

**ORANGE COUNTY TRANSIT
PROGRESS REPORT**



JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023



ORANGE COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

In FY2023, the governing boards of Orange County, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization and GoTriangle adopted a new Orange County Transit Plan that identifies priorities for transit plan investments through the year 2040. The plan was developed in coordination with GoTriangle, Chapel Hill Transit, municipalities within Orange County, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Triangle J Council of Governments, and included stakeholder coordination and public engagement.



IMPROVE MOBILITY



PROVIDE GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY



SUPPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



SUPPORT TRANSIT-ORIENTED LAND USE



IMPACT POSITIVE AIR QUALITY

ONGOING PROGRAMS

GoTriangle, Chapel Hill Transit and Orange County Public Transportation continued to provide bus and on-demand service funded by the county transit plans. In addition, several studies and capital projects moved ahead throughout the year including the Chapel Hill North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project, the Regional Fleet and Facilities Study, the Regional Transit Center Relocation Study, the GoTriangle Short-Range Transit Plan, the Hillsborough Train Station Project and bus stop improvements throughout the county.



LONG-RANGE GOALS

- Improve overall mobility and transportation options in the region.
- Provide geographic equity.
- Support improved capital facilities.
- Support transit-oriented land use.
- Provide positive impact on air quality.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT

- In FY2023, Chapel Hill Transit continued to operate services funded by the Orange County Transit Plan including additional midday frequency, additional evening service, and weekend service.

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- On May 1, 2023, Orange County Transportation Services Mobility-on-Demand was expanded to six days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Customers can make same-day reservations for transit service through the TransLoc app. Initially, the service was only Fridays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Now it is available Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. OCTS continues to hire more drivers to cover this high-demand service.
- Service hours on the Hillsborough Circulator were extended to 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and a reverse circulator will be implemented when the department receives a new vehicle.
- Orange County Transportation Services in coordination with Link Transit in Burlington and the Town of Mebane are working on providing the city two circulator routes to improve transit connections between the Triangle and the Piedmont. Orange County and Hillsborough are working together to improve transit access through potential projects like Ridgewalk Greenway and the Regional Transit Center by the train station.

GOTRIANGLE

- FY2023 funding from the Orange County Transit Plan maintained existing service improvements on multiple GoTriangle routes. Routes 400 and 800 weekend span and frequency improvements were maintained. Funding supported the provision of the ODX service connecting Orange and Durham counties and supported additional service on Routes 405 and CRX. Due to local operator shortages, some of these services were reduced during the course of FY2023.

PLANNING PROJECTS

- Gained approval of the Orange County Transit Plan.
- Continued work on the Regional Fleet and Facilities Study and the Regional Transit Center Relocation Study.
- Initiated development of the GoTriangle Short-Range Transit Plan for Orange County services.

Note: Transit plan funds also are used to continue earlier improvements and to pay a portion of the increased cost of transit services provided by Chapel Hill Transit and Orange County Transportation Services that existed before the Orange County Transit Plan was implemented.

BUS INFRASTRUCTURE

GOTRIANGLE

- **Regional Transit Center Relocation Study** | Relocation of the Regional Transit Center will better serve the needs of transit riders and address the on-site and off-site limitations of the current facility. The relocated Regional Transit Center will improve transit speed and reliability, address passenger amenity and operational needs, and provide new multimodal connections. As a result, the new facility will increase equitable and sustainable access to destinations within Research Triangle Park and across the region as a whole. Specifically, the new facility will include additional covered boarding bays with electric bus-charging infrastructure, covered drop-off spaces for paratransit, microtransit and rideshare vehicles, and a signalized bus-only driveway, ensuring comfortable and reliable transfers for riders taking regional trips or making last-mile connections.

After completing the Regional Transit Center Relocation study to identify the preferred location at NC Miami Boulevard adjacent to the rail line, GoTriangle prepared initial environmental documentation, continued coordination with regional partners and submitted applications to secure federal funding to match committed local funds. Next steps in FY2024 include completing environmental review, continuing to submit applications to relevant federal grant programs, acquiring land, and undertaking design and permitting. Construction is expected to follow in subsequent years.

- **Regional Fleet and Facilities Study** | In FY2023, the Federal Transit Administration awarded GoTriangle a \$1,672,000 grant through the Low or No Emission Grant Program to support the installation of charging infrastructure at its Nelson Road Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility in Morrisville, and the under-construction Raleigh Union Station Bus facility in downtown Raleigh. These projects were identified as early action items through the Regional Fleet and Facilities Study.

