TRIANGLE WEST TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION Technical Committee
September 8th, 2026
MINUTES OF MEETING

The Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization Technical Committee met on September 8th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in the Long Leaf Conference Room at the Central Pines Regional Council. The following people were in attendance:

Eric Vitale (TC Chair)	City of Durham
Caroline Dwyer (TC Vice Chair)	Town of Chapel Hill
Ellen Beckmann (Member)	Durham County
Becca Eversole (Member)	Orange County
Duncan Dodson (Member)	Town of Carrboro
Aaron Cain (Member)	Durham City/County Planning
Clint Blackburn (Member)	City of Durham
Lindsay Smart (Member)	City of Durham
Ben Berolzheimer (Member)	Town of Chapel Hill
Bergen Watterson (Member)	Town of Chapel Hill
Lindsay Smart (Member)	City of Durham
Bill Judge (Member)	City of Durham
Denise Chaplick (Member)	City of Durham
Curtis Scarpignato (Member)	Durham County
Jason Hardin (Member)	GoTriangle
Matt Day (Member)	Central Pines Regional Council
Chad Reimakoski (Member)	Division 7 – NCDOT
Jessica Luther (Member)	Division 8 – NCDOT
Johnna Burkett (Member)	Integrated Mobility Division – NCDOT
Julie Bogle (Member)	NCDOT-TPO
Lauren Blackburn	VHB
Doug Plachcinski	Triangle West TPO
Colleen McGue	Triangle West TPO
Monet Moore	Triangle West TPO
David Miller	Triangle West TPO
Thomas Porter	Triangle West TPO
Filmon Fishastion	Triangle West TPO
Yanping Zhang	Triangle West TPO
Jayne Langston	Triangle West TPO

Quorum Count: 19 of 21 Voting Members

Chair Eric Vitale called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the Triangle West TPO Technical Committee were identified and are indicated above.

PRELIMINARIES:

1. Roll Call

Chair Vitale asked in-person attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Vitale requested that the two Comprehensive Transportation Plan amendments be moved to the front of the Action Items, as the Triangle Bikeway amendment provides an introduction to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The Committee agreed, and the Action Items were renumbered accordingly.

3. Public Comments

Chair Vitale asked if any members of the public were signed up to speak. There were none.

REPORTS FROM STAFF:

4. Report from TPO Staff

Doug Plachcinski, CFM, Triangle West TPO Executive Director

No additional report beyond the written staff report included in the packet.

5. Report from the Technical Committee Chair

Eric Vitale, TC Chair

No report.

6. North Carolina Department of Transportation Reports

Becca Gallas (Matt Nolfo, David Keilson), Division 5 – NCDOT

No additional updates beyond the Division 5 project update included in the packet.

Wright Archer (Chad Reimakoski), Division 7 – NCDOT

Chad Reimakoski reported several additions to the Division 7 project report, including an update to a highway safety project and a correction to the bridge replacement project on Clinton Church Road, which should list three locations. In response to a member question regarding the status of the NC 54 pedestrian improvements, Reimakoski reported that the remaining work involves directional drilling and foundation installation and is expected to be completed shortly.

Reuben Blakely (Jessica Luther), Division 8 – NCDOT

No additional updates beyond the Division 8 project update included in the packet.

Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Office – NCDOT

The Transportation Planning Office reported that the NCDOT Traffic Survey Group has released the official 2024 traffic monitoring data publication, which includes annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts. Interactive traffic volume maps and shapefiles are available on the NCDOT website, along with the Traffic Count Database System (TCDS).

Johnna Burkett, Integrated Mobility Division – NCDOT

Johnna Burkett reported that a statewide planning effort is underway with an open public survey, materials for which were included in the packet, and encouraged members to participate. Burkett also reported that additional information on paved trail feasibility studies and micro-transit feasibility studies will be available later this fall.

