2025-2029

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro
Metropolitan Planning Organization

June 2024

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Introduction

Executive Summary
Coordinated Planning

Executive Summary

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is the regional organization responsible for transportation planning for the western part of the Research Triangle area in North Carolina.

Every five years, the DCHC MPO develops a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan ("Coordinated Plan") to better serve local older adults, people with disabilities, and people or households with low incomes. To develop the Coordinated Plan, stakeholders from the area engaged in workshops to identify needs and produce plans or prioritize strategies that meet those needs. This document also reviews transit services that are currently available to older adults and people with disabilities in the DCHC MPO planning area.

The five main areas for improvement as determined at the 2019 Coordinated Plan workshop and through additional public comment were:

1) Coordination/Mobility Hub for Human Services Transportation

2) Expanded Transportation Services

3) Expanded Education Services

4) Application Process Improvements

5) Bus Stop Access Improvements
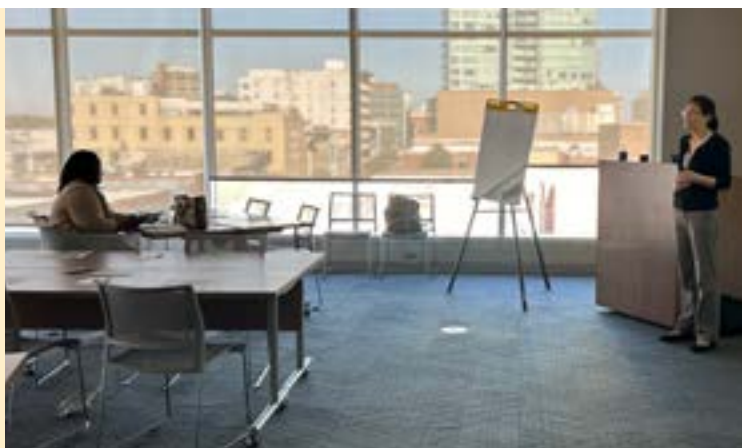
The 2024 Coordinated Plan workshops determined that these needs remain relevant. In particular, the desire for a mobility hub, education services, and application process improvements continue to be significant indicators of a greater need for regional mobility management.

Coordinated Planning

This section provides an overview of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, including why it exists, who the stakeholders are, and what the process of updating the plan entails.

What Federal Legislation Guides this Plan?

The requirement to develop a Coordinated Plan originates from the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005. This act required designated recipients of Section 5307 and Section 5310 funds to develop a plan to address the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. This requirement has been reauthorized several times.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which provides long term funding for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment, was authorized on November 15, 2021. The IIJA included the requirement (continued from the previous federal transportation authorization) that local communities have a "coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" to improve mobility for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes by removing barriers to transportation services. It also included $550 billion in new investments for expanding transportation mobility options, among other needed improvements.

This plan fulfills the Coordinated Plan requirement for all Section 5307 and Section 5310 recipients within the DCHC MPO area.

What is the Coordinated Planning Process?

Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 program be "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan," according to FTA C 9070.1G (page V-I). The Coordinated Planning process can be broken down into three steps, as shown on the next page.

The Three Step Process

1 Identify the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes

Create strategies that address local needs **2**

3 Prioritize strategies for funding and implementation

As defined in the federal guidance, public transportation is regular, continuing shared-ride surface transportation services, which are open to the public or a segment of the public defined by age, disability, or low incomes and the services currently available to them. Public transportation does not include intercity passenger rail transportation provided by Amtrak; intercity bus service, charter bus service; school bus service; sightseeing service; courtesy shuttle service for patrons of one or more specific establishments; or intraterminal or intrafacility shuttle service. Public transit can be broken down into the following 3 categories:

1. Fixed Route Transit

Bus or rail service that follows consistent routes and schedules. This includes regular Chapel Hill Transit, GoDurham, GoTriangle, PART, Orange County Transportation, and Chatham County Transit lines.

Image: GoDurham Bus by HeyItsDavid, CC BY-SA 4.0

2. Demand Response Paratransit

Non-fixed route services that provide transportation for the public (eligibility criteria may apply based on factors, not just disability).

Image: GoDurham ACCESS by GoDurham

3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit

Transportation services for persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route system. All fixed route operators (excluding commuter bus/rail) are required to provide this service for eligible individuals with a service area that is within 3/4 mile of fixed route services.

Image: EZ Rider by Town of Chapel Hill

What is human services transportation?

Human services transportation, as defined in the federal guidance, includes a broad range of transportation service options designed to meet the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations including older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes.

Individuals have different needs and may require a set of different services depending on their abilities, their environment, and the options available in their communities. Some examples of human services transportation include dial-a-ride (responding to individual door-to-door transportation requests), bus tokens or transit passes for fixed route scheduled services, and taxi vouchers or mileage reimbursement to volunteers or program participants.

Transportation is essential to accessing human services agencies. These agencies support a variety of economic and personal needs such as:

1) **Senior Services** (i.e., healthcare, home care, social activities)

2) **Disability Services** (i.e., accessibility, employment, education)

3) **Social Services** (i.e., housing, food, clothing)

Some human services agencies have their own vehicles to provide clients with rides to and from their locations. Other agencies pay for a share of services through a transit provider or have little to no means of providing assistance to reach their locations.

Examples of local human services agencies

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What is DCHC MPO? What Area Does it Cover?

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is a policy body that coordinates and makes decisions on transportation planning issues. DCHC MPO covers the western part of the Research Triangle and includes Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Durham, Hillsborough, Durham County, Orange County, and northeast Chatham County. Raleigh and the eastern part of the Research Triangle are covered by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO). The DCHC boundary is determined by the Census.

DCHC MPO is comprised of the MPO Board, the Technical Committee (TC), local governments, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). DCHC MPO is also one of the ten urban areas in North Carolina designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). A TMA is an urban area with a population of over 200,000 people. Additional information about the DCHC MPO can be found at dchcmpo.org.

Other metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), like DCHC MPO, are responsible for the creation and update of a Coordinated Plan. Rural planning organizations (RPOs) are also required to have Coordinated Plans as a condition of using Section 5310 funds. During the development of this plan, the Coordinated Plans of neighboring MPOs and RPOs were reviewed for consistency. As always in transportation planning work, this plan is also subject to amendments as part of the "3C process"` (comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing).

DCHC MPO Planning Area

DCHC MPO and CAMPO Planning Area

The Coordinated Plan is a useful tool to assess the need for mobility management in the region. The more gaps that are identified in the plan, the greater the need for additional mobility management.

What is mobility management?

Mobility management refers to a strategic approach aimed at improving transportation options and services within a community or region. It focuses on maximizing the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of transportation resources to meet the diverse needs of travelers, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Mobility management seeks to promote sustainable, efficient, and inclusive transportation solutions that enhance mobility and quality of life for all members of the community.

Key aspects of mobility management include:

Coordination
Coordinating transportation providers, services, and resources to create a seamless and integrated network

Information & Outreach
Providing accurate and accessible information on services, routes, fares, schedules, and eligibility

Partnerships
Connecting the resources and expertise of public, private, non-profit, and community stakeholders

Innovation
Adopting innovative technologies and strategies to improve transportation services and address needs

Accessibility

Ensuring accessibility for all travelers, including individuals with disabilities and older adults

Evaluation & Improvement

Monitoring and evaluating the performance of services and identifying areas of improvement

Mobility management professionals include mobility managers, social services coordinators, community engagement specialists, technology access specialists, and senior services coordinators. The stakeholder workshops conducted during this planning effort suggest that a more centralized mobility management system, such as a regional call center with consistent information accessibility, is needed for the DCHC MPO area.

There are also a variety of existing plans in the MPO's service area that aim to address mobility management goals. Some examples include the Durham Master Aging Plan, the Orange County Master Aging Plan, and the Central Pines Regional Council Area Plan for Aging and Human Services. All of these plans support planning for the well-being of older adults and include some degree of transportation needs.

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Existing Conditions

Demographics

Image: Orange County Public Transportation

Demographics

As of the 2020 Census, the Durham urbanized area (UZA) population is the fourth largest urban area in the state of North Carolina with a population of 396,118, behind Charlotte, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem. As of January 1, 2023, the DCHC MPO boundaries increased that population count to 462,954.

As of the publishing of this plan, the new DCHC MPO boundaries are being finalized from the 2020 Census. The final boundaries will discern the block groups used to determine more accurate demographic counts. This data will be analyzed more thoroughly in the upcoming update to the DCHC MPO Environmental Justice Report.

For the purposes of this report, population data listed below is based on Census identified boundaries such as townships and entire counties using 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

Table 1. Distribution of Population in the Durham Urbanized Area among DCHC MPO Members (Source: 2025 DCHC MPO Unified Planning Work Program)

Member	% UZA Population*
City of Durham	53.38%
Durham County	11.15%
Chapel Hill	12.33%
Carrboro	4.22%
Hillsborough	1.98%
Orange County	7.03%
Chatham County	4.91%

Transportation-Disadvantaged Communities

The Coordinated Plan aims to improve mobility for three specific transportation-disadvantaged communities: older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low-incomes. However, other transportation-disadvantaged communities such as rural residents, minority and ethnic communities, homeless individuals, those with limited English proficiency, and households without a car often also benefit from mobility improvements.

These demographic groupings are also not exclusive. For example, 2022 ACS data for Durham County estimates that 47,909 people (or 14.6% of the County's non-institutionalized population) are 65 years or older and 12,270 of those adults (or 25.6%) have a disability. When you look at adults in Durham County who are 75+, those with a disability increases to 40.3%.

Table 2. Durham, Orange, and Chatham County Population of Older Adults, People with Disabilities, and People with Low Incomes (Source: ACS 2022)

	Durham County	Orange County	Chatham County
Total non-institutionalized civilian population	**327,415**	**149,549**	**79,162**
▪ With a disability	36,569 **(11.2%)**	12,925 **(8.6%)**	8,522 **(10.8%)**
▪ With a hearing disability	6,643 **(2%)**	4,234 **(2.8%)**	2,706 **(3.4%)**
▪ With a vision disability	4,506 **(1.4%)**	2,094 **(1.4%)**	1,081 **(1.4%)**
▪ With a cognitive disability	15,496 **(5%)**	4,498 **(3.1%)**	2,513 **(3.3%)**
▪ With an ambulatory disability	18,989 **(6.2%)**	5,241 **(3.6%)**	3,438 **(4.6%)**
▪ With a self-care disability	6,985 **(2.3%)**	1,590 **(1.1%)**	1,586 **(2.1%)**
▪ With an independent living disability	13,419 **(5.1%)**	4,101 **(3.4%)**	2,966 **(4.6%)**
Total population 65 or older	**47,909**	**24,104**	**20,072**
▪ With a disability	12,270 **(25.6%)**	6,587 **(27.3%)**	5,351 **(26.7%)**
Total low-income population (households under $50k; 80% of median)	**27.7%**	**29.3%**	**28.5%**

People with Low Incomes

There are many ways to determine whether an individual or a household is considered low-income, and these values can vary from federal to state to local averages. For the purposes of this plan, we will consider low-income households as those that are meeting less than 80% of the median household income. This plan also reviews Census estimates for poverty, which is a pretax money income compared to a poverty threshold that is adjusted by family consumption.

