

Durham Staff Working Group
April 19, 2023
MEETING NOTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Wednesday, April 19, 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 (Alternate)	DCHC MPO
Filmon Fishastion	DCHC MPO
Colleen McGue*	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 3:00 p.m. All voting members were acknowledged to be in attendance. It was noted and discussed that although it was approved for the City of Durham to have a voting seat on the SWG, the action has yet to be executed.

2. Approval of February 2023 Meeting Notes (MPO)

Jay Heikes made a motion to approve the February SWG Minutes. Kelly Fomenko 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. Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that Kimley Horn is finalizing the final document and that Chair Ellen Beckmann will be bringing it to the May 1st Durham County Commissioners meeting. On May 8, the Plan will be going through a public hearing and on May 22 it will go to the Commissioners for approval. The Transit Plan will also go to the GoTriangle Board in May and the DCHC MPO Board in June.

b. Transit Governance Study (Durham County)

Chair Ellen Beckmann provided the update for the Transit Governance Study. The Interlocal Agreement (ILA) has been approved and associated documents such as the CPA, Staff Bylaws, financial policies, and amendment policy procedures are being worked on. The documents will be brought to the SWG in May and on to the Governing Boards after that.

c. Wake-Durham Bus Plan (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes provided the update for the Wake-Durham Bus Plan. On the Wake side public engagement is wrapping up and a Final Bus Plan will be forthcoming. Jay Heikes made a note of a distinction between Durham and Wake County that for any services that are cross county, they will be treated as concepts and further evaluated. The scheduled adoption of the Wake-Durham Bus Plan is for August of this year. Jay Heikes stated that the Short-Range Transit Plan for both Wake and Durham has begun. The first phase of public engagement will begin in June and will be focused on route and service changes. In September the feedback will be used to recommend changes with hopes of having the Plan ready for adoption by the end of 2023.

d. Commuter Rail (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes provided the update for the Commuter Rail. Jay Heikes spoke of the Joint Subcommittee meeting that occurred on March 23rd to determine what the initial project and cost split for the project might be. Jay Heikes also mentioned an upcoming Joint Subcommittee meeting that will be scheduled in early May. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if the DCHC Subcommittee will be meeting before the joint meeting. Doug Plachcinski responded that they would like to. Doug Plachcinski also asked for more information on the process of a project being approved and brought to the Durham County Commissioners. Chair Ellen Beckmann answered that the ILA states that the cost share agreement and annual work program must be approved by the Durham Commissioners. To have an effective discussion at the meeting, Doug Plachcinski asked if it was known what project Durham County would prefer. Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that there have been discussions, but not a final Board approved response; it would be helpful to map out the decision so that a framework can be made. Chair Ellen Beckmann then articulated the upcoming process where after the cost share has been established and approved, a work plan amendment for the cost share amount will be brought to the SWG to begin funding project development. The approval process for it begins in the SWG then moves to the Durham Commissioners followed by the GoTriangle Board. Doug Plachcinski noted that ultimately, the decision comes down to the Durham County Commissioners.

It was then further refined in the discussion the roles of the MPO and GoTriangle. Jay Heikes provided an example of a way GoTriangle will support the DCHC: the project team will provide the technical information needed in addition to the grant funding strategy should the plan move forward with a phased approach.

4. Transit Staffing and Reorganization (City of Durham)

Sean Egan started the discussion by explaining the memo that was sent out to the SWG. In the memo there are several, but not all, examples of efforts from the City of Durham to support the Durham County Transit Plan. The group then centered the discussion around the Capital Development staff at GoTriangle. After some discussion Sean Egan offered to highlight some other roles that are being dedicated to project delivery to clarify the FTE increase.

5. SWG Administration Transition (MPO)

Doug Plachcinski stated that he and Nishith Trivedi are further refining the documentation outlining the transition. Chair Ellen Beckmann reminded the group that the ILA states that the designation will have to be approved by the three governing boards. Chair Ellen Beckmann also introduced Brandi Minor to the group, the Senior Administrative Officer for Durham County.

6. FY24 Work Program Review of Public Comments (MPO)

Filmon Fishastion went over the compilation of comments from the Public Feedback period that were posted in the agenda packet. There were no comments on the Public Comments.

