

Durham Staff Working Group

January 25, 2023

MEETING NOTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in the Committee Room at City Hall, as well as through the Zoom teleconferencing platform. The following members and guests were in attendance:

Ellen Beckmann (Chair, Voting Member)	Durham County
Doug Plachcinski (Voting Member)	DCHC MPO
Jay Heikes (Voting Member)	GoTriangle
Andy Henry (Alternate)*	DCHC MPO
Kelly Fomenko	DCHC MPO
Filmon Fishastion	DCHC MPO
Sean Egan*	City of Durham
Bill Judge	City of Durham
Erin Convery*	City of Durham
Tom Devlin*	City of Durham
Brian Fahey*	City of Durham
Katie Urban*	GoTriangle
Steven Schlossberg	GoTriangle
Jenny Green*	GoTriangle
Meg Scully*	GoTriangle
Liz Raskopf*	GoTriangle
Paul Black*	GoTriangle
Courtney Wilson*	GoTriangle

Quorum Count: 3 of 3 Voting Members

*Attended remotely

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Ellen Beckmann called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. All voting members were acknowledged to be in attendance.

2. Approval of December 2022 Meeting Notes (MPO)

Chair Ellen Beckmann made a motion to accept the December 21, 2022 Durham Staff Working Group (SWG) Meeting Minutes. Jay Heikes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Plan Updates

a. Durham County Transit Plan (MPO)

Chair Ellen Beckmann provided the update for the Durham County Transit Plan. The plan was delayed to work out the issues of the Interlocal Agreement (ILA). Public comment period has been extended. Chair Ellen Beckman asked Filmon Fishastion if any public comments had been received. Filmon Fishastion responded that five have been received so far.

b. Transit Governance Study (Durham County)

Chair Ellen Beckman provided the update for the Transit Governance Study. Chair Ellen Beckman went over some of the things being worked on such as finalizing the ILA, SWG Bylaws, financial policies, and agreement template. The contract with Atkins has been extended. Durham County and the City of Durham agreed to extend the Interlocal Agreement contract.

c. Wake-Durham Bus Plan (GoTriangle)

Jenny Green provided the update for the Wake-Durham Bus Plan. The Wake portion of the Wake-Durham Bus Plan is moving forward with public engagement from February 20 through March 22. Jenny Green announced that there will not be an engagement effort for Durham County and instead hope to have a kickoff meeting by late February. The current plan is to work on these efforts till the end of the calendar year with the end result being a short range Transit Plan for both GoTriangle and GoDurham as well as the Durham Transit Service Standards.

d. Commuter Rail (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes provided the update for the Commuter Rail. The public engagement for feasibility report is active including an online survey at <https://www.readyforrailinc.com/>, popup events, and open houses. Two will be held in Durham. The first will be on January 30, 2023 from 5:30-7:30. The second will be at the St Joseph AME Church on February 8 from 5:30-7:30. Public Comment period ends 2/19. The report and appendices can be found at <https://www.readyforrailinc.com/>.

4. SWG Administrator Discussion (MPO)

Doug Plachcinski began the discussion of the SWG administrator. Doug Plachcinski stated that the MPO has submitted a revised project sheet that show staff resources being allocated to managing the SWG between an MPO planning manager and an MPO planner. There is a second project sheet that requests funding for the MPO participation on the SWG split between the director and the planning manager. Doug Plachcinski stated that the MPO would like to have a coordinated SWG approach from both counties and that Orange County has offered to take on those responsibilities. Chair

Ellen Beckmann asked if the MPO is still supporting the same number of FTE's from the UPWP. Doug Plachcinski clarified that the MPO is supporting the same program of work and that the staffing plan will not be increasing, but it is being proposed that the MPO bills the time spent on participation and coordination with the SWG. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if it will decrease the amount that the MPO would bill to the UPWP. Doug Plachcinski clarified that it would incorporate the staff resources into the work program.

Doug Plachcinski stated that the MPO has to present a way to cover the cost of participation that is fair and equitable since the MPO will no longer be with the City of Durham. Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that they would not be opposed to more funding for participation in things that are new or above and beyond the normal duties of the MPO, the BRT Study for example. Chair Ellen Beckmann then asked if positions and staff were funded through the UPWP to which Doug Plachcinski responded that staff time may have been inappropriately allocated.

Meg Scully asked for clarification on if the MPO will continue SWG admin duties. Doug Plachcinski responded that the MPO submitted a project sheet by request but realizes that this is a broader discussion. Meg Scully asked if there were conflicting project sheets. Doug Plachcinski stated that he submitted project sheets to both counties. Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that she did submit a project sheet for the SWG administrator and that Durham County is willing to take on the duties if the MPO does not want to. Doug Plachcinski added that both project sheets are proposing budgeted amounts with a block of hours and that the MPO would only expect to be reimbursed for hours that are documented and submitted to the Transit Plan. Doug Plachcinski and Chair Ellen Beckmann then discussed the MPO's use of the UPWP. Jay Heikes added that the MPO seems to be in a similar place as GoTriangle in the sense that they are entities of limited revenue availability and that right now with the current framework the MPO is limited by the categories of what is in the UPWP.

Meg Scully, Doug Plachcinski, and Chair Ellen Beckmann discussed funding regarding participation on the SWG. Chair Ellen Beckmann refocused the conversation back to the administrator duties and stated that Durham County would be willing to do it and that it will be officially endorsed with the start of the FY24 Work Program.

5. FY23 Work Plan Amendment – Electric Bus (City of Durham)

Tom Devlin provided the update for the Electric Bus Amendment. Six electric buses with range increasing battery packs were ordered in January 2021. Shortly after the City of Durham was notified by the Gilling that the battery manufacturer would be changing. The City decided to pause the order until the new batteries were in place. Several changes including an update to the APC system has increased the cost to \$1,033,000. This is over the budget and so the City of Durham is requesting to the SWG \$30,000 to be used for registration and the third-party inspections. Doug Plachcinski made a motion to approve the Amendment request. Seconded by Jay Heikes and passed

unanimously.

6. FY23 Work Plan Update – Project Sheets (MPO)

Chair Ellen Beckmann made a request to increase the amount for the transportation management by \$30,000 to account for increased work associated with developing and maintaining the Transit Tracker. Chair Ellen Beckmann confirmed that no action is needed until the recommendation at the next meeting. Steven Schlossberg made a request for a meeting to discuss any questions pertaining to the project sheets. Elisabeth Raskopf added in that the public engagement dates has not been set and that the process to review the project sheets should not be rushed based off of the next meeting. Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that the group was behind schedule and that the Work Plan should be released for public comment within next month. Chair Ellen Beckmann and Elisabeth Raskopf then discussed a schedule of when items will go out for comment and when it will go to the BOCC. It was concluded that the public comment period should begin the week after the meeting and that Elisabeth Raskopf would get in contact with Filmon Fishastion and Kelly Fomenko to go over any needs. Chair Ellen Beckmann encouraged others to discuss any questions prior to the next meeting.

7. Next Meeting – February 15

Chair Ellen announced that the next meeting will be scheduled for March 15, 2023.

8. Adjournment

With no further business before the Durham SWG, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.