

Durham Staff Working Group
February 19, 2025
MEETING NOTES

The Durham Staff Working Group met on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 1:00pm through the Microsoft Teams platform due to the inclement weather. The following members and guests were in attendance:

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| Doug Plachcinski (Chair, Voting Member) | Triangle West TPO |
| Ellen Beckmann (Vice-Chair, Voting Member) | Durham County |
| Jenny Green (Voting Member) | City of Durham |
| Jay Heikes (Voting Member) | GoTriangle |
| Brandi Minor | Durham County |
| Brooke Roper | Durham County |
| Curtis Scarpignato | Durham County |
| Sean Egan | City of Durham |
| Brian Fahey | City of Durham |
| Bharat Mehta | City of Durham |
| Evian Patterson | City of Durham |
| Eric Simpson | City of Durham |
| Paul Black | GoTriangle |
| Paul Kingman | GoTriangle |
| Steven Schlossberg | GoTriangle |
| Meg Scully | GoTriangle |

Quorum Count: 4 of 4 Voting Members

**Alternate voting member

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Doug Plachcinski called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. All voting members were acknowledged to be in attendance.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Jenny Green asked if the Project Sponsor updates could be moved to the beginning of the agenda. Doug Plachcinski approved this request.

3. Public Comment

Chair Doug Plachcinski asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

4. Administration

a. SWG Administration

i. Approval of January 2025 Minutes

Jenny Green made a motion to approve the SWG January 2025 Meeting Minutes. Doug Plachcinski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Tax District Administration

i. Updated Financial Modeling Results

Steven Schlossberg stated there were no major updates from the Tax District. point but he will provide a financial update for the second quarter at next month's meeting.

c. Public Engagement and Communication

i. Draft FY26 Work Program

Brandi Minor stated that there were three tabling sessions held over the past three weeks. The last session was held yesterday. Brandi also thanked the GoTriangle staff for their assistance and stated that she feels this engagement period was an improvement over last year's engagement. Brandi mentioned that they are still collecting surveys from the GoForward website, and the public comment period will close on February 21st and upon closing of the public engagement period, the comments will be summarized and shared with the SWG.

ii. Transit Tracker Updates

Curtis Scarpignato stated that he has been working on finalizing the transit tracker and if anyone has any outstanding metrics to send them by February 25th. Meg Scully stated that she would prefer to maintain a focus on the data directly related to each individual project and avoid including broader system-wide metrics. Curtis responded to clarify that the intent with the tracker is not to create additional work that does not have any relevance to tracking the progress of projects, but to demonstrate what we're accomplishing with the transit plan. Curtis also mentioned that he would be happy to discuss this further outside of the SWG meeting. Doug Plachcinski stated that in the end, the transparency and accountability is only as good as what the partners are able to effectively contribute to it and that we want to make that effort as efficient and as seamless as possible.

5. Work Program

a. FY25 Work Program

i. FY25 Q4 Amendments

Brandi Minor stated the last FY25 amendment cycle is approaching and any Q4 amendments will be due February 28th. Brandi then reminded the SWG that a memo and amendment form will need to be submitted to her for review, and that the amendments will be shared and voted to be released for public comment at the next SWG meeting. Brandi also stated that the public comment period will open on March 20th, run for 21 days and close on April 10th. Afterwards, the amendments will be voted on to be released for approval by the governing boards in April. GoTriangle acknowledged they would have an amendment for the TAP (Transit Assistance Program) and possibly others. The City of Durham, Durham County, and MPO did not indicate any forthcoming amendments.

b. FY26 Work Program

i. BOCC Presentation Overview

Brandi Minor stated that she presented the Work Program to the Board of County Commissioners on February 3rd, and overall, the presentation was well received. The Commissioners raised questions and concerns, particularly about how we are progressing with the projects identified in the current work program. Brandi stated that this is one of the main reasons we are prioritizing getting the Transit Tracker ready so we can show the Board clear progress on the currently funded projects.

Brandi also stated that there were some concerns raised about the City's capital projects, specifically as it relates to the memo that was attached to the presentation outlining those concerns. Brandi reiterated the importance of addressing these concerns so the SWG may reach a consensus on how to move forward with those projects before our next meeting.

ii. Next Steps for Finalizing the Work Program

Brandi Minor provided an overview of the next steps to finalizing the Work Program. Brandi stated that all project sponsors should review their project sheets and ensure the project schedules are up to date. If there have been any project delays, the schedules should be updated accordingly to reflect the revised timelines. This will be crucial in ensuring the final work program is accurate and reflective of the current status of each project.

