

Durham Staff Working Group

Meeting Notes

March 9, 2022

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Durham County – Chair Ellen Beckmann
GoTriangle – Jay Heikes and Meg Scully
DCHC MPO – Mariel Klein and Andy Henry

2. Approval of February 2022 Meeting Notes (MPO)

Motion by Jay Heikes. Second by Mariel Klein. Motion passed.

3. Plan Updates

a. Durham County Transit Plan (MPO)

Aaron Cain gave an update on the Durham Transit Plan development that should culminate with the adoption of the final report in August 2022.

b. Transit Governance Plan (Durham County)

Ellen Beckmann said a staff workshop was held in person last week for the Transit Governance Plan. Ellen Beckmann said the consultant is working on a summary of the workshop. Ellen Beckmann said the goal of the governance plan is to determine how to develop the new Interlocal Implementation Agreement (ILA)

c. Wake-Durham Bus Plan (GoTriangle)

Jenny Green said the Wake-Durham Bus Plan is now transitioning from regional analysis into transit service concepts in Wake County. Jenny Green said public engagement will be conducted in May to discuss service preferences, following outreach for the FY23 Durham Work Program. Aaron Cain said the public engagement efforts can be coordinated with the FY23 Durham Work Plan to avoid confusing the public. Jenny Green agreed and will further coordinate on this offline. Jenny Green said the main purpose of the bus plan outreach is to understand how travel patterns have changed as a result of the pandemic and then re-evaluate services and strategies. Jenny Green said most of the public engagement will be focused in Wake County

Jenny Green said the consultants are working on developing policy guidance on microtransit. The SWG will consider the best way to move forward with sharing this information with the group.

4. FY22 Financial Update (GoTriangle)

Steven Schlossberg provided an update on the FY23 Durham Transit Revenue Assumptions. Steven Schlossberg compared past revenues to the Federal Reserve trends. Steven Schlossberg reviewed the half-cent sales tax, the vehicle rental tax, and the vehicle registration fee. Steven Schlossberg shared the draft work plan revenues. There was a discussion of the fund balance.

5. FY23 Work Program Review of Projects

Aaron Cain said the requests are close to the projected revenues, although the project sheet for the third additional staff member for the City of Durham has not yet been added to the total. Aaron Cain said the goal today is to get approval to put the projects in the draft work program that can be reviewed and released for public comment in early April.

a. Adjusted projects

i. GoDurham Senior Shuttle (previously Food for Seniors Shuttle)

Aaron Cain noted the decrease from previous budget years.

ii. Fare Collection Improvements

Aaron Cain said the cost of this project was significantly reduced because GoDurham is not currently charging fares.

iii. Youth GoPass

Aaron Cain said the budget for this has dropped to \$0, although if fares are reinstated in FY24, it can be added to the work program through a budget amendment.

iv. GoDurham (Better) Bus Stop Improvements

There was a discussion on the desire to complete all bus stop improvements in the next few years. Hope to get all the bus stop improvements done in the next few years.

There was a discussion on why the Transportation Alternatives project for the City of Durham is not listed on the project sheet summary. Aaron Cain said this may have been a miscommunication and will follow up with Tom Devlin to correct this.

b. New projects

i. Transit Construction Manager (City of Durham)

ii. Transit Plan Planner/Engineer (City of Durham)

Sean Egan said there is another request for another Transit Plan Planner/Engineer at the same salary as listed for the previously submitted position. The project sheet for that position was not submitted in time to be added into the agenda for this

meeting. Ellen Beckmann said the Durham Board of County Commissioners requested more documentation and justification to back up the recommendation for these positions. Ellen Beckmann said the SWG should provide more reasoning and data. Aaron Cain said the SWG next month will vote to send out the FY23 work program for public comment, and during that time elected boards can request a presentation of the draft work program and provide comment. Aaron Cain noted that only the GoTriangle Board of Trustees votes to approve the work program.

There was a discussion on the best way to convey to the boards that in order to conduct transit plan related activities, the salaries for staff should be paid for out of the transit plan funds. Sean Egan confirmed that all three positions are not currently filled. Sean Egan said that the City of Durham is managing capital projects worth over \$30 million with funds from the Durham Transit Plan and staff is desperately needed to advance the projects. Otherwise, the projects will suffer, take longer to complete, and end up costing more over time. Meg Scully pointed out that these requests are for staff to get the work done that the County is requesting, and the staff will happen to be housed within the City and not the County.

