

Durham Staff Working Group

February 15, 2023

MEETING NOTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Wednesday, February 15, 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
Kelly Fomenko	DCHC MPO
Filmon Fishastion	DCHC MPO
Sean Egan*	City of Durham
Bill Judge	City of Durham
Tom Devlin*	City of Durham
Brian Fahey*	City of Durham
Katie Urban*	GoTriangle
Steven Schlossberg	GoTriangle
Saundra Freeman	GoTriangle
Jenny Green*	GoTriangle
Meg Scully*	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 January 2023 Meeting Notes (MPO)

Doug Plachcinski made a motion to postpone the approval of the January 25 Durham Staff Working Group (SWG) Meeting Minutes. Chair Ellen Beckmann 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 is still out for public comment and is set to be reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners in March.

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 moved forward with public engagement on Monday the 20th and so now efforts are being focused on the Durham Bus Plan. A kickoff meeting for the Durham Bus Plan is being planned for early March.

d. Commuter Rail (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes provided the update for the Commuter Rail. Jay Heikes stated that the feasibility study and survey will be out for public comment through Sunday, February 19. From the feedback the Triangle Board will develop a recommendation that incorporates the public engagement and begin working with other Boards that are a part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Commuter Rail to reach a decision and move forward.

4. SWG Administrator Transition (MPO)

Doug Plachcinski provided the update for the Staff Working Group Transition discussion. Doug Plachcinski stated that he and Nishith Trivedi have held discussions to set the responsibilities of the role and that once a revised list is set it will be presented to Chair Ellen Beckmann for review. Chair Ellen Beckmann added in that a memo to the Governing Boards should also be included since the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) states that the workplan, which includes the SWG Transition, must be approved by the three Governing Boards to which Doug Plachcinski agreed.

5. FY24 Work Program Review of Projects (MPO)

Chair Ellen Beckmann began the discussion by going through the list of revised requests and new requests as outlined in the agenda beginning with the item Tax District Administration – Financial Oversight Staff. With this item the discussion revolved around GoTriangle’s request to add 0.25 FTE to the current allocation of 0.75 FTE. Sandra Freeman brought up that this item was also brought up last year and although it was approved by the Staff Working Group, it was not approved by the County

Commissioners. Sandra Freeman asked for clarification on what the concern was. Chair Ellen Beckmann explained that the amount that Durham County paid in funding for the Tax District Administration was comparable to what Wake County paid, but agrees that there should be a larger difference considering the additional projects and more complex processes that occurs in Wake County.

The next item discussed was the Durham County Transit Plan Management. Jay Heikes asked for clarification on the responsibilities split between the Staff Working Group Administrator and the Transportation Planners. Chair Ellen Beckmann gave a breakdown of the anticipated hires along with the source of their FTE's. Doug Plachcinski suggested consolidating all FTEs into one table to help review them. Steven Schlossberg mentioned that Wake County has done something similar. Meg Scully asked for clarification on the distinction of the SWG Administrator duties and what the Economic Development position was. Doug Plachcinski is currently working with Nishith Trivedi on constructing a list of SWG Administrator duties. Sandra Freeman asked for clarification on who on the County side is being charged with the Transit Plan to which Chair Ellen Beckmann responded that she was. The group also discussed how to do things differently when it comes to reporting to make it easier for everyone in the group to understand any issues better. The discussion then moved on to the duties of the Staff Working Group Administrator and what changes to those duties might be moving to Durham County. In addition to this the matter of the supplantation of the MPO's funding source was discussed. In this discussion it was agreed upon that some guidance should be set up to govern how to allocate time that can be billed to the Transit Plan.

The next agenda item discussed was the Transit Plan Administration – Project Implementation Staff. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if the two additional FTE requests from GoTriangle would be taking the place of what the City of Durham has been providing. Meg Scully answered that the City of Durham has stopped funding certain capital delivery associated with things like participatory budget process, third party review, and developmental review. Chair Ellen Beckmann expressed that they didn't want to see a reduction in City of Durham efforts towards GoTriangle projects that are funded through the Transit Plan. Sean Egan was able to speak of their level of involvement. Sean Egan said that the City of Durham is taking on the responsibility of working on bus stop improvements.

Moving along to the next item, Chair Ellen Beckmann made comments on the Increased Cost of Existing Services (ICES) and several of the GoDurham service improvements. It was agreed that although it was helpful to have the services that do not have a dollar amount for FY24 on the agenda, they should be removed prior to public release. Steven Schlossberg asked a question regarding the two TECs about whether he will need to take action to model costs past FY24. Sean Egan responded that once funding is authorized in FY24 for those projects then that's the limit of available funding from this source.

The group then discussed other changes to the project list to be made prior to

release for public comment.

6. Recommendation to Release for Public Comment (MPO)

Jay Heikes made the motion to release the plan with the changes discussed. The motion was seconded by Doug Plachcinski and passed unanimously.

7. Next Meeting – February 15

Chair Ellen Beckmann announced that the next meeting will be on February 15.

8. Adjournment

With no further business before the Durham SWG, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.