



September 11, 2024  
**Executive Board  
 Meeting Agenda**

Wednesday, September 11, 2024  
 In-person with a virtual option  
 Join by computer:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85855172282>  
**Meeting ID 858 5517 2282**  
 or Call **646-931-3860,85855172282#**

Chairman Jay McCosh will convene a meeting of the Centralina Executive Board **on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 5:00 pm**. The meeting will be held in person at the Centralina office (located at 10735 David Taylor Dr., Suite 250, Charlotte, NC 28262) with a virtual attendance option via Zoom.

Time	Item	Presenter
5:00 p.m.	<b>Call to Order</b>	Jay McCosh
	<b>Roll Call</b>	
	<b>Moment of Silence</b>	
	<b>Pledge of Allegiance</b>	
	<b>Amendments to the Agenda</b> (if any)	
<b>Consent Items:</b> <i>Consent agenda items may be considered in one motion and without discussion except for those items removed by a Board Member.</i>		
5:05 p.m. Item 1 5 minutes <i>Pages 5-6</i>	<b>Approval of June 12, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes</b> Approval of June 12, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes. The minutes from the June 12, 2024, meeting have been distributed to all members of the Executive Board and should be approved if correct.  <b>Action/Recommendation:</b> <i>Motion to approve the June 12, 2024, Executive Board meeting minutes.</i>	Jay McCosh
5:05 Item 2 <i>Page 8</i>	<b>Centralina Workforce Development Consortium and Centralina Regional Council Agreement</b> At the request of the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium, the Centralina Regional Council provides administrative services to support the implementation of Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act WIOA and National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) programs on an annual basis. The Executive Board is asked to approve the agreement that governs this relationship prior to its execution by Centralina’s Board Chairman.  <b>Action/Recommendation</b> <i>Motion to approve the Agreement Between the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium and The Centralina Regional Council for fiscal year 2025.</i>	David Hollars
5:05 Item 3 <i>Pages 10-18</i>	<b>Stantec Master Service Agreement (MSA) and Statement of Work (SOW) Approval</b> The Executive Board is asked to approve the Master Services Agreement (MSA) and Statement of Work (SOW) with Stantec for assessment and planning activities and services of a Qualified Environmental Professional as part of the Centralina Brownfields Program.  <b>Action/Recommendation</b> <i>Motion to approve the Master Services Agreement and Statement of Work with Stantec for implementation of the Brownfields program</i>	Michelle Nance
<b>Regular Agenda Items:</b>		

Time	Item	Presenter
5:05 Item 4 5 mins <i>Page 20</i>	<b>Centralina Spotlight: CLT Aviation Academy</b> Centralina Government Affairs & Member Engagement staff will provide an overview of the upcoming CLT Aviation Academy, a one-of-a-kind opportunity to go behind the scenes and experience the inner workings of Charlotte Douglas International Airport.  <b>Action/Recommendation</b> <i>Receive as information.</i>	Kelly Weston
5:10 Item 5 10 mins <i>Pages 22-89</i>	<b>Centralina Personnel Policy Updates</b> It is Centralina's practice to receive approval from the Executive Board for substantive changes to Centralina's Personnel Policies. The purpose of this agenda item is to get approval from the Executive Board for proposed amendments to the Manual and seek approval of these modifications.  <b>Action/Recommendation:</b> <i>Motion to approve the August 2024 Personnel Policy Amendments</i>	Geraldine Gardner
5:20 p.m. Item 6 30 minutes <i>Pages 91-158</i>	<b>Connect Beyond Update: AtP Committee Report and Next Steps</b> Centralina staff will provide key updates on the CONNECT Beyond project to keep the Executive Board apprised of current implementation activities, with a focus on updates on (1) the Advancing the Plan Committee; (2) the development of a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and (3) Centralina's Integrated Mobility Center.  <b>Action/Recommendation:</b> <i>Motion to approve the following: (1) Approval of the Advancing the Plan Committee's final report and (2) Approval of the final Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan</i>	Jason Wager, Sarah Niess and Andy Gryzmski
5:50 p.m. Item 7 20 minutes <i>Pages 160-162</i>	<b>In Focus Discussion: Regional Dialogue: Digital Inclusion</b> The Board will receive an overview of Centralina's digital inclusion planning project, including a framework for a regional approach to addressing the digital divide  <b>Action/Recommendation:</b> <i>Receive as information and provide feedback on outreach activities to disseminate the regional digital inclusion framework to Centralina member governments</i>	Kelly Weston, Christina Danis, Anna Lu Wilson, and Kate Fersinger
6:10 p.m. Item 8 10 minutes <i>Pages 164-168</i>	<b>Process Overview: Setting Priorities for State and Federal Engagement</b> The Executive Director will provide an overview of the forthcoming process to establish priorities for Centralina's Raleigh Relations and Federal Relations agendas.  <b>Action/Recommendation:</b> <i>Receive as information and provide feedback on the proposed process, timeline</i>	Geraldine Gardner
6:20 p.m. 5 minutes	<b>Comments from the Executive Board and Centralina Staff</b>	Board Members and Staff



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Time	Item	Presenter
<b>6:25 p.m.</b> 5 minutes	<b>Comments from the Executive Director</b>	Geraldine Gardner
<b>6:30 p.m.</b> 5 minutes	<b>Comments from the Chair</b>	Jay McCosh
<b>6:35 p.m.</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>	Jay McCosh

*Centralina Regional Council complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Centralina Regional Council will make reasonable accommodations in all programs/services to enable participation by an individual with a disability who meets essential eligibility requirements. Centralina Regional Council's programs will be available in the most integrated setting for each individual. If any accommodation is necessary for participation, please, contact the Board Administrator, 10735 David Taylor Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262, or email: Narissa Claiborne (nclaiborne@centralina.org). Please allow 72 hours advance notice for preparation. Visit our website: [www.centralina.org](http://www.centralina.org) for more information.*



# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 1**





**Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
June 12, 2024**

Officers Present	Board Members Present	Board Members Not Present	Centralina Staff and Guests Present
Jay McCosh, Vice Chairman Jarvis Woodburn, Secretary Tony Long, Treasurer	Bob Hovis Corinthia Lewis-Lemon David Scholl Felina Harris Gene Houpe Jamie Hammill Jennifer Stepp Jennifer Teague Martha Sue Hall Shawn Rush	Brian Helms Darrell Hinnant Elaine Powell Jamie Lineberger Kevin Demeny Lynn Shue Marjorie Molina Mark Loden Patty Crump	Denise Strosser Emily Hickok John Holmes Katie Kutcher Kelly Weston Lenessa Hawkins Linda Miller Michelle Nance Narissa Claiborne  <b>Guests</b> Leslie Mozingo

**Call to Order**

Vice Chair, Jay McCosh, called the meeting to order.

Narissa Claiborne, Boards Administrator, called the roll and noted a quorum present.

**Moment of Silence**

Vice Chair, Jay McCosh directed the Board and staff to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Consent Agenda**

- 1. Approval of the April 10, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes**
- 2. FY23-24 Budget Amendment**
- 3. Finance Committee Authorization**
- 4. HCCBG Aging FY25 Pass-Through Contract**
- 5. Brownsfield Grant Approval**
- 6. Timber Road Extension Grant Agreement**

Mayor Pro Tem made a motion to approve the June 12 consent agenda. Commissioner Tony Long seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**No Amendments to the Agenda.**

No amendments to the agenda were noted.

**Regular Agenda Items**

**7. Centralina Spotlight- Region of Excellence Award**

Centralina’s GAME Department presented the Board with a short video highlighting the Region of Excellence Awards that takes place annually to pay recognition to communities that contributed to significant and positive advancements in the regional community during FY23 and FY24. John Holmes, Government Affairs & Member Engagement Specialist petitioned the Executive Board to consider nominating someone or an organization in their community for one of the Region of Excellence Award Ceremony.

**8. State & Federal Relations Update**

Ms. Leslie Mazingo, Strategic Consultant, shared with the Board the Federal Performance Report and the March and April Federal Activities Update.

**9. FY24-25 Workplan Review and Approval**

Centralina’s Deputy Executive Director Michelle Nance shared with the Executive Board a briefing on the proposed FY24-25 workplan that implements year two of the Centralina Strategic Plan.

**10. In Focus Discussion: Small Towns Initiative Recap &**

Kelly Weston, Centralina’s Government Affairs Coordinator, and Michelle Nance, Deputy Executive Director shared with the Board a recap of the Impact of the Small Town’s Initiative, emphasizing the e needs of communities with populations under 10,000. They also highlighted that the program works to equip small local governments with cross-jurisdictional networks, knowledge, and solutions needed to best serve their constituents

**Comments from the Executive Board and Centralina Staff**

None.

**Comments from the Executive Director**

Centralina's Deputy Executive Director thanked the Board for their participation and feedback.

**Comments from the Chair**

Centralina’s Executive Board Chair shared with the Board upcoming events and encouraged the Board to share with their towns.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to be discussed, Chairman McCosh adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.



# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 2**



## Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>	X	<b>Regular:</b>	
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	David Hollars	<b>Presentation Time:</b>				
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	David Hollars	<b>Phone Number:</b>				
		<b>Email:</b>	dhollars@centralina.org			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Geraldine Gardner	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-351-7130			
		<b>Email:</b>	ggardner@centralina.org			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	Executive	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	G. Gardner			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda:</b> Annual Agreement Between the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium And The Centralina Regional Council						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
<p>At the request of the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium, the Centralina Regional Council provides administrative services to support the implementation of Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act WIOA and National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) programs on an annual basis. The Executive Board is asked to approve the agreement that governs this relationship prior to its execution by Centralina's Board Chairman.</p>						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
<p>Centralina Workforce Development Consortium has been designated as the local Workforce Investment Area for the units of general local government within the confines of its seven-county boundaries (Anson, Cabarrus, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Stanly, and Union Counties) for the purposes of implementing the federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).</p> <p>The Consortium may contract with an administrative entity to provide staff to manage all WIOA programs and manage federal grants. Centralina Regional Council has been providing such services to the Consortium since its formation over 30 years ago.</p>						
<b>Requested Action / Recommendation:</b>						
Motion to approve the <i>Agreement Between the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium and the Centralina Regional Council</i> for fiscal year 2025.						
<b>Time Sensitivity:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	Agreement must be approved at this meeting to ensure continuity of service.					
<b>Budget Impact:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	Centralina manages the annual program grant for Workforce services that includes pass-thru funding and administration funding. Budget for FY25 is approximately \$3,7million.					
<b>Attachments:</b> <i>(none or list)</i>	Agreement Between the Centralina Workforce Development Consortium the Centralina Regional Council					



# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 3**



## Executive Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>	X	<b>Regular:</b>	
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Lenessa E. Hawkins	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	N/A			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	N/A	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2723			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:lhawkins@centralina.org">lhawkins@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Michelle Nance	<b>Phone Number:</b>				
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:mnance@centralina.org">mnance@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	<b>GAME</b>	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	<b>Michelle Nance</b>			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda:</b> Stantec Master Service Agreement (MSA) and Statement of Work (SOW) Approval						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
The Executive Board is asked to approve the Master Services Agreement (MSA) and Statement of Work (SOW) with Stantec for assessment and planning activities and services of a Qualified Environmental Professional as part of the Centralina Brownfields Program.						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
As a region with a long history in textiles and manufacturing, many communities have very prominent sites that have not been redeveloped, due to real or perceived environmental concerns. In order to get these sites back on the tax rolls, the first step is understanding the nature of the environmental challenges and developing a plan for how the site can be cleaned up and reused. Centralina seeks to support communities in these efforts.						
In April 2023, Centralina conducted a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit qualified contractors to work on a potential regional brownfields program. Five contractors submitted proposals for the work and after a thorough selection and interview process, Stantec Corporation was selected and became the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)'s for Centralina's anticipated Brownfields Program. In coordination with Centralina staff, Stantec developed a nine-county grant proposal to EPA to establish the needs of Centralina communities and outline strategies for advancing site redevelopment in the region. The grant focused on brownfield site assessments and the development of reuse plans. The city of Mount Holly, the town of Spencer and Centralina serve as the three coalition members as part of the grant. Centralina has identified a third community, city of Albemarle, as an initial target site and will continue to seek additional sites across the nine-county footprint over the four-year program while working in collaboration with communities.						
In May 2024, Centralina was notified of a \$1.5 million EPA award, with the cooperative agreement and startup activities set to begin October 1, 2024 (the Executive Board approved this grant in June 2024, and we are currently awaiting the agreement for final signatures). In preparation of the EPA agreement, Centralina is seeking to execute an agreement with Stantec to begin the program and start assessment, planning and reporting activities on October 1, 2024. The contract term is concurrent with the EPA's award term, starting October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2028.						

The brownfields program will launch in a regional brownfields summit to be held October 29, 2024. Local government staff and leaders will have been invited to attend.

Board approval provides Executive Director authority to sign and make minor modifications to support the program.

**Requested Action / Recommendation:** *Motion to approve the Master Services Agreement and Scope of Work with Stantec for implementation of the Brownfields program*

<b>Time Sensitivity:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	It is critical that Stantec be working under a master services agreement (MSA) and related statement of work (SOW) prior to start of the EPA agreement (October 1, 2024) and will improve speed in gearing up activities for the program.
<b>Budget Impact:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	Statement of Work is in the amount of \$1,117,281 to be paid for from grant funding previously approved by the Executive Board.
<b>Attachments:</b> <i>(none or list)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stantec Master Services Agreement and Scope of Work FY25-29</li> </ul>



**Consulting Services Agreement – EXHIBIT A**

**Initial Statement of Work**

**Centralina Brownfields Program (the “Project”)**

This Statement of Work (this “SOW”), dated as of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of October, 2024 (the “Effective Date”), is by and between between CENTRALINA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, d.b.a Centralina Regional Council, a North Carolina regional council of governments pursuant to Chapter 160A, Article 20, Part 2 of the General Statutes of North Carolina and having a principal place of business at 10735 David Taylor Drive, Suite 250, Charlotte, North Carolina 28262 (“Centralina”), and Stantec Consulting Services, Inc, a for-profit corporation and having a principal place of business at 521 East Morehead Street, Site 425, Charlotte, NC 28202 (“Consultant”), pursuant to which Consultant will provide to Centralina the services described in this SOW (the “Services”). Centralina and Consultant have simultaneously entered into a Services Agreement (the “Agreement”). The Agreement is incorporated into this SOW by this reference. In the event of any conflicting or additional terms between this SOW and the Agreement, the Agreement will govern, except with respect to the Work Plan, Fees, and Additional Provisions provided in Appendix A, if any, or other items expressly permitted by the Agreement.

<b>SOW As of Date: October 1, 2024</b>	<b>Consultant: Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.</b>
<b>Centralina’s Project Manager: Lenessa Hawkins</b>	<b>Consultant’s Project Manager: Joe Morici</b>
<b>Email: lhawkins@centralina.org</b>	<b>Email: joseph.morici@stantec.com</b>
<b>Telephone No.: 704-348-2723</b>	<b>Telephone No.: 803-960-2069</b>
<b>Work Plan</b>	
<p><b><u>Nature and Objectives of Services to be Provided by Consultant:</u></b></p> <p>Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. will provide assistance in implementing the Centralina Regional Council Coalition Assessment Grant (Grant) awarded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2024. Specifically, Stantec will provide professional brownfield and environmental consulting services. All work performed and tasks completed will be in accordance with Centralina’s approved EPA Work Plan and the Terms and Conditions of the Cooperative Agreement for the Brownfields Coalition Assessment Project.</p>	
<p><b><u>Time Schedule and Task Plan for Performance of Services by Consultant:</u></b></p> <p>The time of performance shall be from October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2028. See Appendix A for a detailed task plan.</p>	
<p><b><u>Consultant Project Roles and Resources to be Provided by Consultant:</u></b></p> <p>Consultant shall provide professional services to complete the following tasks as outlined in the scope of work: project management and reporting, community outreach, site assessments and cleanup planning and redevelopment planning as part of the Centralina Brownfields Assessment Coalition Cooperative Agreement Workplan. Consultant shall provide professional services required to complete the scope of work. Please refer to Appendix A for more details.</p>	



<b>Deliverables (including technical specifications and completion/acceptance criteria)</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
<b><u>Task 1: Project Management and Reporting</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately 48 Project Team Meetings;</li> <li>• 48 Invoices and Activity Summaries;</li> <li>• 16 Quarterly Reports;</li> <li>• 4 Federal Financial Reports and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise forms;</li> <li>• regular ACRES site database updates; and</li> <li>• 1 Final Performance Report.</li> </ul>	<p>monthly</p> <p>monthly</p> <p>quarterly</p> <p>quarterly</p> <p>quarterly</p> <p>year 4</p>
<b><u>Task 2: Community Outreach</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately 16 Steering Committee Meetings;</li> <li>• 1 Community Involvement Plan;</li> <li>• 6 print outreach materials;</li> <li>• 16 social media/webpage posts;</li> <li>• 16 meetings with community groups, site owners, and/or developers.</li> </ul>	<p>quarterly starting after 1/2025 3/2025</p> <p>quarterly / ongoing</p> <p>quarterly / ongoing</p> <p>quarterly / ongoing</p>
<b><u>Task 3: Site Assessments and Cleanup Planning</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brownfield site inventory</li> <li>• approximately 1 Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP);</li> <li>• 30 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments;</li> <li>• 16 Site-specific QAPPs, Health and Safety Plans, &amp; Phase II Environmental Site Assessments;</li> <li>• 20 Asbestos-Containing Material / Lead-Based Paint Surveys;</li> <li>• 10 Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives;</li> <li>• 6 Asbestos-Containing Material Abatement Designs; and</li> <li>• 5 Brownfields Agreements.</li> </ul>	<p>monthly / ongoing</p> <p>year 1 prior to Phase 2 work prior to site fieldwork</p> <p>prior to site fieldwork</p> <p>prior to site work with asbestos ongoing</p> <p>for sites with asbestos ongoing for NC Brownfields program</p>
<b><u>Task 4: Redevelopment Planning</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately 8 Site-specific Reuse Studies;</li> <li>• 4 Market Studies; and</li> <li>• 2 Revitalization Plans.</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>
<b>Period of Performance, Terms of Payment and Ceiling Amount</b>	
<p>This Statement of Work is effective from the Effective Date above through September 30, 2028. Amendment of this SOW, or renewal of its term must be in writing executed by both parties' authorized representative and requires pre-audit certification and attestation by Centralina's finance director. <b>Total fees will be \$1, 117,281.</b></p> <p>Consultant's invoices shall be delivered to the attention of Centralina Accounts Payable with a copy to the Project Manager listed above, by email to <a href="mailto:finance@centralina.org">finance@centralina.org</a>. <b>Each invoice shall reference the Contract Number, the Statement of Work Exhibit Number and the Work Plan Tasks(s) under that SOW for which work has been performed.</b></p>	

Invoices shall be issued by Consultant on a monthly basis, starting from the Effective Date. Invoices shall provide narrative and financial documentation addressing the status of deliverables as defined in the Work Plan. Invoices shall be payable by Centralina within 45 days of receipt of applicable funds from the source granting agency. The amount due to Consultant pursuant to this Statement of Work may not exceed the limit set above unless proper written justification has been submitted to the Centralina Project Manager and approved by a Centralina officer **prior to performance of work**. If necessary, the Project Manager will issue a revised Statement of Work.

**NC Iran Divestment Act Compliance**

Each Party affirms that, as of the date of execution of this SOW, it is not listed on the Iran Divestment Act lists created by the North Carolina State Treasurer pursuant to N.C. G.S. 147-86.58, nor are its subsidiaries or parent companies, if any.

**E-Verify. (Centralina to check one prior to Consultant's execution:)**

E-Verify requirements **DO** apply to this Scope of Work. Consultant agrees that for this Statement of Work, it shall not enter into any subcontracts under this Statement of Work unless such subcontractor (a) affirms either its exemption from or compliance with the E-Verify requirements of NCGS Chapter 64 Article 2 and (b) agrees to similarly ensure its subcontractors' affirmation of exemption from or compliance with those statutes.

E-Verify requirements **DO NOT** apply to this Scope of Work.

[Signatures on following page.]

DRAFT

**Authorization.** This Statement of Work has been executed by each Party's duly authorized representative as of the date below such Party's signature.