There was consensus to add all three new positions into the draft work program while work is underway to produce justifications for the positions that can be presented to the Durham Board of County Commissioners. Aaron Cain mentioned that it is easy to remove a request from the work program. Ellen Beckmann asked if these positions are approved, would the City of Durham terminate their project management consultant contract. Sean Egan said the VHB project management contract will be phased out. There was agreement that local staff are better and more cost effective at managing local project implementation.

iii. Route 3X additional service (GoDurham)

Aaron Cain said this project, along with the North Durham Improvements, will require a plan amendment that will need to be approved by the MPO Board and the Durham Board of County Commissioners prior to going to the GoTriangle Board.

Sean Egan said this project is designed to address crowding issues along this high ridership route that has seen very strong ridership even during the pandemic.

iv. North Durham Improvements (GoDurham)

Sean Egan said this project consists of a series of changes to provide evening and weekend service along the Route 9 corridor and create a new cross-town route. Sean Egan said he hopes these changes can be implemented in January 2023 and acknowledged the need for more operators to make this happen.

v. Access to Transit – Mineral Springs (Durham County)

Ellen Beckmann said this request is for a one-time capital improvement to extend a sidewalk connecting the intersection to the bus stop as part of a larger NCDOT

project. Ellen Beckmann said this would require a municipal agreement with NCDOT and Durham County showing that the county will provide the funding for this portion of the sidewalk. Ellen Beckmann said it is unclear whether NCDOT will pay for this with the new complete streets update, so it should be included in the draft and can be removed later if NCDOT covers the costs. Sean Egan said the City of Durham fully supports this request

vi. Bus Speed and Reliability Improvements on NCDOT Corridors (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes said this project was intended to identify opportunities for bus speed and reliability improvements that could be constructed in tandem with NCDOT improvements on corridors. Jay Heikes said he will look into adding this to the US 15-501 corridor study to include this. Jay Heikes said GoTriangle is removing this request from consideration.

vii. Regional Fleet and Facilities Study Implementation – Nelson Road (GoTriangle)

Aaron Cain mentioned this project would not require a transit plan amendment.

viii. Regional Fleet and Facilities Study Implementation – Paratransit (GoTriangle)

Aaron Cain said the Orange SWG decided to not include this project and the previous project in their draft work plan, although they could be considered for a future amendment as more information is gathered from the transit plan. Jay Heikes said the bulk of the cost for this request is to acquire land for a new paratransit site. Jay Heikes reviewed the assumptions used to calculate the cost as detailed on the project sheet.

There was consensus to include this project and the regional fleet and facilities study implementation – Nelson Road in the draft FY23 work program.

ix. Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement (GoTriangle)

Steven Schlossberg explained the reasoning for spreading out the costs vehicle acquisition for GoTriangle to save money in the long run.

c. Potential Budget Changes

i. Holloway Street TEC (City of Durham)

Aaron Cain mentioned a past conversation with Tom Devlin that the TEC will not need all of the funding in FY23 that has been budgeted for FY23. Sean Egan said he is urging the consultant to provide a detailed cost estimate.

ii. Fayetteville Street TEC (City of Durham)

d. Schedule

6. Proposed Operating Cost Policy (Durham County)

Ellen Beckmann said the operating cost policy was intended to document the current processes for the purpose of clarity. Sandra Freeman mentioned that GoTriangle confirms the actual operating costs per hour each quarter after the reconciliation is complete and do not simply pay the budget for the whole year up front. Sandra Freeman said she will send out more information on the operating cost policy specifics for Durham. Ellen Beckmann said it is Durham County's priority to continue paying for the same components they have been paying for eight years.

7. Next Meeting – Tentatively Schedule for early April

8. Other Business

Sean Egan said the Durham Station Improvements are moving forward with the final design and it is expected to need \$1.8 million on FY23. There was a miscommunication on the transfers from existing project sheets, and the City of Durham will provide a project sheet for inclusion in the draft work program.

There was a discussion on how the GoTriangle positions are delineated on the summary sheet in the tax district administration and financial oversight support services. Sandra Freeman explained the rationale behind the support line and how the tasks are divided up at GoTriangle. Ellen Beckmann said all staff expenses should be included in the staff line, and Sandra Freeman said she prefers to break it up because there are many different components. There was a discussion on how to break up the staff position on the summary sheet. GoTriangle said they have discussed with legal and real estate staff the repercussions of the suspended Durham-Orange light rail project. It was decided that the legal and real estate line item will be adjusted.

Aaron Cain confirmed that an additional third staff position will be added to the draft work program along with the Durham Station project. Aaron Cain confirmed the Route 20 and the GoTriangle Bus Speed and Reliability Improvements on NCDOT Corridors will be removed. Aaron Cain said he will follow up with Tom Devlin to adjust the TEC amount and the Transportation Alternatives project for the City.

Aaron Cain the next SWG meeting agenda packet will include the full slate of projects, the draft work program, maps and narratives.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm.