

Date: January 6th, 2020

To: Durham County Board of Commissioners

Through: Jay Gibson, General Manager

From: Patrick O. Young, AICP, Planning Director

Subject: Durham County Transit Plan Update

Executive Summary

This memo provides an update on upcoming planning decisions which will impact the development and priorities of the Durham County Transit Plan. The approval of the DCHC MPO FY2020 Transit Work Plan, SPOT 6.0 process and the Commuter Rail Study are upcoming decision points which will impact the progression of the new Durham County Transit Plan.

Recommendation

This report is provided for information only. Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners receive an update of existing conditions and pipeline projects for the Durham County Transit Plan, and provide any comments and questions regarding the project. No further action is required.

Background

The FY2020 Work Plan is adopted annually as part of the GoTriangle budget process because GoTriangle, by state statute, has budget authority over the funding for the Durham Transit Tax District. The Staff Working Group (SWG), made up of staff from GoTriangle, the DCHC MPO, and Durham County, review and recommend the Annual Transit Work Plan to the GoTriangle Board of Trustees. The GoTriangle Board of Trustees approved the FY20 Annual Transit Work Plan as part of their budget adoption in June 2020. During the fiscal year agencies that receive funding may request an amendment to the Annual Transit Work Plan. Budget amendments may be approved by the SWG as long as they are not material changes to the plan. Material changes are defined in the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) that has been agreed to by the three partners of the Durham Transit Plan. The first set of amendments to the FY20 Annual Transit Work Plan will be submitted in January 2020, reviewed by the SWG in early February 2020, and sent to the GoTriangle Board of Trustees for its consideration on February 26, 2020.

The Strategic Prioritization of Transportation (SPOT) process is used to systematically evaluate six modes of transportation (highway, ferry, rail, public transportation, bicycle & pedestrian, and aviation) use a data-driven approach for ranking projects in an area. SPOT is based on an analysis of existing and future conditions, the benefits the project is expected to provide, and how the project fits in with local priorities. SPOT serves as input to the Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In the fall 2017, the DCHC MPO submitted 24 new Highway projects, 23 new Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, 21 new Public Transit projects, and 11 new Rail projects for evaluation for SPOT 5.0. Recently, the DCHC MPO board held a public hearing on the draft FY2020-2029 TIP on

December 11, 2019. A final list for SPOT 6.0 projects will go to the MPO Board for approval in April 2020.

A Commuter Rail Study, led by GoTriangle, is underway to analyze the impact and feasibility of commuter rail transit in Durham, Wake and Orange and Johnston Counties. Expected results of the study include infrastructure recommendations, updated capital, operating estimates and ridership modeling and a risk assessment. This is a preliminary study which will help inform the affected jurisdictions on whether they will pursue and invest in more detailed analyses. The results of this study will be presented to the local jurisdictions in January or February with intent to receive feedback on whether or not to pursue further study.

Issues and Analysis

The Durham County Transit Plan is dependent on decisions regarding the DCHC MPO FY2020 Transit Work Plan, SPOT 6.0 process and the Commuter Rail Study.

Alternatives

The Board of Commissioners could choose not to provide input on the Durham County Transit Plan Update or Existing Conditions and Pipeline Projects.

Staff Contact

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