

Durham Staff Working Group
June 18, 2025
MEETING NOTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at 1:00pm in the Durham County Admin II Building, Room 128, as well as through the Microsoft Teams platform. The following members and guests were in attendance:

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| Doug Plachcinski (Chair, Voting Member) | Triangle West TPO |
| Ellen Beckmann (Vice-Chair, Voting Member) | Durham County |
| Jenny Green (Voting Member) | City of Durham |
| Meg Scully^ (Voting Member) | GoTriangle |
| Brandi Minor | Durham County |
| Brooke Roper | Durham County |
| Curtis Scarpignato | Durham County |
| Bill Judge* | City of Durham |
| Bharat Mehta* | City of Durham |
| Eric Simpson* | City of Durham |
| Paul Black* | GoTriangle |
| Brandon Carey* | GoTriangle |
| Logan DiGiacomo* | GoTriangle |
| Paul Kingman | GoTriangle |
| Kelley Smith* | GoTriangle |
| Austin Stanion* | GoTriangle |
| Colleen McGue | Triangle West TPO |

Quorum Count: 4 of 4 Voting Members

*Attended remotely

^Alternate voting member

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Doug Plachcinski called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. All voting members were acknowledged to be in attendance.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Brandi Minor stated there were none.

3. Public Comment

Chair Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any public comments. Brandi Minor stated there were none.

4. Administration

a. SWG Administration

i. Election for Chair and Vice Chair for FY2025-26

Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any nominations for the Chair. Doug acknowledged that Meg Scully has nominated Ellen Beckmann, to which Ellen

accepted. There was support from Colleen McGue and Doug Plachcinski. A motion was made to approve Ellen Beckmann as the Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any nominations for the Vice Chair. Colleen McGue was nominated by Ellen Beckmann and Meg Scully. Colleen McGue accepted the nomination. A motion was made to approve Colleen McGue as the Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

ii. Approval of May 2025 Minutes

Ellen Beckmann made a motion to approve the SWG May 2025 Meeting Minutes. Doug Plachcinski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

iii. FY26 SWG Admin Schedules

1. FY26 Meeting Calendar

Brandi Minor provided an overview of the FY26 Meeting Schedule and asked if there were any questions or concerns. There were none. A motion was made by Jenny Green to approve the FY26 Meeting Calendar. The motion was seconded by Ellen Beckmann. The motion passed unanimously.

2. FY26 Amendment Schedule

Brandi Minor provided an overview of the FY26 Amendment Schedule. Brandi stated that she was changing the FY25 Q3 submission deadline from November 28 to November 26, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Brandi asked if there were any other questions or concerns. There were none. A motion was made by Jenny Green to approve the FY26 Amendment Schedule. The motion was seconded by Doug Plachcinski. The motion passed unanimously.

3. FY27 Work Program Development Schedule

Brandi Minor provided an overview of the FY27 Work Program Development Schedule. Brandi stated that she would be adding due dates for the finalization of the Exhibit A and when they will become available to Transit Partners for review. There was also some discussion around the potential creation of a database for DTP projects. However, it was ultimately determined that the database would likely not be ready in time for the FY27 Work Program development cycle.

Neisha Reynolds asked how long Transit Partners would have to complete Exhibit A's. Brandi Minor responded with a recap of the entire Work Program development process, beginning with the project budget sheets through the time the draft is released, and how changes are submitted after the draft is released. Bill Judge asked about the pre-list submission deadline. Brandi stated that the pre-lists are due August 29, with templates going out in early July to Transit Partners. Brandi also stated that this year's pre-list will include carryover balances to help partners make more informed budget requests, as the carryover balances are not shown on the project budget sheet. Paul Kingman mentioned that the final FY25 balances will not be available before

the pre-lists are due. Brandi Minor stated that the balances on the pre-list are through FY25 Q3 and can be updated if necessary. A motion was made by Meg Scully to approve the FY27 Work Program Development Schedule. The motion was seconded by Doug Plachchinski. The motion passed unanimously.

iv. FY26 Global Agreements Update

Brandi Minor provided an overview of the Global Agreement execution process. Brandi showed the SWG where the agreement templates were located on SharePoint. She explained that each agency would have one operating agreement and potentially two capital agreements, depending on if the projects were awarded federal funding. Transit Partners are responsible for obtaining approval from their governing body. After initial approval, Transit Partners should upload the partially executed agreements to SharePoint. Kelly Smith will route the agreements to the GoTriangle signatories and the MPO (if applicable). Kelly Smith requested to add contract numbers to each agreement for ease of tracking, to which Brandi Minor agreed. Kelly will assign contract numbers to each agreement and will rename each agreement on SharePoint with the appropriate contract number. Paul Kingman asked if we should amend the Global Agreements each time the Work Program is amended. After some discussion from the SWG, the general consensus is that amendments do not require the Global Agreements to be amended as long as they are approved by the appropriate governing bodies and documented through the budget ordinance or amendment approvals.

b. Tax District Administration

i. FY25 Q3 Financial Update

Paul Kingman provided a presentation on the FY25 Q3 Financial Results. A summary is as follows:

Revenue Overview (Half-Cent Sales Tax)

- Year-to-date (YTD) collections at 67.8% of budget.
- FY25 collections are tracking \$500K–\$600K under budget, mainly due to a large refund, possibly to a nonprofit or Duke University.
- Despite shortfalls, investment income is strong (~\$5M YTD), helping to offset the gap.

