

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Link Transit Five-Year Transit Development Plan  
and Transit Facility Study

PREPARED FOR:

*City of Burlington, North Carolina*

PREPARED BY:

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NOVEMBER 2023



## Introduction

Link Transit is the urban fixed route and paratransit service in Burlington, Gibsonville, portions of unincorporated Alamance County, Elon and Alamance Community College and has been in operation since 2016. The City of Burlington Department of Transportation administers Link Transit which provides service on five fixed routes and a supplemental ADA paratransit service.

Eight years into operation, the City of Burlington is evaluating efficiency and performance of the current transit system to make recommendations for the future. This study, the Transit Development Plan, also involves the identification of a potential new site for an operations and maintenance facility and passenger transfer facility. The Transit Development Plan will evaluate the current system and services, develop operations, marketing and financial plans, and a capital improvement plan.

## ABOUT LINK TRANSIT

Link Transit operates with policy oversight from Burlington City Council. The Link Transit Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) includes representatives from all funding partners and serves as an advisory body for the service.

Services are operated by the third-party contractor, Transdev, which has operated fixed routes and ADA paratransit services for Link Transit since 2016.

Service is provided on five fixed routes radiating from downtown Burlington to Gibsonville, Elon, and the Alamance County Government Building and Alamance Community College. Routes operate every 90 minutes, Monday-Friday from 5:30 am to 9:30 pm, and Saturday from 9:25 am to 6:30 pm.

Link Transit is supported by an interlocal funding agreement between the City of Burlington, the Town of Gibsonville and the Town of Elon, and additional funding contributions from Alamance County and Alamance Community College. The City of Burlington is the lead agency and grant administrator for the transit system.

## Community Outreach Approach

The purpose of this Community Outreach Plan is to create an open and transparent process to meaningfully engage the public, particularly current transit riders, in the creation of the Transit Development Plan (TDP) for Link Transit. This plan is designed to comply with the BGMPO Public Involvement Plan adopted in May 2020 as well as the Link Transit Title VI Program – Public Participation Plan adopted in December 2022.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH GOALS

1. Consult with key stakeholders to assess opportunities and challenges for the Link Transit system.

2. Share draft TDP recommendations and gather feedback from key stakeholders.
3. Involve elected officials and funding partners in discussion of recommendations and implementation plans.

### Principles of Engagement

1. Input from transit riders is a priority in planning for the future. All public engagement for this project should prioritize reaching out to current Link Transit riders where they are.
2. All public engagement material should be offered in Spanish, in addition to English.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key Stakeholder Groups to be consulted through this process include:

Stakeholder Group	Methods of Engagement
<b>Current Transit Riders</b>	Online Survey, Flyers, Transit Rider Focus Group, Project Website, Pop-up Engagement
<b>Link Transit Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC)</b>	Focus Group, Meetings, E-mail Updates
<b>Elected Officials</b>	E-mail Updates, Focus Group, Updates from Consultant team and staff
<b>Employers, Non-profit and Community-based Organizations</b>	Online Survey, Project Website, Focus Group

### Transit Rider Focus Group

Creation of a transit rider focus group is an optional way to engage in a more in-depth fashion with a small group of current riders interested in advising on the future of the system. During Phase One outreach to operators, and in focus groups and pop-up engagement, the Consultant Team will ask for nominations or help identifying individuals who might like to serve on a one-time, virtual focus group to be constituted for this study specifically. The Transit Rider Focus Group will have one meeting, during Phase Two of community outreach for this project, to provide feedback on the study recommendations.

Name	E-mail Address / Contact Information
Transit Rider Focus Group will be built out using input from the first phase of community engagement, depending on community interest	


### *Employers, Non-Profit and Community-based Organizations*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>
Alamance Community College	Kristen Sutherland	<a href="mailto:Kmsutherland239@alamancecc.edu">Kmsutherland239@alamancecc.edu</a>
BGMPO	Wannetta Mallette, MPO Administrator	<a href="mailto:wmallette@BurlingtonNC.gov">wmallette@BurlingtonNC.gov</a>
Cone Health	Marcy Green, Impact Alamance	<a href="mailto:Marcy.Green@conehealth.com">Marcy.Green@conehealth.com</a>
Alamance ElderCare	Angela Thompson, Executive Director	336-538-8080
Piedmont Triad Regional Council Area Agency on Aging	MaryLou White	<a href="mailto:agewell@ptrc.com">agewell@ptrc.com</a>
United Way of Alamance County	Heidi Norwick, President	<a href="mailto:hnorwick@uwalamance.org">hnorwick@uwalamance.org</a>
Alamance County Community Services	Danielle Fields, Executive Director	<a href="mailto:dfields@alamanceservices.org">dfields@alamanceservices.org</a>
Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Workforce and Economic Development	Wendy Walker-Fox, Workforce and Economic Development Director  Jessica Raby, Assistant Director	<a href="mailto:jraby@ptrc.com">jraby@ptrc.com</a>  336-904-0300
Alamance Chamber	Reagan Gural, President & CEO	<a href="mailto:reagan@alamancechamber.com">reagan@alamancechamber.com</a>
DSS	Candice Gobble, Director	<a href="mailto:Candice.Gobble@alamance-nc.com">Candice.Gobble@alamance-nc.com</a>
Equity: indigenous perspective	Rose Watlington	<a href="mailto:Rose.watlington@alamance-nc.com">Rose.watlington@alamance-nc.com</a>
Equity: Hispanic/Latinx perspective	Maria Hernandez	<a href="mailto:Mhernandez9469@gmail.com">Mhernandez9469@gmail.com</a>
Equity: Health	Jess Landes Johnson	<a href="mailto:jessland@gmail.com">jessland@gmail.com</a>

## KEY OUTREACH STRATEGIES

*All Outreach Opportunities will be designed to be focused, respectful of public time and interest, conscious of the project budget and to maximize effective engagement with key stakeholders.*

**Project Website** - A webpage with project information will be added to the Link Transit Website. The webpage will include project overview, timeline, contact information, and relevant information related to the current phase of the project – such as a link to a public survey, draft recommendations, or final plan. A brief overview of the project and link to the project website will be provided to funding partners to add to their own website and communications channels.

