

CITY MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT

raleighnc.gov



CITY OF
Raleigh
MANAGER'S
OFFICE

Issue 2020-29

August 7, 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Virtual Neighborhood Meetings – Information Now Available Online

2030 Comprehensive Plan Progress Report

Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Program Update

City Receives Electric Bus Funds from Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust

Weekly Digest of Special Events

Council Follow Up

Community-wide Climate Action Plan Development (Council Member Stewart)

INFORMATION:

Virtual Neighborhood Meetings – Information Now Available Online

Staff Resources: Bynum Walter, Planning & Development, 996-2178, bynum.walter@raleighnc.gov

Prior to the submittal of any rezoning application, applicants are required to host a neighborhood meeting inviting the property owners within 500 feet of the area requested for rezoning. Additionally, in advance of Planning Commission review, many rezoning applicants are required to hold a second neighborhood meeting inviting the property owners within 1,000 feet. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all required neighborhood meetings can be held virtually as authorized by Council during the April 21 special meeting. Pre-submittal meetings information can be found online. Second neighborhood meetings information is also available online along with all other zoning case information. Both links are accessible from the Current Development Activity page and information about upcoming meetings will be updated as meetings are scheduled.

As a reminder, not all neighborhood meetings result in a rezoning case.

(No Attachment)

2030 Comprehensive Plan Progress Report

Staff Resource: John Anagnost, Planning & Development, 996-2638, john.anagnost@raleighnc.gov

Each year, staff prepares a Progress Report which describes the status of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Staff are working now to draft this year's Progress Report; previous years' reports are available [online](#). The Progress Report has three major components:

- an inventory of the City Council's legislative decisions related to the Comprehensive Plan;
- an accounting of Comprehensive Plan action items' status and recommended associated amendments; and
- emerging issues which may indicate a need for changes to the Comprehensive Plan and merit additional consideration by the City Council.

Following the November 2019 adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update, this year's progress report will resume monitoring of action items. Beginning with this year's Progress Report, the action items have been entered into ClearPoint, the same performance management software used to monitor the Strategic Plan. Planning and Development staff will coordinate with all city departments to use ClearPoint to complete action item review and propose the recommended amendments.

The FY20 Progress Report will be presented to City Council in the fall of this year for review and consideration of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

(No Attachment)

Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Program Update

Staff Resources: Mila Vega, Transportation, 996-4123, mila.vega@raleighnc.gov and Jason Hardin, Planning and Development, 996-2657 jason.hardin@raleighnc.gov

Staff continues efforts to advance the Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Program. Since the last program update to Council ([Issue 2020-19](#)), staff have been working with municipal stakeholders on identifying a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for Wake BRT: Western Corridor and Wake BRT: Southern Corridor.

On July 23, the Town of Cary Council ([Cary Council Meeting Video, Agenda](#)) endorsed the routing section of the recommended LPA within the Town of Cary jurisdiction for the Western Corridor. Staff will present the LPA to the Raleigh City Council for consideration at your meeting on August 18. Once approved, transit staff will develop and submit a federal Project Development application, authorized by Council on June 16.

The Western Boulevard Corridor study focuses on land use capacity analysis, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) potential and urban design recommendations. A virtual engagement period for the Western Boulevard Corridor study is tentatively planned for August 31 to October 5 to provide essential project updates including selection of the LPA and reporting on other project deliverables.

On July 28, the Town of Garner Council received a presentation ([Garner Council Meeting Video, Agenda](#)) regarding the routing options for the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor. Raleigh City Council will receive an update on the status of the Southern Corridor in September, discussing routing options and feedback received from the Town of Garner.

The Wake BRT: New Bern Avenue final design and Wake BRT system standards contract was approved by Council on June 2. As the project advances into the next phase of design there will be engagement opportunities for the public to interact and provide feedback to the design team on branding, wayfinding and station design. To ensure continued information sharing and a transparent process, staff held a virtual [Stakeholders Committee](#) meeting on July 22.

The [Equitable Development report](#) has been published and is available for public comment. The Equitable Development Around Transit (EDAT) report is based on public input received during multiple in-person and online public forums over the last year as well as staff's efforts to be present for community conversations where they are occurring. It sets out a vision for a more transit-oriented and sustainable Raleigh, outlining a program that ensures the benefits of the BRT investment are maximized and equitable. The report includes recommendations for accommodating more housing and jobs around BRT. It also includes strategies for displacement including providing more affordable housing along the corridors with new tools such as a zoning affordability bonus and a new "Equity Fund".

Staff is sharing the report with plan participants and all other stakeholders. While, continuing to capture input on how well the report recommendations achieve the plan's broader goals. Staff will deliver the report and accompanying Comprehensive Plan amendments to City Council this fall. Initial implementation steps, other than review and adoption of the report, include revisions to the TOD overlay district and initiation of station area planning for individual stations along the New Bern corridor. Staff is developing the scope of work for station area planning work (funded by an FTA grant) and Council will see further information through the contract approval process.

(No Attachment)

City Receives Electric Bus Funds from Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust

Staff Resource: Megan Anderson, Office of Sustainability, 996-4658, megan.anderson@raleighnc.gov

The City was awarded \$397,000 to replace a diesel activity bus used for parks programs with an all-electric model using funds from the Volkswagen (VW) Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund, administered by the NC Department of Environmental Quality. This grant application was a collaboration among the Office of Sustainability, Engineering Services, Budget and Management Services, and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

These funds were part of a 2015 settlement between Volkswagen and the US Environmental Protection Agency for Clean Air Act violations related to the installation of emissions test cheat devices on millions of vehicles. In 2016 Volkswagen agreed to a settlement of over \$15 billion with the US DOJ and State Attorneys General. North Carolina's Environmental Mitigation Trust received \$92 million, which is to be distributed in three phases of \$30.68 million each.

