

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

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**September 23, 2015**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Committee met on September 23, 2015 at 9:05 a.m. in the City Council Committee on the second floor of the Durham City Hall. The following attended:

Mark Ahrendsen (TC Chair)	City of Durham Transportation
David Bonk (TC Vice-Chair)	Chapel Hill Planning
Hannah Jacobson (Member)	City of Durham Planning
Tasha Johnson (Member)	City of Durham Planning
Pierre Osei-Owusu (Member)	City of Durham Transportation
Margaret Hauth (Member)	Town of Hillsborough
Tina Moon (Member)	Carrboro Planning
Bergen Watterson (Member)	Carrboro Planning
Laura Woods (Member)	Durham County Planning
Linda Thomas Wallace (Member)	Durham County Planning
Scott Whiteman (Member)	Durham County Planning
Peter Murphy (Member)	Orange Public Transportation
Bret Martin (Member)	Orange County Planning
Tom Altieri (Member)	Orange County Planning
John Hodges-Copple (Member)	Triangle J Council of Governments
Patrick McDonough (Member)	GoTriangle
Alison Carpenter (Member)	Duke University
Julie Bollinger (Member)	NCDOT, TPB
Brandon Jones (Alternate)	NCDOT, Division 5
Ed Lewis (Alternate)	NCDOT, Division 7
Darius Sturdivant (Alternate)	NCDOT, Division 8
Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
Lindsay Smart	DCHC MPO
Dale McKeel	DCHC MPO
Kosko Chae	DCHC MPO
Tyler Brary	Town of Cary
Corey Vernier	HNTB
Albert Amoatay	DCA
Armando Sullivan	DATA
Miller Cochran	VHB
Phil Hanson	Chapel Hill Planning
Lisa Jennison	RTP Foundation
Kumar Neppalli	Chapel Hill Engineering
Michael Sudol	Chapel Hill Planning

Quorum Count: 24 of 31 Voting Members

Chair Mark Ahrendsen 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 TC were identified and are indicated above. Chair Mark Ahrendsen reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was being circulated.

**PRELIMINARIES:**

**Adjustments to the Agenda**

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Felix Nwoko stated that he will provide an update on the recent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) meeting with DCHC MPO staff on local project delivery. John Hodges-Copple asked to add a short item on the state legislation relating to Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT) project. Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked for a discussion on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for D-O LRT and DCHC Technical Committee's role since the recommended DCHC MPO Board action is scheduled for November.

**Public Comments**

Chair Mark Ahrendsen 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 meeting.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**4. Approval of August 26, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**5. FFY15 Section 5307/5340 Partial Split Letter**

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated there were two items on the Consent Agenda for approval including the August minutes and the sub-allocation of the remaining four months of the fiscal year for a portion of the 5307 and 5340 funding. Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked if there were any questions or discussion of the Consent Agenda. Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked for a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. Pierre Osei-Owusu made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda and Margaret Hauth seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**6. STP-DA and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

**Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

Felix Nwoko reported on the recommended distribution of funds for the STP-DA and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Felix Nwoko explained the proposal for allocation of FY2017 STP-DA and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and provided a handout. Felix Nwoko described the information on a spreadsheet regarding the existing policy and formula that was approved by the DCHC MPO Board in August, 2014. Felix Nwoko stated that the input used was the yearly allocation of STP-DA and TAP funding of 4.8 million dollars given by NCDOT. He explained that unobligated funds were included in the total and then a 30 percent inflation factor was added to the total prior to distribution of the funds. Felix Nwoko explained the major changes from what was proposed last year to what is being proposed for FY17 through FY25. DCHC MPO LPA staff recommended a formula and policy in which an annual estimated allocation, based on the prior year allocation, be used to project annual funding levels to 2025, consistent with the MTIP/STIP.

Felix Nwoko stated that the action of the DCHC MPO Board is that approval of the formula and policy to distribute STP-DA and TAP funds to sub-recipients for FY2017 through FY2025. Patrick McDonough if there was a study for a rail trail or study for a light rail service for the Durham to Apex rail line. He asked if they could explain the purpose of it from the exhibit.

