



Transportation

To: Durham Staff Working Group

From: Durham County

Date: May 9, 2022

Re: FY 23 Durham County Transit Work Program

On May 2, 2022, the Durham County Board of Commissioners received a presentation of the FY23 Durham County Transit Work Program. In response, Durham County offers the following comments for the Staff Working Group's consideration in the development of the final recommended FY23 Work Program.

The majority of projects in the draft FY23 Work Program are consistent with the current Durham Transit Plan and with the goals of the new Durham Transit Plan in development. We appreciate the staffs' efforts to advance projects that are high priorities of Durham residents. Durham County will officially consider the approval of the material change to the Durham Transit Plan on May 23, 2022 for the four (4) projects that meet that criteria.

However, there are a few projects that should be modified in the draft FY23 Work Program. These all relate to the overall need for better governance policies and agreements.

- 21GOTAD1 - Increased funding for GoTriangle Tax District Administration Finance Team for 0.25 FTE should be deferred until the new Interlocal Implementation Agreement is approved. It is a priority of Durham County Commissioners that the County have a more significant role in the administration of the County taxes and fees, including approval of the Annual Work Program by the Board of Commissioners. For effective collaboration, it will also be necessary that Durham County staff have a role in developing the Work Program, potentially relieving GoTriangle of some of their administrative duties. Thus, it is premature to approve additional staff while the Transit Plan Governance Study and development of the Interlocal Implementation Agreement are underway.
- 23DCITS1, 23DCITS2, 23DCITS3 – New funding for City of Durham staff positions should be deferred until the City and County can develop an agreement on transportation funding

responsibilities. This agreement may be incorporated into an overall Financial Policy consistent with the recommendation of the Transit Plan Governance Study.

- 18DCICD1 and 18DCICD2 – Durham County has concerns that the Fayetteville and Holloway projects may not be consistent with the scope of work defined when the projects were first approved by the Board in a Transit Plan amendment in FY21. The Staff Working Group needs to develop a process by which scopes are clearly defined in project agreements and changes in project scope are considered. Furthermore, a policy should be developed to consider the appropriate funding share between partners for projects with extensive sidewalk construction and maintenance expenses. Construction funding should be deferred until the City and County can develop an agreement on transportation funding responsibilities. This agreement may be incorporated into an overall Financial Policy consistent with the recommendation of the Transit Plan Governance Study.
- Bus Speed and Reliability improvements are not adequately funded in the draft FY23 Work Program. A new project should be included in the FY23 Work Program for the Durham Station Transit Emphasis Zone. Design in FY23 may be able to be funded as part of the \$4,000,000 request for other Better Bus Project projects. Construction in future years can be funded through an anticipated project in the new Durham Transit Plan and/or may be included in the Commuter Rail project.



Comments on FY2023 Draft Durham Transit Work Program

Bike Durham appreciates the opportunity to comment on the FY2023 Draft Durham Transit Work Program. We recognize that there is not yet an updated Transit Plan upon which to base new investments, but we are heartened to see that projects to improve the lives of those of us who use transit in Durham are still being moved forward.

Bike Durham supports the projects identified in the draft work program. We'd like to single out a few investments we believe will particularly improve the lives of transit riders and the larger community:

- Providing 30-minute night/Sunday service on Route 9 will greatly benefit current and future transit riders along the route and is responsive to some of the needs expressed by the Bragtown Community Association. Bike Durham believes that all routes should have service every 30 minutes or better at all times of day.
- A new crosstown route between the Duke Regional Hospital area and the Duke Main and VA Hospital area will shorten travel times for transit users who currently need to go through Durham Station to make this trip. This route will improve access to jobs and medical services for low-wealth communities of color in the northern part of Durham.
- Providing the local match to a Federal grant received by the City of Durham will allow for much-needed improvements at Durham Station, including additional bus bays to allow the system to grow and additional shade, bathrooms and more seating for waiting passengers.
- Increasing the number of bus stops that are improved each year in Durham is a step in the right direction. Too many stops in Durham are still inaccessible and uncomfortable. The faster these stops can be improved, the faster transit agencies can provide the dignity that people deserve while using transit. The final work program should summarize how bus stop improvements are determined and prioritized.
- A sidewalk connection to bus stops near the NC-98/Mineral Springs Rd intersection is a small, but important improvement. The vast majority of GoDurham users walk to/from bus stops. Bike Durham encourages the inclusion of significant funding in the upcoming update to the Durham Transit Plan update to provide safe and accessible connections to transit stops.
- One of the key barriers to the speedy delivery of transit projects in Durham is a lack of staff resources to manage projects. Bike Durham supports the City of Durham's request for three additional staff positions to deliver the projects the City manages. We note that the City is currently working on multi-million dollar projects without staff funding from the Durham Transit Plan.