When looking at poverty by age in the different townships, Durham township has the largest poverty level in the population under 18, Chapel Hill and Williams townships are largest for those 18-64, and Hillsborough is largest for 65 and older.

Table 3. Low Income Thresholds and Poverty Rate by County and Township (Source: ACS 2022)

	Median / Low Income	Poverty
Durham County	$80,089 / $64,071	10.5%
Durham Township	$57,253 / $45,802	19.6%
Orange County	$89,291 / $71,433	14%
Chapel Hill Township	$85,837 / $68,670	14.8%
Hillsborough Township	$82,520 / $66,016	7.2%
Chatham County	$77,906 / $62,325	9.4%
Williams Township	$129,065 / $103,252	2.7%

People with Disabilities

Planning transportation for people with disabilities can look different from one type of disability to another. A hearing impairment may necessitate improved visual wayfinding whereas visual difficulty may lead to increased need for tactile landing pads. An ambulatory disability may require a wheelchair lift or onboard storage for a walker whereas a cognitive disability may require additional travel training materials.

Another plan that works to address mobility access for people with disabilities is the <u>DCHC MPO ADA Transition Plan</u>. This plan was last updated in 2017 and is a comprehensive review of what is required to bring the DCHC MPO into full ADA compliance.

2022 ACS data approximates that 11.2% of residents in Durham County currently have a disability, with the most common disability being ambulatory. In Orange County, approximately 8.6% of residents have a disability and in Chatham County that number increases to 10.8%. Across the 3 counties, close to 60,000 people are estimated to have a disability.

Older Adults

There is no "one size fits all" age for when a person becomes an older adult. This plan defines older adults as people that are 65 years or older, which is the standard for existing federal programs such as Medicaid. However, there are some transit operations in the DCHC MPO area where older adults become eligible once they turn 60.

Table 4. Median Age and Percentage of Population Over 65 by County and Township (Source: ACS 2022)

	Median Age	65+ Population
Durham County	36.1	14.8%
Durham Township	32.4	11.2%
Orange County	36	16.4%
Chapel Hill Township	30.1	13.4%
Hillsborough Township	42.9	17.9%
Chatham County	48.3	25.6%
Williams Township	59	39.4%

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Funding Sources

Federal Funding
State Funding
County Transit Plans & Transit Tax
Other Funding

Image: GoTriangle

This section provides an overview of the different fund sources that are available across the DCHC MPO area, including federal formula funds, state funds, transit plan funds, and other funding opportunities.

Federal Funding

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides annual, formula-based funding to transit agencies, state departments of transportation, and metropolitan planning organizations to support a variety of transportation projects and activities. This funding is distributed according to predetermined formulas outlined in federal law. The funding programs are named based on the section where they are located within the United States Code (i.e., Section 5307).

Formula-based funds include:
- **Section 5307** (Urbanized Area)
- **Section 5310** (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)
- **Section 5311** (Rural Areas)
- **Section 5337** (State of Good Repair)
- **Section 5339** (Bus and Bus Facilities)

Multiple funding sources are used in transportation planning because of diverse needs across different areas and populations, the need for an equitable distribution of funds, for predictability of funds so that recipients can properly budget for their needs, and other critical factors. FTA also has funding programs that are not formula-based: those programs are competitive, and FTA has discretion in which projects are awarded funding.
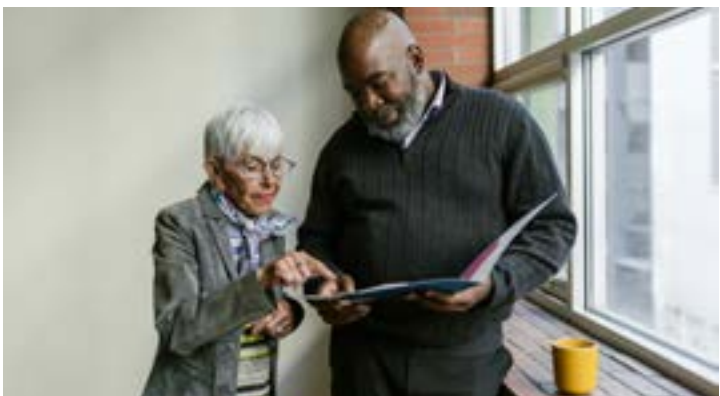
Image: RDNE Stock Project, CC

Image: Rolz International, CC

Section 5307 Funding

Section 5307 funds, also known as Urbanized Area Formula Grants, are aimed at improving mobility and accessibility within urbanized areas. These funds can be used for capital investments, operating expenses, planning activities, and other initiatives that enhance public transit services. In 2024, the Durham Urbanized Area received an allocation of $10,149,600 to split between GoDurham, GoTriangle, Orange County Public Transit, Chapel Hill Transit, and Wake County (limited eligibility).

Figure 1. Annual Section 5307 Funding Apportionments for the Durham Urbanized Area (Source: FTA Apportionments)
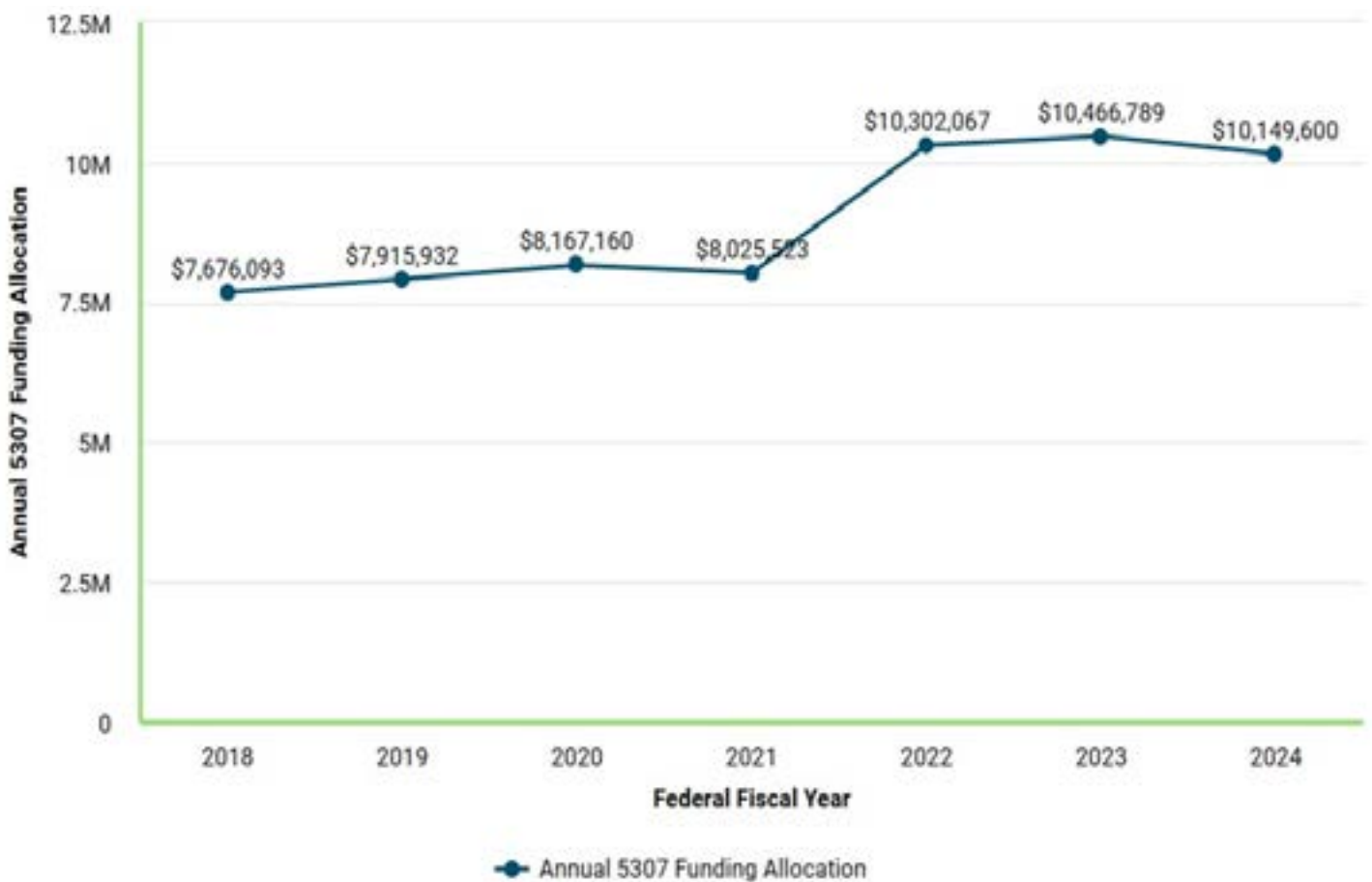
Section 5310 Funding

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Funding (hereafter referred to as "Section 5310 funding") seeks to provide funding, "for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs." (FTA Circular 9070.1G) This program provides formula funding for the purpose of meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation services provided are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funding is apportioned based on factors such as population, age, and disability statistics.

Eligible projects under Section 5310 funding are divided into "traditional" category and "nontraditional" or "other" category. At least 55% of program funds must be used on traditional projects.

The following capital improvements and activities are classified as part of **traditional** Section 5310 projects:

- Transit vehicles: buses and vans

- Wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices

- Transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems

- Mobility management programs

- Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement

Image: Helping a Senior Citizen Cross the Street by Ed Yourdon, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Nontraditional or "other" Section 5310 projects could include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Travel training
- Volunteer driver programs
- Providing accessible paths to bus stops, including sidewalks, curb cuts, accessible pedestrian signals (APS) or other features
- Wayfinding and signage
- Incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service
- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing and/or vanpooling programs
- Mobility management programs

These funds can pass through the state department of transportation or another designated recipient. The funds can then be allocated to subrecipients which can include private nonprofit organizations, state or local government authority, or operators of public transportation. Funds are available for a total of three years and the amount is based on the state or the urban area proportion of seniors and those with disabilities.

The City of Durham is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds apportioned for the Durham urbanized area. DCHC MPO works with the City of Durham to administer the program in accordance with federal law and regulations through a competitive call process according to the approved Section 5310 DCHC MPO program management plan. This call has typically taken place biennially and current available funding is $811,163 between the allocations for 2023 and 2024.