CONSENT AGENDA:

7. Approving August 11th, 2026 TC Minutes
Samad Rangoonwala, Triangle West TPO Transportation Planner

8. Letter of Support for the Orange County 5310 Application
Madeline Galliano, Triangle West TPO Transportation Planner

Member Eversole moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Dodson. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. CTP Amendment – Triangle Bikeway
Monet Moore, Triangle West TPO Principal Planner
David Miller, Triangle West TPO Principal Planner

Principal Planner Monet Moore presented a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) to add the Triangle Bikeway. Planner Moore explained that the CTP is a long-term plan that it is not fiscally constrained, and that the designs shown within it are not final. Planner Moore described the Triangle Bikeway alignment as studied and adopted in the 2022 Triangle Bikeway Feasibility and Implementation Study and explained that the amendment would replace the existing bicycle and multi-use path CTP projects that overlap the alignment with a single continuous project, adding new segments where no facility is currently adopted, in order to ensure consistency among the feasibility study, the CTP, and NCDOT project U-5774.

TC Member Blackburn raised concerns from the City of Durham regarding funding and long-term maintenance. Principal Planner David Miller responded that maintenance is an ongoing topic of discussion, that staff met recently with member jurisdictions along the alignment, and that a meeting with elected officials was scheduled for the following day with the goal of developing a unified regional approach to maintenance. Members noted that similar concerns had been raised by other jurisdictions, and that contracting maintenance to a third party had been suggested. Planning Manager Colleen McGue clarified that the CTP is a needs plan, is not fiscally constrained, and that the requested action is not a funding action. Executive Director Plachcinski added that there is agreement across the region on supporting the project and on working through the maintenance question regionally. Lindsay Smart pointed out a slide that stated the CTP is a shared vision for the region, but that this project is not a priority for the City. A member asked whether additional projects in Orange County could be added to the amendment, and Planning Manager Colleen McGue responded that the amendment proposes only what was in the approved plan.

Member Beckmann moved to recommend that the Triangle West TPO Board release the proposed Triangle Bikeway Comprehensive Transportation Plan Amendment for a 45-day public comment period. The motion was seconded by Member Cain. The motion passed unanimously.

10. CTP Amendments – City of Durham
Eric Vitale, City of Durham

Chair Vitale turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Dwyer, who presided over this item. The City of Durham Department of Transportation brought forward four proposed amendments to the 2017 Comprehensive Transportation Plan, explaining that conditions have changed since adoption and that several mapped projects no longer align with current conditions.

The Alston Avenue Extension amendment would remove the corridor due to neighborhood impacts, including impacts to historically Black neighborhoods and to residential properties, a conflict with an ongoing rezoning of nearly 300 units, conflicts with two city bond projects, and minimal connectivity benefit that could be served by other local streets. The Miami Boulevard Extension amendment would remove a short segment that exists principally to connect to the Alston Avenue Extension. The Pettigrew Street Extension (East) amendment would remove a 1.4-mile segment from Ellis Road to Glover Road, where the alignment crosses a major pharmaceutical manufacturing campus and the developer intends to construct a private street; the City requested that the amendment include a publicly accessible multi-use path in place of the removed public street. The Midland Terrace Extension amendment would remove a segment that conflicts with a transit bus operations and maintenance facility currently in planning and design, intersects a solar installation, runs through environmental justice areas, and would require grade separation of the railroad near Junction Road.

Director Plachcinski asked how the City balances whether an investment in communities that have historically had limited opportunity to engage in transportation planning is constructive or destructive. City staff responded that the City's comprehensive plan emphasizes lower-speed connected local streets over high-speed capacity roadways.

