



GoTriangle
Planning & Legislative Committee
November 15, 2023
11:00 am-11:45 am Eastern Time

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- I. **Call to Order and Adoption of Agenda**
(1 minute Vivian Jones)
ACTION REQUESTED: Adopt agenda.
- II. **Draft Minutes | October 25, 2023**
(1 minute Michelle Dawson)
- III. **Short Range Transit Plan Update**
(20 minutes Jay Heikes)
- IV. **Adjournment**
(Vivian Jones)



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PLANNING & LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

4600 Emperor Boulevard
Suite 100
Durham, NC 27703

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

11:00 a.m.

GoTriangle Board Room

Committee members present | Sally Greene, Patrick Hannah, Vivian Jones, Elaine O'Neal

Committee members absent | Mary-Ann Baldwin [excused], Michael Fox

Committee Chair Vivian Jones officially called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

I. Adoption of Agenda

Action: A motion was made by O'Neal and seconded by Hannah to adopt the agenda. The motion was carried unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Action: A motion was made by O'Neal and seconded by Greene to approve the minutes of September 27, 2023. The motion was carried unanimously.

III. Triangle Mobility Hub Update

Jay Heikes' presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. He shared that this project name, Triangle Mobility Hub, is the new name for the Regional Transit Facility, to better capture the vision for the facility - not just transferring between buses but providing good multimodal connections within the center of our region.

Existing Regional Transit Center

- Located 2 miles southeast of Research Triangle Park at The Plaza
- Intended to be a temporary facility when built in 2008
- GoTriangle leases the site of the transit facility and one parking lot limiting improvements that can be made
- Busiest stop in GoTriangle's network and the second busiest stop in Durham County in addition to serving approximately 50 park-and-ride users

Existing Operational Constraints

- Safety and function – constrained site, limited platforms, shared driveways, buses mixed with other traffic
- Rider experience – limited shelters and passenger amenities
- Access and connectivity – limited integration with other modes [future BRT or regional passenger rail] amenities, employment and housing
- Transit speed and reliability – distance from roadway network, no transit priority, shared entrance, access conflicts

Planning for the facility began in 2021 with a feasibility study to understand the shortcomings of the existing facility, future needs for a transit center and opportunities from a more optimal

location. The process began with over 100 sites, with six final sites evaluated in detail to yield two preferred sites, adopted by the board in April 2021. The Triangle Metro Center site, is owned by Research Triangle Park and is moving forward in the process. Located on the southwest corner of NC 54 and Miami Boulevard, it is just west of the NCRR tracks with good access from NC 54 and the highway network.

Research Triangle Park conducted a Transit Oriented Development study to establish an overall vision for the site location, anchored by the Triangle Mobility Hub, to support a vibrant and active connector for the region. The study included orientation concepts and potential site development patterns. The vision is to encourage public and private investments near public transportation and provide opportunities for creative placemaking, reduce transportation-related pollution and foster affordable transportation options and affordable housing. GoTriangle is leading the schematic design process now.

Greene asked who would be driving the process. Heikes replied that RTP owns the land, so likely they would drive the private development piece similar to the RTP HUB site. GoTriangle is designing the transit facility as an anchor of the site with development potential in mind. He added that the transit facility could be horizontally integrated with open air above it or vertically integrated with development built on top of the facility. He said this will be based on market potential and conditions for this site as well as RTP's goals. Heikes added that for GoTriangle will want to ensure it can deliver the transit facility separate from private market projects and timelines as this is a critical facility for GoTriangle and needs to get moving and not be subject to delays or market timing that could result from a more intertwined project. He also added that GoTriangle wants to ensure the operational ability to maintain transit operations during potential future construction.

Heikes informed the committee that all three transit plans have programmed and designated funding for the schematic design of the project and it also is included in the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. He said staff has submitted a grant application for the USDOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Access and Equity Program and plans to submit the USDOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity.

Greene asked if the Orange County transit plan revision includes funding for this project. Heikes responded that the updated transit plan includes funding for projects in the prior edition of the transit plan. This project was included in the 2017 plan and subsequent work programs in Orange County; however, funding is not committed in future years. Greene asked the benefits of this project to Orange County. Heikes stated this facility would provide the opportunity to enhance the connection between Chapel Hill, RTP, Raleigh and the airport.

Hannah asked the total cost for the project. Paige Cureton responded that the grant submission was \$58.7 million, which includes two battery electric buses and other enhancements for pedestrian crossing of NC 54. Heikes estimated the facility along at \$48 million.

Heikes shared the anticipated project schedule, with schematic design to continue into 2024, followed by preliminary engineering and the environmental review. Construction is expected in 2026-27 with a target opening date in 2028.

IV. Short Range Transit Plan Update

Jay Heikes' presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. He reminded the committee that the plan implements the vision of the three county transit plans and defines bus service changes and expansion through FY2028. Also included are future service concepts beyond FY2028. The plan gives GoTriangle the opportunity to address changing travel patterns and will include service standards to evaluate performance and identify when improvements are needed.

The travel demand assessment conducted reveals strongest demand for transit in areas with high population and job density. It also shows strong potential between RTP, Raleigh, Cary, Durham and Chapel Hill. Emerging travel patterns are not centered around peak.

Ridership is currently at 95% of FY2019 ridership; weekend ridership is up significantly and weekday ridership is about 90% of 2019 levels. The fall of 2022 showed a significant dip in ridership that coincided with GoTriangle's operator shortage and its impact on service. FY2023 shows ridership exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Staffing is key to maintaining that level of ridership as well as providing dependable, no-time service and responding to changing travel.

Heikes reviewed the goals for the short range transit plan:

- ensure reliable service
- respond to ridership trends
 - increase all-day service frequency in higher demand corridors
 - add weekend service
 - increase evening service
- broaden trips purposes served by GoTriangle
 - convert peak-only regional service to consistent all-day service
 - Reorient and strengthen peak-only express routes

Service changes recommended in the plan:

- Chapel Hill – Durham increase weekday frequencies from 30 to 15 minutes; remove a small segment of service from University Drive to South Square [GoDurham Route 10 covers this corridor]
- Chapel Hill – RTP – Raleigh add midday and evening service to 8 p.m. on route 805 from UNC hospitals to The Streets at Southpoint; operate route 800 all day on NC 54 between UNC hospitals and the RTC, serving Boxyard RTP and the new RTC [Triangle Mobility Hub]; shorten route CRX to serve UNC hospitals to downtown Raleigh
- Orange County route 420 direct connection between Chapel Hill and Hillsborough at a new park-and-ride lot; route ODX realign to serve I-40 and US 70 between Durham Station and Mebane City Hall, also serving the new Hillsborough park-and-ride, not DTCC

- Durham – RTP – Raleigh combines routes 100 and 700 into route 100X with weekday frequencies of 15 minutes and 30 minutes on weekends; RDU shuttle timed connections to all routes at RTC; route DRX adding midday and evening trips every 60 minutes with reduced peak frequencies

Greene expressed concern about eliminating CRX service to the Eubanks park-and-ride lot. Heikes responded that Chapel Hill's NS BRT would provide a connection between the Eubanks park-and-ride and the hospital, allowing riders to transfer to GoTriangle's routes.

The second round of engagement will runs to mid-November. The final plan will be presented to the board for consideration in January.

V. **Adjournment**

Action: Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.

Prepared by:

Michelle C. Dawson, CMC
Clerk to the Board of Trustees