Image: Metropolitan Transportation Administration, CC BY 2.0

Figure 2. Annual Section 5310 Funding Apportionments for the Durham Urbanized Area (Source: FTA Apportionments)
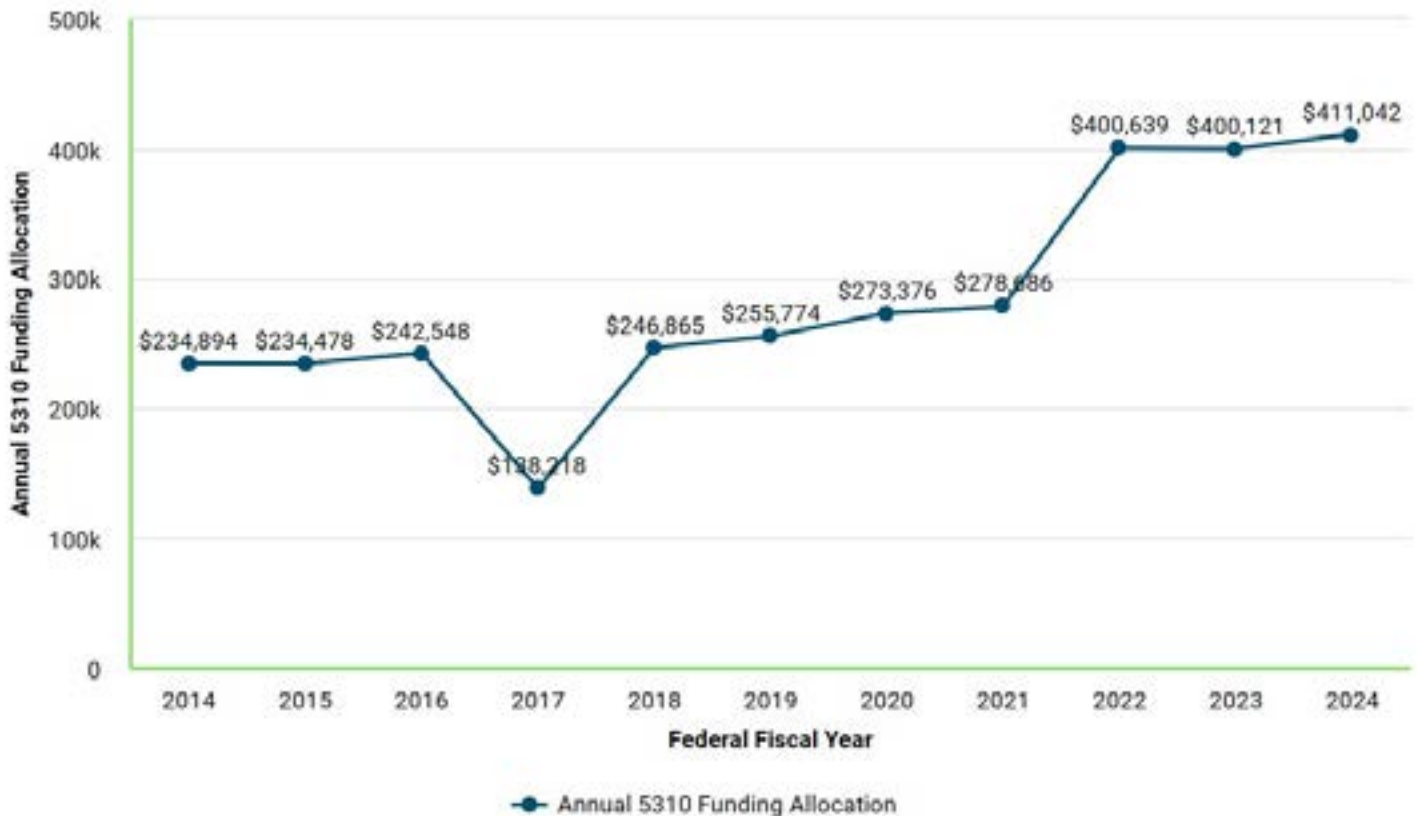
Section 5311 Funding

The Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides funding for designated rural areas with populations less than 50,000. Section 5311 funds are not directly included in the coordinated public transit – human service planning requirements, but they are an important transportation funding resource for rural communities and are often used to support human service transportation.

These funds are distributed to states using a formula based on land area, population, revenue vehicle miles and low-income individuals in rural areas. The funds are designated to support public transportation in rural communities and can be used for capital and operating projects. Section 5311 funds can be used to fund up to 80 percent of the cost of a capital project and up to 50 percent of the cost of an operating project. These funds are distributed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

State Funding

In addition to federal funds, NCDOT provides funding for rural and human service transportation programs. These funds are available to rural portions of Chatham, Durham, and Orange Counties.

Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP)

In 1989, the state legislature recognized the rapidly growing population of older adults and enacted the North Carolina Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP), setting up the appropriation of funds on a formula basis. To be eligible for EDTAP funding, counties must have an approved Community Transportation Services Plan (CTSP), a transportation advisory board that includes representation from agencies and programs that serve the transportation- disadvantaged, and coordinate services consistent with the local CTSP. Eligible trip purposes can include human services agency appointments, pharmacy pickups, group trips to community special events, and attending public hearings.

Employment Transportation Assistance Program (EMPL)

The Employment Transportation Assistance Program (EMPL) provides operating assistance for employment transportation needs. The funds help Department of Social Service (DSS) clients that transition off Work First or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the last 12 months. The program also supports Workforce Development Program participants and/or the general public to travel to work, employment training, and/or employment related destinations.

Rural General Program (RGP)

The Employment Transportation Assistance Program provides operating assistance for employment transportation needs. The funds help Department of Social Service (DSS) clients that transition off Work First or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the last 12 months. The program also supports Workforce Development Program participants and/or the general public to travel to work, employment training, and/or employment related destinations.

County Transit Plans & Transit Tax

In addition to federal and state funding programs, the Research Triangle also has local funding that is designated for transit projects. This is critical to funding transportation projects as these funds can help provide the required local match that is needed to access most federal funds.

These local funds are implemented through three County-specific transit plans: the Durham County Transit Plan, the Orange County Transit Plan, and the Wake County Transit Plan. Funds consist of three dedicated revenue streams for each transit plan:

- Half-cent sales and use tax

- Three-dollar increase to GoTriangle regional vehicle registration fee

- Seven-dollar county vehicle registration fee

An additional five-percent vehicle rental tax was included as a revenue source when the Transit Plans were last updated but was rescinded by the GoTriangle Board of Trustees in 2023. Of the three plans, only the Durham County and Orange County plans are located within the DCHC MPO planning area while the Wake County plan is located within the CAMPO planning area.

As the regional transit authority, GoTriangle also works to coordinate operations between the three plans for continuity across county lines. Examples of this coordination include evaluating how transfers will work from one provider to another, communicating potential differences on fare structure such as reduced fare passes, consolidating user interfaces and apps to reduce travel training needs, using the same or similar bus technology that easily integrates with other providers such as fare collection boxes, and having greater purchasing power to reduce costs for bulk purchases such as for automated passenger counters (APCs).

Durham County Transit Plan

The Durham County Transit Plan contains all transit-related projects that are expected to be completed in Durham County by 2040 based on revenue streams prior to the loss of the vehicle rental tax. These projects have a significant impact on the existing needs in this Coordinated Plan due to the number of projects that are specific to mobility needs and the needs of transportation-disadvantaged communities, such as:

- Committing to having all 1,324 bus stops in the County paved with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible pads by 2030

- Funding the GoDurham Senior Shuttle, which provides older adults with access to healthy groceries

- Using the Direct Investment in Mobility Equity (DIME) grant to support fares for low-income riders

- Supporting GoDurham Connect (on-demand microtransit service to be integrated into Spare Labs system in September 2024) in Eastern and Northern Durham

- Providing funds for GoDurham ACCESS ADA paratransit (including expansion of services) and employment and education access

Orange County Transit Plan

The Orange County Transit Plan was last updated in 2022 and consists of transit-related projects that are expected to be completed in Orange County over the next 20 years. Projects also address mobility though funding is more limited than in Durham County. Examples include:

- Service expansion of the EZ Rider in Chapel Hill, which provides demand response services

- Funding for urban Orange County ADA paratransit expansion as the result of fixed route expansion

- Rural ADA paratransit and demand response services

- Mobility-on-demand service expansion

- Low-cost fare passes for low-income individuals

Other Funding

Additional federal funding is available through DCHC MPO, given a local match can be provided and the project or studies are considered local priorities. DCHC MPO holds an annual Call for Projects as a part of its Locally Administered Projects (LAP) program which scores project applications on a series of factors. Awardees receive a portion of the MPO's discretionary funds.

These discretionary funds currently consist of:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)

Previously awarded projects include paved bus landing pads, bus shelters, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and wayfinding signage.

Transit planning and technical studies related to urban public transportation can also be funded through available Section 5303 funding. In 2025, GoDurham and Chapel Hill Transit will receive $224,144 and $215,355 in Section 5303 funds, respectively.

Image: Andrea Piacquadio, CC

4
Inventory of Services

Current Transportation Services
Other Transportation Services
Service Comparison Tables

The Durham urbanized area is currently served by a number of public transportation, human service, and private transportation providers. Available transportation services in the Durham area are described in this section.

Current Transportation Services

Transit services in the DCHC MPO planning area are served by GoTriangle across the Triangle region, GoDurham in Durham County, Chapel Hill Transit and Orange County Public Transportation in Orange County, and Chatham Transit in Chatham County.

The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) also operates a commuter bus service known as the Alamance Burlington Express that travels from the Burlington area down to Chapel Hill and back. GoCary operates demand response service strictly for Cary residents in which residents can go in and out of Durham and Orange Counties.

Current transportation services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes in the Durham urbanized area can be confusing to navigate. The following pages contain charts that summarize and compare existing services.