Member Cain moved to recommend that the Triangle West TPO Board release the Alston Avenue Extension, Miami Boulevard Extension, Pettigrew Street Extension (East), and Midland Terrace Extension Comprehensive Transportation Plan Amendments for a 45-day public comment period. The motion was seconded by Member Dwyer. The motion passed with two nay votes from Member Day and Member Bogle

11. P9 Express Design Recommendation
Filmon Fishastion, Triangle West TPO Transportation Planner
Transportation Planner Filmon Fishastion presented the third round of express design selections. Planner Fishastion explained that beginning in Prioritization 9, highway projects submitted to the Statewide Prioritization process will require at least an express design level cost estimate, that NCDOT will facilitate express design development through the Feasibility Studies Unit, and that the express design process produces a cost estimate and alternative conceptual designs without advancing to detailed design or engineering. Planner Fishastion reported that Triangle West has been allocated nine express design slots to be selected in batches of three, with the first round completed in November and the second in June, and that the recommended selections for this round are the Purefoy Road Extension, the Manning Drive intersection improvements at US 15-501, and the Hebron Road Extension.

The Town of Chapel Hill asked that the Manning Drive request be described as an intersection improvement rather than an interchange, and staff agreed. Members also asked about coordination between the Purefoy Road Extension and greenway and transit planning in the vicinity.

Member Eversole moved to recommend that the Triangle West TPO Board approve the selected Express Design submissions. The motion was seconded by Member Blackburn. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Fiscal Year 2028 Unified Planning Work Program

Thomas Porter, Triangle West TPO Transportation Planner

Transportation Planner Thomas Porter presented the draft FY2028 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Planner Porter explained that the UPWP is the TPO's annual funding document, defines planning priorities for the fiscal year, and uses Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration funds which are matched by state and local sources.

Planner Porter requested that the Technical Committee recommend that the Board release the draft UPWP for public comment on September 22nd. Planner Porter noted that the special study request deadline was August 31st, but that staff remain available to discuss potential studies. In response to a question from Ben Berolzheimer, Town of Chapel Hill, Principal Planner David Miller shared that a regional trail study proposed in FY27 was withdrawn by the requesting organization. Ellen Beckman, Durham County, observed that the draft is largely a continuation of the current budget.

Member Beckmann moved to recommend that the Triangle West TPO Board release the draft FY2028 UPWP for public comment. The motion was seconded by Member Smart. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

13. J Branch Rail Trail Feasibility Study Update

David Miller, Triangle West TPO Principal Planner

Lauren Blackburn, Transportation Planning Lead, VHB

Principal Planner David Miller introduced the J Branch Rail Trail Feasibility Study. Lauren Blackburn of VHB presented an update on the study's progress and the results of the first round of public engagement.

Blackburn reported that completed work includes an existing conditions summary, a feasibility assessment, a review of 43 regional plans, case studies, and an initial planning framework.

Blackburn described an initial planning framework treating the northern portion of the corridor as a traditional rail trail reflecting its natural context, and the southern portion as a wider, commuter-oriented facility with greater separation of uses. On engagement, Blackburn reported that 2,616 postcards were mailed to adjacent property owners, that a visioning workshop and three public workshops were held between mid-July and early August, that seven pop-up events were held in August, and that the survey received 548 responses. Approximately 68 percent of respondents live near the corridor and approximately one quarter own property along it. Roughly 80 percent indicated they would use a trail for recreation on a daily or weekly basis. Recurring themes included north-south and east-west connectivity, transportation choice, access to natural resources and environmental stewardship, and health and wellness.

Blackburn reported that public feedback to date has included some property owner concerns but little outright opposition. Next steps include economic and community impact analysis, concept planning with visual tools, and a second round of public engagement in early 2027, with a return to the Technical Committee before the study concludes.

TC Member Denise Chaplick asked for funding required for this study. David Miller replied that the total is $500,000, which includes a combination of the required 20% local match and 80% STBG-DA funds. TC Member Chaplick asked if the NEPA process was incorporated into this study, and if not, how it could in the future. Blackburn replied that because the study did not include any formal design work, there was no NEPA work that would be included bu that the team was doing an environmental suitability analysis.

14. Recent News Articles and Updates

Chair Vitale referenced the news articles and updates included in the agenda packet and noted that the 2026 Triangle West Membership Survey is open through September 30th, 2026. Chair Vitale also encouraged members to register for the 2026 Triangle Regional Transportation Safety Summit, scheduled for December 8th, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Cain made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 13th, 2026.