

WAKE COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

Transit Planning Advisory Committee

TPAC Regular Monthly Meeting • March 15, 2023 • 9:30am-12:00pm

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions (David Eatman, TPAC Chair)

David Eatman, TPAC Chair, opened the meeting and conducted roll call. Quorum was established.

3/15/23 TPAC Attendance					
Agency/Org	Name	Role	Agency/Org	Name	Role
Raleigh	David Eatman (Chair)	Primary	GoTriangle	Steven Schlossberg	Alternate
Wake County	Akul Nishawala (Vice Chair)	Primary	GoTriangle	Curtis Hayes	Alternate
Apex	Katie Schwing	Alternate	Holly Springs	Daniel Spruill	Primary
CAMPO	Anna Stokes	Alternate	Knightdale	Andrew Spiliotis	Primary
CAMPO	Shelby Powell	Primary	Morrisville	Danielle Kittredge	Primary
CAMPO	Bonnie Parker	Alternate	NC State University	Andrea Neri	Primary
CAMPO	Evan Koff	Subcom.	Raleigh	Andrea Epstein	Alternate
Cary	Christine Sondej	Alternate	Raleigh	David Walker	Alternate
Cary	Kelly Blazey	Primary	Raleigh	Het Patel	Alternate
Cary	Kevin Wyrach	Alternate	Raleigh	Melanie Rausch	Subcom.
Citizen	Will Allen	Stakeholder	Raleigh	Shavon Tucker	Alternate
Fuquay-Varina	Allison Wylie (Wright)	Alternate	Raleigh	Tracy Chandler	Subcom.
GoTriangle	Paul Kingman	Stakeholder	RTP Foundation	Travis Crayton	Primary
GoTriangle	Matthew Clark	Stakeholder	Wake County	Tim Gardiner	Primary
GoTriangle	Michelle Peele	Primary	Wake Forest	Brad West	Alternate
GoTriangle	Elisabeth "Liz" Raskopf	Subcom.	Wake Up Wake Co.	Nathan Spencer	Subcom.
GoTriangle	Saundra Freeman	Primary	Wendell	Bryan Coates	Primary

II. Adjustments to the Agenda (David Eatman, TPAC Chair)

There were no adjustments to the agenda. However, during the adjustments to the agenda section Evan Koff from CAMPO did note that the dates listed in the Annual Project Progress and Expenditures Review item found in the "Other Business" section on the agenda was now outdated. Instead of reviewing this item at the March PD Committee meeting as previously announced, Mr. Koff noted that it would be discussed at the April PD Committee meeting and will then come to TPAC in May. Mr. Eatman clarified that this does not change any items on our current agenda and Mr. Koff concurred.

III. General Public or Agency Comment (David Eatman, TPAC Chair)

Nathan Spencer stated that, as Executive Director of WakeUp Wake County and a member of the Raleigh Transit Authority, he wanted to congratulate Het Patel and the Raleigh transportation team on the recent announcement of the Southern BRT Corridor's federal rating and making it into the President's budget. He congratulated the team

on successfully putting together the ratings application and moving this project forward in under a year to receive \$85 Million. He noted that with this team and this knowledge in place, we, as a region, can probably get other BRT corridors moving quickly as well if we put in the time and money. Mr. Eatman thanked Mr. Spencer for his comments and echoed his appreciation to Het Patel and the GoRaleigh team for the BRT success.

Mr. Spencer then spoke on the recent Commuter Rail Report released by GoTriangle and noted that 15% of the responses to the survey were from Durham, but the proposed phasing of the project would leave Durham out. He also pointed out that 76% of the respondents made more than the area's median income as compared to the survey released in 2020 which had more representation from lower income people. Mr. Spencer said that he believe we must do better in this regard. He went on to say that the engagement effort did not ask the proper questions of the community, did not at all address the funding issues, and did not alert people to the fact that they could see rises in property taxes to pay for this project if federal grants are out of the picture. Mr. Spence believe that the funding issues in particular are critical as the makeup of the Wake County Board of Commissioners will be drastically different in 2024 because of changes to have only 2 at-large members and the rest as districted members. This change will make it so this Board will be significantly different than it was when the transit tax referendum was originally placed on the ballot.