Tyler Bray stated that a few months ago the Town of Cary had a request from one of their Council Members to look at that corridor as to what could be done and how can it be utilized moving forward on to the best of all needs and parties involved. Tyler Bray stated that they are considering a lot of options for the rail line as Cary goes through their Comprehensive Plan Update. They looked at the CTP and what to identify the corridor as. The corridor could be some sort of commuter-type corridor for some form of public transit or they may want to look at some sort of bicycle or pedestrian corridor options of all of these things being considered for that particular area.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked Patrick McDonough if the statement by Tyler Bray answered his question.

Patrick McDonough stated that Tyler Bray's statement did answer his question.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that the MPO oversight has reviewed extra planning and routine planning and is involved in the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) Staff Work Program Review. In his opinion, any remaining or available funding should be put toward the Old Durham/Chapel Hill Road improvement project and it should be fully funded because it is underway.

Patrick McDonough stated that the possible NC 54 (Orange County) study would need to be discussed. Lindsay Smart stated that there have been conversations between elected officials, local staff, and MPO LPA staff about the study and specific project-related meetings have been conducted.

Felix Nwoko stated that the NC 54 study and other potential study information is a placeholder and will be addressed as the work program for STP-DA funds is developed for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) . Felix Nwoko stated that there will be additional meetings conducted with the specific players in the NC 54 project area.

Bret Martin asked if the Drive Act is approved and the funding levels change, will the STP-DA funding framework change.

Felix Nwoko stated yes, if the Drive Act or other legislation occurs and funding levels change, the numbers in the STP-DA spreadsheet will change. There will be an adjustment.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the jurisdictions should use this information to begin budgeting for non-federal matches .

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked for a motion to approve of the formula and policy to distribute STP-DA and TAP funds to sub-recipients for FY2017 through FY2025. Vice-Chair David Bonk motioned to approve the formula and policy to distribute STP-DA and TAP funds to sub-recipients for FY2017 through FY2025 and Bret Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. NCDOT SPOT P4.0 New Project Recommendations**

**Lindsay Smart, LPA Staff**

**Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

**Kosok Chae, LPA Staff**

**Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

Lindsay Smart discussed the prior meetings for the NCDOT SPOT P4.0. Lindsay Smart explained that the DCHC MPO's subcommittee for the NCDOT SPOT P4.0 process met to review and discuss the preliminary lists of new projects that the DCHC MPO will submit to NCDOT's SPOT P4.0 Online tool. In accordance with P4.0 project prioritization process, the DCHC MPO is limited to 14 new projects to promote in each mode. Lindsay Smart stated that each jurisdiction could submit four new projects per mode and the City of Durham and Durham County could submit eight. These submittals are scaled to reflect populations in the DCHC MPO area. Lindsay Smart stated that 32 new highway; 31 new bicycle and pedestrian; 21 new public transportation projects; and 10 new rail projects were received. . Lindsay Smart stated that LPA staff have been communicating with NCDOT Division 5 and Division 7 to maximize submittals of public transportation and bike/ped projects. . Lindsay Smart stated that the MPO TC could discuss the new rail projects today, but because there were 10 new projects, there really isn't a decision to be made about which projects to submit. All 10 projects will be submitted. Lindsay Smart asked if anyone wanted to discuss any of the public transportation projects, or could we dive into the highway projects.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen and Lindsay Smart asked if there were any questions regarding the new rail or transit projects.

Patrick McDonough asked one question about the rail projects. Patrick McDonough stated that they had some good work with NCRR and that they may have NCRR track funds proposal for Hillsborough as early as November in which case will we have money through SPOT for the Hillsborough train station. There may be some tracks associated with that project, so one of the questions for Lindsay Smart is about the schedule for SPOT submittals. Could we add some spots on the rail line near

Hillsborough later? What will we learn over the next month and a half about what projects may be appropriate for the SPOT rail project submission and what is the drop dead deadline?