Bike Durham encourages inclusion of more access-to-transit projects in the FY23 work program to coincide with the inclusion of additional City of Durham staff to deliver transit projects. **We request that \$750,000 be included in the final FY23 work program to fund the identification of key gaps in access for people walking or rolling to bus stops and the use of quick-build approaches to implement these safety and access improvements.** Example projects include shortening crossing distances at intersections through use of paint and bollards, creating bollard-protected lanes for people to walk or roll to bus stops where sidewalks are missing, installation of "floating bus stop platforms" to eliminate conflicts between through traffic in these lanes and curb access for buses and bus customers.



The Commuter Rail Project Development is not discussed in the document in any detail. Even if funds for this project are proposed to be rolled over from FY22, this should be described in the work program and a summary of the activities the public should expect to occur in FY23 for that project should be included in the final work program document.

Bike Durham acknowledges and shares concerns about transparency and accountability that have been brought forward by Durham County staff. Processes should be adopted in Durham County similar to those currently in place in Wake County that clearly describe how projects included in annual work programs are defined, how much tax funding will be obligated to the project and a robust reporting system to verify that funds are being expended in accordance with their stated purpose. However, resolving process issues and disagreements about whether the costs of the projects should be shared between the transit tax and other funding sources should not delay the ability to deliver projects that benefit Durham's transit riders. For instance, the proposal for a 50/50 cost share from the City of Durham for new sidewalks will only serve to delay the delivery of those sidewalks because the City will need to identify those matching funds and enter into cost-share agreements. For its part, the City must make it clear that funds from the transit tax that support the construction of new sidewalks and other improvements that support people walking to bus stops will augment, and not supplant, funds from the City's budget.

Trust and accountability amongst the transit partners is essential, but it is equally essential that trust be developed with the public. Bike Durham encourages the DCHC MPO to adopt the format of the Wake Transit annual work programs in future years to make it easier for the public to follow what improvements are proposed and provide informed comments. While there is a good summary at the beginning of the document, the draft work program appears to be aimed more at internal staff than the public. As an example, there is no map showing where the route and stop improvements will occur in FY23 and project details are organized by project sponsor rather than project type. In addition, an annual report about how funds were, or were not, spent in the previous fiscal year should be provided each fall.

Bike Durham looks forward to working with all of the transit partners engaged in implementing the investments in the final FY23 Durham Transit work program.

Durham Transit Work Program Public Comments - Emails

<u>Comment</u>	<u># Submissions</u>
I am writing in support of Bike Durham's comments on the FY2023 Draft Durham Transit Work Program.	28
I want to see faster delivery of improvements to our transit service and of safer access-to-transit.	26
I would like to see more accountability in how funds are being spent and a more user-friendly format for the work program that clearly outlines the forthcoming projects. For example, there is no description of next steps for the commuter rail project or a map showing where improvements will be made in Durham County.	25
One of the key barriers to the speedy delivery of transit projects in Durham is a lack of staff resources to manage projects. I support the City of Durham's request for three additional staff positions to deliver the projects the City manages.	5
Providing 30-minute night/Sunday service on GoDurham Route 9 will greatly benefit current and future transit riders along the route and is responsive to some of the needs expressed by the Bragtown Community Association.	4
A new crosstown route between the Duke Regional Hospital area and the Duke Main and VA Hospital area will shorten travel times for transit users who currently need to go through Durham Station to make this trip.	2
A sidewalk connection to bus stops near the NC-98/Mineral Springs Rd intersection is a small, but important improvement for people walking to bus stops in eastern Durham.	2
The growing Durham region needs a COMPLETE transit system, one that pedestrians and bikers can get to safely and easily and one that allows frequent travel.	1
I understand the need for better transportation in the Triangle, and that it should include Bus Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail. However bigger cities that have both of these amenities also have a strong and easily accessible bus system. Too often we are trying to build from the top down, which leaves out several of our essential working groups. It is time for a design plan that builds strength from the bottom up.	1
I would also like to see more citizen friendly and frequently updated information on the current status of transit, bike, pedestrian projects. It seems that we are always answering surveys, but if there is progress I can never find it, or maybe the project just ended without notice, we need the notice.	1
Providing the local match to a Federal grant received by the City of Durham will allow for much-needed improvements at Durham Station, including additional bus bays to allow the system to grow and additional shade, bathrooms and more seating for waiting passengers.	1