Jenny Green, GoTriangle, announced that Friday would be her last day with GoTriangle, and that she would still be part of the transit community in the region as the City of Durham Transit Planning Manager. She stated appreciation for working with the Wake Transit Community over the past several years through her work on the Wake Bus Plan and the other Wake Transit service changes. The Project Management Role for the Bus Plan will be taken on by Austin Stanion and Michelle Peele after her departure. Several members expressed appreciation for Ms. Green's contributions to the region and wished her well.

TPAC ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

IV. Adoption of TPAC Meeting Minutes (Action Item: David Eatman, TPAC Chair) **Attachment A**

MOTION to adopt the February TPAC minutes was made by Michelle Peele, and seconded by Sandra Freeman. The motion carried unanimously. No Comments.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING ITEMS

V. GTCR Engagement Summary Report & Next Steps (Information Item: Elisabeth Raskopf, GoTriangle) **Attachment B**

Liz Raskopf, GoTriangle, presented on this item on the 45-day public comment period to collect feedback on the results of Phase II of the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Project Feasibility Study which ran from January 5 through February 19, 2023. GoTriangle staff will present a summary of the engagement approach, activities, and responses. The purpose was to seek feedback on how or whether the CRT project should move forward. There were 20 in-person events, online engagement, and over 6000 surveys completed.

Ms. Raskopf reviewed the outreach materials uses and said there was special emphasis on outreach to African American and Hispanic populations using new techniques such as a letter-writing campaign to places of

worship. She shared information about how the various partners in the region helped assist in spreading the word about engagement opportunities. The engagement used the ReadyforRailInc.com website, and there were 28,000 views with 12,000 unique users during the period. The team also used social media and email messages for outreach, and advertising on radio and newspaper platforms.

Ms. Raskopf compared the survey results from Round 1 (Fall 2020) and Round 2, noting that the respondents this time were younger, more white, and had higher incomes, but the themes of what people were looking for in the rail project remained consistent (that the rail project should relieve congestion and has environmental benefits). Around 70% of respondents strongly support the Central Section as Phase I; around 7% strongly oppose that section as Phase I. Around 45% strongly support the Eastern Section as Phase I, while around 13% strongly oppose that section as Phase I. Ms. Raskopf provided additional analysis on the breakdown of survey responses, noting that for those respondents with income below \$75,000 had a 77% support rate for continuing the project, and that respondents who identified as non-white had a 69% support rate for continuing the project. When asked if they were current bus users, 18% of the respondents answered “yes,” which Ms. Raskopf said indicated a high level of participation from current transit users.

Evan Koff, CAMPO, asked if Ms. Raskopf could provide some additional analysis of the responses to the survey from those identifying as transit riders; Ms. Raskopf replied that she would provide that detail.

VI. COVID Relief Funding Update

(Information Item: Steven Schlossberg, GoTriangle; Shavon Tucker, City of Raleigh; Jennifer Hayden, GoTriangle; Christine Sondej, Town of Cary; Anita Davis, Wake County) **Attachment C**

Steve Schlossberg, GoTriangle, introduced this item which was jointly presented by individuals representing GoTriangle, the City of Raleigh, and the Town of Cary, with information also provided by Wake County. Prior to the March TPAC meeting, these agencies all submitted templates that detailed how pandemic related funds received based on the Raleigh Urbanized Area (UZA) have been spent. These funds were received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA); and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP). Funds from these sources are available for all operating activities that occur on or after January 20, 2020. The presentation focused on the information collected through the templates submitted by transit partners, including where the specific program funding came from; the amount distributed; the amount expended to date; allocation of funds by category; and additional detail on how the funds were used.

Mr. Schlossberg, reviewed the pandemic timeline and the associated relief funding provided by the federal government during that time to assist transit operators in maintaining solvency and continuing to provide vital transportation to essential workers. There were three allocations of federal funding: CARES Act (March 2020); CRRSAA (December 2020); and ARP (March 2021). The transit agencies were asked to provide details on the funding expenditures and drawdowns associated with those funding sources.