Lindsay Smart stated that there is some flexibility in the schedule but the MPO LPA staff hope to have an action by the TC today. The action would be to have the TC to recommend the top 20 bicycle/pedestrian projects and the top 20 highway projects to the MPO Board for approval. Lindsay Smart stated that the recommendation could include the ability to add additional new rail projects with any additional project information coming from GoTriangle by the time the meeting packet is assembled for the November MPO Board meeting. Lindsay Smart stated that the online tool will be open to thirty days, from October 19<sup>th</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Andy Henry asked for clarification on Lindsay Smart's statement about the TC approving the 20 new projects. He understood it to be 14 projects per mode that the MPO could submit.

Lindsay Smart stated that the MPO is limited to 14 new projects per mode, but the MPO LPA staff are asking the DCHC MPO Board to approve the top 20 for bicycle/pedestrian and the top 20 for the highway to allow for flexibility during project submittal. The flexibility would be beneficial because if the preliminary SPOT On!ine tool suggests that project number 16 would do better than project number 10, the DCHC MPO Board action has allowed LPA staff to move number 16 up in priority. Lindsay Smart stated that MPO LPA staff mimiced the scoring for P4.0 and have had the NCDOT SPOT office review all of the work that was done. However, there are still data points that are missing because the data are not available to the MPO or NCDOT. Lindsay Smart stated that this has impacted some of the scores, but she would try to talk through them a little bit. Lindsay Smart stated that we know that we probably have maybe a B+ to an A on all of the highways scoring because there are few data sets that is missing, and we cannot account for them. Lindsay Smart stated that LPA staff have requested to have the flexibility built-in so that a project that should have been funded does not slip through the cracks and not get submitted.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the extra six projects are back-up, should one of the fourteen appear not to do so well.

Lindsay Smart stated that the LPA staff are also asking the DCHC MPO Board to build in flexibility to modify a corridor project. If a corridor project is entered into the SPOT Online tool and it does not seem to score well, LPA staff should have the flexibility to pull out an intersection or interchange along that corridor and submit a standalone intersection/interchange project would be a beneficial improvement for the corridor.

Bret Martin stated that he agreed with the approach that Lindsay Smart described. It would be conservative not to leave anything out that might be more competitive. Bret Martin stated that one of his questions is about the ranking of the two categories. There is a ranking in the Division Tier and the Regional Tier and to determine the top 20 projects are we going with the Division rank or the Regional rank? Based off of the scoring, the Regional scores are better than some the Division scores of the top 20 projects and vice versa. Bret Martin stated that he wanted to know how they would determine between the two Tiers and what are the top 20 projects.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that most of that would be based on the amount of available funding and what those projects would be in competition against. It may be different from one Division to another. Chair Mark Ahrendsen also made a note of the difference in the available funding in each Tier. One Tier may have more funding or less funded than the next.

Lindsay Smart stated that the NCDOT and the MPO do not have some data available for scoring projects but the statewide scaling doesn't need to be considered because the MPO's projects in each mode are only competing against each other right now. Of the 32 new highway projects, only the top 14 will be submitted to NCDOT SPOT so the 32 highway projects are only in competition with themselves for the top 14 spots.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that some of the scores show absence information that could ultimately determine the final scores. The score that is based on the information and data that are available.

Lindsay Smart agreed with Chair Mark Ahrendsen's statement.

Bret Martin stated that was fine. He was thinking that this was the recommendation of the top 20, but since there is going to be more discussion on what really is the top 20 that makes it better.

Lindsay Smart stated yes there are sixty minutes programmed to discuss the top 20 and there are spreadsheets that you can look through for each of the data points.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that his understanding is that Yangping Zhang and Kosak Chae have spent a lot of time trying to apply a methodology that has not been applied to anything else before based on the data that they have. They are trying to give the best data that is available to date as to how these projects would score.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that he had two questions related to schedule and then process. Vice-Chair David stated that it seems that there are a lot of questions about the lists of projects. The way it was explained is that a lot of stuff was missing and that the staff at the MPO applied what they believe are the factors that they did have information about. Vice-Chair David Bonk understands that Lindsay Smart would like to walk through the information in the current meeting and would like to talk about the elements, but he does not think there would be enough time to do that. Vice-Chair David Bonk believes that it would be better to have a smaller group to review the elements of the project time wise. Vice-Chair David Bonk asked if they were under a deadline to have this by a certain date?