In FY2023, GoTriangle continued to advance the multifaceted study to identify fleet maintenance facility needs, establish low- or no-emissions fleet composition goals - including charging or fueling infrastructure - and evaluate opportunities for regional cooperation. The study has produced designs and cost estimates for expanding and renovating the GoTriangle Nelson Road Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility. The study will produce an inventory of capital projects and cost estimates that will be programmed into the transit plan's future year budgets to ensure that adequate facilities are in place to support the existing and planned service expansions funded by the transit plan.

NEXT STEPS

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT

- Chapel Hill Transit continued to assess service levels in FY2023, restoring service reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and integrating service expansions supported by the transit plan.

GOTRIANGLE

- Continue support for Routes 400, 405, 800, CRX and ODX.
- Restore service that was suspended in earlier years due to the operator shortage.

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- Continue working with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration on updating the fleet with new electric and gas-efficient vehicles.
- Develop operational staff necessary to improve Mobility-on-Demand paratransit service to six days a week per the Orange County Transit Plan update.

PLANNING PROJECTS

- Finalize work on the Regional Fleet and Facilities Study. The study will produce an inventory of capital projects and cost estimates that will be programmed into the transit plan's future year budgets to ensure that adequate facilities are in place to support the existing and planned service expansions funded by all three county transit plans.
- Complete the GoTriangle Short-Range Transit Plan.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Continue design for priority transit safety and access improvements in Orange County including on U.S. 15-501 at Eastowne Office Park.
- Next steps in FY2024 for the new Regional Transit Center include completing environmental review, continuing to submit applications to relevant federal grant programs, acquiring land and undertaking design and permitting. Construction is expected to follow in subsequent years.
- Finalize work on the Regional Fleet and Facilities Study. The study will produce an inventory of capital projects and cost estimates that will be programmed into the transit plan's future year budgets to ensure that adequate facilities are in place to support the existing and planned service expansions funded by the transit plan.

CHAPEL HILL NORTH-SOUTH BUS RAPID TRANSIT PROJECT UPDATE

- The North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project - an 8.2-mile project extending from the Town of Chapel Hill's Eubanks Road Park & Ride lot to the town's Park & Ride lot at Southern Village - is progressing towards 60% design, expected to be complete in early calendar year 2024. In spring 2024, 90% design is expected to commence, with completion anticipated by the end of FY2024. National Environmental Policy Act review was completed in March 2023, with the project earning a Categorical Exclusion based on a low likelihood of significant environmental impacts. Chapel Hill Transit submitted a request to Federal Transit Administration for an updated Project Rating in August 2023 and expects to request a Small Starts Grant Agreement in early calendar year 2024.

HILLSBOROUGH TRAIN STATION UPDATE

- Design of the Hillsborough Train Station – a joint venture between the N.C. Department of Transportation Rail Division, GoTriangle and the Town of Hillsborough – began in summer 2022 and is ongoing. The scope of work includes comprehensive design of the station building and platform, parking lot, site improvements for improved access, and stormwater and utility improvements to the site from Orange Grove Extension, a local road to which the station access will connect. As part of this effort, the town-owned 20-acre property has been annexed and rezoned and will be subdivided into a separate 6.5-acre parcel.