**CENTRALINA REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES, INC.**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Geraldine Gardner

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Executive Director

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*"This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the North Carolina Local Government Finance Act."*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Denise Strosser, Centralina's Finance Officer

*"This instrument has been approved as to form as required by Centralina Policy."*

DRAFT

## Appendix A: Project Scope

### **Services:**

Stantec anticipates performing the following tasks in implementing the Centralina Regional Council Coalition Assessment Grant (Grant) awarded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2024. All work performed and tasks completed will be in accordance with the Centralina's approved EPA Work Plan and the Terms and Conditions of the Cooperative Agreement for the Brownfields Coalition Assessment Project.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE:**

Consultant will perform work in accordance with the approved QAPP. Consultant may support any necessary future updates of the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for existing environmental information, in accordance with the EPA standards. The QAPP will be a living document, which will be revised if needed throughout the period of performance.

### **Task 1: Project Management and Reporting**

**\$25,100**

Stantec will attend and support monthly project team meetings, where Stantec will provide an updated project inventory with details of the status of associated tasks or proposed actions for each site. Decisions and action items will be documented in an e-mail following each meeting. Stantec will draft EPA quarterly reports, Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization forms and provide to Centralina for review and submittal. Stantec will update the ACRES database, at least quarterly and as project activities are completed. Stantec will invoice monthly and provide a summary letter detailing the activities completed for the expenses in the associated invoice. At the end of the project, Stantec will draft a Final Performance Report to document accomplishments and lessons learned. *Stantec and Centralina will cooperatively develop communication protocols, an annual workplan highlighting priority tasks, key personnel and more detailed timelines, and will establish an agreed upon format for documents, narrative and financial reporting components to meet EPA and Centralina requirements.*

Deliverables anticipated include:

- approximately 48 Project Team Meetings;
- 48 Invoices and Activity Summaries;
- 16 Quarterly Reports;
- 4 FFR and DBE forms;
- regular ACRES updates; and
- 1 Final Performance Report.

### **Task 2: Community Outreach**

**\$26,500**

Stantec will support the community outreach efforts to include helping facilitate Steering Committee meetings; developing a Community Involvement Plan (CIP); identifying and prioritizing sites; facilitating community workshops in the Target Areas and through virtual platforms; and engaging with communities in underserved disadvantaged areas to identify sites, needs, and redevelopment opportunities; and, preparing outreach materials, such as presentations, articles, and web and social media posts about the project. Stantec will also support outreach to community groups, property owners, and developers (anticipated quarterly). *Stantec and Centralina will establish outreach protocols to ensure external communication alignment and will cooperatively develop procedures for implementing steering committee activities and other outreach efforts.*

Deliverables anticipated include:

- approximately 16 Steering Committee Meetings;
- 1 CIP;
- 6 print outreach materials;
- 16 social media/webpage posts;
- 16 meetings with community groups, site owners, and/or developers.

Based on project needs and budget available, Centralina and Stantec may agree to adjust community outreach tasks and number of outcomes, as needed.

**Task 3: Site Assessments and Cleanup Planning** **\$885,681**

Stantec will develop and continually update a brownfield inventory as sites are identified throughout the region. Stantec will assist Centralina with identifying and setting priorities for sites that require environmental assessment and/or are being targeted for redevelopment. Stantec will provide Centralina an estimate of assessment costs for those identified priority sites. Once approved by Centralina, Stantec will complete Environmental Site Assessments, including but not limited to the following assessments, for the high priority sites.

Stantec will submit Site Eligibility Determinations for EPA approval, and petroleum determinations will be requested from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), when needed. Phase I ESAs will be performed in accordance with ASTM E1527-21 and the EPA All Appropriate Inquiry Final Rule. Phase II ESAs will be conducted in accordance with ASTM E1903-19, after the approval of a Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and site-specific QAPPs. Stantec will also develop Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) prior to field work. Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) and Lead-Based Paint (LBP) Inspections will be completed for many of the older buildings on priority sites. For sites with contamination, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) will be developed to identify applicable remediation alternatives for the site based on potential reuse scenarios. For sites with ACM, asbestos abatement design may be completed. When needed, assistance will be provided to enroll sites in North Carolina's Brownfields Program and development of a Brownfields Agreement (BFA).

Deliverables anticipated include:

- approximately 1 Generic QAPP;
- 30 Phase I ESAs;
- 16 Site-specific QAPPs, HASPs, & Phase II ESAs;
- 20 ACM/LBP Surveys;
- 10 ABCAs;
- 6 ACM Abatement Designs; and
- 5 BFAs.

Based on project needs and budget available, Centralina and Stantec may agree to adjust site assessment and cleanup planning task and number of outcomes, as needed.

**Task 4: Redevelopment Planning** **\$180,000**

Stantec will support the client in working with community partners to develop a brownfields strategy for each target area by identifying prioritized brownfield sites, opportunities for redevelopment, and resources needed to achieve specific community goals. Stantec will lead community visioning sessions for site-specific reuse plans for priority sites and will develop market studies to understand local market demands and trends to help facilitate redevelopment of priority sites. An Area-Wide Revitalization Plan will be developed for two communities.

Deliverables anticipated include:

- approximately 8 Site-specific Reuse Studies;
- 4 Market Studies; and
- 2 Revitalization Plans.

Based on project needs and budget available, Centralina and Stantec may agree to adjust redevelopment planning tasks and number of outcomes, as needed.

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# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 4**



## Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>		<b>Regular:</b>	X
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Kelly Weston	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	5 minutes			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	Kelly Weston	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2728			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:kweston@centralina.org">kweston@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Michelle Nance	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2709			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:mnance@centralina.org">mnance@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	Government Affairs & Member Engagement	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	Michelle Nance			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda:</b> Centralina Spotlight – CLT Aviation Academy						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
Centralina Government Affairs & Member Engagement staff will provide an overview of the upcoming CLT Aviation Academy, a one-of-a-kind opportunity to go behind the scenes and experience the inner workings of Charlotte Douglas International Airport.						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
Since 2018, Centralina has partnered with the City of Charlotte to offer the CLT Aviation Academy. This program provides a unique, hands-on opportunity to go behind the scenes and experience the inner workings of Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Over the course of eight weeks, gain an understanding of the airport's impact on our region's economy, transportation systems, and overall community by observing current operations and future planning efforts up close. The Aviation Academy is open to local government staff and elected officials, as well as other community stakeholders. The application period will open September 30th and classes will begin in January 2025.						
<b>Requested Action / Recommendation:</b>						
Receive as information.						
<b>Time Sensitivity:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	None.					
<b>Budget Impact:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	None.					
<b>Attachments:</b> <i>(none or list)</i>	None					





# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 5**



## Executive Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>		<b>Regular:</b>	X
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Venecia White	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	N/A			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	Geraldine Gardner	<b>Phone Number:</b>				
		<b>Email:</b>	Ggardner@centralina.org			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Venecia White	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2733			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:vrock@centralina.org">vrock@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	<b>Admin</b>	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	<b>Geraldine Gardner</b>			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda:</b> Personnel Manual Updates						
<b>Description of Agenda Item: (This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</b>						
<p>It has been Centralina’s practice to receive approval from the Executive Board for substantive changes to Centralina’s Personnel Policies. The purpose of this agenda item is to get approval from the Executive Board for proposed amendments to the Manual and seek approval of these modifications.</p>						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
<p><u>Personnel Policy Amendments:</u>          We are proposing to amend Centralina's personnel policies to provide clearer and more consistent organization-wide guidance for employees. The proposed amendments clarify existing language for Centralina’s personnel policies and help ensure our policies continue to align with the latest regulations.</p> <p>Additionally, the additions and amendments to the policies help provide clear guidance to Directors and managers, help ensure consistency in approach across departments, and offer transparency to staff.</p> <p>The attached summary page provides further details on the proposed changes.</p>						
<b>Requested Action / Recommendation:</b>						
Motion to approve the August 2024 Personnel Policy Amendments						
<b>Time Sensitivity: (none or explain)</b>	none					
<b>Budget Impact: (none or explain)</b>	none					
<b>Attachments: (none or list)</b>	1. Centralina Personnel Manual					

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL MANUAL  
AND AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

The statements contained in the Personnel Manual are intended to provide only general information about the current existing policies and practices of employment. Nothing contained herein is intended to create, or shall be construed as creating, an expressed or implied contract or guarantee of employment for a definite or indefinite term.

Nothing contained in this policy should be considered as a contract between Centralina and an employee. Employment with Centralina is "at-will". Centralina or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or notice.

Centralina retains the right at any time, in its own discretion, to delete, add to, alter and amend any and all information, statements, employee benefits, or terms and conditions of employment contained herein.

My signature below acknowledges my understanding that my employment with Centralina is at-will. Also, my signature represents that I have received the adopted Personnel Manual and agree to abide by the guidelines. Further, I agree that if there is any policy or provision within this document that I do not understand, I will seek clarification from Human Resources.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Personnel Manual is located at the following link:

**[CENTRALINK Library / Human Resources / Personnel Policy Manual](#)**



## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Pursuant to Centralina’s Personnel Manual (*Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality; Section 2: Conflict of Interest*), Centralina actively prohibits any actual or appearance of conflict of interest with clients, the community, member governments or within the organization by employees and members of the Board of Delegates.

A conflict of interest is considered an actual or perceived interest by a staff member in an action that results in (or could potentially result in) personal or professional gain.

It is not possible to list every activity or relationship that would create a conflict of interest but examples of activities that violate this policy include the following:

- An employees’ interest in an outside business which conflict or appears to conflict with their ability to act and make independent decisions in the best interest of Centralina.
- Employees, members of employee’s immediate family, and members of the Board soliciting or accepting gifts, money or gratuities (in excess of minimal value) from the following:
  - Persons receiving benefits or services from the organization.
  - Any person or organization performing or seeking to perform services under contract with the organization, and
  - Persons who are otherwise in a position to benefit from the actions of any employee of the organization.
- Using the resources of Centralina for personal gain, and
- Using your position at Centralina for personal advantage.

Any violation of this policy by a Centralina employee is subject to review under Centralina’s Policy on Disciplinary Actions which are found in the Centralina Personnel Policy Manual.

Any violation of this policy by the Executive Director will be referred to the Board of Delegates.