**Public Survey** – A public survey focused on the needs and opportunities for current transit services, and the perspectives of transit riders. This survey will be hosted online and marketed in the community using Link Transit and partner agencies' social media channels, public service announcement e-mail blasts through partner agencies and key stakeholders, and flyers with scannable QR codes posted on Link Transit buses and at bus stops. City of Burlington will also include a flyer about the study as an insert in the December water bill. In addition to the primary survey online, a printable version will be available and may be distributed at community centers.

**Pop-up Engagement** – Project Team members will use pop-up engagement strategies to meet current transit riders where they already are – on buses, at the temporary transfer hub, and at Alamance Community College. Engagement strategies will include mobile and iPad-based survey collection and sharing handouts with survey links (in Phase One) and the high points of the plan recommendations (Phase Two).

**Transit Rider Advisory Group (optional)**– An advisory group made up of current transit riders and key representatives from stakeholder groups whose clients or employees are transit-dependent. If desired by Link Transit, this focus group would meet once through this project, to provide input and guidance on opportunities and priorities for the transit system.

**Focus Groups** – Additional focus groups who may provide input on opportunities and priorities for the transit system may include local employers, non-profit and community-based organizations, and other partners who are not yet part of the Public Transportation Advisory Committee.

**Project Update E-mails and Presentations** – Project update e-mails and presentations will be prepared at key milestones, and can be shared as appropriate with key stakeholders, focus groups and project partners.

## Schedule

### PHASE ONE: OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

The first phase of community outreach on this project will focus on introducing the project to key stakeholders and the general public and collecting input on opportunities and priorities for Link Transit. This will include:

- » Project website
- » Community survey
- » Pop-up public engagement conversations at the Temporary Transfer Hub and Alamance Community College (Opportunities 1 and 2 in-person)
- » Operator interviews
- » Focus Group with Transit Riders (*Optional Opportunity, virtual*)
- » E-mail update or Focus Group with Public Transportation Advisory Committee, including elected officials and City Managers in the service area (Opportunity 3, virtual)
- » Focus Group with other Key Stakeholders – employers, non-profits and community-based organizations (Opportunity 4, virtual)

Phase One input, including analysis from the public survey and comments from pop-up engagement conversations and focus groups, will be summarized in a memo and included in the development of the Transit Development Plan (TDP).

## PHASE TWO: FEEDBACK ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon the conclusion of Phase One, the Consultant Team will combine public input on opportunities and priorities with the results of the current system evaluation to develop a draft TDP for Link Transit.

Phase Two of community outreach for this project will focus on sharing the draft recommendations for the TDP and Transit Facility and asking for reactions and feedback on these recommendations. Activities during Phase Two of community outreach will include:

- » Updates to the project website
- » Community survey on recommendations
- » Pop-up public engagement conversations at the Temporary Transit Hub located at Webb and Worth in Burlington, Elon University and Alamance Community College (Opportunities 5 and 6, in-person)
- » Presentation / Focus Group 2 with Transit Riders (*Optional Opportunity, virtual*)
- » Presentation / Workshop with PTAC and decision-makers (Opportunity 7, virtual)
- » Presentation / Focus Group 2 with other Key Stakeholders (Opportunity 8, virtual)

## SCHEDULE MILESTONES

Date	Activity	Lead
<b>Phase One: Opportunities and Priorities</b>		
Oct 2023	Community Outreach Plan	Kimley-Horn
	Design Community Survey	Kimley-Horn

	Stakeholder List	Kimley-Horn
Nov & Dec 2023	Council Update 1 – Nov 7	Kimley-Horn to draft, Link Transit to send
	Project Website	Kimley-Horn / Link Transit
	Distribute Community Survey	Project Team / Local Partners
	Focus Groups	Project Team / Link Transit
	Pop-up Engagement: Alamance Community College, Temporary Transfer Hub, + Route Field Observations	Kimley-Horn
	Operations Staff Interviews	Kimley-Horn
Jan 2024	Preliminary summary of survey findings	Kimley-Horn
	Jan 16 – PTAC Meeting	Kimley-Horn
	Jan 19 – Close Survey, Summarize Findings	Kimley-Horn
<b>Feb 2024</b>	Council Update 2 – Findings from Survey, Service and System Evaluation	Kimley-Horn to draft, Link Transit to send e-mail or coordinate Council briefings
<b>March 2024</b>	Council Update 3 – Facility Study: Site Selection Criteria + Preliminary Site Id	Kimley-Horn to draft, Link Transit to coordinate Council briefings
<b>Phase Two: Feedback on Recommendations – TDP and Facility Plan</b>		
May & June 2024	Update Project Website	Kimley-Horn / Link Transit
	Community Survey on Recommendations	Kimley-Horn
	Focus Groups & Workshop with elected officials (Council Update 4: Operations, Marketing and Financial Plan, Site Selection Findings)	Kimley-Horn
	Pop-up Engagement	Kimley-Horn
	Presentations	Kimley-Horn

Initial recommendations will be refined and documented in the final TDP and Facility Study Document. Final recommendations and implementation plan will be posted on the Project Website and presented to the Burlington City Council and PTAC, at a minimum. There is potential for three other virtual presentations, if necessary.