Christine Sondej, Town of Cary, stated that Cary received \$4.5 million from CARES Act, which was used in FY 20 and FY 21 on transit operations, fuel and staffing. They received \$843,000 in CRRSAA funding, which was used in FY 22 on transit operations expenses. They received \$1.1 million from ARP, some of which has been used in FY 23 for operations. Cary will draw down \$2 million for staff salaries and operations in FY 24.

Jennifer Hayden, GoTriangle, reported that GoTriangle received \$8.8 million in total funding from the three sources, and that \$3.1 million has been expended and drawn down. About 63% of the funding was spent on operations (including bus maintenance, bus operations, and paratransit), and 37% to replace lost fare revenues from going fare free during the pandemic. She noted that \$576,000 from CRRSAA had been expended, and \$5.1 million from ARP has been expended. GoTriangle has submitted the grant applications for that funding to FTA and is awaiting approval of those. Kelly Blazey, GoCary, asked in what year the ARP funding had been expended; Ms. Hayden reported those funds were spent in FY22, and the CARES funding was spent in FY22. Ms. Blazey asked the status of the FTA grant applications for draws against those funds. Ms. Hayden reported that GoTriangle had a temporary grant number and has not submitted the formal drawdown request yet. Ms. Blazey asked what the delay was on the grant execution; Ms. Hayden did not know.

Shavon Tucker, GoRaleigh, then reported that the City of Raleigh received a total of \$51 million in combined funding from the three sources. Of that, 97% was spent on operations, maintenance, and paratransit expenses, and was used starting in FY21. The City has assigned the other 3% (\$1.5 million) to assist with constructing the Poole Road Park and Ride, planning studies such as the Northern BRT Major Investment Study and Southern BRT Station Area TOD planning. To date, \$20 million has been expended, and the City of Raleigh anticipates all spending to be complete in FY25. The staff is currently working on ARP and CRRSAA grant agreements to begin drawdowns against those funds.

As Anita Davis-Haywood, Wake County, was unavailable at the meeting, Mr. Schlossberg reviewed the GoWake Access data she had provided. Wake County utilized funding for operations for demand-response services, personal protection equipment for staff, software, lost fare revenue replacement due to driver shortages (20%). The county received \$4.3 million and had spent \$1.7 million and drawn down \$975,000.

Tim Gardiner, Wake County, thanked all the presenters for providing this information. He stated that some context that would be helpful would be to know the allocation figures that were based on federal formulas versus those allocations made using local formulas. He also noted that several presentations included funding for “lost revenues” and Mr. Gardiner said it would be helpful to understand what each agency meant by that term. This could affect the ongoing fare/no-fare discussions that are happening. Mr. Schlossberg noted that CAPMO had worked on the allocations and that he would work with the CAMPO staff on getting that information and with the fare workgroup on establishing or understanding the various definitions of “lost revenue.”

Sandra Freeman, GoTriangle, asked if there were any other questions on this issue for GoTriangle, and wanted to make sure all the loops on this issue were closed. She would like to answer any other questions for GoTriangle so that we can end the discussions on this topic.

Mr. Eatman thanked the presenters and noted that the relief funds have been instrumental in filling gaps left by the pandemic effects. These impacts would be visible over the course of the next several years as transit agencies try to get back to normal.

VII. FY24 Community Funding Area (CFA) Program Update

(Action Item: Evan Koff, CAMPO) **Attachment D**

Evan Koff, CAMPO, presented this item. He explained that the FY 2024 Community Funding Area (CFA) Program call for projects opened October 31, 2022, and closed January 6, 2023. He then reviewed the FY24 CFA process, including some foundational information about the program and a review of the selection committee process associated with reviewing and recommending projects. The CFA program has funded 13 projects since its inception – 7 planning studies, 3 capital projects and 3 operating projects. The use of the program continues to grow and provide benefits across the county.

Mr. Koff reviewed the FY24 CFA allocation of \$2.73 million, noting that \$1.57 million is available after accounting for continuing prior expenditures. The Program Management Plan allows for a 10% cost overage without penalty, and states that no single project can use more than 30% of an annual CFA allocation on operating expenses without TPAC approval. Mr. Koff explained the long-term operating cost implications of current projects and reviewed the CFA program schedule. The projects recommended by the review committee would move forward into the recommended work plan to be reviewed by the TPAC in April.