Other Transportation Services

In addition, other transportation services for people who qualify for coordinated services are offered through private and non-profit providers. For example, Lincoln Community Health Center supplies its clients with paratransit transportation services to allow access to clinics. Orange County's Transportation Guide for Older Adults highlights various examples. Some local services include:

- A Helping Hand (http://www.ahelpinghandnc.org/)
- Alliance of Disability Advocates (http://www.adanc.org/)
- H2GO (http://www.h2gollc.com/)
- RTP Connect (https://rtpconnect.com/)
- Seniors on the Go (http://www.ncseniorsonthego.com/)
- Wheelchair Getaways (http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com)
- Wisdom Care Transportation (https://wisdomcaretrans.com/)

Projects that have Previously Received Section 5310 Funding

It is important to keep in mind that once services have been introduced to a community and have been established with some degree of permanency, changes to those services should be avoided or limited. Changes require evaluations due to the riders who may have come to rely on those services. However, sustaining those services requires consistent funding resources. When it comes to Section 5310 funds, there are a number of agencies that currently draw funds from this funding pool. Some previously funded projects as of this plan update include:

- Orange County Public Transportation (since 2016, for Senior Transportation Expansion, Assessment, and Mobility Manager)
- Chapel Hill Transit (EZ Rider and Senior Shuttle since 2016, ADA Bus Stop Review and Design Work from 2018 to 2022)
- GoDurham (ACCESS since 2016, County ACCESS from 2016 to 2022)

Current Transit Services

	Who is eligible?	Where can I go?	When can I go?	How much does it cost?	Where can I learn more?
Chapel Hill Transit EZ Rider	ADA-certified riders who cannot use fixed-route bus service	Within 3/4 mile of Chapel Hill Transit bus routes. Service is door-to-door.	**Mon-Fri**: 5:15am-10:27pm **Sat-Sun**: 7:50am-7:57pm **Booking**: 1 to 14 days in advance	Free	Visit <u>here</u> or call 919-969-4920
Chapel Hill Transit Senior Shuttle	Older adults in Chapel Hill and Carrboro (no age minimum)	Fixed route with stops at assisted living facilities, grocery stores, and Chapel Hill Public Library	Hourly service on **weekdays** from 8am-4:40pm. No reservations needed.	Free	Visit <u>here</u> or call 919-969-5544
GoDurham ACCESS	*City of Durham residents*: ADA-certified riders who cannot use fixed-route bus service	Anywhere within Durham city limits. Service is curb-to-curb (door-to-door upon request).	**Mon-Sat**: 5:30am-12:30am **Sun**: 6:30am-9:30pm **Booking**: 1 to 14 days in advance	Free	Visit <u>here</u>
	Durham County residents who live outside of the City of Durham: Certified riders who are 60 or older, have a disability, are transportation disadvantaged, reside in a rural area, or need work, medical, or shopping trips	Anywhere in Durham County, as long as the trips begins and/or ends outside of the City of Durham			

Current Transit Services

	Who is eligible?	Where can I go?	When can I go?	How much does it cost?	Where can I learn more?
GoDurham Senior Shuttle	Residents from 10 senior communities in Durham	Between senior communities and Walmart	Hourly service between 10am and 2:30pm. Each senior community is assigned one day per week.	Free	Visit <u>here</u>
Orange County EDTAP	Adults 60 years or older and people with disabilities, requires certification	Medical, human services, or job related trips within Orange County and certain points in Durham (e.g., Duke and VA Hospitals).	**Weekdays** from 7am-5pm. Trips must be booked 2-7 business days in advance.	$3 one-way	Visit <u>here</u>
Orange County Rural General Program	Any rural Orange County resident who does not qualify for ADA paratransit or EDTAP	Medical, human services, or job related trips within Orange County and certain points in Durham (e.g., Duke and VA Hospitals). Trips must begin or end in a rural area.	**Weekdays** from 7am-5pm. Trips must be booked 1-7 business days in advance.	$12.75 per ride	Visit <u>here</u>
Orange County EMPL	DSS clients transitioned off TANF or Work First within 12 months, Workforce Dev. Program participants, disadvantaged public, and/or general public. Orange County residents only.	Job-related trips and childcare for children of working parent	**Weekdays** from 7am-5pm. Trips must be booked 1-7 business days in advance.	Free	Visit <u>here</u>

Current Transit Services

	Who is eligible?	Where can I go?	When can I go?	How much does it cost?	Where can I learn more?
Orange County **ADA Paratransit**	ADA-certified riders who cannot use fixed-route bus service	Within 3/4 mile of Orange Co. Public Transportation bus routes. Service is curb-to-curb.	**Weekdays** between 8am and 5pm. Trips must be booked 1 to 30 days in advance.	Between $0 and $2 depending on route	Visit here
Orange County **Mobility-on-Demand (MOD)**	Anyone	Anywhere in Orange County and certain parts of Mebane and Durham (by Duke)	**Mon-Thurs:** 8am-5pm **Fri:** 8am-9pm **Sat:** 9am-5pm **Sun:** No service	$5 one-way	Visit here
Orange County **Senior Center Transportation**	Adults 60 years or older	Seymour and Passmore Senior Centers	**Weekdays** from 8am to 5pm	$3 one-way	Call 919-245-2015 (Passmore) or 919-968-2070 (Seymour)
GoTriangle **ACCESS**	ADA-certified riders who cannot use fixed-route bus service	Within 3/4 mile of GoTriangle bus routes. Service is curb-to-curb.	**Mon-Fri**: 5:45am-11:15pm **Sat**: 6:40am-11:15pm **Sun**: 6:40am-9:15pm **Booking**: 1 to 7 days in advance	**One-way fare:** $5 **Monthly pass:** $160	Visit here or call 919-485-4768
Chatham Transit **In County Service**	Chatham County residents. Buses are accessible to people with disabilities.	Anywhere in Chatham County and medical trips outside of Chatham County (riders going outside must pay the fully allocated cost)	**Weekdays** from 4:30am to 5:30pm. Reservations must be booked at least 48 hours in advance.	**0-5 miles:** $2 **5-10 miles:** $4 **10-20 miles:** $7 **20+ miles:** $3 for each 10 mile increment	Visit here or call 919-542-5136

Comparison of Services

	SERVICE TYPE			ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS			SERVICE FEATURES	
	Fixed Route Transit	Demand Response Paratransit	ADA Paratransit (requires certification)	Disability	Older Adult	Rural Resident	Unrestricted Trip Purpose	Free Fares
Chapel Hill Transit EZ Rider			✓	✓			✓	✓
Chapel Hill Transit Senior Shuttle	✓				✓			✓
GoDurham ACCESS *(for City residents)*			✓	✓			✓	✓
GoDurham ACCESS *(for non-City, County residents)*		✓		✓ or	✓ or	✓		✓
GoDurham Senior Shuttle	✓				✓			✓
Orange County EDTAP		✓		✓ or	✓			

	SERVICE TYPE			ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS			SERVICE FEATURES	
	Fixed Route Transit	Demand Response Paratransit	ADA Paratransit (requires certification)	Disability	Older Adult	Rural Resident	Unrestricted Trip Purpose	Free Fares
Orange County Rural General Program		✓				✓		
Orange County EMPL		✓		Specific eligibility requirements (see above)				✓
Orange County ADA Paratransit			✓	✓			✓	
Orange County Mobility-on-Demand (MOD)	On-demand microtransit			Open to anyone			✓	
Orange County Senior Center Transportation		✓			✓			✓
GoTriangle ACCESS			✓	✓			✓	
Chatham Transit In County Service	✓			Open to anyone			✓	

5
Public Involvement

Outreach
Workshop Agenda
Gaps, Needs, & Strategy Prioritization
Public Comments
Survey Results

This section contains an overview of the workshops that were held for this plan update, including who was invited, who participated, and the feedback that was collected. Additionally, public input provided on the plan during the public release of the draft plan (May 28th - June 19th, 2024) is included in this section

Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 program be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The DCHC MPO has taken the responsibility of developing the coordinated plan for the Durham urbanized area.

DCHC MPO's strategy to develop a coordinated plan included ample outreach for participation among transportation partners, passengers and advocates, human services partners, and other stakeholders as required by FTA C 9070.1G (page V-3).

Outreach

The draft schedule for the update to the Coordinated Plan and associated stakeholder workshops were initiated through presentations to the DCHC MPO Technical Committee and Board at their February 2024 meetings. Members were asked to provide feedback on workshop locations and stakeholders.
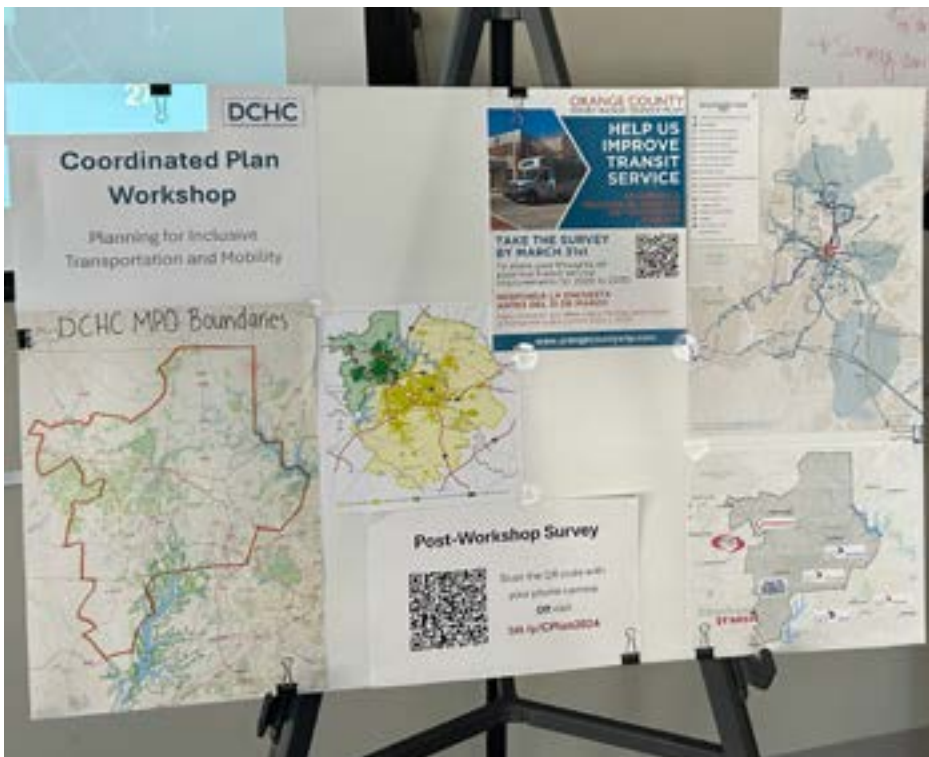
Four workshops were then scheduled, three of which were held in-person and one that was held virtually. Each workshop was scheduled for 2.5 hours and options were provided for both morning and afternoon participation. The three in-person workshops were held in transit-accessible locations with two of those locations being senior centers to receive increased feedback from older adults. These in-person workshops were held in downtown Durham, Hillsborough, and Chapel Hill. The virtual workshop was held for people that were unable to attend an in-person workshop.

Workshops were advertised through various forms of media. Announcements were dispersed through our website, social media (X, Facebook), social networking platforms (Nextdoor, Eventbrite), a Coordinated Plan stakeholder email list, an MPO e-newsletter for DCHC MPO members and the public, and the Central Pines Regional Council e-newsletter. These announcements were targeted to DCHC MPO members, public transit agencies, human services agencies, non-profit organizations, and members of the public.

More details on the timeline of this outreach, the stakeholder list, and outreach materials can be found in Appendix A.

Workshop Agenda

Workshop attendees were provided agendas with 2 hours of scheduled activities. Agenda items included a presentation on the background of the Coordinated Plan, an overview of existing transit services, and a series of group discussions regarding mobility needs.

These interactive sessions encouraged participants to **1)** identify existing transportation needs and gaps in service, **2)** brainstorm strategies, activities, and projects that address these needs and gaps, and **3)** choose particular strategies, activities, and projects to prioritize. Prioritization is an important step in understanding what the community desires and values. Participants in each workshop labeled projects and strategies using stickers that represented low, medium, and high priority.

To facilitate these activities, participants were provided details on projects from previous Coordinated Plans and discussions that took place in other workshops. The workshop agenda can be found in Appendix B of this plan.

