

TRIANGLE WEST TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Board Meeting
September 23rd, 2025
MINUTES OF MEETING

The Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization Board met on September 23rd, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Long Leaf Conference Room at the Central Pines Regional Council. The following people were in attendance:

Karen Howard (Chair)	Chatham County
Amy Fowler (Board member)	Orange County
Carl Rist (Board member)	City of Durham
Danny Nowell (Board member)	Town of Carrboro
Nida Allam (Board member)	Durham County
Mark Bell (Board member)	Town of Hillsborough
Sally Greene (Board member)	GoTriangle
Lisa Mathis (Board member)*	NCDOT Board
Melissa McCullough (Board member)	Town of Chapel Hill
Marilyn Carter (Alternate)	Orange County
David Keilson	NCDOT Division 5
Chad Reimakoski	NCDOT Division 7
Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
Becca Eversole-Robinson	Town of Carrboro
Matt Day	Central Pines Regional Council
Sarah Williamson	Orange County
Ben Berolzheimer*	Town of Chapel Hill
Eric Vitale*	City of Durham
Thanh Schado*	Chatham County
Logan DiGiacomo*	GoTriangle
Bergen Watterson*	Town of Chapel Hill
Julie Bogle*	NCDOT TPD
Marie Parker*	Town of Carrboro
Bryan Kluchar*	NCDOT Division 8
Ellen Beckmann	Durham County
Doug Plachcinski	Triangle West TPO
Colleen McGue	Triangle West TPO
Yanping Zhang	Triangle West TPO
KC Chae*	Triangle West TPO
Filmon Fishastion	Triangle West TPO
Samad Rangoonwala	Triangle West TPO
David Miller	Triangle West TPO
Thomas Porter	Triangle West TPO
Madeline Galliano	Triangle West TPO

Yuwen He* [REDACTED] Triangle West TPO
Dolly Hall-Quinlan* [REDACTED] Triangle West TPO

Quorum Count: 9 of 10 Voting Board members

Chair Karen Howard called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Voting Board members and Alternate Board members of the Triangle West Board were identified and indicated above.

PRELIMINARIES:

1. Roll Call

Chair Karen Howard asked in-person attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Ethics Reminder

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

Triangle West TPO Executive Director Doug Plachcinski requested the board to add a budget amendment that was handed out to attendees as item 8A. This budget amendment increases the Triangle West TPO budget within the CPRC budget to reflect the awarding of 5303 funds and the Prioritization Process Pilot Program grant.

4. Public Comments

CONSENT AGENDA:

5. Approval of August 12th, 2025, TC Minutes

Samad Rangoonwala, Transportation Planner

6. Letter of Support for Orange County 5310

Colleen McGue, TPO Planning Manager

7. Request for Additional Funding For HL-0045

Stephanie Trueblood, Town of Hillsborough

78 **8. TIP Accelerated Amendment #1**
79 **Filmon Fishaston, Transportation Planner**

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81 Board member Mark Bell moved to accept the Agenda and the Consent Agenda. The
82 motion was seconded by Board member Melissa McCullough. The motion passed
83 unanimously.

84 **ACTION ITEMS**

85 **9. PUBLIC HEARING: 2055 MTP Preferred Option**

86 Board member Amy Fowler made a motion to open the Public Hearing on the 2055 MTP
87 Preferred Option; Board member Mellissa McCollough seconded the motion. The
88 motion passed unanimously.

89 Joe Milazzo Executive Director of the Regional Transportation Alliance applauded the
90 board for the opportunity to speak, he expressed the business community's support for
91 multi modal transportation, including the FAST 2.0 Study, and encouraged the board to
92 include the elements of that study, including BRT on I-40, an exchange station for
93 regional transit and ensuring there's sufficient multi modal capacity on major freeway
94 arterials.

95 As no one else in person or online indicated they wanted to address the board, Board
96 member Mellissa McCollough made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the 2055
97 Preferred Option. The motion was seconded by Board member Nida Allam. The motion
98 passed unanimously.

