

Durham Transit Plan Public Engagement Plan

July 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many agency partners are working to make the Durham Transit Plan possible, including:

Executive Team

Drew Cummings | Chief of Staff, Durham County

Sean Egan | Director of Transportation, City of Durham

Katherine Eggleston | Chief Operating Officer, GoTriangle

Felix Nwoko | Senior Transportation Planning Manager, DCHC MPO

Sara Young | Acting Planning Director, City of Durham

Core Technical Team

Ellen Beckmann | Transportation Planning Manager, City of Durham

Aaron Cain | Planning Manager, DCHC MPO

Brooke Ganser | Planner, City-County Planning Department

Jenny Green | Transit Service Planner, GoTriangle

John Hodges-Copple | Planning Director, TJCOG

Technical Committee

Ellen Beckmann | Transportation Planning Manager

Aaron Cain | Planning Manager, DCHC MPO

Brooke Ganser | Planner, City-County Planning Department

Jay Gibson | General Manager of Environmental Stewardship, Durham County

Jenny Green | Transit Service Planner, GoTriangle

Jay Heikes | Senior Transportation Planner, GoTriangle

John Hodges-Copple | Planning Director, TJCOG

Bill Judge | Assistant Transportation Director, City of Durham

Meg Scully | Manager of Planning TOD, GoTriangle

Praveen Sridharan | Senior Financial Analyst, GoTriangle

Scott Whiteman | Planning Manager, City-County Planning

Outreach Committee

Laura Biedeger | Program Manager, City of Durham

Juan Carlos Erickson | Community Engagement Manager, GoTriangle

Lisa Miller | Senior Planner, City-County Planning Department

Anne Phillips | Principal Planner, DCHC MPO

Andy Willard | Public Involvement Specialist, GoTriangle

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Purpose of the Public Engagement Plan	4
Engagement Goals.....	4
Engagement Design	5
Engagement Principles	5
Engagement Approach.....	7
Equitable Engagement.....	7
Project Branding.....	7
Stakeholder Engagement.....	8
Targeted Engagement.....	8
Engagement Ambassadors.....	8
Elements for Outreach.....	9
Engagement Phases.....	12
Phase I: Preliminary Goal Setting.....	13
Phase II: Scenario Development	13
Phase III: Scenario Adjustment.....	14

Introduction

With the discontinuation of the Durham-Orange Light Rail in 2019, Durham has the opportunity to re-examine transit goals and priorities in updating the Durham Transit Plan (DTP). For transit-dedicated funds to be reallocated, new transit service projects and/or improvements must be identified through the plan update effort. The update process will reexamine the contents of the DTP, identify local transit service improvements, identify potential high-capacity transit investments, and help prioritize transit funds for upcoming projects.

Purpose of the Public Engagement Plan

The purpose of this Engagement Plan is to improve and strengthen communication, outline how and why engagement will be occurring, and to fully explain the engagement process for the DTP. The Plan includes the Engagement Goals, Phases, Objectives, Methods, and Principles. It is important to explain why decisions were made and to point to milestones during the planning process that led to the resulting decisions. The following Public Engagement Plan helps align the plan outcomes with the needs and wishes of the community and facilitate an equitable planning process.

Engagement Goals

The goal of the engagement process is to deliver a highly transparent and accessible experience for those that live, work, and play in Durham. The process is designed to:

Inform

1. Raise awareness about the Durham Transit Plan Update.
2. Communicate effectively to participants how materials are developed, input is incorporated, altered, or omitted, as well as what level of influence participants' input will have in the decision making (are participants simply being informed with no opportunity to influence outcomes, or are they being asked to participate in a collaborative decision making process?).

Consult

3. Engage communities that have been historically marginalized, clearly defining these communities so that results can be measured.
4. Enact strategies that strive to ensure feedback received during engagement is representative of Durham's population, clearly defining and quantifying the categories of representation, with a specific focus on the demographic make-up of Durham transit riders.

Involve

5. Interact with and seek opinions from those who live, work, play, study, invest, and pray in Durham.

Collaborate

6. Encourage collaboration among all City and County Staff to help the DTP fulfill Durham's Strategic Plan vision and goals.