Gaps, Needs, & Strategy Prioritization

The gaps, needs, strategies, and prioritization of strategies identified during the workshop sessions are summarized in tables on the following pages. Overall, the five main themes from the 2019 Coordinated Plan are still relevant:

1) Coordination/Mobility Hub for Human Services and Public Transportation

Participants mentioned how crucial coordination is for receiving accurate, updated, and straightforward information such as for Duke Medical that has over 2,000 touchpoints for clients possibly needing transportation services. Mobility hubs allow users to access multiple types of transportation modes in a centralized location and promote information sharing.

Image: Proposed Triangle Mobility Hub by *GoTriangle*

2) Expanded Transportation Services

Participants identified gaps in services and options to address these gaps, including through less traditional methods. For example, a study from a church in north Durham found transportation service gaps among its seniors and suggested starting a volunteer driver program. This program could be useful for people who are worried about using ride-hailing services like Lyft or Uber where they do not know the operator. Other respondents noted that existing service limits options for last-minute trips, late night travel, and access to more diverse cultural and natural places.

3) Expanded Education Services

Participants emphasized the lack of information on what services they are eligible for, how ADA certification works from one transit agency to another, and the differences between overlapping service areas, such as those shared by both Chapel Hill Transit and Orange County Public Transportation.

4) Application Process Improvements

Participants mentioned variation in ADA certification policies that led to confusion over elements such as who was eligible, who was required to sign different documentation, and how they would be informed of changes to any procedures. Additional barriers include passenger illiteracy or other needed assistance in filling out application forms.

5) Bus Stop Access Improvements

Participants expressed feeling unsafe accessing bus stops due to limited sidewalk infrastructure, vehicles blocking stops, and wide street crossings.

Gaps, Needs, Strategies, and Prioritization

Gaps and Needs	Strategies	Responsible Agency	Prioritization	Cost
Technological barriers to entry for transit users (i.e., no access to internet, concern about safety of online services, fares that are cashless)	Provide service schedules at bus stops	Transit agencies	LOW	$$
	Provide call-in numbers to access rideshare without an app	Transit agencies	LOW	$
	Consolidate user-required apps across region/services	Transit agencies	MODERATE	$
	Provide cash options or go fare free	Transit agencies	LOW	$ – $$
Transportation access screening and service eligibility (i.e., required signatures, policies, ADA form assistance)	Establish communication channel between human services and transit agencies	MPO and mobility manager	MODERATE	$
	Provide more direct access to mobility managers (providers and public)	Transit agencies with support from MPO	LOW	$
	Provide information on relationship between Medicaid and transportation	Medicaid providers with transit agencies	LOW	$
	Streamlined screening process for transportation access regionally (including education on eligibility)	Transit agencies	LOW	$$
	Electronic platform for universal reference/use	Transit agencies	MODERATE	$$
	Provide community outreach for passengers that are not actively riding due to inability to fill out application forms	Transit agencies with mobility manager	MODERATE	$$

Gaps and Needs	Strategies	Responsible Agency	Prioritization	Cost
Educational resources and outreach gaps (i.e., how users understand regional connectivity, opportunities)	Provide differentiation of roles in the region, such as for Central Pines Regional Council	MPO	**LOW**	**$**
	Provide comparison of services where areas are overlapping (i.e., Chapel Hill and Orange County)	MPO with transit agency support	**HIGH**	**$**
	Provide communities with list of fund sources available to them for smaller, more localized transportation projects	Central Pines Regional Council	**LOW**	**$**
	Determine a centralized way to share service updates, such as changes to stops, routes, and alternate forms of transportation across all services in Triangle	Transit agencies with MPO support	**LOW**	**$$**
Bus stop access improvements (i.e., vehicles blocking entry, locations across wide roads)	Facilities planning	Transit agencies	**MODERATE**	**$**
	Increased trails and sidewalks	Municipalities and NCDOT	**LOW**	**$**
	Review of current infrastructure relative to needs of transportation-disadvantaged communities	MPO and transit agencies	**LOW**	**$$**
Reduction in bus drivers due to COVID-19	Provide more direct high school and college educational programs for drivers	School boards, community colleges, and transit agencies	**LOW**	**$$**
	Create regional job board for all open positions	Central Pines Regional Council	**LOW**	**$**
	Support mentorship through grants	Counties and municipalities	**LOW**	**$$**

Gaps and Needs	Strategies	Responsible Agency	Prioritization	Cost
Customer service issues (i.e., information out of date, inaccurate or incomplete information provided, buses never arrive)	Support for a regional call center with consistent information from a single source and comprehensive service information	Transit agencies	LOW	$$
	Procure improved bus tracking software and/or hardware	Transit agencies	LOW	$$
Services too limited (i.e., need late-night service, last minute trips, access to cultural and natural spaces)	Initiate volunteer driver programs to fill in existing service gaps	Human service agencies and community-based organizations with transit agency support	LOW	$
	Offer deviated or weekend routes to places that are important for social and health purposes (i.e., cultural and natural spaces)	Transit agencies	MODERATE	$$$
	More regional route options covering larger service areas with more frequency	Transit agencies	HIGH	$$$
	Provide more on-demand service rather than demand response for flexibility in travel	Transit agencies	HIGH	$$
	Provide services later into the evening	Transit agencies	LOW	$$$
	Provide more transportation for seniors in Durham	Human service agencies, community-based organizations, and transit agencies	HIGH	$$$
Limited transportation across county lines (i.e., services limited to within 10 miles of county borders, driving to pickup points)	Determine applicable fund sources for cross-county transportation service	Transit agencies with MPO support	HIGH	$
	Determine impact of current cross-county service limitations	MPOs and Central Pines Regional Council	HIGH	$

Gaps and Needs	Strategies	Responsible Agency	Prioritization	Cost
Services are inefficient (i.e., excessive trip times, pickup and drop-offs are not timely, few people are riding, commuter services are too limited, bus operators have large gaps in workday, need to book well in advance)	Provide incentives for people to ride and provide residents with more comprehensive overview of sources	MPO, Central Pines Regional Council (TDM), and transit agencies	LOW	$$
	Better coordination of bus schedules with timing for when people are more likely to need services (i.e., throughout day)	Transit agencies and mobility manager	MODERATE	$
	Reduce travel and waiting times through more efficient planning	Transit agencies	HIGH	$$
	Coordinate land use decisions with access to transit	Counties, municipalities, and transit agencies	LOW	$

Public Comments Received During Plan Update

*"There are many folks **in rural areas who lack access to reliable transportation**."*

Image: <u>Chatham-Orange County Line</u> by Mx. Granger, CCo

*"In order for age in place to be achieved... it would need to include... a system for **shared rides and volunteer rides**... a system of cars or vans on call that **work at night and seven days a week** so that we can **attend religious/cultural events**... a system that includes an **easy-to-use app**..."*

*"We are aware of grocery and pharmacy delivery services that will be free or affordable to us when needed, though they will **limit social outlets**..."*

*"I find it limiting [that there is] **no availibility on weekends**.TransLoc was annoyingly unreliable and not worth it."*

*"**We want to age in place** and we understand that it is a goal of local government too."*

Survey Responses

After a draft of the Coordinated Plan was released on May 28th, 2024, we launched the Coordinated Plan Public Feedback Survey to receive input on challenges and strategies identified in the plan. The survey remained open until June 19th, 2024. This survey generated 26 responses from the public, a sample that includes both younger and older adults, people with different types of disabilities, and people with varying income levels. Questions asked in this survey are displayed in Appendix A.

Challenges

One question in the survey summarized challenges identified in this plan and asked respondents to rank them by what should be prioritized the most in future improvement projects. A graphic was provided that explained the challenges as follows:

Technological Barriers

- No internet access
- Cashless fares
- Concern about the safety of online services

Education & Outreach

- Lack of accessible resources on available transit services and program eligibility
- Out of date, incomplete, or non-existent information

Inadequate & Unsafe Transit Facilities

- Trips require crossing wide roads
- Area around stops is difficult or unsafe to navigate
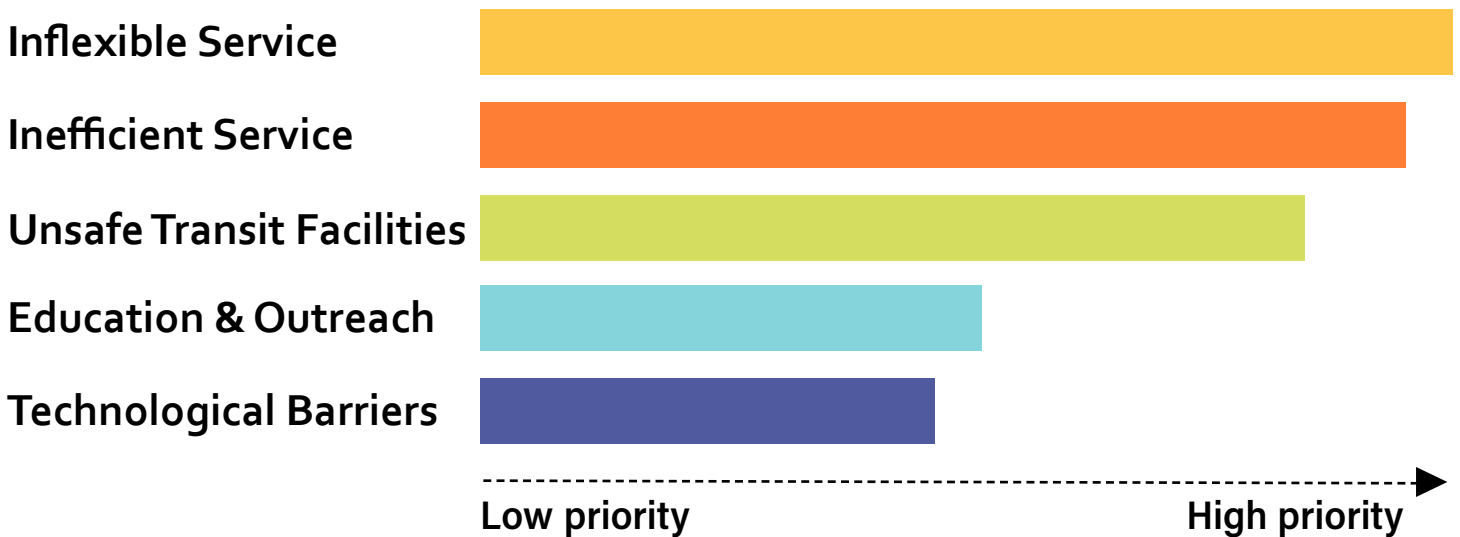
Inflexible Service

- Limited times you can travel
- Limited locations you can travel to
- Trips need to be booked well in advance
- Limited transportation across county lines

Inefficient Service

- Pick-up and drop-offs are not timely
- Few people are riding
- Buses never arrive

Respondents ranked these challenges as follows:

Inflexible Service	████████████████████████
Inefficient Service	███████████████████████
Unsafe Transit Facilities	████████████████████
Education & Outreach	████████████
Technological Barriers	███████████

Low priority →→→→→ High priority

Based on these results, the highest priority strategies should address how flexible and efficient service is. Nearly all of the services covered in this plan are demand response paratransit, requiring that trips are planned at least a day in advance and cannot be spontaneous. Further, these services limit where you can go and require that you be ready in a tight time frame.