Lindsay Smart stated that they need a DCHC MPO Board approval at their October meeting to start entering projects. If they wait until November for DCHC MPO Board approval of the projects to start, they may only had a week or a week and a half in November to use the SPOT Online tool to enter projects. Lindsay Smart stated that if we talk about the projects in the current Technical Committee meeting and get the recommendation from the DCHC MPO Board that will give Staff a month to use the

SPOT online tool and enter projects. Also, it will allow them to come back to the Technical Committee before anything is submitted and let them know that we entered the data and give them a chance to make any changes before the November Board meeting.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that he understands the timeline, but he questions if it is the most efficient way to review these projects.

Lindsay Smart stated that after the current meeting that she would be out of the office until October 16, 2015. She would not be able to facilitate a small group meeting between now and the MPO Board meeting; however, if someone else would like to facilitate the meeting in her absence that would be fine.

Vice-Chair David Bonk did not want the meeting to take place in Lindsay Smart's absence.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that they were not looking for the DCHC MPO Board to approve the final projects during their October meeting, it will actually happen to the November meeting. LPA staff is only asking for a recommendation at this time so that LPA staff can begin entering projects.

Lindsay Smart stated that they would like for the DCHC MPO TC and Board to approve 20 projects so that LPA staff can enter these top 20 projects into the SPOT On!ine tool for bicycle/pedestrian and highway projects so that there would be time for further discussion of projects during the October TC and November Board meeting.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen wanted to know when will they ultimately have to approve the final 14 of the 20 new projects.

Lindsay Smart stated that it would probably be the October TC meeting. She does not know when the NCDOT SPOT window will close. If the SPOT On!ine tool closes before the November DCHC MPO Board meeting, then the MPO Board will have to grant the MPO TC the ability to approve the final 14 of the 20 new projects during the October TC meeting.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that he understands that the Orange County projects are not in competition with the Durham County projects. They are competing with Greensboro and Raleigh. Of

the top 14 projects, all but one are Durham projects, how does that move us toward some form of regional equity if Orange County submits nothing but a project in Hillsborough. The Orange County projects are more competitive against the Greensboro projects than the Durham County projects against the Raleigh Projects.

Ed Lewis corrected Vice-Chair David Bonk and stated that two projects in Orange County seem to make it into the top 14.

Lindsay Smart agreed and stated that we can only score our projects against each other, which is the internal prioritization process works. There will be statewide scaling, where the NCDOT are going to take all the scores of all the projects and apply a scaling factor. Lindsay Smart stated that they just need to look at their best 20 projects and pick out the 14 highest priority projects.

Bret Martin asked if there would be any danger in trying to enter all 32 new projects when the window opens rather than just the top 20 projects.

Lindsay Smart stated that the LPA staff were hoping to build-in the flexibility of entering the top 20 projects, so she did not see any harm in entering all new projects and asked if anyone had any opposition. Lindsay Smart stated that the only hesitation she has is that she does not know how long it will take to enter each project into the SPOT On!line tool and if there will be time to enter in all new projects and provide the TC with the tool's output of raw scores.

Ed Lewis responded that in Division 7 there were two people that were able to use the SPOT tool to enter projects. Ed Lewis stated that you had to get a password to be able to use the SPOT tool. Obviously you had to do a lot of cooperation. Ed Lewis stated that he and his co-worker split the project up because there is a lot of data that comes along with entering the projects into the SPOT tool. You will get a raw data score and you will have to take that with a grain of salt because the NCDOT's data aren't fully compiled yet and because of the statewide scaling. Ed Lewis stated that you can enter as many projects as you want and the projects aren't finalized until you hit submit.

Lindsay Smart thanked Ed Lewis for the information.

Alison Carpenter asked about bicycle/pedestrian projects. Lindsay Smart asked Dale McKeel how bicycle/pedestrian scoring was going. Dale McKeel replied that he would like to discuss that during the bicycle/pedestrian presentation.