99
100 **10. Draft FY 2027 Unified Planning and Work Program (UPWP): Request for Public**
101 **Comment**

Thomas Porter, Transportation Planner

Transportation Planner Thomas Porter presented the Draft FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He explained the purpose of the UPWP, the development schedule, the different funding sources, and new additions to this year's document. One change includes updating the FY 2027 UPWP to include new task codes that better represent the MPO's work. Mr. Porter went over the proposed special studies for FY 2027 including Extra regional MTIP Database, NC-54 study, Joint Regional Trail Plan, and the TDM plan Update. Board member Wendy Jacobs asked if the NC-54 Study would include the proposed passenger rail stop at RTP. Executive Director Doug Plachcinski explained that the passenger rail project would be studied as part of the FY 2026 budget and was separate from the FY 2027 NC-54 Study.

Board member Sally Greene asked for the start and end points of the FY25 15-501 study. Executive Director Plachcinski explained that those had not been fully determined yet but would be unlikely to go east of the 15-501 bypass, and the western terminus was yet to be decided. Board member Jacobs and Board member Carl Rist asked about end dates for the carryover of FY 2025 studies. Mr. Porter also explained that the TPO is requesting 2% of the gross budget in the form of local Board member match, which would be dedicated to establishing a funding reserve that would provide financial resiliency and flexibility for the TPO.

Board member Danny Nowell asked if there was a likely need to increase the funding reserve over the next few budget cycles. Executive Director Plachcinski explained that

the budget was likely to remain fairly stable, and that delays in NCDOT reimbursements and other factors have caused cashflow issues impacting the TPO and Central Pines Regional Council, which has necessitated the creation of the reserve.

Board member Rist expressed support for the reserve but wished for further discussion about policies surrounding usage and replenishment of the reserve. Board member Jacobs noted that the Co-Gen Rail Trail project is on a line that is designated as a potential passenger rail line. Board member Greene expressed support for the Co-Gen project, explaining that it's a way to bring UNC-Chapel Hill into the fold and move the Co-Gen Power plant off of coal.

Board member Mellissa McCullough made a motion to release the FY 2027 UPWP for a 30-day public comment period. The motion was seconded by Board member Carl Rist. The motion passed unanimously.

11. SPOT 8.0 Project Priority List **Filmon Fishastion, Transportation Planner**

Transportation Planner Filmon Fishastion presented on the SPOT 8 Project submissions list, starting with an overview of SPOT and the changes to it in the SPOT 8 cycle including the reduction in project submissions from 24 for each mode to 17 for each mode. Filmon emphasized that there was very little funding available during SPOT 7, and the expectation is that there will be even less during this cycle. Mr. Fishastion went over the project lists for each of the Highway, Transit, Rail, and Bike-Ped modes in each of NCDOT Divisions 5, 7 and 8,

Regions C and D and at the statewide level. Mr. Fishastion also presented the projects that CAMPO, Kerr Tar RPO, and Central Pines RPO will be submitting to SPOT 8, which are also within the Triangle West area. Some projects will also be submitted by NCDOT Divisions 5, 7, and 8.

Most of the cross-jurisdictional transit projects that will be submitted by CAMPO are at the regional funding level. This is an area where the TPO saw multiple projects funded in P7.

Mr. Fishastion presented proposed changes to the Division tier funding weights that are being coordinated with partner organizations in each division. The weight changes were only approved by all partners in Division 5, with the partners in Division 7 being unable to come to an agreement. Filmon also presented the P8 cycle schedule with the SPOT online submission period ending on September 30th, 2025.

Board member Sally Greene asked about the Mebane to Carrboro BRT, adding that the board had discussed the topic earlier this year. Executive Director Doug Plachcinski explained that the project was a combination of a variety of projects and is designed both as a valuable standalone transit line but also to leverage the NS-BRT corridor and gain additional funding for that corridor as well as the Hillsborough Transfer center. This has a better chance of getting funded at the regional level than those projects do at the divisional level due to the forecasted funding availability in each tier.

A motion to approve the SPOT 8.0 Project Lists was made by Board member Melissa McCullough. The motion was seconded by Board member Amy Fowler. The motion passed unanimously.