Any violation of this policy by any member or members of the Centralina Board of Delegates will face appropriate action by the rest of the Board Members and in accordance with jurisdictional Code of Ethics policies.

*Note: The conflict of interest policy described above, may be superseded by higher requirements established by external funding sources or grant requirements.*

By signing and submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed this policy and agree to abide, to the best of my ability, with the requirements stated therein.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Pursuant to Centralina’s Personnel Manual (*Workplace Guidelines; Section 6: Outside Employment*), Employees are not prohibited from other employment. However, the work of Centralina shall have precedence over other occupational interests of employees. Outside employment for salary, wages or commission or self-employment by an employee must be approved in advance by the employee’s Department Director with notification to Human Resources.

Approval or denial will be based on the following:

- Conflicts of interest
  - Outside employment could present a conflict of interest if the work activities are related to the employee’s responsibilities at Centralina or if the employer (or client in the case of self-employment) is a Centralina partner, vendor or other stakeholder.
  - Outside employment could also present a conflict of interest if it has any type of negative impact or potentially negative impact on Centralina or its operations. Please see Centralina’s policy on *Conflict of Interest*. The department director and/or supervisor shall consult the Executive Director on areas of concerns and/or ambiguity.
- Any interference with the employee’s ability to perform their duties for Centralina; and
- Any interference with the employee’s regular working hours.

Any activity related to outside employment may not take place during the employee’s regular hours nor involve the use of Centralina’s resources.

Any employee who is permitted to hold outside employment is still expected to demonstrate satisfactory performance in his or her job responsibilities with Centralina; will be evaluated by the same performance standards; and will be subject to Centralina’s scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If Centralina determines that an employee’s outside work requirements interfere with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of Centralina, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment and be given a specified period of time to complete that separation.

By signing and submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed this policy and agree to abide, to the best of my ability, with the requirements stated therein.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WELCOME TO CENTRALINA REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Welcome to Centralina Regional Council! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further Centralina's goals.

You are joining an organization that has a reputation for outstanding leadership, innovation, and expertise. Our employees use their creativity and talent to invent new solutions, meet new demands and offer effective services to the governments and entities that we serve. With your active involvement, creativity and support, Centralina will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of Centralina's success.

All the activities of Centralina are interrelated and dependent upon each other and members and staff must work together to accomplish the organization's goals. For any group to work together and to function efficiently there must be:

- A climate of cooperation;
- A basic understanding of purposes and objectives; and
- A common interpretation of the policies, rules, and regulations that govern the organization.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this manual. Although this policy manual has been designed in the best possible manner, its contents cannot be considered as all-inclusive. Allowances must be made for judgment on the part of the Executive Director, department directors and supervisors. An Operations Manual has been created to provide more clarification on certain policies and provide information on proper procedures and course of action.

If you have questions, feel free to ask your supervisor or contact the Human Resources Manager.

## **BACKGROUND OF CENTRALINA**

Centralina Regional Council is a public organization that was established to serve the needs of the greater Charlotte region, including Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties. Our mission is to strengthen regional collaboration and improve quality of life, which we accomplish in three distinct ways. We identify regional opportunities and spark action by facilitating areawide planning, collaboration and problem-solving. We support local governments by giving them the technical support, training and expertise they need to serve their communities. Finally, we provide direct health, aging and workforce services to individuals. Through these three levels of engagement and impact, we seek to unite our region by a common vision for a thriving and prosperous place to live, work and play.

### *Our Mission:*

Centralina Regional Council leads regional collaboration and sparks local action to expand opportunity and improve quality of life. We do this through creative problem solving, innovative service delivery and support to our local governments.

## CORE VALUE STATEMENTS

We **LEAD** in the way we **ACT** with each other and our customers.

- **L**isten and speak with care
- **E**mbrace boldness and flexibility
- **A**ffirm that differences matter
- **D**rive Collaboration
- **A**ct with integrity
- **C**ommit to our communities
- **T**ake care of ourselves and each other

We <b>LEAD</b> in the way we <b>ACT</b> with each other and our customers.	<b>What does this look like?</b>		
<b>Listen and Speak With Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We take time to praise each other and practice gratitude.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively listen before being heard, practicing empathy and speaking with precision and care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are open to feedback on how we can adapt and improve.</li> </ul>
<b>Embrace boldness and flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are innovative and not afraid to take risks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are flexible in both independent and collaborative tasks while working remotely.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are open minded leaders that look to the future and anticipate what's next.</li> </ul>
<b>Affirm that differences matter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We acknowledge and appreciate that we are all unique individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively engage to understand other unique perspectives, needs and experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We adapt how we present our expertise so that it is accessible to all.</li> </ul>
<b>Drive Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We serve as subject-matter experts (SMEs) to ensure our organization is able to meet critical business needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We acknowledge that we are better together!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We adopt a One Centralina mindset by creating opportunities for teamwork within and across all areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Act with integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are mindful of the impact that our actions and decisions have on others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We work to build trust through honest relationships and acting in good faith.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We adhere to the highest level of ethics and authenticity.</li> </ul>
<b>Commit to our communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are proactive in engaging our communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We invest in learning about our communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We foster relationships with local leaders to build bridges for our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Take care of ourselves and each other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We practice and support a healthy work-life balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We intentionally take action to improve our physical and mental health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are aware when our teammates are in need and offer support.</li> </ul>

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 1: Purpose of the Policy**

It is the purpose of this policy and the rules and regulations set forth to establish a fair and uniform system of personnel administration for all employees of Centralina under the supervision of the Executive Director.

Nothing contained in this policy should be considered as a contract between Centralina and an employee. Employment with Centralina is "at-will". Centralina or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason or notice.

### **SECTION 2: Amendments to the Policy**

Centralina reserves the right to add, change, or delete personnel policies and/or procedures as it deems necessary. Amendments to this Policy Manual that are substantive in nature will be made by the Executive Director and/or designated staff with final approval from the Executive Board. Employees will be made aware of these changes as soon as reasonably possibly.

### **SECTION 3: Responsibilities of the Board of Delegates**

The Board of Delegates and its Executive Board is responsible for adopting all plans, programs, objectives and policies of Centralina. Project review and adoption of a budget are also responsibilities of the Delegates. The Executive Board shall be responsible for establishing and approving personnel policies, the position classification and pay plan and may change the policies and benefits as necessary. The Executive Board, however, delegates the actual employment and discharge responsibilities to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and staff carries out the approved and budgeted activities of Centralina.

### **SECTION 4: Responsibilities of the Executive Director**

It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to administer these policies and procedures and any subsequent amendments or additions as may be adopted by the Board of Delegates or its Executive Board. As delegated by the Executive Board, the Executive Director shall make appointments, dismissals and suspensions in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in this Policy.

The Executive Director may designate an employee, i.e. a Human Resources Manager, to perform certain responsibilities related to administration of the personnel program. This designee shall maintain the position classification plan and the pay plan and perform such other duties in connection with an effective human resources program. All matters dealing with human resources shall be routed through this designee who shall maintain a complete system of personnel files and records.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

### **SECTION 1: Equal Opportunity**

Centralina is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. It is against Centralina's policy for any employee to discriminate against an applicant for employment or an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

The policies and principles of equal employment opportunity also apply to the selection and treatment of independent contractors, personnel working on our premises who are employed by temporary agencies and any other persons or firms doing business for or with Centralina.

This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment and hiring, compensation, benefits, dismissal and all other terms and conditions of employment.

Department Directors and supervisors are responsible for implementing equal employment practices within each department. The Executive Director is responsible for Centralina's overall compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Employees' questions or concerns should be referred Human Resources.

Violations of this policy, regardless of whether or not an actual law has been violated, will not be tolerated. Centralina will investigate every issue that is brought to its attention in this area, will take corrective actions and will take appropriate disciplinary action when appropriate.

### **SECTION 2: Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

An inclusive workplace is essential to carrying out Centralina's mission of expanding opportunity and improving quality of life while upholding our core values. Centralina has a responsibility to create and sustain a work environment where employees of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, cultures, religions, gender identities or expressions, sexual orientations, ages, neurodiversities, and physical abilities feel safe, respected, and empowered to bring their unique identities to work. We welcome the contributions these differences offer and recognize that having an array of perspectives fosters creativity and innovation.

To promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization, Centralina commits to:

- Providing ongoing training and resources on cultural competency and overcoming personal biases.
- Zero tolerance for harassment of any kind.
- Resolving conflicts and addressing grievances expediently and effectively.
- Ensuring equity in hiring, advancement, and salary setting practices.
- Regularly reviewing and assessing the organization's cultural inclusivity and sensitivity.

### **SECTION 3: Title VI Compliance – Policy Statement and Notice of Non-Discrimination (Updated April 2023)**

Centralina Regional Council, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, assures that no person shall, on the grounds of their race, color, age, disability, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in any agency-sponsored program or activity, regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. Centralina’s Non-Discrimination Policy is in keeping with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act and related federal policies that address non-discrimination as outlined in the following document.

Centralina’s Non-Discrimination Policy applies to all employees, contractors and subrecipients of Centralina, as well as all recipients of and participants in all Centralina programs, services and activities.

Further, in the event that Centralina distributes federal financial aid funds to a subrecipient, Centralina will include the appropriate non-discrimination language and references to federal laws, such as Title VI, in all written agreements and will monitor those subrecipients for compliance as and when required.

This policy statement not only identifies the guiding principles of Centralina’s Title VI plan but is also an expression of our organization’s broader commitment to non-discrimination.

Centralina values the diversity of all the people and communities we serve and welcomes participation from all interested parties in its programs, services and activities, regardless of cultural identity or background. Centralina is also committed to promoting the comprehensive realization of equal opportunity and equal access to all of its programs, services and activities regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, marital or family status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or any other characteristic protected by law. Centralina is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Centralina will not tolerate any form of proscribed discrimination in employment efforts or in any of its programs, services or activities. Further, Centralina will not tolerate any form of retaliation directed against an individual who complains of discrimination pursuant to this policy or who participates in any investigation concerning discrimination pursuant to this policy.