Additional Challenges & Gaps in Existing Service Identified Through Public Comment

"help for those that are **bedridden**"

"**on-demand transportation** for people in wheelchairs"

"Chatham Transit is the **ONLY transportation available**… **limited to medical appointments**"

"public transit route[s] are **too limited**, not expanded enough to **private neighborhoods**"

"**reduced fare[s]** for persons who might not meet income levels; fill the buses with **seniors who are uncomfortable driving** in this area"

"**Safety**. I haven't needed to use a bus in a few years, however **I will never forget how I felt as a young woman of color. I have been harassed, followed, watched, etc. (on the bus, at the stops, at park & rides, etc.).** I can't imagine how others feel (Queer, POC, English language learners, etc.)"

"**How to get from the bus station to City Hall and [its] vicinity safely** and without having to walk the whole way"

"financial limitations"

"It's a shame you don't have services to help carry people to **doctor appointments [and] grocery**. What I have noticed is [that service] provided is very limited."

Strategies

We also asked respondents to choose their top three strategies that address these challenges. Strategies that were labeled a "moderate" or "high" priority in the workshops were provided as answer options. The text of these options was simplified to make them shorter and easier to understand. These strategies were prioritized by respondents as follows, with the top three choices bolded:

1) **Provide more on-demand service instead of booking in advance**
2) **Offer more routes to cultural, social, and natural destinations**
3) **Provide more service during popular times, like during the day** (tie)
3) **Reduce travel and waiting times for transit services** (tie)
5) Build and improve sidewalks around bus stops
6) Increase communication between health institutions and transit agencies
7) Streamline transit trips across county lines
8) Consolidate user-required apps across transit services in the Triangle
9) Develop user-friendly resources on transit services available throughout the Triangle
10) Support passengers that need help with filling out application forms

Challenge Being Addressed by Strategy

- Inflexible Service
- Inefficient Service
- Unsafe Transit Facilities
- Education & Outreach
- Technological Barriers

Number of votes

Strategies and corresponding ranks
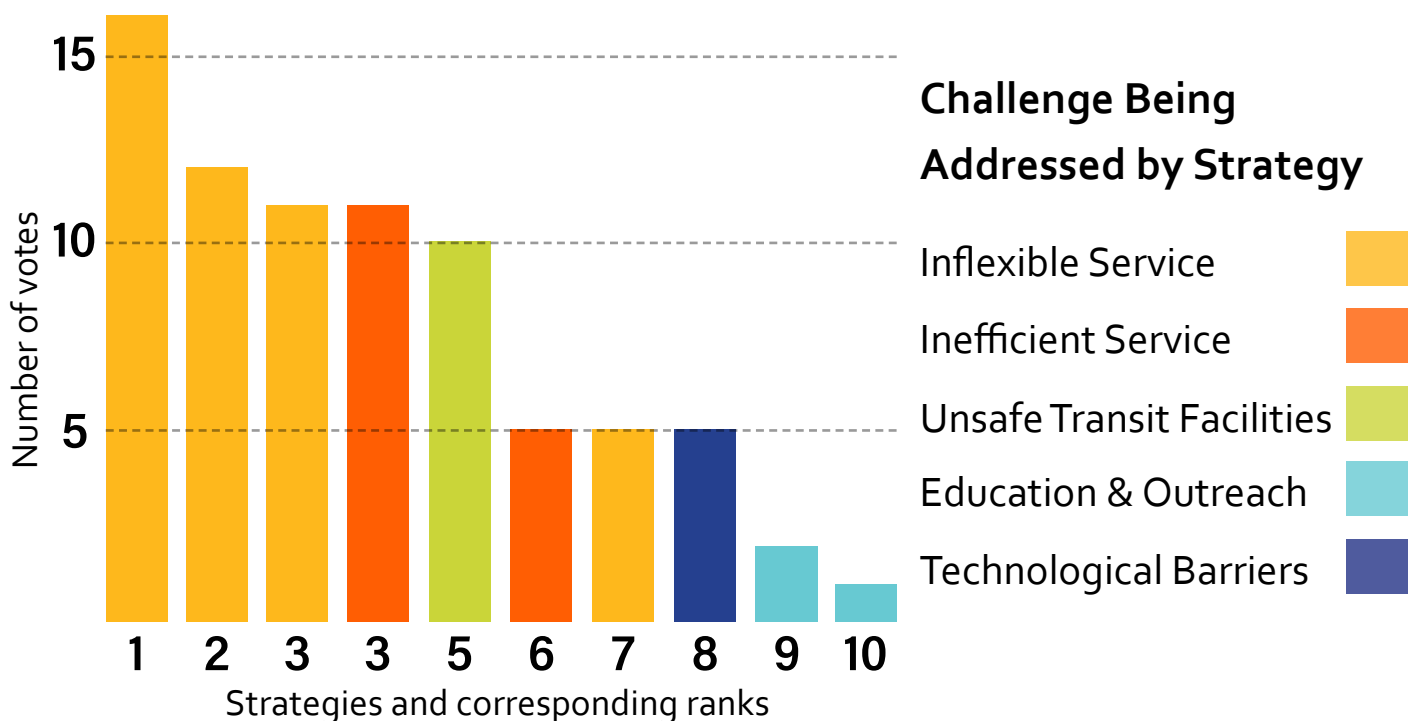
Additional Strategies Identified Though Public Comment

"Better lighting"

"Regional conversation on expanding transit and/or partnership with local transit agency"

"Need trips to cultural sites downtown with a turnaround time, doctor appointment times"

"Have services that routinely go to supermarkets at reasonable costs"

"24 hour service"

"Fixing the existing infrastructure, before creating apps to bring everything together because they remain useless if the foundation is not addressed first"

"Offer incentives to not use your vehicle"

6

Additional Factors

Opportunities
Challenges

Opportunities

Transportation planning efforts are continually evolving, so it is important to understand what is under development during this planning process.

GoDurham ACCESS is transitioning to an operating platform called Spare Labs to improve ride-sharing capabilities. This platform includes opportunities for eligible individuals with disabilities to apply for and schedule service for ADA paratransit online. Other improvements for GoDurham service include extension of the County program into Wake County and expansion of the Senior Shuttle.

Chapel Hill Transit recently received a grant award through the Areas of Persistent Poverty Program to financially plan and design a new app-based, on-demand micro-transit system to serve a two-mile corridor of the planned North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT). The NSBRT is an 8.2 mile-long, planned project that stretches from Eubanks Road in north Chapel Hill to Southern Village in the south. The plans for this Bus Rapid Transit corridor in the area combines high-capacity buses with exclusive traffic lanes and traffic signal priority to decrease travel time and improve the rider experience.

Larger-scale transit opportunities are being explored in ongoing studies. The regional Freeway, Arterial, Street, and Tactical (FAST) 2 transit study intends to make our freeways and regional boulevards "transit ready." It is also looking into updating freeway technology and efficiently connecting the region to the central Triangle area and the airport. The Bus Speed and Reliability study is being completed in Durham County to further improve the efficiency of specific corridors in that part of the region.

The S-Line freight rail line from Raleigh to Richmond will also have large regional impact. This project was awarded a $1.09 billion discretionary federal grant in late 2023. Additional funding has been awarded to corridor identification and development of future connections from Raleigh to Winston-Salem, on either side of the DCHC MPO area.

The region also has an ongoing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program called **Triangle Transportation Choices** that has regular funding opportunities for alternative forms of transportation. Previous awardees have included City of Durham, GoTriangle, Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Duke University. Activities under this program vary but can include bike workshops, incentives for using alternate modes of transportation, and promoting rideshare or carpooling options.

Regional improvements are also taking place in healthcare by connecting patients to transportation. The **7CS+ workgroup** is a learning collaborative comprised of stakeholders from local health care systems, health insurance plans, and human services agencies from 7 counties around the Triangle region who are looking to understand their roles in the transportation sector.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in service changes across all transportation modes and impacted the transportation access of older adults and those with disabilities. There were impacts to service capacity in which passengers were spaced out and fewer people could ride at one time, as well as rapid changes to safety guidance which caused concerns or uncertainty about a passenger's level of safety. This created challenges for agencies in complying with ADA requirements such as prohibiting capacity constraints and meeting requests from riders needing assistance from drivers, in other words providing service while maintaining necessary social distancing.

On a wider scale, it became apparent that more preparation was needed in the event of a major service disruption such as this one. It is important to consider what lessons have been learned over the course of the pandemic that can be used to start planning for future disruptions to transit service.

7
Appendix

Appendix A: Outreach
Appendix B: Workshop Agenda
Appendix C: Workshop Prioritization Activity
Appendix D: Commonly Used Acronyms
Appendix E: Public Comment

Appendix A: Outreach

Outreach Timeline

February 13 – Presented to the DCHC MPO Technical Committee

February 27 – Presented to the DCHC MPO Board

February 29 – News and calendar announcements added to our website

March 4 – Workshop announcements initially made on social media (Facebook, X)
- 7 shares
- 4 likes
- 712 impressions

March 5 – Workshops were publicized in Eventbrite and in CPRC Pine Needler
- 14 people had signed up (registration was not required); 3 attended

March 6 – Workshop announcement sent to stakeholders via email
- Limited feedback was received during this time

March 7 – Workshop announcement in DCHC MPO newsletter

March 11 – Workshop events added to NextDoor
- Hillsborough Area (Passmore Center) – 9,408 impressions
- Chapel Hill Area (Seymour Center) – 5,162 impressions
- Durham Area (County Admin Building) – 5,422 impressions
- All Areas (Virtual Event) – 14,351 impressions

May 31 – Coordinated Plan Public Feedback Survey goes live

Stakeholder List

- A Helping Hand Aging Well Durham
- Ameri Health Caritas NC
- Autism Society of North Carolina
- B&D Integrated Health Services BikeDurham
- Burlington-Graham MPO Capital Area MPO
- Caring House
- Carrboro Town Council
- Carrboro Town Manager
- Carrboro Transportation Advisory Board
- Carver Rehabilitation Center
- Central Pines Agency on Aging
- Central Pines RPO
- Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation
- Chapel Hill Planning Department
- Chapel Hill Town Council
- Chapel Hill Town Manager Chapel Hill Transit
- Chapel Hill Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Chatham Aging Services
- Chatham County Board of Commissioners
- Chatham County Manager
- Chatham Transit Network
- Chatham Transportation Advisory Board
- City of Durham Equity & Inclusion
- City of Durham General Services
- Club Nova Compass Center
- DCHC MPO Board Members & Alternates
- DCHC MPO Staff
- DCHC MPO Technical Committee & Alternates
- Department of Public Health, Durham County

Stakeholder List (continued)

