

# Durham Staff Working Group

## Meeting Notes

May 12, 2022

### 1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Durham County – Chair Ellen Beckmann  
GoTriangle – Jay Heikes and Meg Scully  
DCHC MPO – Mariel Klein

### 2. Approval of April 2022 Meeting Notes (MPO)

Motion by Jay Heikes to approve the April meeting notes, second by Mariel Klein. Motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Plan Updates

#### a. Durham County Transit Plan (MPO)

Aaron Cain said there was meeting on May 10 to review outreach materials for the preferred scenario for public engagement scheduled to begin next month. Aaron Cain said work with Kimley Horn is ongoing and he would like to coordinate with GoTriangle on public engagement. Ellen Beckmann said there are many final materials to be produced, but is hopeful that outreach will occur in June.

#### b. Transit Governance Study (Durham County)

Ellen Beckmann said the consultant is presenting the governance study recommendations and results of staff workshops to Boards this month. Ellen Beckmann said there was a productive discussion at the MPO Board meeting on May 11 that will spark further discussions with the City of Durham and Durham County. Ellen Beckmann said the overall goal is to bring forward a transit plan and Interlocal Agreement (ILA) that is unanimously approved. There was a discussion on how to schedule the City/County meetings in a timely manner. Sandra Freeman said GoTriangle has an Operating & Finance (O&F) committee meeting on June 2.

Evian Patterson said City of Durham (COD) staff are pushing elected officials to make a decision by the May 26 SWG meeting, but these are significant issues of concern to the City, and more time may be needed to further discuss certain issues. Evian Patterson said the COD staff will do the best they can to move the work program forward on time.

Aaron Cain said the original goal was to have final approval of the work program by the SWG on May 26 in order to provide a document for GoTriangle to include at their June 2 O&F meeting. Sandra Freeman said ultimately they will follow whatever direction the

GoTriangle Board decides. Ellen Beckmann pointed out that there can be amendments to the budget throughout the year. Evian Patterson said the COD wants to move the work program forward as it is currently drafted.

**c. Wake-Durham Bus Plan (GoTriangle)**

Jenny Green said public engagement is underway on the Wake Bus Plan and regional service concepts for GoTriangle, and coordination will continue with the Durham side as well. Jenny Green summarized the upcoming schedule for the bus plan, which includes FY24 projects and a short-range plan through FY27. Jenny Green said projects will be identified beyond that time horizon following the Governance Study.

Ellen Beckmann said there is a lot of excitement about the North Durham improvements and Route 9 expansions, and asked when there will be more specific information on those projects. Jenny Green said the projects in FY23 work program could proceed independently of the bus plan as the bus plan will use the FY23 work program as a basis for service. Jenny Green said this project is considered a service change assuming a January 1, 2023 start date.

**4. FY22 Budget Amendments**

**a. Increased Cost of Existing Services (ICES) (GoTriangle)**

Aaron Cain said the ICES adjustment is standard annual practice. Jennifer Hayden added that after the actual \$7 vehicle registration tax is calculated, 50% of actuals are allocated to GoDurham.

Motion by Mariel Klein to approve the ICES FY22 budget amendment, second by Jay Heikes. Motion passed unanimously.

**b. Transfer from DCHC MPO SWG Admin (19MPOAD1) to Transit Plan Development (20MPOAD1) (MPO)**

Aaron Cain said this FY22 budget amendment is to move \$5,000 from the SWG administrator line item to the Transit Plan Development line item for compensation for Engagement Ambassadors. Aaron Cain said this is a budget neutral request and all work will now be in the Kimley Horn contract.

Motion by Jay Heikes to approve this FY22 budget amendment, second by Mariel Klein. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. FY23 Draft Annual Transit Work Program – Issues Tabled from April Meeting**

**a. GoTriangle Tax District Administration**

**b. City of Durham Staff Requests**

**c. Transit Emphasis Corridors**

Ellen Beckmann said that all parties agree on the vast majority of the FY23 Work Program and the City of Durham and Durham County elected officials will further discuss specific issues and hopefully reach a resolution. Ellen Beckmann suggested deferring action on this item until those discussions have occurred.

Sandra Freeman asked for an update on public comments and what typically is done with them. Aaron Cain said the public comment period ended May 11, and a full compilation of comments he received and those submitted through the GoForward website will be available for all to review soon. Steven Schlossberg asked if the comments typically cause adjustments to the work program. Aaron Cain said there are more comments than usual this year and many people have expressed support for Bike Durham's comments, most of which are supportive of the work program. Aaron Cain said some comments can be handled by the SWG administrator regarding document layout. Meg Scully said there is a bus stop improvement map on the GoTriangle website (<https://godurhamtransit.org/stops>).

Ellen Beckmann asked if we could show carryover funding for projects rolling over into FY23. Aaron Cain said at this time we do not know the exact amounts. Steven Schlossberg clarified the timeline and process for when that information will be available in time for the final document. Jay Heikes said the most important part of the carryover projects is to remind people of the projects that are underway.