#### **A RESOLUTION REGARDING TITLE VI AND ADOPTION OF A TITLE VI POLICY STATEMENT**

**WHEREAS**, the Centralina Council of Governments (Centralina COG) is the state-designated lead regional organization for the nine-county region in and around Charlotte, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, Centralina COG’s role is to coordinate the efforts of federal, state and local governments and organizations to grow our region’s economy and jobs, control the cost of government and improve quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, to fund its many program activities and initiatives, Centralina COG receives direct or pass-through federal funding from agencies such as the US Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration); the US Department of Health and Human Services; and the US Department of Labor; and

**WHEREAS**, Centralina COG, as a recipient and sub-recipient of federal funding will ensure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination based on race, color and national origin, specifically 42 USC 2000d, which states that:

*No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance; and*

**WHEREAS**, Centralina COG will also comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended and its related statutes, regulations and all additional protections set forth; and

**WHEREAS**, Centralina COG has developed a Title VI Policy Statement that will direct the administration and implementation of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 within the organization and authorizes Centralina COG’s Executive Director to further develop and provide any other Title VI assurances, plans and programs, as required.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Centralina COG certifies that it will comply with the provisions of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) and the associated responsibilities of the law and adopts the 2018 Title VI Policy Statement.

*Approved by the Centralina Board of Delegates October 10, 2018*

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#### **SECTION 4: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation**

It is the policy of Centralina to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Further, Centralina will make reasonable accommodations, including modification of organizational policies and procedures in appropriate cases for qualified individuals with disabilities, if Centralina can do so without undue hardship.

Employees who may require reasonable accommodation should contact Human Resources.

#### **SECTION 5: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of New Employees**

**Job Requisition Process.** Department Directors shall complete a job requisition form whenever the department has a need to:

- Create and fill a new position, or
- Refill an existing position when there is a termination of employment.

The job requisition form details the request for the position, explains the need, determines the budget available for the role and identifies any resources or technology needed. The Executive Director with input from the Finance Director shall approve the job requisition prior to posting the position for recruitment.

**Recruitment Sources.** When position vacancies occur, Centralina shall publicize these opportunities for employment, including applicable salary information and employment qualifications. Job openings will be advertised in local newspapers, professional publications and other such means in order to establish a diverse and qualified applicant pool. In addition, notice of vacancies shall be posted internally at a designated conspicuous place at the Centralina office

where notices are customarily posted and/or on the Centralina website.

**Application for Employment.** All persons expressing interest in employment with Centralina shall be given the opportunity to file an application for employment for positions that are vacant. All applications shall be delivered and maintained by Human Resources in accordance with disposition records schedule.

**Travel Expenses and Relocation Assistance.** On occasion, recruitment for an open position may require a search over a wide geographic area. In these circumstances the Executive Director may authorize the payment of travel expenses for candidates and payments for part or all of moving expenses for relocating new employees.

**Selection.** Department directors, with the assistance of Human Resources, shall make such investigations, schedule and conduct such examinations as necessary to assess accurately the knowledge, skills, experience and other qualifications required for the position. All selection devices administered by Centralina shall focus on knowledge, skills, abilities, and suitability to perform the job.

**Appointment.** Before any commitment is made to an applicant, either internal or external, the Department Director shall make recommendations to the Executive Director and Human Resources of the position to be filled, the salary to be paid, and the reasons for selecting the candidate over other candidates. The Executive Director shall approve all appointments and starting salaries with input from the Finance Director. Human Resources shall be responsible for the processing of new employees and will have the authority to negotiate employment considerations with the candidate as it relates to salary and any other compensation and/or benefits and the employee's start date.

## **SECTION 6: Anti-Harassment**

Centralina explicitly forbids harassment of one employee by another employee, supervisor or third party (including contracted service providers or members of the Board) for any reason. Such behavior undermines the integrity of the employment relationship and goes against Centralina's Core Values.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Definitions of harassment are contained below. If employees have further questions about what constitutes harassing behavior or what conduct is prohibited by this policy, they should discuss these questions with Human Resources and/or their immediate supervisor.

**Unlawful Harassment.** "Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment because of:

1. The individual's membership in a protected class (to include race; color; religion; genetic information; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; age; disability; or any other category protected under federal, state, or local law), or
2. Substantially and unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affecting an individual's employment opportunities, regardless of protected class designation.



Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile or intimidating acts.

**Sexual Harassment.** "Sexual harassment" is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual's employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

**Retaliation.** Centralina also absolutely forbids retaliation, which includes: threatening an individual or taking any adverse action against an individual for (1) reporting a possible violation of this policy, or (2) participating in an investigation conducted under this policy.

Centralina staff and Board Members are covered by this policy and are prohibited from engaging in any form of harassing, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct. None of the aforementioned individuals has the authority to suggest to any applicant or employee that employment or advancement will be affected by the individual entering into (or refusing to enter into) a personal relationship with the supervisor or member of the Board or for tolerating (or refusing to tolerate) conduct or communication that might violate this policy. Such conduct is a direct violation of this policy.

Even non-employees are covered by this policy. Centralina prohibits harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of our employees in connection with their work by non-employees. Employees should immediately report any harassing or discriminating behavior by non-employees, including contractors and/or subcontractors.

**Reporting.** If you have any concern that Centralina's Anti-Harassment policy may have been violated by anyone, you must immediately report the matter. Any employee who believes they have personally experienced or directly observed an act of harassment should report the incident to their supervisor/manager or to Human Resources immediately. Supervisors/manager or Directors who receive a complaint, or who personally observe harassing conduct, should inform the Human Resources Department immediately.

Employees should report any actions they believe violates this policy no matter how slight the actions may seem. Centralina is committed to investigating the report and then taking prompt, appropriate remedial action. However, although Centralina encourages and expects prompt reporting of harassment claims so that rapid responses and appropriate actions may be taken, no limited time frame will be instituted for reporting such claims. The late reporting of a claim will not in and of itself preclude Centralina from investigating and/or taking remedial action.

Employees shall not be penalized or retaliated against for reporting improper conduct, harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other actions that they believe may violate this policy.

## **SECTION 7: Complaint Reporting Process**

It is Centralina's policy to provide a just procedure for the presentation, consideration, and disposition of all employee complaints. The purpose of this section is to outline the procedure for complaints and to assure all employees that they receive a response to their complaints and that the complaint reporting process will be prompt and fair.

Employees utilizing the complaint procedure shall not be subjected to retaliation or any form of harassment from supervisors or employees for exercising their rights under the complaint procedure. Supervisors, or other employees who violate this policy, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

It is the responsibility of human resources and supervisors at all levels, consistent with authority delegated to them, to consider and take appropriate action promptly and fairly on a complaint or adverse action appeal of any employee.

In adopting these procedures, Centralina sets forth the following objectives:

- Assure employees of a way in which they can get their complaints considered rapidly, fairly, and without fear of reprisal.
- Provide employees with assurance that actions are taken in accordance with policies.

This complaint reporting process also applies to any complaints made against Centralina's Executive Director, Board Members or other individuals that staff come into contact within the course of their work.

1. Complaints regarding instances of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, shall be reported in a timely manner to any of the following: the employee's immediate supervisor or Department Director, or the Human Resources Department. An employee is not required to follow the chain of command in making a complaint.
2. An employee may skip a level(s) in the management chain in order to seek an impartial, uninvolved party with which to lodge their complaint.
3. Any complaints about the Executive Director should be addressed to both Human Resources and the Centralina Board Chairman and/or Centralina Board Officers.
4. If the employee believes that the alleged harasser may not be aware that the conduct or behavior is unwelcome, the employee may choose to inform the alleged harasser that the conduct or behavior is unwelcome. This procedure should be reserved only for minor or incidental comments or jokes that, while inappropriate at the workplace, do not rise to the level of harassment. If the conduct or behavior continues, the employee must report that conduct or behavior.
5. An employee is not required to inform an alleged harasser that the conduct is unwelcome prior to reporting the matter.
6. Employees shall cooperate with any investigation of a violation of this policy and shall provide all relevant information.

7. Employees shall follow this complaint procedure in the event of harassment from any Centralina vendor or other outside contractor or non-employee doing business with, or attempting to do business with Centralina. This includes other agencies or groups with which an employee is required to interact as part of the employee's job responsibilities.
8. The employee should provide the following information (without regard to which supervisor in the organization's chain of command receives the complaint):
  - His or her name, title and work assignment.
  - The name and title of the person (or persons) committing the harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
  - The specific nature of the harassment or conduct complained of, how long it occurred, any employment action (demotion, failure to promote, dismissal, refusal to hire, transfer, etc.) taken as a result of the harassment or conduct, or any other threats made as a result of the harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
  - Witnesses to the harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; and
  - Details of any previous reports of a similar nature involving the alleged harasser or any related complaints.
9. A supervisor receiving a complaint shall make an initial inquiry to determine whether any action needs to be taken to protect the complainant pending an investigation.
10. Compliance with this policy shall not impact any employee's ability to pursue a claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or any other appropriate government agency.
11. The Human Resources Department, who may also coordinate with Centralina's legal team, is responsible for investigating all complaints alleging harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, unless there is a conflict of interest.
12. The privacy of the employee filing the report and the employee under investigation shall be respected at all times, consistent with the obligation to conduct a fair and thorough investigation.
13. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. Information concerning a complaint shall not be released to anyone who is not directly involved with the investigation. The purpose of this provision is to protect the confidentiality of the employee who files a complaint and to encourage reporting of incidents of harassment, discrimination or retaliation.
14. In the event Human Resources does not establish probable cause, the parties involved will be notified and the findings of the investigation communicated on a need-to-know basis.
15. Any substantiated intentional act of harassment or proven retaliation in response to a complaint of harassment is considered to be a serious violation of this policy and will be dealt with accordingly through Centralina's Disciplinary procedures. Additionally, any employee proven to have falsely accused another employee of an act of harassment as defined under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **SECTION 8: Appeal Process**

**Appeal Process – Non-Discrimination.** Any Centralina employee wishing to appeal a decision not related to discrimination because of his/her age, sex, race, color, national origin, religion,

creed, physical disability or political affiliation may file the complaint with the Executive Director, who shall consider the complaint and render a decision in writing as promptly as possible. If the decision is not satisfactory to the individual in or if he/she fails to receive an answer within the designated period provided, the individual may file the complaint with the Centralina's Board Chairman and Executive Board who shall consider the complaint appeal and render a decision in writing as promptly as possible. This decision shall be final regarding the complaint.

