

Durham Staff Working Group
December 15, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Monday, December 15, 2025, at 1:01pm 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:

Ellen Beckmann (Chair, Voting Member)	Durham County
Doug Plachcinski (Vice-Chair, Voting Member)	Triangle West TPO
Neisha Reynolds (Voting Member)	City of Durham
Jay Heikes (Voting Member)	GoTriangle
Brandi Minor	Durham County
Caroline Lamb	Durham County
Brooke Roper*	Durham County
Curtis Scarpignato	Durham County
Colleen McGue*	Triangle West TPO
Thomas Porter*	Triangle West TPO
Bharat Mehta*	City of Durham
Eric Simpson*	City of Durham
Paul Black*	GoTriangle
Brandon Carey*	GoTriangle
Kelley Smith*	GoTriangle
Logan DiGiacomo*	GoTriangle
Paul Kingman	GoTriangle
Steven Schlossberg	GoTriangle

Quorum Count: 4 of 4 Voting Members

*Attended remotely

1. Call to Order/Roll Call (Timestamp: 00:18)

Chair Ellen Beckmann called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. All voting members were acknowledged to be in attendance.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda (Timestamp: 01:00)

Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Brandi Minor stated there were none.

3. Public Comment (Timestamp: 01:05)

Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if there were any public comments. Brandi Minor stated there were none.

4. Administration

a. SWG Administration

i. Approval of November 2025 Minutes (Timestamp: 01:17)

Jay Heikes made a motion to approve the November 2025 Meeting Minutes. Neisha Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ii. Voting Member Update (Timestamp: 1:55)

Brandi Minor stated that Neisha Reynolds is the new primary voting member for the City of Durham. Brandi also confirmed that Eric Simpson will remain as the alternate voting member.

iii. Transit Plan Amendment Update (Timestamp: 02:17)

Durham County staff provided an update on the Transit Plan Amendment. Ellen Beckmann, Brandi Minor, and Curtis Scarpignato attended their first meeting with two of the County Commissioners, the County Manager, and the Deputy County Manager, and stated that they have the two remaining meetings scheduled for tomorrow.

At the initial meeting, Durham County staff were directed to provide a high-level introductory public presentation at the next BOCC work session, to provide additional background information on the potential Transit Plan amendment and FY27 Work Program requests. The work session is scheduled for January 5, 2026. Durham County staff are also planning to present to GoTriangle's Audit & Finance Committee in early January and are awaiting a presentation date from the Tax District Administration. Triangle West staff proposed that Durham County staff also present to the MPO board, which was accepted. Durham County Staff will also seek input on engaging with the Durham City Council, which requires an invitation to participate.

The SWG discussed options for releasing the draft Work Program for public comment, including maintaining the current schedule (end of January) or delaying by one month to incorporate feedback from the governing boards. The preferred approach is to delay release to ensure the draft reflects board guidance. Key milestones include finalizing content by late March to prepare for the SWG vote on the final recommended Work Program in April. After SWG approval, the Work Program will proceed to the Board of County Commissioners for approval in May, and GoTriangle Board of Trustees approval in June. The public comment period will occur before adoption, and flexibility exists to adjust timelines while aligning with local budget processes.

b. Tax District Administration (Timestamp: 20:19)

i. FY26 Q1 Durham Transit Plan Financial Update

Steven Schlossberg provided a presentation on the FY26 Q1 financials. Steven noted that all of the Global Agreements in Durham County have been signed. As of September 30, approximately \$10.8M in sales tax revenue has been collected (about 25% of the \$44M budget), with vehicle registration revenue at \$467k

against a \$1.7M budget. Investment earnings totaled \$1.9M year-to-date, contributing to overall receipts of \$13.5M (about 29% of budget). No major concerns were identified regarding meeting revenue targets. Steven also mentioned that refund requests from institutional partners are expected later in the year, and staff will provide historical averages for context.

On expenses, only the City of Durham and Triangle West have been fully reimbursed for operating and capital costs; other reimbursements for the County and GoTriangle are in progress. Capital appropriations and carryforward total \$72.1M for FY26. Cash and investments as of November 30 were \$206M, with roughly \$111M in available liquidity after accounting for reserves and encumbrances.

Lastly, staff emphasized that approving new projects impacts future funding capacity and encouraged timely closeout of completed projects to free up funds. A suggestion was made by Durham County staff for all sponsors to review their capital projects to determine if any projects could be closed out. Brandi Minor will follow up with sponsors on this initiative.

5. Work Program

a. FY26 Work Program

i. Q3 Amendments (Timestamp: 34:25)

Brandi Minor stated that she received four Q3 amendments. The first amendment was submitted by the City of Durham to revise the scope of their BRT Project Team staffing project. Neisha Reynolds stated that the City is withdrawing their amendment.

The discussion moved on to the amendment request from Triangle West TPO for their Durham Staff Working Group Participation, which is an increase of \$17,188. This request was intended to be a one-time request to address the time MPO staff would spend managing the staffing study. After much discussion, it was mutually decided to revise this request into a new, standalone project (with a new project ID), so that the time spent managing the study can be differentiated from the time MPO staff spend on other SWG duties. MPO staff plan to submit a revised request in FY27 to address any needs for the SWG Participation project.

An amendment for Route 800 Improvements, totaling \$123,370 was submitted by GoTriangle, which is a resubmittal of the Q2 amendment. This request is for additional revenue hours to maintain on-time performance targets without altering span or frequency. It was mentioned during this discussion that Orange County has paused processing amendments (Q2 and Q3) pending resolution of Global Agreement concerns, with leadership meetings scheduled to address the issue.