Empower

7. Provide the opportunity for residents to identify proactive transit improvements/investments that can contribute to the development of the Comprehensive Planning effort in Durham.

Engagement Design

Despite the unique challenges posed by COVID-19, achieving equity throughout the engagement process is still a top priority. The DTP Public Engagement Plan aims to:

- Meet people where they are
- Engage the community by effectively integrating on- and offline engagement
- Use strategic measures to capture current transit ridership
- Accurately represent Durham's demographic makeup within the outreach process
- Use simple, clear language, not jargon

Bridging Offline Engagement and Online Engagement by Meeting People Where They Are

An effective way to integrate online outreach with offline activities is to engage community members at strategic locations (such as Social Service Providers, Durham Station, libraries, downtown, etc.); through in-person and direct messaging efforts (mailers in utility bills, project posters at strategic locations throughout Durham, postcards, etc.); and in distributing both project information and directions for how to also engage online. Informational materials will contain project information as well as links/QR codes leading to the project website. This method:

- Increases online participation;
- Publicizes the DTP;
- Seeks to include community members that may not typically participate in online engagement efforts
- Allows for easily comparable quantifiable input into the DTP.

Whenever possible, engagement activities will take place in-person instead of virtually. The Engagement Plan is intended to be a living document that will be flexible and adaptive to social distancing guidelines. When planning for outreach, the engagement strategy that proves to be the most relevant and useful form at that time will be used.

Engagement Principles

Successful public engagement requires a positive working relationship between the City and County and everyone that lives, works, plays, studies, invests, and prays here. The Durham Transit Plan team wishes to cultivate a respectful dialogue among everyone involved. To maintain an inclusive and respectful dialogue, the Transit team will work according to the following Engagement Principles. The DTP team pledges to follow these Principles during ALL engagement opportunities:

A. During engagement opportunities, be mindful of the following:

- All participants have useful information;
- Each of us sees things other people may not;
- People may disagree with me and still have pure intentions;
- Differences are opportunities for learning; and,
- We all could be contributing to any misunderstandings.

B. During engagement events, remember to:

- State views and ask sincere questions;
- Share all relevant information;

- Use specific examples and plain language
- Explain reasoning and intent;
- Focus on common interests, not positions; and,
- Test assumptions and inferences.

C. Build trust through transparency and responsiveness

Be clear and open about processes, outcomes expected, use of input, and the range of opinions and ideas expressed during the engagement opportunity.

D. Encourage openness and learning

Create an environment for participants to constructively explore ideas, learn, and apply information in ways that generate options collaboratively so that the engagement opportunity is effective and relevant.

E. Set clear expectations

Set expectations at the outset of each engagement phase and individual event about the purpose of the engagement and how much influence people will have in the decision-making process.

F. Plan and prepare carefully

Carefully plan engagement opportunities so that they serve a clearly defined purpose.

G. Engagement is effectively designed

Provide a real opportunity for the engagement event to influence DTP development.

H. The information provided will be jargon free and understandable.

I. Make it easier for people to take part

Identify and address barriers, including access to technology, child-care, and transportation to project events, for different groups to allow people to more easily engage.

J. Coordinate and collaborate

Work with City of Durham and Durham County departments, civic groups, North Carolina Central University (NCCU), Duke University, and others to take advantage of existing engagement opportunities and collaborate with existing events and informational campaigns.

K. People are informed about the impact of their contribution

Provide timely feedback to participants about their input and the decisions or actions taken as a result.

L. Commit to a Racially Equitable Process - Engagement opportunities are planned to:

- Involve and include people of different ages, genders, social classes, races and ethnic groups, mental and physical abilities, and geographic locations; and,
- Involve and include marginalized and seldom-heard groups.

M. The engagement event/opportunity treats participants with respect

Participants feel valued, comfortable, and welcome. They can rely on:

- A non-confrontational atmosphere in which they can express their views freely;
- A well-managed process that provides them with confidence in the engagement activity; and,

- A friendly and informal environment where they feel they can speak openly.

N. Learn from engagement opportunities in order to improve upcoming engagement opportunities

Evaluate engagement events to measure the success in effectively engaging participants and meeting the stated engagement goals.