For the implementation metrics, Brandi stated that these will be crucial for populating the transit tracker. She also mentioned that Curtis will follow up with everyone after this meeting to ensure that everything has been submitted, as we are aiming to have the Transit Tracker ready for Commissioner review in April.

Brandi stated that if you are planning to make any budget changes (increases, decreases, or removals) from what was presented in the draft Work Program, to notify her by next Tuesday. Brandi indicated that she does not need the revised project sheet at this time but does need to know about the budget changes so we can update the project sheets and inform the Tax District since any budget changes will have an impact on the financial model, and we need to ensure that Steve has time to rerun the financial model.

Brandi stated that the project closeout list will be finalized soon, and that she will follow up with each sponsor to finalize which projects need to be closed out by June 30th, 2025. Brandi also stated that the goal is to ensure that everything is closed out properly this year, as we encountered some issues with projects not being closed out properly in last year's Work Program.

Doug Plachcinski made a comment regarding his vote at the January SWG meeting. After reflecting on the discussion and feedback, Doug stated that he realized he could have communicated more clearly regarding the intent of the SWG recommendation. It was always the understanding that the draft Work Program was still a work in progress and that there would be continued

refinement and adjustments throughout the public review process. His hope was to resolve any outstanding questions and add new information as we moved forward, before ultimately presenting the final Work Program for approval by the BOCC.

Doug also clarified that his vote was intended to keep the process moving forward while acknowledging the uncertainties that remain, and that he hoped to work through these issues in the coming weeks with the help of the project sponsors and Staff Working Group Administrator.

Meg Scully stated that it is important to note the distinction between the project sponsors and the beneficiaries of the projects. For example, with the Bus Stop Improvement Program, while GoTriangle manages and oversees the project, a significant portion of the improvements benefit Durham County as a whole, much of which doesn't even serve GoTriangle's own routes. Brandi Minor replied and recalled that this issue was brought up last year and was addressed in the narrative section of the Work Program. Brandi also indicated that it is important to maintain clarity around how expenditures are allocated among agencies but agrees that they can work collaboratively to incorporate this feedback into the final Work Program. Ellen Beckmann stated that the Transit Tracker will be able to help clarify this, as it will have a mapping component to show the location of these improvements.

Brandi also reminded the SWG that the exhibits are all on SharePoint and that we will need to add cost shares to the applicable exhibits, so it is clear how the projects are being split. Brandi stated that she would be willing to have a separate meeting to discuss this ahead of the finalization of the Work Program.

Jenny Green asked about the pie chart and how it was created. Ellen Beckmann stated that she reviewed the projects in the MYOP and CIP and categorized them according to where they aligned best. The Operations and Maintenance category increased mainly due to TAP and the Low-Income Fare Program. Ellen also stated that another factor affecting funding allocation is the expansion of routes. For example, instead of creating a new Route 14, we extended existing routes, which shifted some funding between categories. Lastly, Ellen stated that she would be willing to share this breakdown with the SWG and if there are any thoughts or feedback on whether projects were categorized appropriately to let her know. Jenny asked if we could include this information in the final Work Program. Brandi Minor replied that we could possibly include a table in the appendix to display this information and that in next year's Work Program, there may be an option to include this on the exhibit (project sheet).

iii. Review Schedule and any upcoming tasks for next month

Brandi Minor reviewed the schedule and upcoming deadlines.

- Q4 Amendments: These are due by February 28th.
- Financial Subcommittee Meeting: This will now take place in March due to the budget season at Durham County. Brandi will finalize the date once she coordinates with all parties involved (County staff, GoTriangle, and Tax District) and let you know.

- Draft Work Program: The Draft Work Program will be shared with the GoTriangle Audit and Finance Committee in March. It will also be presented to the TPO.
- Public Comment Period: The Q4 Amendment public comment period will open next month for 21 days (March 20 – April 10).
- Staff Working Group Meeting: We'll have our next meeting on March 19th, where we will vote to release the final work program to the governing boards for approval. Assuming everything goes smoothly, Brandi will seek approval from the BOCC in April and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees in June.