Four (4) applications were submitted for consideration for FY24. There were three capital project applications – Apex applied for sidewalk connections to transit stops; Apex applied for bus stop improvements; and Knightdale applied for sidewalk connections (which would be matched using CAMPO LAPP funding) and transit stop improvements. One operating project was submitted. This project was also submitted by Apex, who applied to do a planning study to prioritize additional local transit service implementation. Mr. Koff noted that these projects were scored using the methodology in the Program Management Plan. He also noted that, including contingency, the Apex planning project would go over the 30% funding cap, and thus needed to have approval by the TPAC to move forward. He also noted that the Program Management Plan specifically recommended that the TPAC strongly consider waiving the cap if it was for a worthwhile project.

Finally, Mr. Koff noted that since this was a planning study and not an overage on an operational project, the impact to future funding in the CFA program was limited. The selection committee had forwarded a recommendation to include all four applications in the FY24 work plan, including the one that exceeded the cap.

Shelby Powell, CAMPO, asked if the action today was to approve the applications or just to approve the waiver of the 30% funding cap. Mr. Koff replied that the TPAC would act on the approval of the projects through their action on the Work Plan in coming months, and that today's action was just for waiving the 30% cap.

Mr. Gardiner asked for clarification that this action was intended only for this one project, not a blanket approval to waive the cap for all future projects. Mr. Koff replied that it was just for this one project, but that if the TPAC wished to revisit the cap issue or any other CFA issue, they would have the opportunity to do so in FY24 when the Program Management Plan is updated.

A motion was made by Tim Gardiner for the one time action to waive the 30% cap for the Apex project. Second was made by Shelby Powell. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION to Recommend a one-time waiving of the Community Funding Area Program Management Plan’s 30% Single Applicant Cap in FY 2024 was made by Tim Gardiner and seconded by Shelby Powell. The motion carried unanimously. No Comments.

VIII. GoRaleigh BRT Program Update

(Information Item: Het Patel, City of Raleigh)

Het Patel, GoRaleigh, presented this item. Mr. Patel thanked TPAC members and guests for the accolades on the recent announcement of the inclusion of the Southern BRT corridor in the President’s budget and the overall medium-high rating the project had received. He noted that, although earlier comments were made about the project reaching this point in one year, the BRT program has been in development since the original adoption of the Wake Transit Plan in 2016 and this award was the culmination of a lot of work by many partners and staff over a period of years.

Mr. Patel presented the status of the four core Wake Transit BRT projects. He noted a change on the BRT map that now shows the Northern BRT splitting off to both Mid-Town Raleigh (North Hills) and Triangle Town Center, since those connections are being studied in the Northern BRT MIS currently. The study should conclude with a local preferred alternative by the end of 2023.

The New Bern Avenue BRT project will begin construction this summer.

The Southern BRT corridor was at 30% design, with the final design expected in FY24. If the project remains in the federal budget and successfully works its way through the federal Capital Improvement Grant (CIG) planning process, construction would begin in FY26.

The Western BRT corridor is at 10% design. Mr. Patel explained that there were various capital projects along the Western corridor being implemented by NCDOT, City of Raleigh and Town of Cary that needed additional coordination before a good cost estimate could be produced. Work will continue on this coordination, and Mr. Patel anticipates final design in FY25 and hopes for construction to begin in FY27.

Mr. Patel reviewed the details for each corridor. The New Bern BRT project is 5.39 miles long, with 3.3 miles of dedicated lanes. The project has 10 stations and will require 7 buses. Construction bids will occur in Spring/Summer 2023. Mr. Patel briefly reviewed the goals for the BRT station planning, noting that uniformity and consistency across the BRT lines and stations was desired. There is a station area video available on the GoRaleigh BRT site with additional detail.

The Southern Corridor is 5.1 miles long, with 3.8 miles of dedicated lanes. It just received the medium-high rating in the CIG program. The project will have 10 stations and require 7 buses to operate. The 30% design will be complete in Spring/Summer 2023 and selection of a final design consultant will occur in Summer 2023.