Bret Martin asked Ed Lewis how much of a deviation did he observed from the raw data scores to the final SPOT scores when he entered the project data for P3.0 into the SPOT tool.

Ed Lewis replied that it was over a year ago and he could not recall those details. Ed Lewis stated that each project has to be mapped and you entered all of the mandatory data or the information and then get a sense of what project would score well and what was not going to score well.

Andy Henry stated that when you enter the data enter SPOT it does not tell you how well you are competing against the Greensboro project. It just gives you the raw data without a benchmark of what score the project would need to be funded. Andy Henry stated that when he looks at the list of new highway projects, there is a handful that will be competitive. We can try to enter all 32 projects and we may find a diamond in the rough.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the key would be to determine the top 20 new highway projects by entering all 32 projects and see how they come out and then determine the ultimate top ones that we would like to submit to the system.

Lindsay Smart stated that there would be other items to look at besides the raw scores. The Congestion Management team will also play a part in making some decisions on what type of improvement will happen to the projects. MPO jurisdictions didn't provide intersection improvement types, most local staff submitted project information and requested that the NCDOT Congestion Management team determine the best improvement type. Lindsay Smart stated that not having this information from local staff will require LPA staff to make decisions about intersection improvement types on the fly while using the SPOT Online tool.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked about the schedule . Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that there is a 30 day window that will start in mid-October. He stated that it seems unreasonable, because we do not

know when it is going to begin and we only have one opportunity for DCHC MPO Board action during that time. Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that there should be a request that the SPOT tool should be open to mid- November so that there would be time for a November DCHC MPO Board meeting.

Ed Lewis stated that there is a SPOT tool trial run on October 9, 2015, so that means the SPOT tool will not be open until sometime after October 9, 2015.

Vice-Chair David Bonk is concerned about how the data gets reflected and to make sure that the right numbers are being applied to the projects. He used the Elliott Road extension project as an example of his concerns. Looking at that project and looking at the volume and the ADT and the capacity of the road, he is not sure that is the way it should be applied but it depends on the way the State defines that variable. The benefit of that project does not benefit Ephesus Church Road it is going to benefit Fordham Boulevard in terms of congestion along the Boulevard by diverting traffic from an intersection that is failing in peak hours. Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that he does not know how this will get reflected but this is why these types of projects need to be discussed because there may be others like this one.

Bret Martin stated that they had projects like this that they did not agree with the scoring that the projects received in the SPOT 3.0. Bret Martin stated that Orange County staff have been in contact with the NCDOT SPOT office about the scoring and the NCDOT SPOT office has been receptive on our concerns. David Wasserman has been open to looking at different methodologies for unique projects.

Ed Lewis stated that he checked David Wasserman's email and noted that the SPOT tool will be tested on October 9, 2015 and the window will open in October 19, 2015. That would make the 30-day window available until November 19, 2015.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that would be a more doable schedule to go through our process. Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated it more reasonable now that we could enter projects, brainstorm with a smaller group before the Technical Committee meeting, take the information back to the Technical

Committee, and then back to the DCHC MPO Board in November. He asked if everyone was ok with the decision.

Linda Thomas wanted to know if there was a policy on distribution of the assignment to points and if there was anything in written to determine if there was a balance.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen and Lindsay Smart explained the past assignment of local input points and the raw score of past projects and how the local jurisdictions handled them.

Dale McKeel stated that some of the Divisions had offered to consider submitting some of our projects. The Divisions asked for that information this week. They wanted to know which projects we would like for them to consider for submission. Dale McKeel asked if they were going to provide some suggestions of the Divisions.

Lindsay Smart stated she had received a request from Division 5 for non-highway projects. Lindsay Smart stated that the MPO does hope that each Division would help submit non-highway projects so that collectively, the MPO and Divisions would maximize the number of available project submittals.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked if there were any further questions related to the highway projects. No further questions were asked.

