



MEMORANDUM

TO: Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization

FROM: Tom Altieri, Orange County Comprehensive Planning Supervisor

DATE: September 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Orange County Transit Plan

In 2012, the BOCC along with the Durham-Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) and GoTriangle adopted Orange County's first comprehensive Transit Plan. This Plan was funded using a newly-adopted Article 43 Half-Cent Sales Tax, and it included investments in new and expanded bus service and new capital infrastructure projects such as the Chapel Hill North- South Bus Rapid Transit Project, the Hillsborough Train Station, and the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DO-LRT) Project. The Plan was most recently updated in 2017 to meet federal requirements associated with the DO-LRT Project.

In March 2019, the DO-LRT Project was discontinued. This project was central to the Transit Plan; it was the Plan's primary investment, represented a critical partnership between Durham and Orange counties, and served as the transit infrastructure around which other transit services and growth strategies were planned. In response to the discontinuation of the light rail project, a staff team began the process of creating a potential planning framework to create a new Orange County Transit Plan that prioritizes investments, funds service improvements, and improves the resiliency of the public transit network.

At its November 17, 2019 meeting, the Orange County BOCC approved the planning framework for updating the Orange County Transit Plan. The framework included a Policy Steering Committee (PSC) composed of two (2) Commissioners serving as Co-Chairs, and one representative each from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, and Mebane to lead the process. The County and/ or municipal appointees are intended to represent the interests of GoTriangle and DCHC MPO.

The PSC is supported by a staff team which is led by County staff and includes representatives from the same organizations as well as staff support from the Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG), Durham-Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO), Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization (TARPO), GoTriangle, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Both the PSC and the staff team provide direction and guidance to the consulting firm whose tasks include analyzing data, facilitating public input processes, soliciting feedback from specific stakeholders, and drafting the Transit Plan. The new Plan is intended to outline transit investment priorities through 2040.

In January 2020, Orange County Planning staff began work with Renaissance Planning, Inc., the consulting firm chosen to update the Orange County Transit Plan. Over the past two years, planning staff and the consulting team have established key project deliverables and the

timetable for their delivery, defined the scope of the consulting work, established a project website (www.octransit2020.com), created the public participation and outreach plans, and conducted regular meetings with the PSC, transit service providers, and key stakeholders with updates on the plan's progress.

Following is a list of key process milestones carried out by the Consultant, PSC, transit service providers and staff teams:

- Held bi-monthly meetings with progress updates for the PSC during the 2020 calendar year (May 2020)
- Received the Transit Choices Brochure (TCB), a visual document that illustrates the concepts and continuums of transit planning, and the Regional Connections Opportunity (RCO) Report, a technical assessment of key issues and opportunities for effective transit service (July 2020)
- Held the first Transit Summit over the Zoom platform and received a memo of key themes from the summit discussions and first public survey (October 2020)
- Met with Durham City and County representatives to discuss progress of Durham Transit Plan Update relative to the Orange County Transit Plan Update (November 2020)
- Received draft versions of conceptual scenarios and graphics with an accompanying memo (January 2021)
- Held recurring monthly PSC meetings over Zoom with updates for first half of 2021 (January 2021 – June 2021)
- Received final versions of conceptual scenarios and graphics with an accompanying memo (May 2021)
- Held an in-person Transit Summit for PSC members to discuss core values and visions for the fiscally-constrained plan and learned of aspirational future projects (July 2021)
- Received draft recommended network and plan as well as draft conceptual vision map for transit service provider feedback and scheduling of future PSC meetings (October 2021)
- Held PSC Work Session #1 to look at the final recommended network and conceptual vision map with goal of beginning round 2 of public outreach (January 2022)
- Created public outreach opportunities with a second round of surveying (where over 1,000 surveys were collected) and two focus groups (held on February 8th and February 16th) that included local stakeholders (February 2022)
- Held PSC Work Session #2 to look at the feedback received from public outreach and assess the draft network, which resulted in a request to provide check-in presentations to the local elected boards (March 2022)
- Held PSC Work Session #3 to present a final draft of the plan updated with feedback from the transit service providers, the local elected boards and the PSC (May 2022)
- Delivered final report (including appendices) to Orange County Planning Staff in preparation for fall 2022 adoption timeline (August 2022)

Adoption Process

The *2017 Orange County Transit Plan* was adopted by the Orange County BOCC on April 27, 2017 before it was adopted by DCHC MPO and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees on April 28, 2017. Orange County staff is bringing the 2022 Transit Plan Update through the adoption process following the critical path outlined below:

Orange County:

- BOCC Public Hearing (11/1/22)
- BOCC adoption consideration (11/15/22)

DCHC MPO:

- Technical Committee recommendation to release draft for public comment (9/28/22)
- Board consideration to release draft for public comment (10/12/22)
- Technical Committee recommendation (11/16/22)
- Board adoption consideration (12/14/22)

GoTriangle:

- Board adoption consideration (12/21/22)