

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, March 9, 2020

5:30 P.M. Special Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, Second Floor, Durham County Government
Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina

Present: Chair Wendy Jacobs, Vice-Chair James Hill and Commissioners Heidi Carter,
Brenda Howerton and Ellen Reckhow

Presider: Chair Wendy Jacobs

Discussion Item

**Memorandum of Understanding in Support of Continued Development of the Greater
Triangle Commuter Rail Project**

Chair Jacobs introduced Shelly Blake Curran, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of GoTriangle; Katharine Eggleston, Chief Development Officer of GoTriangle and Aaron Cain, City-County Planning Manager. Ms. Curran thanked the Board for inviting GoTriangle to present at the Special Session meeting. She added GoTriangle was asking for the Board to adopt the resolution at the Regular Session meeting authorizing the Chair of the Board and the County Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the support of continued development of the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail (GTCR) project.

Ms. Eggleston shared a presentation titled "*Commuter Rail Update*" which highlighted the following: Map Highlighting Major Regional Transit Investments, Map Of Proposed Commuter Rail Including In The Current Wake and Durham County Plans and Existing North Carolina Railroad Company Corridor Where Extensions Could Go, Study Findings, Additional Study, Focus On Risk Management, Coordination With Others, Next Phase of Study: Key Focus Areas, Critical Next Steps, Current Fiscal Year 2020 Work Plan and Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Work Plan.

The Board asked for a summary of the MOU. Ms. Eggleston stated two high-level studies were conducted on a potential GTCR project indicating the feasibility of the project and its potential eligibility for federal funding. She added for the project to proceed, additional work was required to further define the project which included engaging community members, municipalities, and institutional partners; better understanding key project risks; and building a consensus among and seeking formal endorsements from funding partners, municipalities, railroads, and institutional partners. Ms. Eggleston explained GoTriangle recommended approximately 18 months of

additional study to address items and prepare the project for a subsequent decision on whether to pursue project design and implementation, in addition to initiating the Federal Starts Process.

The Board expressed concern for the Northern Durham County residents being excluded from the rail project. Ms. Eggleston stated the project included areas in Durham along the North Carolina Railroad Company Corridor. The Board asked why the City of Durham was not included as an official MOU signature holder with the rail project. Ms. Eggleston responded the rail project was at the stage to only include project management partners that had a reasonability for elements that spanned the project. She added the next phase would engage the City and other partners that had jurisdiction over certain elements and individual partners on the corridor. Ms. Eggleston continued to say GoTriangle hired a stakeholder consultant to do a study in the community but had not received the results.

The Board inquired about the number of additional train tracks needed for the rail project. Ms. Eggleston responded one additional parallel track through the corridor would be needed. The Board inquired if the rail project could include Park-and-Ride lots that incorporated mixed-use development with affordable housing. Ms. Eggleston stated the project was evaluating metrics and benefits to included economic impact assessments. The Board recommended expanding bus routes, shared vehicle options, bike lanes and sidewalks.

The Board asked if the County Transit Plan would be updated before the end of the study with the project spending allocated transit tax funds. Mr. Cain responded he was anticipating a draft County Transit Plan for the Board to review by January 2021. He added the goal was to update the County Transit Plan every four years.

FY20 Durham Transit Tax Annual Work Plan Amendment – Next Phase of GTCR Study

Aaron Cain, City-County Planning Manager explained the amendment was requesting an additional Fiscal Year 2020 funding of \$2,235,000 from the Durham Transit Tax fund. The Board had no questions.

Adjournment

Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow to adjourn the Special Session meeting at 6:47 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Macio Carlton
Deputy Clerk to the Board