Lindsay Smart stated that an action was needed to have staff come back to the Technical Committee with the results from the SPOT online tool raw score.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked for a motion to recommend the staff to use the SPOT online tool to score the 32 highway projects and then come back to a small group if there is time or to the Technical Committee with the results from the SPOT online tool raw scores.

Vice-Chair David Bonk made the motion for staff to use the SPOT online tool to score the 32 highway projects and then come back to a small group if there is time or to the Technical Committee with the results from the SPOT online tool raw score. Bret Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Dale McKeel discussed the bicycle/pedestrian project handout and explains the categories and scoring of the handout. Dale McKeel discussed the crashes, posted speed, and safety benefit data sets. There was a maximum score of 15 points for the safety category. The next scoring criteria was accessibility, which has a maximum of 10 points and is regarding access to major centers and secondary centers that are considered destinations within walking or biking distance of a facility. Dale McKeel also discussed the measure of distance from the prime facility as a major destination and how far was it to that location. Dale McKeel stated that there is also a demand criterion, with population and job demand. A new factor in P4.0 is a connectivity category which regards to connecting existing locations. The most that a project could score is 50 points because bike/ped projects are in the Division category. Dale McKeel stated that the Jones Ferry Road projected in Carrboro scored very well. Dale McKeel stated that he originally was going to propose that the list of bike/ped projects be cut off at 20 or 21 projects. If the cut off was 20 projects, the projects would include submitting all 3 projects from Chatham County, 8 projects from Orange County and 9 projects in Durham. However, if we are going to see how the score in the SPOT Online tool, we do not need to have that discussion.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the TC could make the same motion that was made for the highway projects. Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked for a motion to recommend the LPA staff use the SPOT online tool to score the bicycle/pedestrian projects and then come back to a small group if there is time or to the Technical Committee with the results from the SPOT online tool raw score.

Vice-Chair David Bonk made the motion for staff to use the SPOT online tool to score the bicycle/pedestrian projects and then come back to a small group if there is time or to the Technical Committee with the results from the SPOT online tool raw score. Linda Thomas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**8. State Legislation and DO-LRT**  
**John Hodges-Copple**

Chair Mark Ahrendsen opened the floor to the discussion about the State Legislation and DO-LRT discussion. Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the DEIS is open to comment until October 13, 2015. Local jurisdictions are going through the review process and working with their local boards.

Vice-Chair David Bond stated that recent legislation limited the budget. Chapel Hill Town Council will take up the topic and have it addressed September 28, 2015, public hearing September 29, 2015, and October 1, 2015.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that they should review the project as it was before the recent legislation change. The 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2040 MTP) and recently adopted 2016-2025 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) are the approved/adopted plans for the MPO.

Patrick McDonough stated that legislation is still moving. Patrick McDonough stated that he just learned 20 minutes ago the Representative Paul Stam of Apex introduced a new piece of legislation that proposes to remove the prohibition against extending the funding of Light Rail in Wake County until the end of the year. Then suddenly pulled it from the calendar and it has been rescheduled for housing finance at 2:00 p.m. Patrick McDonough stated that it would be difficult for them to discuss this issue without discussing Durham and Orange County Light Rail Transit at the same time. There have been a lot of people calling the various members of the General Assembly this week and that shows that someone over there is paying attention. Patrick McDonough stated that they received some questions from members of the General Assembly this week because they were not aware of the project. Some of the members did not know that the D-O LRT was at a different funding stage than any other rail projects in Wake County that had been proposed. Patrick McDonough stated that they have studied with LRT in Wake. They have a 30% designed project being that could theoretically be constructed in 3 1/2 years into the funding world. People did not understand the difference between those things. There was some education on that this week, which should help. Patrick McDonough stated that some of the information that we prepared for them covered the following pieces of information; project

393 planning for the corridor goes back to 1997 and the Major Investment Study (MIS) in 2001 and the  
394 momentum for the project that really started up again in 2007, to name a few. Last year, GoTriangle  
395 received 1.7 million dollars from the Federal Government, the second largest grant award for the FTA  
396 grant in the United States, to continue studying and building stations around the D-O LRT.