**Appeal Process – Discrimination.** Any current or former employee wishing to appeal a decision related to a discrimination complaint (to include complaints related to employment, promotion, training, or transfer was denied him/her or that demotion, layoff, or dismissal of employment was forced upon him/her because of race, color, religious creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic predisposition, or any other classification protected by applicable discrimination laws and complaints involving the availability of services and programs and benefits to disabled persons as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act) may file the complaint in writing to Centralina's Board Chairman and Executive Board, who shall consider the complaint and render a decision in writing as promptly as possible. This decision shall be final regarding the complaint.

**Appeal Process – Adverse Action.** Any Centralina employee or former employee wishing to appeal a decision arising out an adverse action (demotion, dismissal, reduction in pay, layoff or an undesirable transfer or suspension), may file the adverse action appeal with the Executive Director, who shall consider the complaint and render a decision in writing as promptly as possible. This decision shall be final regarding the adverse action appeal.

## **SECTION 9: Whistleblower Policy**

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of Centralina who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

This policy is intended to cover protections for employees that raise concerns on issues such as:

- Incorrect financial reporting.
- Unlawful activity.
- Activities that are not in line with Centralina's policies.
- Activities, which otherwise amount to serious improper conduct.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact his/her immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. Centralina will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases or threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against must contact the

Human Resources Manager as promptly as possible. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, & CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **SECTION 1: Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct covers a wide range of business practices and procedures. It does not cover every issue that may arise but sets out basic principles to guide all Centralina employees and members of its Board of Delegates. The following Centralina policy sections specifically pertain to the organization's expectations regarding Code of Conduct:

- Equal Opportunity
- Conflicts of Interest
- Confidentiality
- Record-Keeping, Financial Controls and Disclosures
- Personnel Actions
- HIPAA Compliance
- Outside Employment

All employees and Board of Delegates must conduct themselves accordingly and seek to avoid even the appearance of improper behavior.

Centralina employees and Board of Delegates are responsible for understanding policy requirements within each of these sections and reporting any suspected violations of law, this code or Centralina policy.

Those who violate the standards of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment or Board assignment. Furthermore, violations of this code may also be violations of the law and may result in civil or criminal penalties.

### **SECTION 2: Conflict of Interest**

Centralina actively prohibits any actual or appearance of conflict of interest with clients, the community, member governments or within the organization by employees and members of the Board of Delegates.

A conflict of interest is considered an actual or perceived interest by a staff member in an action that results in (or could potentially result in) personal or professional gain.

It is not possible to list every activity or relationship that would create a conflict of interest but examples of activities that violate this policy include the following:

- An employees' interest in an outside business which conflict or appears to conflict with their ability to act and make independent decisions in the best interest of Centralina.
- Employees, members of employee's immediate family, and members of the Board soliciting or accepting gifts, money or gratuities (in excess of minimal value) from the following:
  - Persons receiving benefits or services from the organization.
  - Any person or organization performing or seeking to perform services under contract with the organization, and
  - Persons who are otherwise in a position to benefit from the actions of any employee of the organization.

- Using the resources of Centralina for personal gain, and
- Using your position at Centralina for personal advantage.

Any violation of this policy by a Centralina employee is subject to review under Centralina's Policy on Disciplinary Actions which are found in the Centralina Personnel Policy Manual.

Any violation of this policy by the Executive Director will be referred to the Board of Delegates.

Any violation of this policy by any member or members of the Centralina Board of Delegates will face appropriate action by the rest of the Board Members and in accordance with jurisdictional Code of Ethics policies.

*Note: The conflict of interest policy described above, may be superseded by higher requirements established by external funding sources or grant requirements.*

### **SECTION 3: Confidentiality**

During the course of employment staff may have access to confidential or proprietary information. Confidential information includes information disclosed to or known by the employee because of their employment or relationship with Centralina that is not generally known to people outside of the organization. This information might be disclosed through your participation on a Centralina project, program or initiative. Proprietary information might include non-public information that might be of use to competitors or harmful to the Centralina or its customers/clients if disclosed.

Any breach of confidentiality or misuse of information could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, even if the employee does not actually benefit from the disclosed information. The obligation to preserve proprietary information continues even after employment ends.

If there is any doubt regarding the types of information that is deemed to be confidential, the employee should seek counsel from the Executive Director, Department Director or Human Resources.

Members of the Centralina Board of Delegates also have an obligation to maintain confidential or proprietary information entrusted to them by the organization or its customers/clients, except when disclosure is authorized in writing by the Executive Director or required by laws or regulations.

If there is any doubt regarding the types of information that is deemed to be confidential, the Board of Delegates should seek counsel from the Executive Director.

### **SECTION 4: Record-Keeping, Financial Controls and Disclosures**

Centralina requires honest, accurate and timely recording and reporting of information in order to make responsible business decisions. All business expense accounts must be documented and recorded accurately in a timely manner. If you are not sure whether a certain expense is legitimate, please ask the Finance Director. Policy guidelines are also available from the Human Resources Manager. All of the organization's books, records, accounts and financial statements must be maintained in reasonable detail; must appropriately reflect the organization's



transactions; must be promptly disclosed in accordance with any applicable laws or regulations and must conform both to applicable legal requirements and to the organization's system of internal controls.

## **SECTION 5: Personnel Actions**

Human Resources will prescribe necessary forms and reports for all personnel actions and will retain records necessary for the proper administration of the personnel system.

**Access to Personnel Records.** Centralina shall maintain the records deemed necessary for the proper administration of the personnel system. The official personnel files are maintained by Human Resources. These files contain documents such as employment applications, records of personnel actions, performance reviews, performance warnings, pay records, retirement and insurance records, and other personnel related documents. Only documents included in these files constitute official personnel records. The Executive Director and/or Human Resources are the only persons authorized to release information or provide access to an employee or ex-employee's Personnel File.

**Records of Former Employees.** The provisions for access to records apply to former employees as they apply to present employees.

**Employee Objections to Material in File.** An employee who objects to material in his/her file on grounds that it is inaccurate or misleading may seek to have the material removed from the file or may place in the file a statement relating to the material.

**Public Information.** Certain information included in an employee's personnel file shall be considered public record; while other information in the employee's personnel file shall be treated as confidential in accordance with NC General Statute 153A-98; Privacy of Employee Personnel Records.

In accordance with General Statute 153A-98, the following information is a matter of public record: name, age, date of original employment or appointment to public service, current position title, current salary, date and amount of most recent increase or decrease in salary, date of most recent promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation or other change in position classification, and the office to which the employee is currently assigned. Any person may have access to this information for the purpose of inspection, examination, and copying, during regular business hours.

All information contained in an employee's personnel file, other than the information mentioned above, is confidential and shall be open to inspection only in the instances listed in accordance with NC General Statute 153A-98. Confidential records are kept in a locked fire-retardant cabinet.

**Penalties for Permitting Access to Personnel Records and Files.** A public official or employee who knowingly, willfully and with malice permits any person to have access to information contained in a personnel file, except as is explicitly permitted, is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and upon conviction shall only be fined an amount not more than five hundred (500) dollars.

**Examining and/or Copying Confidential Material Without Authorization.** Per NC General Statutes, any person, not specifically authorized to have access to a personnel file designated as confidential, who shall knowingly and willfully examine in its official filing place, remove or copy



any portion of a confidential personnel file shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and upon conviction shall only be fined in the discretion of the court but not in excess of five hundred (500) dollars.

## **SECTION 6: HIPAA Compliance**

Centralina is committed to protecting the privacy, security, confidentiality, integrity and availability of individually identifiable protected health information in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the regulations described there under. These policies and procedures apply to protected health information (PHI) created, acquired, maintained or disclosed by Centralina employees, subcontractors, business associates, vendors, volunteers and interns. All individuals representing Centralina will take responsibility for safeguarding protected health information to which they have access. The organization has designated a HIPAA Compliance Officer for breach reporting and action. More detailed information regarding HIPAA policy and procedures can be found in Centralina's Operations and Procedures Manual.

## EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

### SECTION 1: Employment Categories

It is the intent of Centralina to clarify employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility.

**Regular, full-time.** Employees (not on term status) regularly work at Centralina full-time schedule of 40 hours per week. Regular, full-time employees receive full sick and vacation leave and holiday pay and are eligible for Centralina's medical, life insurance, and retirement benefits according to Centralina personnel policies.

**Regular, part-time.** Employees (not on term status) regularly work less than the full-time schedule. Regular, part-time employees receive sick and vacation leave and holiday pay on a prorated basis and are eligible for Centralina's medical, life insurance, and retirement benefits if they continue to work on the average at 30 hours or more per week.

**Introductory employee.** A full time or part time regular employee who has not yet successfully completed the six-month introductory period of employment.

**Term employee.** A term employee is hired to assist with a specific project or to temporarily supplement the work force. A term employee is paid according to the terms of hire. Term appointments can be short-term in duration or for a period of time determined by the Department Director to meet the service needs of a particular program or project but shall not exceed limits set by the NC Local Governmental Retirement System. Personnel employed on term status only receive those benefits mandated by state or federal law. Term employees do not receive: vacation/sick leave, holiday pay, COLA's, health insurance, or retirement benefits. A term employee's work performance and status should be evaluated on a schedule determined by the Department Director or recommended by the Human Resources Manager. This ultimately ensures project goals and requirements are met. The terms of the employment agreement, assignments and any salary adjustments may be made at that time.

**Non-Exempt Employee.** Non-Exempt employees are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements regarding overtime and are entitled under specified conditions to overtime pay. (*The FLSA requires overtime compensation at time and one-half for hours worked over 40 hours per week, for "nonexempt" employees.*)

*Overtime.* Centralina employees may be requested to work overtime hours as necessitated by the needs of the organization and determined by the employee's supervisor and/or department director. In these instances, the employee's supervisor must give final approval of the additional hours worked. Employees who work overtime hours without prior approval from their supervisor may face disciplinary action.

Hours worked beyond the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) established limit of forty (40) hours per week will be compensated in either compensatory time or pay at the established rates. Under the provisions of the FLSA, "non-exempt" employees must be paid overtime for hours worked over forty (40) in a workweek at a rate of one and one-half (1.5) times their regular hourly rate of pay.