GoTriangle staff explained that service changes began in November and additional hours are needed starting in March. Concerns were expressed by Durham County staff about limited budget flexibility and the need to prioritize requests, given the status quo budget and potential Transit Plan amendment.

Route 800 was noted as a critical, high-ridership route within the core network, however, the importance of balancing choices and trade-offs among competing requests while maintaining reliability and fiscal responsibility was acknowledged amongst the SWG.

The discussion also addressed investment income, which is not currently factored into future budget models. While this revenue could help offset funding gaps, the Tax District emphasized that it is treated as actuals rather than projected income, making it difficult to rely on for planning.

Lastly, the SWG discussed the Staffing Study amendment submitted by Triangle West TPO, totaling \$183,570 (to be split between Durham and Orange). This study will focus on assessing current and future staffing needs and establishing performance metrics to guide future requests. Procurement is expected to begin in January, with completion in 6-8 months. The SWG emphasized the importance of aligning staffing resources with Transit Plan implementation while acknowledging concerns about optics, such as funding a study versus direct service improvements. The study is intended to create a sustainable framework for evaluating staffing requests and reduce future conflicts. For clarification, it was noted that the study will be conducted on behalf of Durham Transit, not Durham County, to which Brandi Minor agreed to update on the amendment forms accordingly.

After initial discussion and clarification regarding the proposed amendments, the SWG agreed to vote to release the following items for public comment:

- Route 800 Improvements: Approved as submitted, totaling \$123,370
- Staff Working Group Participation: Revised as a new, separate request (Staffing Study Personnel) totaling \$17,188, and designated as a major amendment
- Staffing Study: Approved as submitted, totaling \$183,570

Jay Heikes made a substitute motion. The motion was seconded by Doug Plachcinski. Ellen Beckmann voted nay. The motion passed 3-1.

b. FY27 Work Program

i. Exhibit A Update (Timestamp: 1:28:51)

Brandi Minor provided an update on the status of the Exhibit A review process. Durham County staff asked if exhibits would include clarification on reimbursable expenses. Brandi Minor stated that this year, cost share details will be added directly to Exhibit A to improve transparency for reimbursements. The discussion regarding cost shares continued and key points included ensuring clarity on both reimbursable expenses and cost share allocations, as Exhibit A is both public-facing and part of binding project agreements. Some SWG members noted that tracking time by hour is impractical for operators and suggested using cost share percentages as a proxy. Durham County staff recommended that Brandi Minor and Steven Schlossberg work collaboratively to ensure the exhibits have the appropriate information needed for reimbursement purposes.

ii. Review Schedule and any upcoming tasks for next month (Timestamp: 1:44:53)

Brandi Minor reviewed the upcoming tasks and deadlines. The Financial Subcommittee Meeting will be held in January 2026. Brandi will send an updated Work Program schedule to the SWG and will continue preparing the exhibits to be sent to the graphic designer in preparation of releasing the draft Work Program for public comment. The SWG will meet on January 21, which will include the action of releasing the Q3 amendments to the governing boards for approval. Brandi noted that the draft Work Program will not be presented to the governing boards in February, but a presentation will be provided to update the boards on the FY27 Work Program submission.

6. Project Sponsor Updates (Timestamp: 1:47:19)

a. City of Durham

Neisha Reynolds stated that for Central Durham BRT, negotiations on the fee and schedule with the selected vendor are ongoing and they are expected to finalize this week, with a goal of executing the contract in early February.

b. GoTriangle

Jay Heikes stated that there have been strong gains on ridership compared to last year through Q1 and Q2 YTD. November ridership is down 5% versus last November which is pretty substantial given that they were still in the process of returning to fares last year. Route performance updates include Route 800 continuing to show gains, and Route 400 has a 10% year-over-year increase. The GoTriangle Board is considering March 2026 service changes including a realignment of Route 700 to serve Durham Tech and NCCU and a new route that will better connect RTP to downtown Durham and the Regional Transit Center. On the capital side, two major projects are expected to go out to bid next year, including Bus Stop & Crossing Improvements and the East Hill improvements in Orange County.

Paul Black stated that the notice to proceed for the GoTriangle Bus Blueprint was sent to the vendor, and they will be looking for some representation from the Durham Transit Plan on the Steering Committee at some point in the future.

Ellen Beckmann asked for a status update on the Bus Plan that was funded last year. Jay Heikes replied that this may be a carryover project needing to be reevaluated. He noted that the goal is for GoTriangle and GoDurham to reach an agreement on how to share costs and determine whether to begin work before or after the Transit Plan update. Finally, Jay mentioned that there is currently no plan to move forward with a Bus Plan; however, Jay and Jenny Green will discuss whether it makes sense to start some preliminary work now and present that to the SWG.

c. Durham County

Curtis Scarpignato stated that for the BRT Vision Plan, the consultants are conducting a high-level review of universal corridors that will be presented to their partners in early January. The first round of public engagement was completed last month, and the results are being processed.

Caroline Lamb stated that the BOCC approved the contract for the East Durham Rail Crossing Study. She is currently working on executing the contract, which is expected to be completed within a couple of weeks.

d. Triangle West TPO

Doug Plachcinski stated that NCDOT and the NC Railroad are moving forward to develop an understanding of what improvements and changes need to be made to add a sixth daily train between Charlotte and Raleigh. He is expecting to provide an update next month.

7. Next Meeting Date – December 15, 2025 (Timestamp: 2:00:44)

Ellen Beckmann announced the next Durham County SWG meeting will be on January 21, 2026.

8. Adjournment (Timestamp: 2:00:48)

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