are working to help create an ecosystem of continuous innovation and improvement

## Recommendations

- Update the Public Participation Plan to include new performance metrics, best practices, and targets – achieved to a degree in 2021 PIP
- Work with a partner like a university to help DCHC MPO and local / regional governments build and maintain a database of participants
- Add a K-12 public school system representative to the TC (new)
- Create a performance dashboard, preferably on the MPO website
- Acquire third-party tools that are free or inexpensive to review policies and projects through an equity lens (including health-related impacts)



# YOUR COMMENTS & IDEAS

*Any final adjustments to the report and which recommendations to tackle first?*

## As Suggested in the Draft Report:


- Collaborate between MPO / LPA senior staff and MPO Board during budgeting and key staff hiring processes.
- Develop (and refine) presentation templates and guidelines.
- Lobby for more project control.
- Clarify use of in-kind matches and discontinue the practice of using MPO funding to subsidize staff
- Continue to build on EJ engagement
- Work with partner to build / maintain engagement database
- Benchmarking (internal and external)
- Periodically report on benchmarks and include “dashboard” on website

## YOUR IDEAS?



# THANK YOU

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■ 56.9 – 75.1 ■ 75.2 – 77.5 ■ 77.6 – 79.5 ■ 79.6 – 81.6 ■ 81.7 – 97.5

**Life expectancy by Census Tract, 2010 – 2015**  
(U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project)