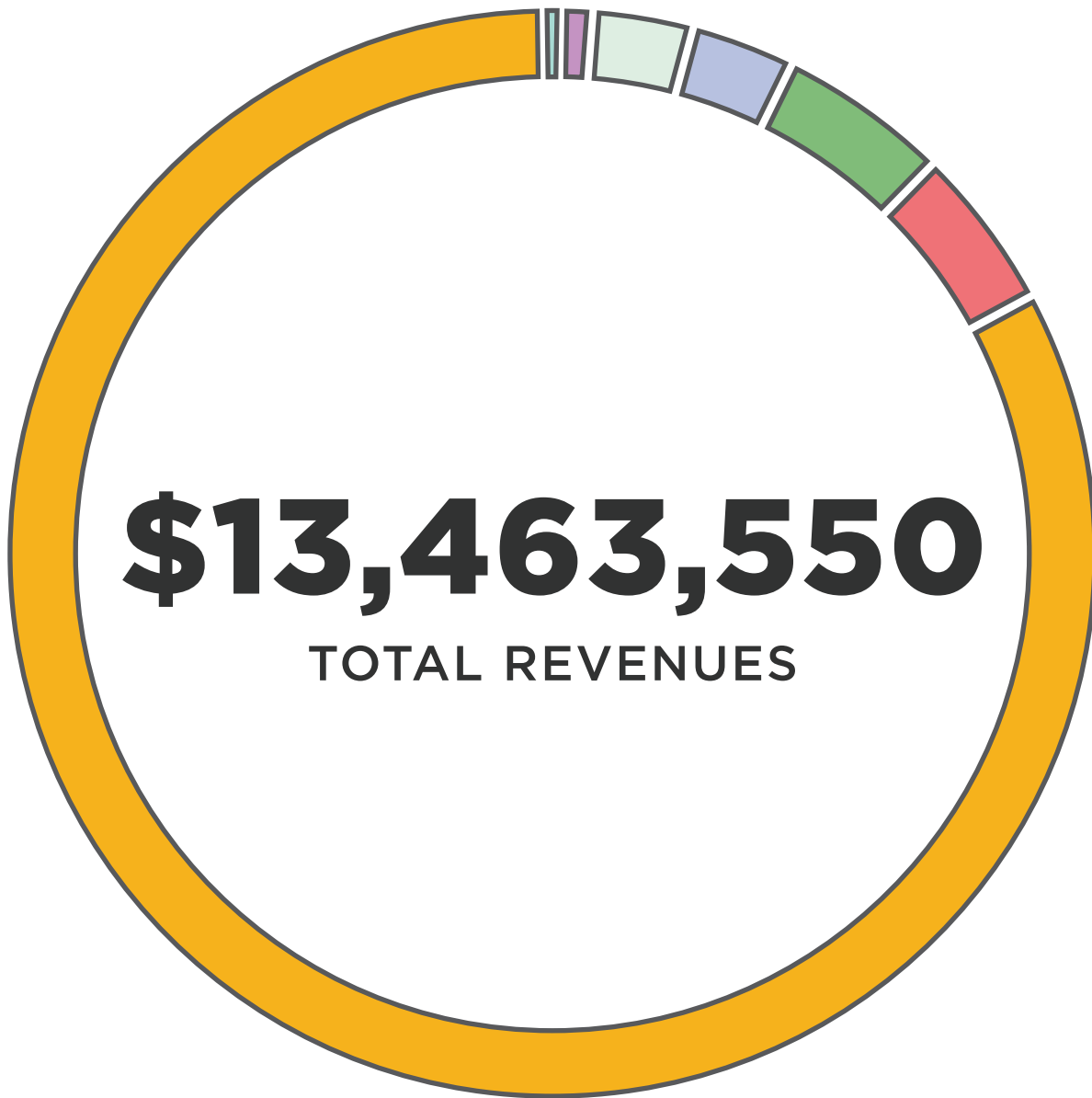
The project will focus on sustainability through site and building design that incorporates efficient and renewable energy systems, daylighting (using skylights and other fixtures to increase natural light), stormwater management and green roof technologies. Facilities are provided for both passenger rail and Town of Hillsborough operations, including a new board meeting room, public gathering space and offices.

Design and engineering have been completed through the Schematic Design level, including architectural drawings and preliminary code analysis with civil, landscape, structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire protection narratives and/or drawings. As part of the design effort, the design team has generated and studied multiple three-dimensional forms and site strategies, worked with consultants to perform building energy modeling and systems selection, solicited and incorporated stakeholder feedback, and presented to the Town of Hillsborough's Board.

The town issued a request for qualifications for design/engineering in August 2021 and signed a contract with a design team in May 2022. The funding agreement allows seven years for project completion, with design and permitting expected to be completed in late 2024.

Orange County Transportation Services is working with Hillsborough to make the new train station a multimodal hub for regional transit services. It is submitted for the State's Strategic Prioritization of Transportation P.7 process as an Orange County Transportation Priority and part of the consolidation of GoTriangle's ODX route. This facility is also submitted as part of the North Carolina Department of Transportation Integrated Mobility Division Transit Facility Needs Survey as the state develops funding programs around transit facilities and mobility hubs and as part of its zero-emission fleet transition plans. Orange County Transportation Service seeks to make this center the county's new transportation hub for all local and regional transit agencies in an effort to connect the Piedmont to the Triangle. This includes providing connections to Piedmont Authority on Regional Transportation, known as PART, Chapel Hill Transit, GoDurham, GoTriangle and Amtrak.