Engagement Approach

Equitable Engagement

Achieving a racially equitable engagement process is a priority for the DTP process. For engagement to be equitable, it must aim for participation from a group representative of a community's geography, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and other demographic characteristics. It must place specific emphasis on those who will be most adversely impacted by the project and those who are most often marginalized in these conversations¹. Staff will focus effort and invest engagement resources towards the people who are often underrepresented in participation.

Measuring Success

Throughout each phase of engagement, staff will collect demographic data from respondents, and categorize data by engagement type. This information will be compared to regional thresholds for EJ population groups (as cited in the 2019 Environmental Justice Report for DCHC MPO) and Durham County demographics overall so staff can measure well residents are being engaged as well as understand which engagement strategies are working, which are not, and gain insight into how to adjust engagement strategies moving forward.

Demographic data will be continually collected, documented, and reviewed by internal DTP Committees (CTT, Technical and Outreach Committees, and Leadership Team) throughout engagement efforts, with a commitment to adjusting engagement strategies in order to collect representative feedback. All input received will be considered when developing DTP recommendations, but special attention will be paid to input received from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that are existing transit users or that live in communities identified as traditionally underserved.

Project Branding

To distinguish this planning process from previous and ongoing plans or studies within the region, the Durham Transit Plan update includes a branding theme (e.g. project moniker, color scheme, and design templates) for use in all project deliverables. Any Durham Transit Plan-specific branding will also be used in conjunction with the EngageDurham logo during outreach efforts.

Strategic engagement creating an implementable plan will require a continuous and inclusive process that brings residents, business owners, public service providers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to the table with local staff and elected officials. The underlying principle for understanding local dynamics will be collaborative planning and consensus-building through a process that recognizes the intimate knowledge of these groups and the current and anticipated issues facing Durham.

¹ (City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services, 2018)

Stakeholder Engagement

In order to better promote understanding and support of the final transit plan, an effort will be made to provide consistent communication/collaboration with elected officials, partner agency staff, and major employers in the region. Those stakeholders may include:

- Durham Department of Transportation
- Durham City/County Planning
- Neighborhood Improvements Services
- Traffic and Operations Staff
- DCHC MPO
- CAMPO
- NCDOT
- Durham County Commissioners
- GoTriangle Board of Trustees
- Durham City Council
- GoDurham
- GoTriangle
- Orange County Public Transportation
- Chapel Hill Transit
- GoRaleigh
- NCCU
- Duke
- Durham Tech
- Research Triangle Foundation
- MERK
- Durham Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Durham Inc.

Targeted Engagement

While all will be welcome to participate in the engagement process, there are key interest groups that should be targeted or invited to participate in outreach activities to make sure their voices are heard and input included.

Those key interest groups may include:

- Bike Durham
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Homeless Services Advisory Committee
- Durham Housing Authority
- Mayor's Hispanic/Latino Committee
- Racial Equity Task Force
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Urban Ministries
- Durham Rescue Mission
- DurhamCAN
- Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People
- Durham PACs
- Church World Services Durham
- CASA

Engagement Ambassadors

Engagement Ambassadors are an outreach group formed during the engagement process of the City of Durham's Comprehensive Plan, *EngageDurham* and Listening and Learning Workshops. The Engagement Ambassadors are recruited and chosen by Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS) staff and Planning staff due to their existing connections within the community. The Engagement Ambassador program provides training and a stipend to approximately 40 ambassadors to engage with underrepresented residents. The ambassadors are tasked with reaching under-served community members to ensure those voices and input are incorporated during the Comprehensive Plan and Transit Plan processes.

Through each phase, the project team will consider the most effective way to engage and utilize the Engagement Ambassadors. Special consideration has been given to how to best reach and engage a representative demographic of the community with the intent to accomplishing the following objectives:

- Engaging key community leaders
- Offering decision points for residents who have been historically marginalized and/or underrepresented
- Ensuring representation from a wide range of demographics
- Using the engagement process to raise awareness to local and regional transit issues

Elements for Outreach

During each phase of outreach, a variety of community events, meetings, surveys, and media channels will be used. The following table outlines engagement activities, the purpose of each activity, and the responsibilities for DCHC MPO, County, City, and agency staff and the consultant team.