Employees in positions determined to be "exempt" from the FLSA are not paid overtime and are expected to work the hours required to do their job in an effective and efficient manner.

*Compensatory Time.* Compensatory time off is time off with pay in lieu of overtime pay for irregular or occasional overtime work. As prescribed by the U.S. Department of Labor, employees of State or local government agencies may receive compensatory time off, at a rate of not less than one and one-half hours for each overtime hour worked, instead of cash overtime pay.

Any compensatory time accrued in excess of forty (40) hours must be used within forty-five (45) days of its accrual. There shall be no payout of these hours, except upon separation. No employee shall exceed the maximum balance of hours of compensatory leave allowed by FLSA.

An employee will be permitted to use compensatory time on the date requested unless doing so would “unduly disrupt” the operations of the agency. Employees who have accrued compensatory time must be granted compensatory time off rather than personal leave when leave is requested.

The employee’s supervisor is responsible for the administration of compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. An agreement between employees and the supervisor must be arrived at prior to the employees' actually performing the work, as to the method to be used in compensating overtime hours worked.

**Exempt Employee.** Exempt employees are not covered by the overtime provisions because of standards and criteria established by the FLSA with regards to job duties. Under the FLSA, exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay or compensatory time.

## **SECTION 2: Position Classification Plan**

The Position Classification Plan provides a complete inventory of all authorized positions in Centralina, and an accurate description and specification for each class of employment. The plan standardizes job titles, each of which is indicative of a definite range of duties and responsibilities. The Position Classification Plan shall be used as follows:

- As a guide in recruiting and examining applicants for employment.
- In determining lines of promotion and in developing employee training programs.
- In determining salary to be paid for various types of work.

## **SECTION 3: Pay Plan (Updated April 2023)**

The Pay Plan includes the basic salary schedule and the “Assignment of Classes to Grades and Steps” adopted by the Executive Board of Delegates. The schedule consists of the minimum and maximum rates of pay for all classes of positions.

Centralina seeks to recruit, develop, and retain qualified, high performing and motivated employees to fulfill the organization’s mission and strategic priorities while honoring the organization’s values. Fair, equitable compensation of employees is integral to this goal. Stated in simple terms, the compensation philosophy helps us in: recruiting and retaining top talent, improving job performance, being confident about compensation discussions with employees

The compensation philosophy will be reviewed periodically and modified based on how well it continues to support the recruitment and retention of exceptional employees and aligns with the organization’s core values

The Pay Plan includes the basic salary schedule and salary range representing the minimum, midpoint, and maximum rates. The midpoint is set to provide market competitive, fair and equitable salaries based on the competitive marketplace for the organization. Best practice defines the midpoint means the employee meets essential responsibilities over time. Range maximums set the ceiling for a particular pay grade. Range minimums set the floor.

#### **SECTION 4: Administration and Maintenance of the Position Classification and Pay Plans**

Centralina’s Human Resources Manager, in coordination with the Executive Director, shall be responsible for the administration and maintenance of the Position Classification and Pay Plan and shall periodically review portions of the plans and recommend appropriate changes to the Executive Director.

#### **SECTION 5: Starting Salaries (Updated July 2024)**

All persons employed in positions approved by the Position Classification Plan shall be employed in at least the minimum rate for the classification in which they are employed except for employees in trainee status. Exceptionally well qualified applicants, however, may be employed above the minimum rate of the established salary range.

As the budget allows, Centralina shall apply the following compensation guidelines for new hires when the level of experience exceeds the position minimum years of experience:

- Calculate 2% above the minimum for each year of directly related full-time experience, at the same level of position, in excess of the minimum requirements (excluding internships or fellowships).
- Calculate 1% above the minimum for each year of full-time work experience that is not directly related to the position functions, in excess of the minimum requirements.
- Calculate 2% above the minimum to reflect related industry certification or related advanced degree that exceeds the minimum requirement of the position.

The initial offer may go as high as the pay range midpoint. Centralina will also review salary determinations for internal equity.

The Executive Director reserves the right to go outside the above compensation guidelines in consideration of current market conditions or as hiring conditions necessitate.

#### **SECTION 6: Trainee Designation and Provisions**

Applicants being considered for employment or Centralina employees who do not meet all the requirements for the position for which they are being considered may be hired, promoted, demoted, or transferred to a “trainee” status, at the recommendation of their supervisor to the Executive Director. In such cases, a plan for training the employee to meet the qualifications of the job, including a time schedule within which the employee should meet the job qualifications, must be prepared by the employees’ supervisor and/or Department Director. “Trainee” salaries may be no more than two grades below the minimum salary established for the position for which the person is being trained.

If the training is not successfully completed to the satisfaction of Centralina, the trainee may be transferred or dismissed. If the training is successfully completed, the employee shall be paid at least the minimum rate established for the position for which the employee was trained.

## **SECTION 7: Introductory Period**

New employees and regular employees being transferred into new positions, shall complete an initial six months of satisfactory performance in the appointed position. This shall be referred to as "introductory employment period". The introductory employment period may be extended for an additional three months by the Executive Director.

The introductory employment period provides an opportunity for the appointee to adjust to the new job. Likewise, it serves as an orientation period during which one must demonstrate his/her ability to perform the work, to accept additional responsibility, to develop a desirable attitude and to work well for the public and with his/her fellow employees.

An employee serving an introductory employment period following initial employment may be dismissed at any time by the Executive Director without benefit of redress through the complaint procedure.

A regular employee serving a probationary employment period following a promotion may be demoted or dismissed if unable to satisfactorily perform the assigned duties of the new position. A regular employee may appeal such action in accordance with the complaint procedure. However, a regular employee who accepts a promotion does thereby waive any rights of expectations of returning to his previous position in the event he/she fails to succeed in the position to which he/she was promoted.

During their introductory employment period, new employees shall be entitled to all benefits possessed by regular employees.

During the introductory period, supervisors shall monitor the employee's performance and communicate with the employee concerning performance progress. Introductory employees shall receive a performance review at the end of six (6) months to discuss accomplishments, strengths and any needed improvements. (See the section on Performance Evaluations) The supervisor shall then recommend in writing to the Human Resources Manager whether the introductory period should be completed, extended or otherwise. Completion of the introductory period does not alter at-will status of employment.

## **SECTION 8: Promotion (Updated April 2023)**

Promotion is a change in duty assignment and title of an employee from one position to another in a higher salary pay grade, involving a higher level of responsibility and increased qualifications, such as greater skills or longer experience. Requests for staff promotions will be reviewed as submitted for consideration.

Candidates for promotion shall be chosen based on their qualifications. When a current employee is chosen for promotion, the promoting supervisor shall forward the request to the Human Resources Manager with recommendations for classification and salary along with reasons for selecting the employee over other internal applicants. After considering the supervisor's

recommendation in consultation with the Human Resources Manager and Finance Director, the Executive Director shall confirm or reject the appointment. If the Executive Director confirms the appointment, he or she shall approve the starting salary for the employee. Employees within their initial probationary period of employment with Centralina are not eligible for a promotion.

Based on available budget, employees being promoted will be given the minimum of the new paygrade or up to 7.5% promotional base salary increase. An internal equity review will also be conducted whenever a staff member is promoted. The purpose of the promotion pay increase is to recognize and compensate the employee for taking on increased responsibility. This decision, however, shall be at the Executive Director's approval and again based available budget.

The first six (6) months in the new position is the introductory period and a performance evaluation shall be conducted at the completion of this period.

## **SECTION 9: Demotion**

Demotion is the movement of an employee from one grade level to a lower grade level. An employee whose work or conduct in the current position is unsatisfactory may be demoted provided that the employee shows promise of becoming a satisfactory employee in the lower position. Such demotion shall follow the disciplinary procedures outlined in this Personnel Manual and be made in accordance with Centralina's Classification and Pay Plan.

When a current employee is identified for a demotion based on unsatisfactory work or conduct, the employee's supervisor shall forward the request to the Human Resources Manager with the recommendations for classification and salary along with reasons for the demotion. After reviewing the supervisor's recommendation and in consultation with the Human Resources Manager, the Executive Director shall confirm or reject the action. If confirmed, the employee shall then be provided with written notice citing the recommended effective date of the demotion, the reasons for the demotion and the appeal rights available to the employee as stated in this manual.

An employee who wishes to accept a position with less complex duties and reduced responsibilities may request a voluntary demotion. A voluntary demotion is not a disciplinary action and is made without using the procedures related to corrective action.

## **SECTION 10: Lateral Transfer**

A Lateral Transfer is the movement of an employee from one position to a position in a class in the same salary range. If a vacancy occurs and an employee in another department is eligible for a transfer, the employee can apply for the transfer using the usual application process. The request for transfer shall be subject to approval of the Executive Director.

The department director wishing to transfer an employee to a different department or classification shall make a recommendation to the Executive Director with the consent of the receiving department director. The salary of an employee reassigned to a position in the same class or to a position in a different class within the same salary range shall not be changed by the reassignment.

Staff must be in their current position/role for a minimum of 6 months for transfer consideration; for transfer consideration the employee must also have a good performance and attendance record.

The first six (6) months in the new position is the introductory period and a performance evaluation shall be conducted at the completion of this period.

## **SECTION 11: Reclassification**

A reclassification is a change in a position from one grade to another based on a significant change in job duties and level of responsibility.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to identify significant changes in job responsibility and to initiate a reclassification review. The department director may make a recommendation to the Human Resources Manager for the review of a position for reclassification. Along with the position and salary recommendations the department director should also include any recommendation for a new job title. The position review could result in a higher classification, a lower classification or no change to the position.

An employee whose position is reclassified to a class having a higher salary range shall receive a pay increase of at least five (5) percent or an increase to the minimum rate of the new pay range, whichever is higher. This decision, however, shall be at the Executive Director's discretion and based on business conditions.

If the position is reclassified to a lower pay range, the employee's salary shall remain the same. If the employee's salary is at the maximum established for the new range, the salary of that employee shall be maintained at the current level until the range is increased above the employee's salary.

## **SECTION 12: Merit Pay Adjustment**

Depending upon the allocation of funds by the Centralina Executive Board, employees may be eligible for consideration for increases in compensation based on the performance evaluation process. Recommendations shall be submitted in writing by the supervisors and final decision on the allocation of merit increases shall be made by the Executive Director with input from the Finance Director. Merit increases may occur until such time as the employee achieves the top salary in their range (see Merit Bonus section). Any merit in excess of the pay range will be paid as a quarterly bonus and not increase the employee's base salary.