- Downtown Durham, Inc.
- Duke University
- Duke University Medical Center
- Durham Center for Senior Life Durham Chamber of Commerce Durham City Council
- Durham City Manager
- Durham County Aging and Adult Services
- Durham County Board of Commissioners
- Durham County Community Living Programs
- Durham County Manager
- Durham County Transportation Advisory Board
- Durham Department of Social Services for the Blind
- Durham Exchange Club Industries
- Durham Housing Authority
- Durham Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- El Centro Hispano
- El Futuro, Inc.
- End Hunger Durham
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Extraordinary Ventures in Chapel Hill
- Federal Highway Administration
- Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation
- GoDurham / GoDurham ACCESS / City of Durham
- Golden Leaf Foundation
- GoTriangle
- GoTriangle Board of Trustees
- Helping Hands Mission
- Hillsborough City Council
- Hillsborough City Manager
- Interfaith Council for Social Services
- Kerr Tar Council of Governments
- Lincoln Community Health Center

Stakeholder List (continued)

- NC DHHS Disability Services
- NCDOT Div 5
- NCDOT Div 7
- NCDOT Div 8
- Nelson Nygaard (short range transit plan consultant)
- North Carolina State University
- Orange County Advisory Board on Aging
- Orange County Board of Commissioners
- Orange County Department of Social Services/Non-Emergency Medicaid Services
- Orange County Department on Aging
- Orange County Manager
- Orange County Transportation Advisory Board
- Orange Public Transportation
- Peer Learning of Chapel Hill
- Pettigrew Rehabilitation Center
- Piedmont Triad RPO
- Project Access of Durham County
- Rainbow 66 Storehouse
- Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority
- Reality Ministries
- Ronald McDonald House Charities (of the Triangle)
- Samaritan Health Center
- Senior Care Management Associates
- Senior PharmAssist
- Triangle Disability Awareness Council
- UNC Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities
- UNC Health Alliance
- UNC Memorial Hospital
- Unity Center of Peace
- University of North Carolina
- Urban Ministries of Durham
- Veterans Bridge Home

Email Invitation

Subject: Join Us to Help Update Your Local Coordinated Transportation Plan

Coordinated Plan Workshop Dates.png
1 MB

Hello regional partners,

The DCHC MPO is in the process of updating our Coordinated Transportation Plan and we are looking for your feedback!

This plan is updated every five years and is a process of identifying transportation needs, providing strategies for meeting those needs, and prioritizing services to meet those needs for older adults (65+), those with low incomes, and those with disabilities. If your service areas extend beyond the DCHC MPO boundaries (which is the basis for this plan update) and into rural areas of North Carolina, you may also be interested in the Statewide Coordinated Plan.

How To Get Involved

The DCHC MPO will be holding a series of workshops to get feedback from the community. These workshops are open to the public and are scheduled for the following locations and times:

- Orange County Passmore Center - 103 Meadowlands Drive, Hillsborough, NC 27278
o Monday, March 18 - 1:00PM-3:00PM

- Orange County Seymour Center - 2551 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
o Wednesday, March 20 - 9:00AM-11:30AM

- Durham County Administration Building (room 466) - 201 E Main Street, Durham, NC 27701
o Thursday, March 21 - 9:00AM-11:30AM

- Zoom Virtual Meeting - Link (passcode: 245360)
o Wednesday, April 10 - 1:00PM-3:30PM

While registration for these workshops is not required, registration is appreciated in understanding our expected attendance and allows you to save the event to your personal calendar.

If you are unable to attend any of these workshops, we are planning to record the final virtual workshop for future viewing so that you can provide feedback based on the materials presented. The draft plan will then be available for additional comment before it is adopted.

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to reach out. Thank you!

DCHC MPO e-Newsletter Post

Workshops Planned for Inclusive Transportation & Mobility

Coordinated Plan Workshops

Are **you** an older adult (65+), have a low income, or considered to have a disability?
Do you **know someone** who is an older adult, has a low income, or has a disability?
Do you **work with** older adults, those with low incomes, or those with disabilities?

Join us in updating your local coordinated plan! Help identify community needs and provide recommendations for transit services for older adults, those with disabilities, and those with low incomes. These workshops are **open to the public**, as well as non-profits, human services agencies, and anyone else who is interested in mobility in the DCHC MPO area.

MARCH 18 1:00-3:00 PM	Orange County Passmore Center 103 Meadowlands Drive, Hillsborough, NC 27278
MARCH 20 9:00-11:30 AM	Orange County Seymour Center 2551 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
MARCH 21 9:00-11:30 AM	Durham County Admin Building (room 466) 201 E Main Street, Durham, NC 27701
APRIL 10 1:00-3:30 PM	Virtual Workshop Zoom - Visit dchcmpo.org for details

Contact: Kelly Richard | Kelly.Richard@dchcmpo.org | 919-503-4119

DCHC METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Join us at an upcoming workshop and provide feedback!

The MPO will be hosting a series of workshops aimed at improving mobility for older adults, those with low incomes, and those with disabilities. To learn more about this effort, visit our website or sign up for a workshop. There are options for both in-person and virtual workshops, and registration is not required (though it is appreciated).

Sign up for a workshop

Central Pines Regional Council e-Newsletter Post

Coordinated Plan Update for Mobility of Older Adults and those with Disabilities

Join the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) in updating our Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan addresses existing mobility and future needs for older adults and those with disabilities in the urbanized areas of Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. Four workshops will be available to learn more and provide input. These workshops are open to the public, human services agencies, and anyone else who is interested in mobility in the area.

Learn About Workshops

Facebook Posts

X Posts

Nextdoor Posts

When these workshops were posted, the area covered by the DCHC MPO boundaries in Nextdoor had a reach of 185,983 members and 114,664 households.

Coordinated Plan Public Feedback Survey

This survey was created to receive public feedback on the draft of this plan. It was posted on Facebook, X, and Nextdoor, and included in DCHC MPO and Central Pines Regional Council's e-newsletters.

Take the Inclusive Transportation & Mobility Survey Today!

The 2024 Coordinated Plan draft is ready for **YOUR** review.

Did we miss anything? Let us know by taking the survey now through **June 19th, 2024**.

Feedback from this survey will be used to address **existing mobility issues and transportation needs** in the Western part of the Triangle region in North Carolina.

To take the survey, enter the URL below or scan the QR code:

bit.ly/CoordinatedSurvey

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DCHC

Coordinated Plan Public Feedback Survey

This survey was created to receive public feedback on the draft of this plan. The image on the right was attached in in Question 5 to illustrate and summarize the main challenges identified in the stakeholder sessions.

Demographic Questions (optional)

The DCHC MPO Public Involvement Policy (PIP) states the MPO will measure equitable engagement, where possible. The following questions are optional and will be used to understand overall engagement.

1. What is your age?
- Under 18
- 18-59
- 60 or older

2. Do any of the following disabilities apply to you? *(select all that apply)*
- Hearing
- Visual
- Cognitive
- Ambualtory/physical
- Self-care
- Independent living

3. How many people live in your household (including you)?
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

4. What is your household income (gross)?
- Under $20,000
- $20,000 - $39,999
- $40,000 - $59,999
- $60,000 - $79,999
- $80,000 - $99,999
- $100,000 or more

Respondents click "Next" here to go to the next section

Coordinated Plan Feedback

Your comments will be used to understand existing needs and determine what strategies are available to reduce transportation barriers. The areas covered in this plan include Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties, the City of Durham, and the Towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough.

5. We identified five current challenges for older adults and residents with disabilities during our Coordinated Plan workshops. Please refer to the attached image for more information on each challenge. To enlarge the image, use this link: https://bit.ly/CoordinatedPlanChallenges

For this question, rank the challenges by what you think should be prioritized the most in future improvement projects.

Your top choice is the highest priority and your bottom choice is the lowest priority. To move the options, use the arrows on the right or drag each option to the desired position. *(the image on the next page is the attached image)*

- Technological Barriers
- Education & Outreach
- Inadequate & Unsafe Transit Facilities
- Inflexible Service
- Inefficient Service

6. Are there any other challenges or gaps in existing service that you feel are missing from the draft Coordinated Plan?
- Enter your answer (text response)

Current Challenges

Technological Barriers

- No internet access
- Concern about the safety of online services
- Cashless fares

Education & Outreach

- Lack of accessible resources on available transit services and program eligibility
- Out of date, incomplete, or non-existent information

Inadequate & Unsafe Transit Facilities

- Trips require crossing wide roads
- Area around stops is difficult or unsafe to navigate
- Lack of sidewalks to and from bus stops

Inflexible Service

- Limited times you can travel
- Limited locations you can travel to
- Trips need to be booked well in advance
- Limited transportation across county lines

Inefficient Service

- Pick-up and drop-offs are not timely
- Few people are riding
- Buses never arrive

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7. During our workshop sessions, participants rated potential strategies to address these challenges. The following strategies were considered a "high" or "moderate" priority.

For this question, select the top three strategies that are most important to you.

- Consolidate user-required apps across transit services in the Triangle
- Support passengers that need help with filling out application forms
- Increase communication between health institutions and transit agencies
- Develop user-friendly resources on transit services available throughout the Triangle
- Build and improve sidewalks around bus stops
- Provide more on-demand service instead of booking trips in advance
- Offer more routes to social, natural, or cultural destinations
- Streamline transit trips across county lines
- Provide more service during popular times, like during the day
- Reduce travel and waiting times for transit services

8. Are there any other strategies you think should be prioritized?
- Enter your answer (text response)

Appendix B: Workshop Agenda

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DCHC
DURHAM · CHAPEL HILL · CARRBORO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Coordinated Plan Workshop

AGENDA

20 MINUTES	Welcome & Introductions
15 MINUTES	Background and Overview of Plan
20 MINUTES	Overview of Existing Transit Services
20 MINUTES	Identify Transportation Needs and Gaps in Service
20 MINUTES	Identify Strategies, Activities, and Projects to Address Gaps
15 MINUTES	Prioritize Strategies, Activities, and Projects Based on Available Resources
10 MINUTES	Wrap Up and Next Steps

SECTION 5310 FUNDS

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) receives around $275,000 per year in 5310 funds. These funds are used for enhanced mobility of **seniors** and **individuals with disabilities**. Projects selected to receive these funds must be derived from a locally developed, **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**, also known as a coordinated plan. Human services transportation that is provided by or on behalf of a human services agency for access to agency services or to meet basic, day-to-day mobility needs of these communities, are eligible to receive funds.

DEFINITIONS

Coordinated Plan
A locally developed, coordinated transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of older adults (65+), individuals with disabilities, and those with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services for funding and implementation.

Public Transportation
Regular, continuing shared-ride services that are open to the general public or a segment of the general public (excludes Amtrak, school buses, courtesy shuttles, & sightseeing buses)

PREVIOUSLY FUNDED PROJECTS

Since 2016, six (6) different services have been funded using 5310 funds. These are the **1)** Chapel Hill EZ Rider Senior Shuttle, **2)** an Orange County Mobility Manager, **3)** GoDurham ACCESS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trips beyond 3/4 mile, **4)** GoDurham ACCESS for demand response services within the county, **5)** Chapel Hill Transit ADA bus stop review and design work, and **6)** DCHC MPO administration.