12. FY2026-2035 TIP Amendment #1
Filmon Fishastion, Transportation Planner

Transportation Planner Filmon Fishastion presented on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update process and TIP Amendment #1. Mr. Fishastion explained that the TIP is a 10-year program of funded transportation projects, and amendments are needed when adding/removing projects, or there is a significant change to the project. Mr. Fishastion overviewed the new accelerated amendment process which will allow amendments to be proposed and adopted in the same month as outlined in the TPO's Public Participation Plan. Accelerated Amendments take place when changes are needed in a quicker timeline than the amendment process can accommodate.

Accelerated Amendment #1 includes additional funding for HL-0045 and the Item N statewide project requests from NCDOT.

Amendment #1 included adding the Central Durham BRT project with 5307 funds and the Village Mobility Hub using funds from an Area of Persistent Poverty award. Updates to the Horton Road pedestrian project, GoTriangle Systemwide Replacement Bus Purchases, and the NS-BRT were also presented.

Accelerated Amendment #1 will be brought to the board for adoption on September 23, 2025. TIP Amendment #1 will be brought to the Board and TC to be adopted in November after the public comment period ends on October 24th.

Board member Wendy Jacobs asked if the Central Durham BRT and Village Mobility hub changes were just moving money forward in the budget. Mr. Fishastion and Executive Director Plachcinski explained that the new funding sources for those projects were not yet in the STIP, and this is required by FTA to help them track the funding sources.

Board member Jacobs and Board member Carl Rist noted that Durham County and City Staff needed to clarify where the local match for the new grant funding would be coming from.

Board member Marilyn Carter asked about the emergency amendment process and if there was a policy for when projects would qualify for acceleration.

Mr. Fishastion explained that the Public Participation Plan included this procedure and left it to the discretion of the director. Board member Carter followed up asking if there was a connection between the procedure and the damage done by Tropical Storm Chantal in Orange County. Mr. Fishastion clarified that there was no connection, but it is convenient in allowing for easier disaster responses.

Board member Melissa McCullough made a motion to release Amendment #1 for public comment. The motion was seconded by Board member Danny Nowell. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Amendment: Massey Chapel Road
Bill Judge, City of Durham
Earl Lewellyn, Kimley-Horn and Associates

City of Durham Transportation Department Assistant Director Bill Judge explained that at the June meeting the board released the CTP amendment for public comment. The public's comments were mixed, and there appeared to be some confusion from the public about what the proposal was and its timeline. In recognition of these concerns, however, there was conversation about removing the existing CTP Realignment of Massey Chapel Road, amending CTP to maintain the status quo roadway.

Earl Lewellyn, a consultant for Kimley-Horn proposing the amendment on behalf of a private client explained the reason why his client preferred the initial proposed CTP amendment which would shift Massey Chapel Road onto a new alignment built along the existing James Ross Road.

Board member McCullough asked if a pair of roundabouts had been considered an option for the intersection. Earl explained they considered but didn't study the option due to ROW constraints and the presence of a historic church.

Board member Rist made a motion to amend CTP to remove the Massey Chapel Road Realignment and instead keep the existing Massey Chapel Road Alignment in CTP. The motion was seconded by Board member Wendy Jacobs. The motion passed unanimously.

After the motion passed, the board clarified their intention with the motion to approve the TC recommended action and not to approve the amendment brought by Earl Lewellyn on behalf of his client.

Mr. Lewellyn asked if his client submits an application for rezoning and does not protect the existing CTP corridor, and NCDOT does not adopt the approved CTP amendment if that would be a basis for rejecting his client's application. Executive Director Plachcinski expressed his willingness to discuss the issue with local staff in that case.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

237 **14. Strategic Plan**

238 **Doug Plachcinski, Executive Director**

239 **Drew Finley, Fountainworks**

240 **Beau Mills, Fountainworks**

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242 Executive Director Plachcinski introduced Beau Mills and Drew Finley, the consultants
243 from Fountainworks who have been working with the TPO to conduct the strategic plan
244 and organizational assessment. Mr. Finley went over both the strategic plan and
245 organizational assessment, explaining the process for both these documents. He
246 covered the major findings of the organizational assessment and recommendations for
247 future changes including the hiring of an additional modeler, an administrative
248 specialist, a community engagement specialist, and a transportation mobility manager.
249 This would even out the workload across the team and better align job responsibilities
250 with skill sets and experience. Other recommendations were to create more specific job
251 titles and improve employee benefits, the establishment of an operating reserve, and an
252 onboarding process for new employees.