The Western Corridor is 12 miles long with 20 stations. It will require 10 buses. Mr. Patel reiterated the issues associated with the other ongoing capital projects, including Dix Park development, the Cary Multi-Modal Center and other NCDOT roadway projects. The planning team needs additional information from those projects to make better assumptions for the Western Corridor in order to prepare a better ratings package and have higher confidence in cost and design details.

IX. Rapid Bus Extension Major Investment Study Update

(Information Item: Jimi Mitchell, Project Consulting Team – Nelson\Nygaard) **Attachment E & F**

In April of 2021, CAMPO staff kicked off a major investment study (MIS) that will develop and evaluate alternatives and ultimately select preferred alternatives for rapid bus or bus rapid transit (BRT) extensions from Cary to Research Triangle Park and from Garner to Clayton. These extensions would build onto two of the core BRT corridors included in the original Wake County Transit Plan, and which are being implemented by the City of Raleigh. The extensions were included in the Wake County Transit Plan Update, and the capital improvements thereof were assumed to be funded with State revenue sources in the FYs 2020-2029 Transportation Improvement Program.

Jimi Mitchell, Nelson\Nygaard, who is a leader on the consultant team presented this item. The consultant has developed a technical recommendation for a locally preferred alternative in each corridor, which was presented to the Core Technical Teams and Stakeholder Oversight Teams in October for feedback. Mr. Mitchell presented the locally preferred alternatives for the Western Extension (Alternative 2, which follows NC 54, Evans Drive and McCrimmon, then NC 54 into RTP) and the Southern Extension (US 70 from the core BRT Garner Station stop to Powhatan in Johnston County just past Clayton). These extensions require a bit more analysis before the locally preferred alternatives will be adopted by the MPO and a project sponsor assigned. As such, the consultant has recommended additional study on operations and project delivery methods to be conducted before the project can be assigned to a project sponsor or move through the Wake Transit Concurrence Process.

Mr. Mitchell explained that a final round of public engagement occurred during November and December 2022, with anticipated recommendation of a final Locally Preferred Alternative early in 2023. Mr. Mitchell discussed the overall goal of the Bus Rapid Transit/Rapid Bus service. He explained that Rapid bus transit service has four key elements to include reliability, speed, comfort, and convenience. He stated that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast and efficient service that may include dedicated lanes, bus ways, traffic signal priority, off-board fare collection, elevated platforms, and enhanced stations. He presented maps of the project areas for the western and southern extensions which gave a visual of the initial and potential alignments in the study areas.

Mr. Mitchell framed the overall approach for the rapid bus extension, the desired outcomes to develop, evaluate and recommend high-capacity transit investments in BRT corridors identified in the Wake County Transit Plan. He discussed their alternatives analysis milestones which included a 3-phase process for the study. Mr. Mitchell provided a community engagement summary which included public and stakeholder engagement, launching of public websites, pop up events, and social media methods. He stated that there were fourteen public comments received, eight which were specific to the Western corridor, two specific to the Southern corridor, and three general comments in which were very supportive and interest in when this service will be implemented. He informed the Executive Board that NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources responded providing typical and natural environmental clearance guidelines. Also, the Town of Morrisville wrote a letter of support of the Western Alternative recommendation.

He provided information and details on alternative development and evaluation framework to show how they arrived at the final recommendations from a technical perspective. Mr. Mitchell discussed the capital cost and provided a comparison of costs for the different alternatives. He noted the recommended locally preferred alternative. Mr. Mitchell discussed the pathway to project development.

X. Subcommittees

Mr. Eatman asked if the Subcommittee Chairs had reports. None did. The PD Committee will meet on March 28. The CE Committee will meet on March 23.

XI. Other Business

Anna Stokes, CAMPO, asked TPAC members to review the other business items included on the agenda. She noted the deadline for requesting work plan changes was coming up soon, and that comments on the draft work plan had been shared yesterday with project sponsors.

XII. Adjourn

Mr. Eatman announced the next TPAC meeting would occur on April 19, and declared the meeting adjourned.