Increasing the number of bus stops that are improved each year in Durham is a step in the right direction. Too many stops in Durham are still inaccessible and uncomfortable.	1
The faster transit and bike/ ped projects get accomplished the more the city of Durham can fight Traffic Violence and prevent more needless death and injury of it's citizens who can't or don't drive cars. It is also a step in the right direction to improve the health and well being of all Durham Citizens by reducing pollution caused by personal automobiles. Especially in traditionally neglected neighborhoods and communities of color who suffer more from pollution related health effects.	1

FY23 DURHAM ANNUAL TRANSIT WORK PROGRAM PUBLIC COMMENTS

SUBMITTED VIA GOFORWARD WEB SITE

Great to see additions and expansions to bus routes. Additional funding towards sidewalks would be welcome as well.

Routes to/from the RDU airport (NOT the Triangle Bus Hub in RTP) itself on a regular basis would encourage "new" ridership. The routes served to/from the airport would include the ability to drive to a parking lot where you could leave your car (at no cost) and take the bus to/from the airport. This has worked well in many, many smaller cities like Durham and Raleigh and is well accepted in larger cities like Atlanta, Boston, etc.

To save folks on the northern side of Durham some time, why cannot you not have at least one of the route 9 buses turn right on Club Blvd when it comes off Dearborn and go to the Walmart at Glen Station? Would save us from having to go downtown and transferring to the 3. Just a thought.

For short term improvements, this certainly seems like a laudable list. I am concerned that we need more dramatic, city-defining plans, such as closing the Durham freeway through downtown and converting that right-of-way into transportation options outside of the single occupancy car, but that is a long project.

The increase in service on the 11 has served us very well and I am glad to see similar levels of service being added elsewhere in the city.

Expanding service on the 800, ideally to account for people who want to take early morning (6/7 am) flights from RDU, would really help. Likewise, expanding evening service between Durham and Chapel Hill on the weekends (an "owl" express bus that leaves every hour from 11 pm to 3 am, going between downtown Chapel Hill and downtown Durham, would be fantastic) would be a smart investment, particularly if you do it in partnership with downtown businesses in both places.

I am in support of the work plan as shown. It looks like Durham is trying to meet the needs of the community. We need more bus service and we need Commuter Rail. Surprised that GoTriangle is only asking for .25 of a position. Been following the work they do and some of their presentations.

I like the plan. Durham and the Triangle needs much improvement in its public transportation services. Compared to other major cities, the Triangle is lacking in this area.

PLEASE implement a high speed commuter rail transit system that includes travel through Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Not just one straight line, but a system similar to those in cities like Atlanta, where lines branch off to different areas such as the Durham Bulls stadium, Southpoint Mall, each of the major Universities, etc. I would love to see something that would branch out to Greensboro, too. Thank you!

Good day GoDurham Transit, and thank you for the transportation services that you provide. Will you please increase bus 7 to add another 30 minute bus service during before and after school hours, because bus 7 provides service to Hillside H.S., WG Pearson and CC Spaulding. Also, a lot of housing has been added to Martin Luther King JR. BLVD. And finally, Durham Public Schools beginning 2022-2023 school year will begin new start time schedule for all Elementary Schools 7:45 am to 2:15 pm, all Middle Schools 8:30 am to 3:20 pm, and all high school 9:15 am to 4:00 pm.

I support the Plan. It takes resources to get the work done. Strongly recommend you don't put in stuff that you don't have folks to implement. From what I hear GoTriangle is doing a lot. Support their request and City needs help too.

The plan looks great. We need more buses and trains in Durham. I know plenty of people that rely on public transport to get to work or school. I think the request from Go Triangle sounds reasonable.

Having lived in areas of the country with good and frequently used mass transit, I support the Transit Work Plan and the position requested by GoTriangle and Durham to help it succeed.

Need bus routes in East Durham along Sherron Rd or Mineral Springs.