



TRIANGLE WEST

Transportation Planning Organization

March 11, 2025

TO: Triangle West Technical Committee
FROM: Tom Porter, Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: FY2026 UPWP Amendment #1

Summary

To approve an amendment to the FY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that programs scope and funds for the UNC Co-Gen Rail Corridor Feasibility Study.

Background

The proposed UNC Co-Gen Rail Corridor Feasibility Study revolves around the transformation of the active J Branch rail line (also referred to as the Co-Gen rail line) of the North Carolina Railroad, which is used to deliver coal to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UNC Health Co-Generation Steam and Power Plants. For the proposed study, Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization (Triangle West) will partner with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, Orange County, and other stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of transforming the active, multi-jurisdictional +/-10.8 mile J Branch rail line into a repurposed transportation corridor that would connect downtown Carrboro through suburban western Chapel Hill to the southeast rural area of Orange County. This study seeks to identify the highest and best reuse of the rail line for a greenway, which could include bicycle and pedestrian trails with or without an adjacent transit component such as light rail or pop-up railway or other appropriate passenger vehicle type.

The total request for the study is \$500,000, with \$400,000 requested from federal funds (STBG-DA) and \$100,000 committed for the 20% local match. The local match of \$100,000 has been committed as follows:

- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: \$20,000
- Town of Carrboro: \$10,000
- Town of Chapel Hill: \$10,000
- Orange County: \$10,000
- North Carolina Railroad Company: \$50,000



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The study will be managed by Triangle West, and the client managers will include the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, and Orange County.

Table 1

| Agency | Task Code | Requested Additional Funds | | |
|--------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | | Local Match (20%) | Federal (STBG-DA) (80%) | Total (100%) |
| MPO | II-B-3: UNC Co-Gen Rail Corridor Feasibility Study | \$100,000 | \$400,000 | \$500,000 |
| Total | | \$100,000 | \$400,000 | \$500,000 |

Financial Impact

This amendment seeks to program additional FY2026 STBG-DA funds for the UNC Co-Gen Rail Corridor Feasibility Study. This amendment increases the total STBG-DA amount in FY2026 by \$400,000.

Requested Action

Technical Committee Action: To recommend the MPO Board approve FY2026 UPWP Amendment #1