253 Mr. Finley went over the Strategic Plan, its focus areas, the organization values and its
254 framework for the future of the TPO.

255 Board Member Wendy Jacobs asked if the board could have a more in-depth
256 conversation with more time to discuss; she also asked about how the TPO would
257 prioritize the new positions. Mr. Finley explained that the positions were not prioritized
258 yet to allow for flexibility in how they were hired. Doug clarified that the transportation
259 modeler was the first priority to allow the TPO to prepare for the express design
260 requirement in P9.

Board Member Carl Rist expressed support for the plan and the additional staff capacity. He asked if there was a SWOT analysis done and if there could be an assessment of the TPO's current effectiveness.

Board Member Amy Fowler asked what was driving the high workloads on TPO staff and why most or all of TPO staff had taken on new responsibilities.

Board Member Melissa McCullough made comments, expressing a desire to recast organization values instead of just environmental sustainability but sustainability in all contexts. She expressed a desire to include the total costs of project maintenance as part of strategic focus #2: Evaluate the state of infrastructure repair and maintenance.

Board Member McCullough continued asking for expansion in the usage of resiliency in the strategic plan, for greater partnership with contractors emphasizing the need to bring them onboard as collaborators rather than opposition by showing how bike-ped projects can be valuable projects for them , and improving core product performance metrics to include emissions reductions and induced demand for travel time costs.

Amy Fowler asked who would develop the action steps for the strategic plan and for more information about who is doing some of the tasks that would be assigned to the proposed new roles. Executive Director Doug Plachcinski explained that bringing on an admin and community engagement specialist would free existing staff from work that has been taken on since leaving the City of Durham where the TPO was able to lean on city staff for some admin and engagement tasks.

REPORTS:

15. Report from TPO Staff

Doug Plachcinski

In addition to the written report, Executive Director Doug Plachcinski shared work that Board members of TPO staff were excited about having done recently.

16. Report from the Board Chair

Karen Howard, Board Chair

No report.

17. NCDOT Reports

Lisa Mathis, NCDOT Board

Board Member Lisa Mathis shared that the transportation summit earlier in the month had brought together over 1100 participants. She shared that while Hurricane Erin didn't make landfall it had caused some damage along the coast, and that NCDOT had online resources for Hurricane Season. A new intercity bus service has started in Asheville; DOT has brought on 40 new drivers license examiners and NCDOT has a new secretary Daniel Johnson after the retirement of Secretary Joey Hopkins.

Becca Gallas, Division 5 – NCDOT

No report.

Wright Archer (Chad Reimakoski, Stephen Robinson), Division 7 – NCDOT

No report.

Reuben Blakey (Bryan Kluchar), Division 8 – NCDOT

No report.

Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division – NCDOT

Julie Bogle shared that the traffic survey group had published the 2024 AADT counts.

John Grant, Traffic Operations – NCDOT

No report.

Vacant, Integrated Mobility Division

No report.

18. Recent News Articles & Updates

19.¹ Closed Session: Executive Director Performance Evaluation

Council Member Wendy Jacobs made a motion to go into closed session to complete the evaluation of the TPO Executive Director's performance. The motion was seconded by Council member Danny Nowell, the motion passed unanimously. The Board set the executive director's salary at \$198,375, retroactive to July 1, 2025. The motion to set the executive director's salary was made by Wendy Jacobs, the motion was seconded by Mellissa McCollough. The motion passed unanimously.

Danny Nowell Made a motion to exit closed session. The motion was seconded by Karen Howard. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Karen Howard Adjourned the meeting following the closed session.