Jay Heikes stated that the issues on the agenda today are out of the hands of the SWG and discussions should occur amongst governing bodies. Jay Heikes added that the SWG should best equip ILA partners and sponsors to carry out all projects. Jay Heikes made a motion to recommend approval of FY23 work program as drafted. The motion failed for a lack of a second.

Ellen Beckmann said the issues need to be resolved with the elected officials as they relate to more than just the FY23 work program. Mariel Klein said she heard from the May 11 MPO Board discussion that Board members want to have higher level conversations prior to moving forward with the FY23 work program with the knowledge that the work program can be amended. Mariel Klein agreed with the sentiments of the MPO board that the SWG should wait to approve the work program until the City and County staff have had a chance to talk.

Jay Heikes explained the thinking behind his motion, which was that the work program is not binding, and the GoTriangle Board represents the entire region, so the SWG should make its best technical recommendation and then let the elected officials take it from there. Sandra Freeman agreed asked why a GoTriangle representative has not been involved in the preliminary discussions to coordinate a meeting with the City and County. Aaron Cain said the meeting will be run through the City manager's office and is unsure of if GoTriangle will be involved. Sean Egan said the COD is seeking legal advice to avoid a quorum issue for any governing body that would trigger restrictions during a meeting. Jay Heikes agreed that a GoTriangle representative should be included in those meetings.

Meg Scully said that, as a GoTriangle staff member, it seems odd to send a GoTriangle Board member to this meeting to discuss such a small piece of the overall work program.

Mariel Klein asked if the SWG could approve the FY23 work program with certain line items left out. Mariel Klein said she would be in favor of approving the work program including the 0.25 FTE for GoTriangle while omitting the rest of the contentious items. Ellen Beckmann advised the SWG to vote on May 26 on the full work program.

Mariel Klein made a motion to recommend approval of the FY23 work program without the three COD staff positions and the TEC requests. Second by Jay Heikes. There was a discussion on the County's concerns that there is not enough information on how the \$2 million in the current work program for each TEC will be spent. Aaron Cain clarified that the TECs are carryover projects that were approved by all three ILA Boards in a plan amendment in spring of 2020. Furthermore, in the FY20 work program, there was funding for design in FY21 and construction in FY22. Aaron Cain added that all of those funds are currently available to the COD as FY22 carryover dollars.

Jay Heikes proposed approving the work program excluding the three COD staff positions but including the TECs. Mariel Klein asked if there is any information on what the agenda will be for the elected officials meeting. Aaron Cain said hopefully they can both solve the immediate issue and also have higher level conversations on the Governance Study. Ellen Beckmann added that the dollar amount of the 0.25 FTE request is less the issue than what the decision determines about the roles of the various groups moving forward. Ellen Beckmann said the Governance Study and new ILA should be in place prior to addressing staffing concerns. Sandra Freeman said that the Governance Study will not change GoTriangle as the Tax District Administrator, so the 0.25 FTE request will not be affected.

Aaron Cain said that now retracting the TEC dollars from the COD would set a precedent that any capital projects' previously allocated dollars could be pulled away. Ellen Beckmann said her main concern is how to make the transit plan meaningful so that projects approved in the work program fulfill the goals of the transit plan. There was a discussion on the shifting scope of the bus speed and reliability projects that have been identified by the County as a priority. Ellen Beckmann said the County is not directing that the corridor projects not be done, but if the scope has shifted from bus speed and reliability improvements to a pedestrian access project, a cost-share should be discussed. Sean Egan said planning and operations analysis is underway and are not yet at a point to make a recommendation.

Ellen Beckmann said the County agrees with the need for more COD staff, but still thinks the COD should financially contribute to those positions. Sean Egan said that this issue arose too late to be included in the COD budget cycle, and if they are not approved in the work program, the COD staff requests will have to wait until the FY24 budget cycle. Sean Egan pointed out that the COD is already investing in staff resources to manage transit plan projects.

Mariel Klein made a motion to recommend approval of the FY23 work program without

the three staff positions for the COD, knowing the work program could be revised at a future meeting pending conversations amongst elected officials. Second by Jay Heikes. The motion passed 2-1, with Ellen Beckmann of Durham County dissenting.

Ellen Beckmann mentioned the County's request for an update from the COD on the Better Bus Project. Sean Egan said the COD submitted a presentation that the County said was not acceptable because it did not include cost information. Sean Egan stated that if a comprehensive financial and planning analysis is requested, there should be accompanying resources to conduct that level of analysis. Ellen Beckmann disagreed that the request for financial information would be too burdensome on those overseeing the funds for the project.

#### **6. Next Meeting – May 26 – Recommendation of Final Work Program**

Aaron Cain said the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 26, will depend on the progress of the meeting with the City and County.

#### **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.