397 Scott Whiteman wanted to know the state of the DEIS if the federal government shuts down.

398 Patrick McDonough stated that the group doing the DESI still must complete the DEIS process on  
399 the federal timeline that was imposed when the EIS began.

400 Patrick McDonough stated that the schedule requires us to complete the DEIS in 24 months,  
401 regardless of what the resolution to what the state funding issue may be. The funding issue, is a separate  
402 issue from the Record of Decision (ROD) and the DEIS. We need to know where the project is going to go  
403 so that we can disclose the impact on the public, we need to receive their comments, and we owe them a  
404 good response. Patrick McDonough stated that holds true no matter what else happens, especially if we  
405 want to go forward and the General Assembly changes its mind. And if we have not completed the  
406 necessary steps, as in getting the ROD in 2016, we will have created a new problem. Patrick McDonough  
407 stated that we have to stay on schedule and have the DEIS completed by February. Patrick McDonough  
408 used the Charlotte as an example to explain that the work can be done for the DEIS no matter what.

409 Andy Henry wanted to know if there is no change in legislation, would the NCDOT come back a  
410 couple months later and amend the STIP and if they do, the STIP may no longer match the MTIP. Andy  
411 Henry wanted to know what type of impact that would have.

412 Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that it is a mutually adopted TIP, so it cannot be modified without  
413 consent from both mutual parties that adopted it. No one party can change it alone. There would be no  
414 change.

415 Linda Thomas stated that it is a basic contradiction to the prioritization process. From a policy  
416 standpoint the way it is presented it could cause a problem with the completion of projects.

Patrick McDonough stated that to Linda Thomas that she is right and that a lot of people are speaking to the General assembly about the issue. It is looking to open up the flood gates to Pandora Box.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that there is a good process in place, but the way that policy is being handled undermines the process.

Patrick McDonough stated to Chair Mark Ahrendsen that Ellen Reckhow asked if the DCHC MPO Board could make comments. The FTA said that was very rare for a DCHC Board MPO to comment. They did not recommend it. They preferred for the comments to come from the local jurisdictions instead of the policy Board itself. So it was best to have those comments at the local level. Patrick McDonough stated that this is what Tammy Bouchelle was told by the FTA.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen asked what if the DCHC MPO Board hears comments from the Public through the Public comment process and wanted to forward the comments and ideas.

Patrick McDonough stated that he will circle back with Tammy Bouchelle to further clarify.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that if the comments from the Public could not be shared from the DCHC MPO Board, then what was the need of having a public comment session for the public to speak with the MPO Board.

Lindsay Smart stated that the public comments the MPO Board heard during their September meeting were intended to be informative to Board members and to assist Board members in their consideration of endorsing the D-O LRT project. The public comments that were heard were not intended to be passed along to FTA.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen confirmed that this was the guidance given to the MPO Board members during their September Board meeting.

#### **REPORTS:**

#### **9. Reports from the LPA Staff** **Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

Felix Nwoko briefed the MPO TC on the very productive meeting held last week with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Department of Transportation Headquarters (DOT) (Divisions 5/Division7). Felix Nwoko stated that the meeting purpose was to find solutions to the difficult issues that the local staff were having with Local Administrative Projects (LAP) and federally funded projects. Felix Nwoko stated that the meeting was insightful and that it was good to listen to the NCDOT speak about possible ways to alleviate the problem. Some suggestions are for the FHWA, NCDOT, and the MPO to partner for providing training to local staff on LAPs. The MPO LPA staff will continue the discussion for future training opportunities with FHWA and NCDOT.

Felix Nwoko stated that the new law is creating a bit difficulty for LAP. The law is a recent Super Circular. Felix Nwoko discussed what the new Super Circular means to the participating person(s). Felix Nwoko stated that the new Super Circular says; once you have a Municipal Agreement signed, a schedule for the project has to be committed to, and local jurisdictions have to stick to the schedule. Felix Nwoko stated that the Super Circular says that once a Municipal Agreement is signed and the schedule slips without a good reason, there will be no reimbursement. Felix Nwoko stated that is why it is very important that planning is done correctly. It is important that there is a clear design concept and scope of what is to be done, so that the project schedule does not slip.