Target Audience	Purpose of Outreach	Responsibilities	
		Consultant Team	Staff Team
Coordination			
Public Engagement Plan			
Project Management Staff, Consultant Team	Provide a common understanding of outreach, communications, and engagement work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Draft Plan● Update Plan based on Staff comments	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review and provide comment
Committee Meetings			
Executive Team and Core Technical Team (CTT) Meetings			
Executive Team, Core Team	Provide project oversight and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create agendas● Provide materials● Facilitate meetings● Summarize results	Project Management Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Approve agendas● Distribute materials and agendas Executive Team and CTT <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review materials and provide comment/direction

Target Audience	Purpose of Outreach	Responsibilities	
		Consultant Team	Staff Team
Technical Committee			
Key staff from City of Durham, Durham County, DCHC MPO, and GoTriangle	Provide guidance on key topics and assist with outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create agendas● Provide materials● Facilitate meetings● Summarize results	Project Management Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Approve agendas● Distribute materials and agendas Technical Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review materials and provide comment/direction
Outreach Committee			
Individuals with relevant expertise	Assist with outreach and communications work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create agendas● Provide materials● Facilitate meetings● Summarize results	Project Management Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Approve agendas● Distribute materials and agendas Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review materials and provide comment/direction
Public Engagement			
Public Meetings/Workshops			
Public	Provide those interested in the future of transit investments in Durham the chance to participate in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create agendas● Develop marketing materials● Provide materials● Secure virtual platform (if needed)● Help facilitate meetings● Summarize results	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Approve agendas● Choose platform● Distribute meeting information and marketing materials● Help facilitate meetings● Synchronize with EngageDurham (and other regional transportation planning efforts)

Target Audience	Purpose of Outreach	Responsibilities	
		Consultant Team	Staff Team
Engagement Ambassadors			
Public	Engage with underrepresented residents in underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide materials● Provide strategic oversight/planning	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Coordinate with ambassadors● Distribute materials to ambassadors● Outreach logistical planning
Small Focus Groups			
Key Stakeholders and Interest Groups (reached through targeted engagement)	Facilitate focused participation by individuals and small groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide materials● Provide strategic oversight	Technical Committee and Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Help identify stakeholders and small groups Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Secure locations● Schedule interviews● Facilitate interviews● Summarize results
Communications			
Branding			
Public	Create graphic identity for the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create branding materials	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review branding materials
Project Website			
Public	Create a simple website that serves as a “hub” of information for the broader development of the transit plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop materials for inclusion on the website● Host and administer website● Provide content and information	Technical Committee and Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review webpage design and content● Help ensure up-to-date information is available● Provide content and information

Target Audience	Purpose of Outreach	Responsibilities	
		Consultant Team	Staff Team
MetroQuest Online Survey			
Public	Gather feedback on potential projects and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop contentDetermine survey platformSummarize results	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review contentHelp distribute link
Existing Social Media Accounts			
Public	Educate or inform the public; Engage in conversations about issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide content and information	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">Utilize existing City, County, transit agency, and partnering stakeholder’s social media accountsPublish content
E-Blast			
Public	Educate the community on the purpose, process, milestones, and project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create templateDevelop content	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review contentHelp distribute emails
Print/Direct to Person Engagement (postcards, surveys, posters, yard signs, flyers, utility mailers, etc.)			
Public	Engage with members of the community who may not typically participate in online outreach efforts regarding the purpose, process, milestones, and project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop contentCreate materialsHelp distribute	Outreach Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review contentHelp distribute

Engagement Phases

The development of the DTP has three main phases. As with any community planning project, the DTP will evolve over the life of the project, and the project design and timeline may change. When an engagement effort is undertaken, it is incumbent upon DCHC MPO to forthrightly explain the purpose of that engagement. DCHC MPO, Durham County, and the City of Durham invite community members to work with the consultant team and spend their valuable time participating in the DTP's development process. Therefore, it is reasonable for stakeholders to expect a clear explanation of why DCHC MPO is asking them to engage and the method of that engagement. As such, the objective for the engagement within each phase is noted below.