The awarded funds will replace an existing 40-passenger diesel shuttle bus with an electric bus. Replacing this bus with an electric vehicle will offset all of the emissions from this vehicle's use. The replacement bus will undertake all of the same duties as the original bus and serve the same populations.

Replacing a diesel bus with an electric model is aligned with the City's environmental policy goals and initiatives, including:

- an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 levels by 2050, community-wide (adopted by City Council in May 2019);
- the [Transportation Electrification Study](#), which identified current and future opportunities in Raleigh with regard to transportation electrification, specifically that key vehicles in the City fleet be transitioned in the short term to electric vehicles;
- two key focus areas of the Strategic Plan: "to establish Raleigh as the leader in transportation innovation" and "to optimize public infrastructure projects to address community resiliency, sustainability, and efficiency";
- several policies found in the Raleigh's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, including:
 - Policy EP 1.1 Greenhouse Gas Reduction:
 - Policy EP 1.9 Sustainable Public Realm
 - Policy EP 1.12 Air Quality Improvements

(No attachment)

Weekly Digest of Special Events

Staff Resource: Derrick Remer, Special Events Office, 996-2200, derrick.remer@raleighnc.gov

Included with the *Weekly Report* packet is the special events digest for the upcoming week.

(Attachment)

Council Member Follow Up Items

General Follow Up

Community-wide Climate Action Plan Development (Council Member Stewart)

Staff Resource: Megan Anderson, Office of Sustainability, 996-4658, megan.anderson@raleighnc.gov

Council Member Stewart requested an update on the development of the Community-wide Climate Action Plan (CCAP) project. City Council set a community-wide goal of an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 on May 21, 2019, which helped set the focus for the development of strategies and community engagement. This following update provides background on the strategy and action development process, other supporting work, and next steps.

Strategy Development

The Office of Sustainability has held several listening and learning sessions with partner departments, peer cities, local NC stakeholders, and those working in various topic areas related to climate, equity, resilience, energy, transportation, waste, water and more to help guide strategy development and gain buy in from Raleigh stakeholders and residents. There are unique opportunities and challenges in the local Raleigh and North Carolina context. This includes opportunities to embed equity and resiliency into climate strategies, as well as feasibility challenges with laws, regulations, utility considerations and resources. In addition, four stakeholder groups were established for CCAP and have assisted in the development of the project and strategy ideas: the Interdepartmental Team, the Technical Team, the Community Advisors Team; and an Equity Advisors Team. We received input from these stakeholder teams, other local experts and interest groups, and researched best practice climate strategies to gather over 600+ potential greenhouse gas emissions reduction ideas for consideration in this project. These ideas were then vetted, categorized and focused into near and mid to long-term strategies.

The strategies are divided into the categories of Buildings & Energy; Transportation & Land Use; Clean, Green, & Healthy Raleigh and Cross Cutting. The main focus for strategy development is connecting the city and community to actions that can be started or implemented in 0-7 years. These near-term strategies should connect climate action to community priorities, existing plans and resource allocation. Key considerations for strategy development included: greenhouse gas emissions reduction impact, equity and resilience principles, collaborations and resources, existing partnerships, financial feasibility, laws, culture, utility and land use considerations, community co-benefits, and alignment with developing work and priorities for the City and the Raleigh community. The CCAP will also identify potential mid- and long-term strategies, those that could be started or implemented after the first seven years and through 2050. These mid- to long term strategies will help drive continued collaboration and partnership opportunities across the community by identifying potential areas of action that partners across Raleigh can use as a guide for future planning. Strategy development looked to existing plans, technical experts and collaborations related to climate and sustainability initiatives, such as the North Carolina Clean Energy Plan, the NC Energy Efficiency Roadmap, Duke Energy's net zero carbon by 2050 goal, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and many other plans associated with topics related to reducing GHG emissions and upholding the quality of life for Raleigh residents.

The purpose of the strategies will be for the Raleigh community to continue to "see themselves" in the strategy areas so they can continue to identify relevant actions that they can take or help lead that align with the community values and impact areas laid out in the CCAP strategies. Stakeholders are expected to continue working to implement emission reduction strategies after the written CCAP is prepared, as the nature of this project is long term and ongoing.

Other Work and Next Steps:

Work continues on CCAP project development, which includes modeling and forecasting GHG emissions related to strategies and actions; equity evaluation methods and aligning approach with city-wide equity efforts (including partnering with the new Office of Equity & Inclusion); identifying data and project metrics; identifying partners and foundational projects; creating communication, education and outreach materials and aligning with city-wide outreach efforts; benchmarking and reporting with best practice organizations; implementation plan development; and work to implement and align the Transportation Electrification Study and other related city projects with CCAP.

CCAP strategies and other deliverables will be vetted by the CCAP teams at their last round of meetings. Due to ongoing impacts from COVID 19, all methods of communication and outreach have been shifted to occur virtually. Staff from the Office of Sustainability continue to meet with stakeholders and anticipate the final round of meetings with the consultants and CCAP teams to occur early this fall. In these last rounds of meetings, the CCAP teams will get an update on GHG emissions modeling related to strategies; review and provide feedback on strategies and actions, roles and partnerships, equity considerations, program outputs and metrics, and discuss implementation and next steps. A draft of the written CCAP document is expected from the consultants late this fall and staff expects to work with stakeholders to finalize the document by early 2021.

(No Attachment)