Felix Nwoko stated that he does not know what is considered "a good reason" for schedule changes because he has not received the new Super Circular document guidelines and hasn't reviewed the language carefully.

Felix Nwoko stated that the MPO will use the proposed trainings to help people to understand the process. Felix Nwoko stated that based on their suggestions, LPA staff want to give a one day workshop to train local staff responsible for project delivery. They will have a pilot program with a small number of people to streamline and be more cost effective.

John Hodges-Copple stated that CAMPO has a good system. John Hodges-Copple stated that local staff have to do the training and the projects are funded in phases, but that they have a pretty good

system. CAMPO's system is their LAP program and they have specific staff designated to managing that program. The DCHC MPO doesn't have that type of program or staff to staff that type of program but it could be considered in the future if local staff would like more oversight and assistance from the MPO LPA.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that we should still work with our local governments. DCHC MPO allocates the funds to projects but not by phases. There are rules on how they are scoped. There is a process.

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that we have Board approved policies on completing projects, but the Board has been relaxed about enforcing them. Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that the Board should start monitoring the projects more closely to make sure that the policies are being enforced.

Vice-Chair David Bonk stated that he agrees with Chair Mark Ahrendsen because it sets the bar to a higher standard.

John Hodges-Copple stated that CAMPO has high standards to get project started and the LAP program staff provides a lot of support.

Felix Nwoko stated that the LPA staff would be providing project status updates throughout the year and asking local jurisdiction staff to comment on project progression. LPA staff would be using the new project database to start to track local projects and that would help with project oversight. Over time, LPA staff hopes to offer the LAP trainings and help with tracking project statuses.

#### **Report from the DCHC MPO TC Chair**

#### **Mark Ahrendsen, DCHC MPO TC Chair**

Chair Mark Ahrendsen stated that there was no additional report from the Chair.

#### **10. NCDOT Reports**

Brandon Jones, NCDOT Division 5, stated that there was no additional report from NCDOT Division 5.

Ed Lewis, NCDOT Division 7, stated that they have set up an all day training on October 13, 2015 for training on the delivering projects to NCDOT at the local level and Division level. This correlates to the

earlier discussion about local project delivery. Jimmy Travis, NCDOT, will be on site and helping with the training. There will also be people from the NCDOT project development and environmental analysis branch. The goal is to produce better bid packages, faster pre-construction (environmental side), and to teach more about planning and the available resources.

Ed Lewis stated that the FHWA will be at the training to talk about the environmental side of the Federal view. The environmental scientists will be there to talk about the do's and don'ts in the trends that we need to avoid and the procedures that we need to follow.

Ed Lewis stated that they will finish up the day of training with a question and answer period. Ed Lewis stated that there are sixty slots available with the cost of \$60 per person. The training will be done in a module type setting. Ed Lewis stated that he will leave the contact information with Lindsay Smart to share with the local jurisdictional staff. The event will take place at the Deep River Event Center in Western Guilford County. The targeted audience is the staff that works on getting environmental documents together or is responsible for getting projects out the door.

Darius Sturdivant, NCDOT Division 8, stated that there was no report from NCDOT Division 8; however, he wanted to make an announcement. Darius Sturdivant stated that Division 8 public comment period will start October 1, 2015, through November 2, 2015. The Division Public Meeting will be held on October 15, 2015, at the Division Traffic Service Office in Carthage, NC. Darius Sturdivant stated that the NCDOT Communications Office will be following up and sending out the formal press release. Darius Sturdivant stated that he can get that information to Lindsay Smart so that she can circulate it.

There was no report offered from the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch.

There was no report offered from the NCDOT Traffic Operations.

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: 11. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

An announcement was made that as of October 9, 2015, Bret Martin will no longer be employed by Orange County. Bret Martin has accepted a position with CAMPO. The MPO TC wished Brett Martin well with his transition and in the new position. His involvement with the DCHC MPO will be missed.

516    **ADJOURNMENT:**

517            There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Technical Committee, the meeting was

518    adjourned at 11:03 a.m.