

GoTriangle Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2021 – Special Session
Held Remotely via WebEx

Board Members Present Remotely:

Will Allen III	Michael Parker, Chair
Brenda Howerton	Renée Price
Sig Hutchinson (arr. 11:21 a.m.)	Jennifer Robinson (arr. 11:06 a.m.)
Vivian Jones	Steve Schewel (left 11:36 a.m.)
Valerie Jordan	Stelfanie Williams (arr. 11:14 a.m.)

Board Members Absent:

Corey Branch	Michael Fox
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Chair Michael Parker officially called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

I. Oaths of Office

Chair Parker introduced Brenda Howerton, new representative from the Durham County Board of County Commissioners.

Action: GoTriangle General Counsel and NC Notary Public Shelley Read Curran administered the oath of office. Pursuant to the emergency video notarization requirements contained in G.S. 10B-25, the principal signer stated she was physically located in Durham County, North Carolina during the emergency video notarization and Notary Public Curran was in Wake County, North Carolina.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Action: On motion by Allen and second by Price the agenda was adopted. Upon vote by roll call, the motion was carried unanimously.

III. Commuter Rail Survey Presentation – Means, Methods & Results

GoTriangle president and CEO Charles Lattuca stated this the first of three planned public outreach periods for the commuter rail study was completed in November. He introduced Scott Thomas, Chief Communications Officer, to present the survey results.

Thomas said the survey received high response, having over 2,700 participants, compared to a typical survey of 300-400 participants. He said thousands of comments were received as well, with the majority of those comments being supportive and positive for commuter rail. Thomas then introduced Liz Raskopf, public engagement supervisor, and Elise Bielen, transportation project manager for Simpson Engineers & Associates. Their presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

Raskopf shared the corridor map and other background information that was included in the survey. She discussed the materials used and the methods for distributing the survey: email, social media, paper surveys at events and virtual meeting and presentations. She also talked about efforts to reach traditionally underrepresented groups.

Bielen noted that upper income levels were over represented in the survey and stated that future outreach would attempt to improve those statistics.

Hutchinson arrived.

She said the race and ethnicity of survey respondents generally mirrored the population, but noted there is room for improvement. She stated that all three counties indicate a need for more inclusion of people of Hispanic background and where efforts can be focused in the future.

Bielen shared the benefits mentioned in survey responses:

- Reducing congestion
- Environmental benefits
- Decreasing commute times
- Bringing the Triangle up to modern metropolitan standards
- Sense of connectivity throughout the Triangle

Concerns noted from survey responses were:

- Project cost and funding allocation
- Would it be effective?
- Would it serve the community equitably?
 - Serves only commuters
 - Doesn't serve those most in need (not equitable)
 - Some geographic areas left out

The survey included these open-ended questions:

1. What would you like in a commuter rail train that connects Durham and Wake counties? The most common responses were reliability, schedule, frequency, affordability.
2. What do you see the commuter rail train doing for your community? 87% of the responses categorized as positive, with congestion overwhelmingly listed as the top benefit. Negative comments were 10% of the responses, with project cost topping the list.
3. At the end of this study, local leaders will decide whether to move forward with the proposed commuter rail train. What else should they be considering to make that decision? Project cost, equity and growth were the top factors to be considered in making a decision about moving forward with commuter rail.

Bielen said that focus groups would be conducted next to explore themes raised in the initial survey and also reach out to underrepresented demographic groups. Additionally there would be continued education and awareness as well as two more public comment periods in the spring and summer.

Board members suggested that the survey results should be presented to both MPOs as well as the three boards of county commissioners, TJCOG, chambers of commerce, RTA, and other community based organizations.

Schewel left.

Price added that Hillsborough, Carrboro and Chapel Hill also should be included.

Lattuca highlighted the standalone website which would go live next month, ReadyforRailNC.org.

IV. Adjournment

Action: Chair Parker adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Prepared by:



Michelle C. Dawson, CMC
Clerk to the Board of Trustees