PREVIOUSLY RECORDED NEEDS

Coordination/Mobility Hub for Human Services and Public Transportation
- Create a mobility hub for the entire region, which would include a healthcare element. Paratransit service providers to develop a centralized computer system for scheduling. Coordinate funding and share resources among agencies. Create a website or an app to better access services, such as scheduling and updating information. Develop an app for vehicle tracking for paratransit ridership. Coordination of overall funding. Create a process for the reduction or the elimination in the rate of "no show" ridership, which negatively impacts efficiency. Use paratransit software to include detailed information and requests from clients with special needs.

Expanded Transportation Services
- Provide more opportunities for underutilized vehicles to offer non-healthcare related transit (e.g. grocery store routes) that would improve the quality of life of seniors and persons with disabilities. Increase senior social trips, which leads to better mental health of the recipient. Coordinate ADA applications and provide gap funding while individuals wait for approval to use service. Allow for home pick-up and return trips for services in different areas, including crossing over county lines. Set a paratransit cost that is equal among all transit services in the region. Extend holiday operating hours to 10pm. Include paratransit services in GoDurham's fare free day. Expand paratransit service to neighboring cities and towns. Provide additional door-to-door service (e.g. Uber, taxi, current public transit, etc.). Provide additional work trips for low-income people in rural areas. Streamline and shorten the process for schools requesting trips for incoming disabled students.

Expanded Education Services
- Expand travel training for all transit agency staff. Encourage hospitals to screen patients for transportation needs. Create a higher level of comfort among seniors while using public transportation. Improve the transit service providers understanding of clients' needs. Present better information for trip planning to riders (e.g.. sheltered stations, stop location, etc.). Conduct policy workshops more frequently. Provide better information to clients.

Application Process Improvements (passengers applying for service)
- Transit service to expand assistance to persons who are in need, but are not eligible for ADA paratransit service and are not covered by other services. Provide gap funding to passengers while waiting for ADA qualification results. Develop receiving of ADA applications in the region. Establish person-centered eligibility and certification rather than rigid criteria. Shorten the interview and application process for ADA approval.

Bus Stop Access Improvements
- Bus stops are too far apart and often without ADA improvements, and riders are unaware of transit alternatives. Increase the number of accessible bus stops.

Appendix C: Workshop Prioritization Activity

Workshop Participant List

Local Residents
- Nancy Park
- Deborah Harris
- Sharon Harris
- Len Cone
- Maple Osterbrink

DCHC MPO Members
- Brandi Beeker (Orange County mobility manager)
- Melissa McCullough (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Thanh Schado (Chatham County)
- Kim Johnson (GoTriangle)
- Lindsay Smart (City of Durham)
- Curtis Scarpignato (Durham County)

Human Services
- Fred Johnson (Duke University Family Medicine and Community Health)

Nonprofits
- Katrina Williams (Durham Exchange Club Industries, Inc)
- Henry Broadway (Temple Baptist Church)

Other/Regional
- Shuchi Gupta (Central Pines Regional Council)
- Karyl Fuller (Central Pines Rural Planning Organization)

Workshop Discussion and Prioritization Activities

- High school and college — What are all the open jobs in region
  educational driver/planner programs
  - grant for mentors
  - are non-citizens eligible
- Hospital transportation screening
  (how to consolidate 2000+ points of entry)
  - Human Services ↔ transport (Both)
- Lack of reasonable access across county lines
  - 10 miles past county boundaries
- Who requires fares, how to pay
  - Orange County cashless
  - confusing
  - are fares worth the burden

Education on how "Council of Government" operates here

Chapel Hill HS Route stop on Franklin needed (does now; how to inform)
  - Inform and find influential reasons to ride (incentives)
  - Schedules at stops?

Too many apps (barrier to entry; no internet)

Educate on Orange County vs Chapel Hill service areas
  - EZ rider for ADA but 1+ hour per ride
  - not just paratransit

What are the applicable fund sources for seniors, etc? (good)
  - area on aging (Durham, orange, CPRC)

- Commuter bus
  - select hours - operator hour gaps
  - education on operations
    (need app + ID)
  - too commuter focused when it comes to transportation

- Paratransit (ADA) eligibility form
  - need an MD signature initially but can be OT, nutritionist, other
  - not following own policy
  - electronic platform for universal use (no mailing barrier)

Medicaid
  - management (phone#, depts)

Transportation Needs/Gaps

▸ Timeliness of pick-ups & drop offs for disabled

→ Services along the border of Wake/Durham / boundary
  ↳ live on Wake side, need to get to work in Durham & have to drive to pickup point

→ Survey done by Church in Northern Durham
  ↳ Gap in transportation for seniors in Northern Durham
  → Not comfortable calling uber, etc

▸ Application Process barriers like illiteracy, can't fill out form, need assistance

↟ 74

Strategies (Facilities)

- Prioritizing Access to Bus stops (Facilities Planning)

- Fixed Route Consolidation/Adjustments
  → making sure there is trail & sidewalk access

- Trail Expansion: Durham-Roxboro Rail Trail
  → boundaries of Durham Connect system, and how they relate to the rail trail
  → transportation disadvantage area Briggtown, etc

Strategies to Address Gaps

• Sparelabs for GoDurham ADA Paratransit Access
  ●→ App, online service for people to apply & schedule
  → Ride sharing capability for people being picked up near each other and dropped off
  → County access Program can go into wake Co
    → GoDurham is looking at this
  → Looking to expand Durham Shuttle soon
  → North of I-85 Churches & volunteer drivers for medical appointments

Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
Orange County - Durham - Carrboro customer service and lack of access between locations	2.1. Lack of bike lanes and larger vehicles blocking areas - lack of connectivity	3.1. Issues with what app to follow, such as inaccuracies for Google Maps... what should people use
EZ rider service gaps and access to services well in advance	2.2. Access to bus stops across large road areas	3.2. Coordination with standards on timing based on actual needs
1.3.	2.3. Services later in the evening are needed	3.3. For opportunities for last minute trips and pilot programs to test services (see: Durham Connect)
1.4.	2.4. Changes in services meaning you have to find new ways to get around	3.4. Mobility Management - how to access services such as rideshare without app, but maybe a call-in number (ex. Transloc app Orange County) • Worrying about safety of online services
1.5.	2.5. More routes (regionally) without going through the main hub, larger service areas, more frequency • land use related to wealthier neighborhood development	3.5. Access to the mobility managers more directly
(Services area gaps and coordination across ADA services-i.e someone might be in EZ rider zone and needs to go to Durham, how do we make that possible)	2.6. Cannot access specific cultural and natural spaces, that are important for social and health purposes • Possibly less frequent but deviated route to these locations • Weekend options	

Appendix D: Commonly Used Acronyms

3C – Comprehensive, Cooperative, Continuing
ACS – American Community Survey
ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
APC – Automated Passenger Counters
APS – Accessible Pedestrian Signals
BRT – Bus Rapid Transit
CAMPO – Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
DCHC MPO – Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization
DIME – Direct Investment in Mobility Equity
DSS – Department of Social Service
EDTAP – Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program
FAST – Fixing America's Surface Transportation
FTA – Federal Transit Administration
IIJA – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
NCARPO – North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations
NCDOT – North Carolina Department of Transportation
RGP – Rural General Public
RPO – Rural Planning Organizations
SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TC – Technical Committee
TMA – Transportation Management Area
UZA – Urbanized Area

Appendix E: Public Comment

This section represents all comments received over the course of the Coordinated Plan update. Additional comments received during relase of this plan for public comment will be included here. Public comments are anonymous. We removed any information that could be personally identifying.

Comment #1

Here are my views about a Coordinated Transportation Plan for me. I will try to attend the March 20 workshop before 11:30 AM but I want to go on record with my own views about transport services for myself and other older adults as well as others in my area of Orange County... We are just one of several neighborhoods in this category as well as being an area with numerous rural homes.

I am 84 years old and still drive - but not at night and not on highways. My husband is 80 and he drives - but frankly, it is becoming scary for me to be his passenger. We have two adult children in the area and we can arrange transport with them sometimes, but they have busy jobs and young children, so they can't help us much.

We want to age in place and we understand that it is a goal of local government too. Some transportation resources we know about include:

1. If we don't have a strict time of arrival for something we want to do in town, we can afford to use an Uber. But, if we have to be somewhere on time, Uber's are too expensive - I was charged more than $40 recently for a ride I'd expected to cost about $13 - but was kicked into "surge" pricing because I needed to be on time for an appointment. I've heard that advance scheduled Ubers can be even more expensive.
2. We are aware of grocery and pharmacy delivery services that will be free or affordable for us when needed, though they will limit social outlets - particularly for grocery shopping.
3. We think there may be some transportation made available by UNC Hospitals, but I can't find any online.
4. The public transportation services currently offered by Orange County are so limited as to be useless to us.

In order for the age-in-place goal to be achieved - public transportation services for us and others in similar circumstances - it would need to include:

1. No buses: a. our streets are not suitable, b. for our health and sociability we walk our streets which have no sidewalks and c, our population is not numerous enough for buses to be economical anyway.
2. A system for shared rides and volunteer rides set up for each neighborhood or limited area participation - not one countywide big system.
3. A system of cars or vans on call that works at night and seven days a week so that we can attend religious/ cultural events as well as medical appointments and all the other things active old people want and need to do.
4. A system that is door-to-door or door-to-bus stop.
5. A system that is free to low income users and affordable for others. (Scheduled Ubers can be exorbitant!)
6. A system that includes an easy-to-use app and a phone contact for people who are not native speakers of "internet".
7. A system that would include teens and college students as eligible users to get to school - since the school bus system isn't working.
8. A system that welcomes people younger than 65 who self-identify as "afraid to drive", who can't afford to drive themselves, or whose usual transport is temporarily unavailable. In other words, a system that works for everybody when they need it.

Comment #2

We are looking for transportation for my mother and I just read you will be advancing inclusive transportation. She is permanently in an electric wheelchair. Could you keep us posted on any Orange County options. She currently uses Orange County when it is available and lives on Eden Drive in Hillsborough.

Nextdoor Comments

13w

Don't forget about the need for safe transportation for the disabled and aged riders. I find it limiting by no availability on weekends. TransLoc was Annoyingly unreliable and not worth it.

14w

I read your document and although interesting it was slight on contact information. As a disabled adult I am using Orange County Transportation Services.
However at times I need to go outside of the area for important events. Will you please inform me of the availability for this type of services?

· 15w

I have a friend who is visually impaired and is trying to find a place to live and only has a limited income of $600 and can't find anywhere to live within that range even trying to just rent a room. It is so unfair because he cant work or drive and now he can't find a place to live. It is so unfair.

15w

Thanks for posting here. There are many folks in rural areas here who lack access to reliable transportation. Is any thought being given to electric vehicle sharing services or van services for people who need to get to work/ hold care/family violence protection, list goes on?