Operating Budget Overview:

- YTD reimbursements are at 58% of the annual operating budget.
- Some lower-than-expected reimbursements are likely to be due to delayed implementation of service routes.
- Approximately \$8.4M in operating funds remain available.

Capital Budget:

- Total adopted capital budget + FY24 carryover = substantial funding available.
- YTD reimbursements for capital projects vary due to multi-year implementation timelines.

- Estimated \$2.3M expected in Q4 drawdowns.
- Anticipated \$48.3M carry forward into FY26 for capital projects.

Cash Position (as of 3/31/2025):

- Total cash on hand: \$189M
- Allocations:
 - \$8M potentially spendable (pending reimbursement activity before August 10)
 - \$51M pending capital drawdowns
 - \$10M reserved per Durham County policy
 - \$36M in operating/capital reserves per Durham Transit Plan policy

Paul stated that the financial and project status updates are available on SharePoint. Paul also stated that the Tax District will continue monitoring the Q4 revenues and reimbursements. Lastly, Paul stated that we can contact him or Steve with questions or if anyone needs access to SharePoint.

5. Work Program

a. Transit Plan Amendment/Fare Support Policy Discussion

Curtis Scarpignato led the discussion regarding the Transit Plan Amendment that would address Fare Support and some of the capital project funding shortfalls. A summary of the discussion is provided below:

Fare Support Programs and Policy Inconsistency

- **TAP** (GoTriangle): A low-income fare subsidy for qualifying riders across regional routes.
- **DIME** (City of Durham): Fare-free service on GoDurham buses, intended to support low-wealth riders.

Policy Inconsistency:

- These two programs serve similar equity goals but operate differently and are funded inconsistently.
- DIME's fare-free model is more expensive, and questions were raised about whether the Transit Plan should fully fund this.
- The SWG emphasized the need for a consistent, equitable framework to evaluate and fund such programs.

Concern Raised: Equity and Fairness

- Approving DIME in full would set a precedent for unequal support across the region.
- It is fair to select certain projects for the amendment without offering other partners an equal opportunity to submit or adjust their projects.
- If DIME receives full funding, similar support mechanisms should be considered for other operators.

Funding Trade-Offs & Capital Shortfalls

- While there are several capital project shortfalls, there's also limited flexibility in the existing Transit Plan funding model.
- Concerns were expressed that increasing investment in fare-free or heavily subsidized fare programs could lead to cuts or delays to other important projects, especially operating services.
- A suggestion was made to potentially create a policy to enforce guardrails around funding shifts (e.g., only allowing capital-to-capital reallocations within the same project sponsor).

Process & Precedent

- Concerns were voiced about maintaining a consistent amendment process:
 - Project sponsors typically submit fully scoped and costed amendments.
 - Offering multiple funding "options" to the boards for a single program was seen by some as inconsistent.
 - Others argued that boards benefit from having scenarios or options (e.g., full, partial, or no funding) to better understand the trade-offs.

Program Evaluation and Complexity

- GoTriangle noted the technical and operational complexity of TAP, including fare technology, federal compliance, and data tracking.
- In contrast, DIME is simpler to administer but more expensive since it offsets all fare revenue.

Consensus Points

- There's fatigue with repeating the same conversations and a collective desire to let the governing boards make the ultimate decisions. The general consensus is that the boards must set the policy direction, particularly on how much to invest in fare support across the region.
- Project sponsors will bring forward proposals, but the SWG will consolidate and make a joint recommendation to the governing boards.
- Any amendment to the Transit Plan must model long-term financial implications, especially as they relate to operating sustainability and equity impacts.
- Acknowledgment that a comprehensive Transit Plan update is needed to re-evaluate regional priorities, equity goals, and available funding.

Brandi Minor stated that a kickoff meeting to discuss the amendment further at a high level will be scheduled for next week.

6. Project Sponsor Updates

a. City of Durham

Eric Simpson provided his updates in the attached memo. Jenny Green stated that a service change occurred this past Saturday on the Route 11/11B to improve on-time performance. Jenny also stated that they will be adjusting service at Durham Station due to ongoing construction, which they will coordinate with GoTriangle. There will also be an August service change to add evening service to Route 3. The Senior Shuttle will now have push trolleys with bags to carry their groceries. Lastly, Jenny mentioned that Lindsay sent out 11-12 letters of support for BRT.

b. GoTriangle

Meg Scully stated that the RUS Bus ribbon-cutting will be on July 25th at 10:00 AM. Meg also stated that GoTriangle will be implementing a 15-minute service change on August 3rd on the Route 400/405. Lastly, Meg stated that they are planning to apply for 5339 funds for the Triangle Mobility Hub and the BOMF and will be reaching out for letters of support.

c. Durham County

Ellen Beckmann stated that the BRT Vision Plan is under contract. Ellen also stated that the East Durham Railroad Crossing RFQ closed yesterday and received four proposals. Lastly, Ellen stated that a new staff member will be starting with the County next week.

d. Triangle West TPO

Doug Plachcinski stated that they received some good input from their board regarding the MTP Preferred Alternatives.

Colleen stated that the MPO is updating their ADA Transition Plan. They currently have a focus group with disability advocates participating. Colleen also stated that there are several plans related to Title VI that they are in the process of updating. There will be more to come.

7. Next Meeting Date – August 20, 2025

Brandi Minor announced the next Durham County SWG meeting will be on Wednesday, August 20, 2025.

8. Adjournment

With no further items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.