7. FY22 Durham Actual Carryover Reauthorization (GoTriangle)

Steven Schlossberg began the informational item the Durham Actual Carryover Reauthorization by providing some background information on the process for transparency's sake. For FY22 the estimate was \$30,151,260 and the actual was \$28,104,077. There were no questions on the Actual Carryover Reauthorization.

8. FY23 Q4 Amendments

a. Amendment for GoDurham Connect (GoTriangle)

Meg Scully provided the overview of the GoDurham Connect item and explained that due to a drastic increase in ridership in the North Durham zone the budget was expended in mid-March. GoTriangle and the City of Durham recommended transferring the funds from FY23 project 23DCITS3 to the Microtransit project. Chair Ellen Beckmann agreed with the recommendation and added that the program rules should be evaluated. Chair Ellen Beckmann also asked for more details on the ridership cost to date including the period after the budget had been exhausted. Meg Scully pointed out that the memo cannot be updated daily and that the numbers are accurate per the date of the memo. After some discussion Meg Scully suggested adding a note at the bottom of the memo beside the budget impact stating that unused expenses will revert to fund balance. Jay Heikes stated that adding more context to the memo would be helpful in explaining an increase in budget by ten times that isn't also done the following year.

b. Amendment for Patterson Place (GoTriangle)

Jay Heikes provided the overview of the amendment for Patterson Place and announced that the total amended FY23 budget request is \$463,426. The increase would address construction cost escalation, property acquisition, and property owner coordination.

c. Amendment for the I.C.E.S Calculation (GoTriangle)

Steven Schlossberg began the item for the Increased Cost of Existing Services. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked if procedures from the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) would be followed to which Steven Schlossberg replied that although the ILA has been approved, it has yet to be executed. Doug Plachcinski added that Board actions are legally binding meaning the ILA is in effect even if there is a document that hasn't been executed. Chair Ellen Beckmann clarified that it has been executed by Durham County. The group agreed to work to set a schedule for amendments in the FY24-25 workplan development.

Steven Schlossberg explained that a memo will be written to the GoTriangle Board explaining that four amendments have been submitted along with their financial implications.

d. Amendment for GoDurham Repower (City of Durham)

Sean Egan explained that the amendment was to repower 6 buses purchased for expansion of GoDurham services. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked for affirmation that these costs are modeled in the financial model. Steven Schlossberg confirmed that the model is what Sean Egan has said and put in a word of caution that the costs go up over time.

There was a motion to approve all four amendments by Jay Heikes. The motion was seconded by Kelly Fomenko and passed unanimously.

9. FY24 Transit Plan Project Updates (GoTriangle)

a. New Regional Transit Facility

Jay Heikes provided the overview for this item. The request is to delay the construction of the Regional Transit Facility by a year to align with the anticipated project schedule.

b. Regional Fleet and Facilities Study

Jay Heikes provided the overview for this item. A cost share with Wake County and Orange County was set at 55% for Wake County, 15% for Orange County, and the remaining 30% to be requested from Durham County. These are based on revenue hours split among the Transit Plans. Jay Heikes also stated that federal grants were not to be assumed, although GoTriangle will be applying for some federal grants. Chair Ellen Beckmann asked how the cost share was created to which Jay Heikes responded that guidance from the ILA was used.

10. Discussion of Future FY24 Workplan Amendment – Low-Income Fare Program (GoTriangle)

Meg Scully provided information about the Low-Income Fare Program. The planned pilot program aims to help those affected by the return of fares to bus services to continue to utilize transit services. It was

asked what funding was being anticipated to which Meg Scully responded that it was too soon due to details of the program not being set yet.

11. Recommendation of Final Work Plan (MPO)

Filmon Fishastion opened the floor for any comments prior to recommending the Work Plan. Sean Egan made note of some revisions to the memo that were made including the reduction of 0.5 FTE for staffing needs.

Jay Heikes made a motion to approve the Final Work Plan. The motion was seconded by Kelly Fomenko and opposed by Chair Ellen Beckmann. The motion passed.

12. Next Meeting – May 17

Chair Ellen Beckmann stated that the next SWG meeting will be held on May 17 in the Committee Room of City Hall.

13. Adjournment

With no further items to discuss the SWG meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.