In order to adjust to social distancing measures and allow for flexibility, the inclusion of interactive public workshops, focused stakeholder groups meetings, and Engagement Ambassadors conducting direct-to-person

outreach will be determined at the time of the engagement. The following methods are anticipated to be used during phases I, II, and III of public engagement.

The phases of the DTP are as follows:

Phase I: Preliminary Goal Setting

The DTP team will engage the public to gather input on the proposed goals and objectives synthesized from the transit-related feedback collected during the Listening and Learning phase of Engage Durham outreach, idea collection phase from the City of Durham's first cycle of Participatory Budgeting, and resident focus groups that were conducted to supplement the City of Durham's annual resident survey. The goals and objectives will provide the framework for scenario development and evaluation in future project phases. There are several major planning/outreach efforts happening simultaneously that directly relate-to/impact one another. The DTP team will coordinate and seek alignment for the goals and objectives for these planning efforts. The major planning efforts are listed and described below:

Durham Transit Plan Update – Public transit investments within Durham County, as well as investments that improve connections throughout the region

Durham Comprehensive Plan Update – Physical development of the community (including land use surrounding transit service and transportation improvements/investments)

CAMPO-DCHC MPO 2050 MTP – Long range planning for transportation improvements across the Triangle region

Engagement Objective:

Increase awareness of DTP effort and understanding of overall planning process, garner project support, and receive input on project goals and objectives themselves—as well as the process used by project staff to identify plan goals and objectives. A summary of the planning process to-date will be provided explaining how transit-related comments were collected through previous outreach efforts, catalogued by event type/engagement method and information related to the demographics of respondents for each, the methodology for identifying themes in the comments, and how those were used to develop goals and measurable objectives for the DTP. Respondents will be asked to provide input on the validity of the goals and objectives as well as their respective level of importance. Respondents will have the ability to alter goals and objectives used to develop transit scenarios as well as influence the goal prioritization.

Engagement Methods:

- DTP Committee meetings
- Narrated presentation (for inclusion on website)
- Project website
- Survey (printed and online)
- Printed informational media with QR codes to website/survey
- Small focus groups with stakeholders and/or engagement ambassadors (held in-person if possible, virtually if not)
- Engagement Ambassadors
- Eblasts
- Social Media

Phase II: Scenario Development

The DTP team will develop conceptual transit scenarios representing different combinations of transit investments that most closely achieve the core values, goals, and objectives.

Engagement Objective:

Obtain public feedback on transit alternatives and educate the benefits/trade-offs of different transit options. Work directly with the community to provide feedback on how public input and data analysis influenced the scenarios development. Respondents will be asked to comment on four different transit service scenarios – how they meet the established goals and objectives of the plan, how well the various transit scenarios meet their community's needs, and which aspects of the scenarios they support/do not support and why. Respondents will have the ability to shape and change transit service proposals with their feedback.

Engagement Methods (if conditions permit):

- DTP Committee meetings
- Three public workshops (held in-person if possible, virtually if not with identical content)
- Narrated presentation (for inclusion on website)
- Project website
- Survey (printed and online)
- Printed informational media with QR codes to website/survey
- Small focus groups with stakeholders and/or engagement ambassadors (held in-person if possible, virtually if not)
- Engagement Ambassadors
- Eblasts
- Social Media

Phase III: Scenario Adjustment

The DTP team will revise and adjust the scenarios based on public feedback and then evaluate the scenarios based on their adherence to project goals and objectives and release the final transit plan for public comment. A final preferred alternative will be presented to elected boards for approval with a report documenting feedback received from the public related to the final plan and how input was/was not incorporated.

Engagement Objective:

Present final preferred transit scenario to public, receive feedback, make any necessary changes, and finalize plan.

Engagement Methods (if conditions permit):

- DTP Committee meetings
- Three public workshops (held in-person if possible, virtually if not with identical content)
- Narrated presentation (for inclusion on website)
- Project website
- Survey or comment form (printed and online)
- Printed informational media with QR codes to website/survey
- Small focus groups with stakeholders and/or engagement ambassadors (held in-person if possible, virtually if not)
- Eblasts
- Social Media