6. Discussion Items

- i. **Funding Eligibility Rules for Capital Projects**
- ii. **Required Project Sponsor Contributions for Operating/Capital Projects**

Doug Plachcinski initiated a discussion regarding the future of capital projects and the role of the Transit Plan in funding these projects. Doug acknowledged that we know that project costs fluctuate throughout development, from initial concepts to the construction phase, but that it is essential we find ways to bring more certainty into the process and establish clear guidelines about what is and isn't eligible for funding, especially with capital projects. Specifically, we want to ensure that project sponsors have clear commitments for participation in these projects and to understand what that means for the overall funding landscape. The BOCC seemed interested in seeing the full picture of the transportation investments across the region and the overall contributions from project sponsors. Unlike many other regions, we have a perpetual half-cent sales tax. This is a unique opportunity for us to think creatively about funding and how we can leverage this model in ways that benefit the entire Triangle region. Given the complexity of these topics, Doug suggested we schedule a separate meeting outside of the Staff Working Group to explore these ideas in more depth. Jenny Green thanked Doug for his leadership and support for this discussion and reiterated that it is crucial that we view these projects in a broader context, not just focusing on transit investments but also the larger regional effort. Jenny stated that having the full picture of what's being done in transit helps everyone understand the bigger impact we're making.

7. Project Sponsor Updates

a. City of Durham

Jenny Green provided the following updates:

- **Fare policy**
 - o The budget discussion on Feb 28th will be available for viewing on YouTube. The proposal will be to increase the base GoDurham fare structure to \$2. This is expected to generate \$4.8 million. We have an \$8 million structural deficit that the City Council needs to address. We also have a proposal to discontinue the zero-emissions bus program, which will save \$3 million per year for the next 10 years on average. The presentation will give a comparison of peer agencies.

- The fare policy proposal does not include service reductions because we'd have to cut 25% of service before the City funded service would see an effect.
- **Service changes**
 - GoDurham service changes are scheduled for late spring/early Summer to routes 3, 3B, 5, 8, 12, and 13. We are planning for a 7% increase in service. We are collecting comments through the end of February by riding routes and tabling at Durham Station.
- **Senior Shuttle**
 - The City of Durham is talking with riders and partners about the senior shuttle. We are reviewing ridership and investigating adjusting apartment complexes that we serve. We will bring an update to a future meeting.

Brian Fahey provided the following updates:

- **GoDurham Updates:**
 - Over 4 million trips this FY through January 31, 400k more trips than the same period in FY24.
- **GoDurham ACCESS Updates:**
 - Since implementing recommendations from the Paratransit Improvement Study (including new reservations/scheduling system), the results have been very positive.
 - OTP Pick up 95% (2 yr average prior to improvements – 85%)
 - OTP Dropoff 91% (2 yr average prior to improvements – 81%)
 - Customer Reviews 97% of 1389 trip reviews in rider app were positive
 - No-Shows 2.30% (2 yr average prior to improvements – 6.07%)
 - Average Trip Time 27 min (2 yr average prior to improvements – 33 min)
 - Already over 10% of bookings coming from the new app
- **Microtransit Updates:**
 - The microtransit service has provided approximately 400 trips since beginning in October.
 - Little marketing/outreach, but have increased efforts recently
 - Promising statistic, 19% of the trips have occurred between Feb 1 – 18
 - Exploring opportunities to expand zones into additional areas
 - 71% of all trips are pooled/co-mingled with other trips (ADA, County-Funded, etc.)
 - 82% of all trips have the origin or destination w/in the fixed route area (note: riders cannot book a trip where the origin and destination are both in the fixed route area)
 - Customer satisfaction score is 100% (no negative reviews) from the 20% of riders that reviewed their trip

Eric Simpson provided the following updates:

- **Better Bus Project:** 30% plans transmitted to stakeholders, comments due by February 27th. Quarterly Update meeting, SWG invited, on March 5 at Fay Street. Plans have been submitted to the NCDOT Review Portal. Met with NCCU staff and invited them to comment on the plans. Interactive website to collect feedback:

- **Junction Road Transit Access 20DCICD2**
 - 02/19/25 - 30 percent plans are out for review by stakeholders and staff. Cost Estimates are under review and being checked by a third-party consultant. Results will be shared with the members of the Staff Working Group before the March 5th Better Bus Project quarterly update meeting.
- **Durham Station Improvements 23DCICD02**
 - 02/19/25 – Pre-construction meeting held with the Contractor. The contractor is breaking ground in late March 2025.
- **GoDurham Bus Maintenance Facility (Paratransit) 25DCICD25**
 - 02/19/25 - Site selection for new facility finalized and property acquired by the City of Durham, using City funds. Preliminary architectural planning is the next step before Architectural Design and Construction documents.
- **GoDurham Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility (Fay Street) 25DCICD26**
 - 02/19/25 – The City is preparing to install chargers for new vehicles arriving in 2025.
- **Horton Road Transit Access 26DCICD13**
 - 02/19/25 - Construction drawings at 99%. Real Estate negotiations are underway for four properties. Anticipating bidding Summer to Fall 2025 should right-of-way proceed normally.
- **The Village Mobility Hub 26DCICD14**
 - 02/19/25 - Draft concept graphics for the mobility hub will be presented to stakeholders before the next March quarterly update meeting. Flexibility for Bus Rapid Transit is included with the report. The next steps are to finalize site selection and finalize the NEPA documents; then the project can move into a series of stepped phases: real estate acquisition, planning, design and permitting, and finally construction.
- **Holloway Street TEC 18DCICD1**
 - 02/19/25 – 30 percent plans are out for review by stakeholders and staff. Cost Estimates are under review and being checked by a third-party consultant. Results will be shared with the members of the Staff Working Group before the March 5th Better Bus Project quarterly update meeting.
- **Fayetteville Street TEC 18DCICD2**
 - 02/19/25 - 30 percent plans are out for review by stakeholders and staff. Cost Estimates are under review and being checked by a third-party consultant. Results will be shared with the members of the Staff Working Group before the March 5th Better Bus Project quarterly update meeting.

b. GoTriangle

Jay Heikes provided the following updates:

- Service Changes - on the service side, there are service changes launching in a few weeks on Sunday, March 9th which may be found on [Service Changes | GoTriangle](#).

- Route 700 - there is operational change that should improve some on-time performance issues on Route 700.
- Route 800 will now be all day, Monday through Saturday, every 30 minutes, hourly. On Sundays it will operate consistent service along the 54 corridor from Southpoint past the transfer point with GoDurham at Hwy 55 and Hwy 54 and serve emerging destinations at Boxyard RTP Hub RTP. This will provide a consistent route across southern Durham and will be complementary to changes the City is making in May to those routes.
- Route 805 will become a shuttle between Southpoint, Woodcroft and UNC. In making these changes, we've identified that we're able to operate the 805 every 30 minutes throughout the day on weekdays.
- Route 310 will go to every 30-minute service on weekdays. This is relevant to Durham residents, visitors, and employees who are connecting through the Regional Transit Center.
- Route 400 will be our first 15-minute frequent regional route connecting Durham Station, Duke through Patterson Place down to UNC and the Town of Chapel Hill.
- RUSS Bus will have a grand opening ceremony on July 25th and service changes will follow afterwards.
- The Triangle Mobility Hub is in the second stage of the selection process, and we have three qualified firms.
- BOMF we recently completed and selected a firm for design services for that facility and anticipate releasing a contract for CMAR in the coming months.
- Electric charging infrastructure will be purchased for our buses. Three new chargers with six new charge positions will also be installed in the coming months.

c. Durham County

Ellen Beckmann stated that she thinks the RFP for the Eastern Railroad Crossing Study will likely be released in early March. For the BRT study, they are in discussions with Kimley-Horn and are finalizing the contract. They have proposed a change to the public engagement sub-consultant and approach, so they are waiting to receive more information from them regarding this matter. Lastly, Ellen stated that she is going to meet with the Museum of Life and Science to work out how we do service to the museum.

d. Triangle West TPO

Doug Plachcinski stated that they received notification that the Federal Transit Administration has requested grantees to take certain steps by March 4th for some outstanding grant commitments, mostly through federal formula funding grants. They have amended their board agenda for next week to bypass certain steps in their

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment process to make sure they can meet the March 4th deadline and allow their partners enough time to complete the request at the guidance of the Federal Transit Administration.

8. Next Meeting Date – March 19, 2025

Brandi Minor announced the next Durham County SWG meeting will be on Wednesday, March 19, 2025.

9. Adjournment

With no further items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.