\$6,341
FTA GRANTS

\$54,140
INVESTMENT INCOME

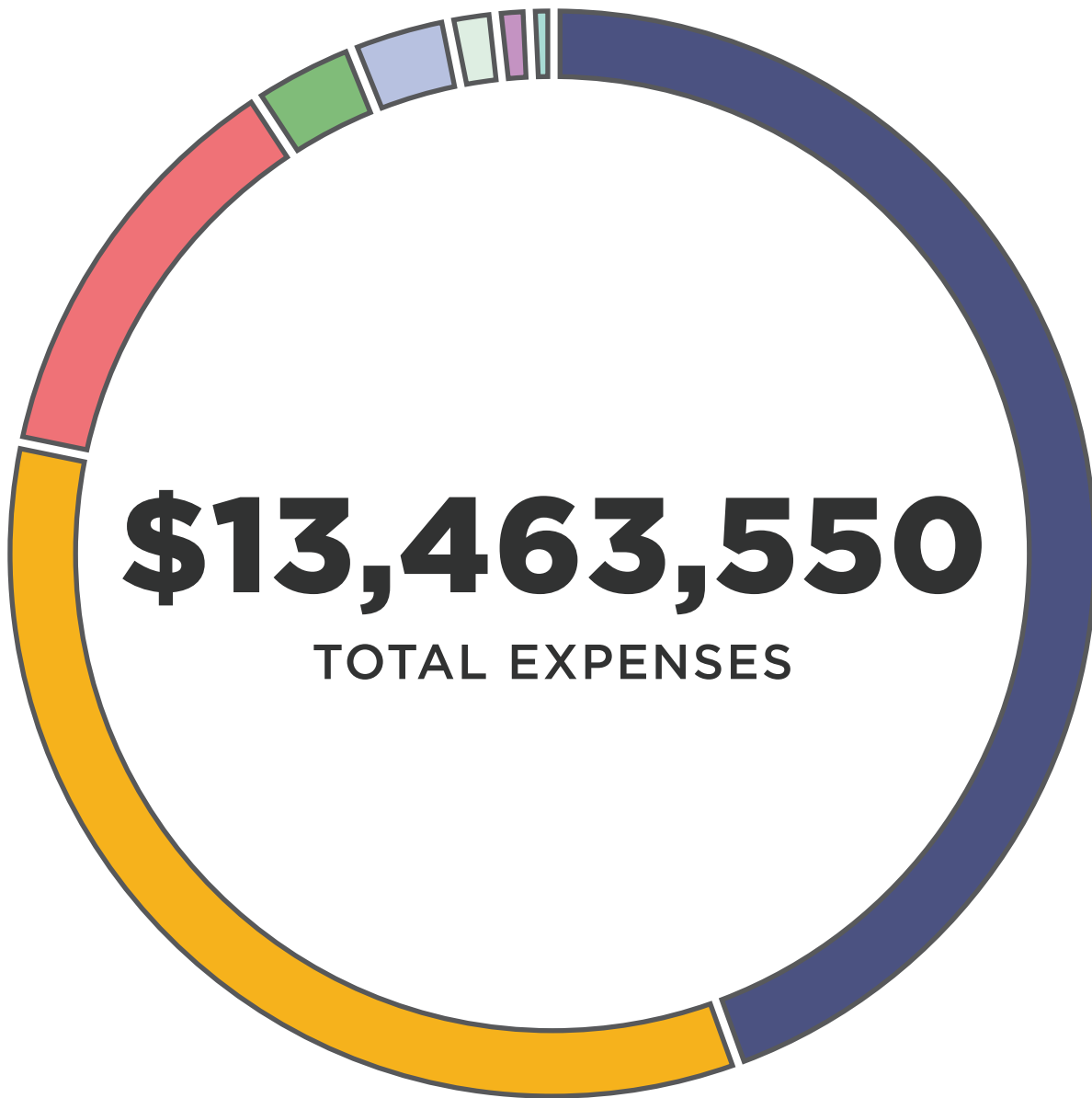
\$318,488
UNREALIZED GAIN/(LOSS)
INVESTMENTS

\$349,332
VEHICLE REGISTRATION
TAX \$3

\$780,712
VEHICLE RENTAL TAX

\$815,108
VEHICLE REGISTRATION
TAX \$7

\$11,139,429
HALF-CENT SALES TAX



\$8,006
VEHICLE ACQUISITION

\$97,425
CAPITAL PLANNING

\$161,211
TAX DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATION

\$349,160
TRANSIT PLAN
ADMINISTRATION

\$354,823
BUS INFRASTRUCTURE

\$1,812,500
BUS RAPID TRANSIT

\$4,571,967
TRANSIT SERVICES

\$6,108,458
ALLOCATION TO
FUND BALANCE