To be eligible for a merit increase, an employee must be employed with at least six months of continuous service prior to the merit award effective date.

**Merit Bonus.** Employees who are at or near the maximum of the salary range for their position classifications are eligible to be considered for a merit bonus following the completion of their annual performance evaluation. Merit bonuses shall be awarded generally based upon the performance of the employee as described in the performance evaluation. Merit bonuses do not become part of base pay and shall be paid to the employee on a quarterly basis. Merit bonuses will be the same amount as allocated by the Department Director. Merit bonuses will be treated as regular pay. The award and amount of merit bonuses are wholly within the discretion of the Executive Director.



## **SECTION 13:      **Across-the-Board Pay Adjustment****

Depending on financial conditions, the Centralina Executive Board may approve an Across-the-Board Pay Adjustment in appreciation of staff's commitment and collective organizational achievements, in recognition of any increases in cost of living or to maintain market compatibility. To be eligible for an Across-the-Board pay adjustment an employee must be employed with at least three months of continuous service prior to the effective date of the pay adjustment.

In years where only a merit pool is offered it is at the discretion of the Executive Director to provide a salary adjustment to employees who have been employed with Centralina at least three months prior to July 1. This adjustment will be applied at the employee's six (6) month service anniversary, providing that performance is acceptable.

**Across-the-Board Bonus.** Employees who are at or near the maximum of the salary range for their position classifications are eligible to be considered for an across-the-board bonus. Across-the-Board bonuses do not become part of base pay and shall be paid to the employee on a quarterly basis.

## **SECTION 14:      **Discretionary/Elective Bonuses****

At certain times during the year, Centralina may decide to implement such a bonus as a means to promote productivity and to provide an immediate and visible recognition of employee contributions. These bonuses may recognize individual employee contributions in instances where the employee has exceeded expectations for exceptional performance or may be awarded to the entire Centralina staff in recognition of the organization's good works. The authorization of a discretionary/elective bonus plan shall be approved by the Executive Director.

Individual recommendations for discretionary/elective bonus shall be made by department directors and subject to the following framework:

- Department directors can recommend a discretionary/elective bonus for staff engaged in temporary but ongoing work responsibilities that is in addition to or beyond an employee's current job classification.
- For staff to be considered for this bonus they must be:
  - Doing something that is not in their job description or encompassed within the department's work;
  - Doing temporary but regularly occurring work (meaning more than one or two times).
- For every 3 months of time incurred in this work the staff member will receive up to \$500.
- Discretionary/Elective Bonuses shall be grossed up and shall be paid out on a quarterly basis, as needed.
- Bonuses are dependent on available budget and must be reviewed by finance and approved by the Executive Director
- Discretionary/Elective Bonuses will be available to regular full or part-time employees who have completed their introductory employment period as indicated by the employee's supervisor.



## **SECTION 15: Recognition Systems**

**Peer-to-Peer awards.** The peer-to-peer award program is an opportunity for Centralina staff to appreciate and recognize contributions of their colleagues. Through this program, a staff member can nominate a colleague as a gesture of their appreciation and the nominee will receive a gift card in a nominal amount.

All regular full-and-part time staff, interns, temporary staff and fellowship program participants will be eligible to receive an award under this program.

The Human Resources Manager shall manage this awards program, in coordination with the Finance Director. Amounts of the individual award, frequency and total budget will be determined on an annual basis.

**High-Five awards.** The High-Five award program is an opportunity for Directors and supervisors to recognize excellent performance or valuable contributions of an employee in a real-time way. Employees are able to select from various reward options providing managers the opportunity to provide a meaningful “thank you” and connect the reward to the contribution and/or performance being recognized while also being mindful of employees’ primary language of appreciation at work. Continuous and sustained excellence should be recognized through the promotion process or end-of-year performance bonus.

All regular full- and part-time staff who have been employed for a minimum of 6 months are eligible to receive a reward under this program.

## **SECTION 16: Timesheets**

Employees are required to provide an accurate accounting of hours worked and leave used during a pay period on the biweekly timesheet. Employees will be provided with the appropriate cost center(s) in which to charge their time which corresponds to the work that the employee is assigned. Centralina employees must complete an electronic timesheet, which will be verified and approved by the employee’s supervisor. These timesheets will then be retrieved electronically by the Finance Department for processing. To ensure timely processing, timesheets will be due at a time established by the Finance Department.

Employees taking time off (i.e. vacation or leave time) are required to submit their timesheet prior to their leave. If the pay period is not yet opened, the employee should notify finance for access.

## **SECTION 17: Payday**

Any payments for compensation issued by Centralina will be paid by direct deposit. The regular payday for all Centralina employees and other individuals receiving compensation from Centralina shall be every other Friday by method of direct deposit to their designated bank account.

If the agency’s financial position necessitates, the Executive Director shall have the authority to combine all the pay periods during a month to pay the employees on the last regularly scheduled Friday payday in the month.

The Executive Director shall have the authority to issue checks to deliver pay in the event direct deposit becomes infeasible or temporarily inoperable.

**Final Pay.** An employee that has separated employment for any reason will be paid through the last day of work, plus any unused vacation (not to exceed the limit of accrued maximum days) and sick (at the rate of one-third days' pay for each day of accumulated sick leave, not to exceed a maximum of 15 days if employed before January 1, 2018) leave that is owed.

It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor and/or department director to ensure that Finance receives the terminating employee's timesheet in sufficient time for processing.

If the employee has terminated employment in good standing, the separated employee's payout of any accrued and unused leave shall normally occur two weeks after the regular payday.

## **SECTION 18: Hardship Policy**

Centralina has created a Hardship Policy for staff when a specific emergency event creates an acute financial problem that is short-term in nature that can be solved with a limited payout of earned vacation leave or an advance of an employee's paycheck, provided Centralina has funds available for this purpose.

1. Eligible Hardships: In order for the hardship request to be approved, the employee must have suffered a hardship such as the following within the three months preceding the request:
  - Severe illness, injury, or emergency dental work of employee.
  - Severe illness or injury of employee's immediate family member.
  - Death of employee's immediate family member.
  - Major loss/damage to primary residence due to disaster such as fire, flood, or hurricane.
  - Job loss by a household member that creates a deficit in household income.
  - Victim of domestic violence with immediate need for safe housing; or
  - Threat of housing displacement or utility shut off.
2. Ineligible: Non-emergency reasons for which requests cannot be granted include:
  - Money needed to pay for vacation expenses.
  - Personal purchases or gifts for others on holidays or special occasions.
  - Money needed to pay off credit or consumer debt.
3. Financial difficulties that pre-date this hardship (three months) or are ongoing in nature are beyond the scope of this policy.
4. All applicable taxes will be deducted from the payout amount including FICA, Medicare and Retirement and Federal and State taxes (depending on the payout amount).
5. Employees will be limited to one (1) hardship payout of vacation leave or Pay Advance every one (1) year.

**Payout of Earned Leave.** Employees must submit a written request of the specific hardship that necessitates a payout of earned vacation leave. The employee's request must include the specific hardship, the circumstances involved, and the amount needed.

The employee may request a payout of earned vacation leave in the amount of \$500 to \$3,000.

Employees are limited to one (1) hardship payout every one (1) year and must be in good standing with their supervisor and a full-time employee.

After the payout amount, the employee must still have at least 25% of available leave in their vacation bank.

Payouts will ordinarily be available with the next pay date cycle following review and approval of the request.

**Payroll Advance.** "Payroll advance" refers to employees receiving their pay before their next normal payday. Employees must submit a written request of the specific hardship that necessitates an advance of the employee's paycheck. The employee's request must include the specific hardship and the circumstances involved. The payroll advance will not exceed the net pay from the prior pay period, less cell phone allowance if applicable. Once review and approval of the payroll advance request, the payment will be processed on the following check run date.

## **SECTION 19: Separation of Employment**

All separation of employees from positions in the service of Centralina shall be designated as one of the following types and shall be accomplished in the manner indicated: resignation, reduction in force, furlough, disability, voluntary retirement, dismissal, or death.

**Resignation.** Varying circumstances can cause employees to voluntarily resign employment. Employees are asked to follow the procedure below to be considered as resigning in good standing.

1. The resigning employee must provide a minimum of ten working days' notice (not to include holiday, sick or vacation days).
2. Complete ongoing projects, document processes, and train or transfer responsibilities to other team members or any other items requested by the employee's supervisor to ensure minimal disruption to ongoing work functions.
3. Such notice should be given to the department director (or in the case of the department director, to the Executive Director) and forwarded to Human Resources for appropriate action.

An employee not leaving in good standing, as outlined above, may result in the forfeiture of accumulated vacation and sick leave payouts (if applicable) and the individual may be deemed ineligible for rehire. The Executive Director has the discretion to determine if the employee has resigned in good standing.

Please note that three (3) consecutive days of absence without contacting the immediate supervisor or department director may be considered to be a voluntary resignation. (However, in the case of an extreme circumstance such as serious illness that has caused the absences, the employee should contact or have his/her agent contact the organization as soon as practicable to explain the situation.)

Sick leave will only be approved during the final two (2) weeks of a notice with a physician's certification or comparable documentation.

In all circumstances, the Executive Director has the right to waive the resignation requirement and/or determine good standing when it is in the best interest of the organization.

In most cases, Human Resources will conduct an exit meeting on or before the last day of employment to collect all company property and to discuss final pay. If applicable, information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be sent to the employee's home address.

**Reduction in Force.** In the event that a reduction in force becomes necessary, consideration shall be given to the quality of each employee's past performance, organizational needs and seniority in determining those employees to be retained. When possible, employees who are laid off because of reduction in force shall be given at least two (2) weeks' notice of anticipated lay-off or generally two (2) weeks' severance pay or an amount determined by the Executive Director. No regular employee shall be laid off while there are temporary employees serving in the same class in the department, unless the regular employee is not willing to transfer to the position held by the temporary employee.

**Furlough.** Furlough is the placement of an employee in a temporary leave without pay status for a specified number of hours or days within a specified time frame. This may be necessitated by financial emergency, including revenue shortfalls, caused by events such as a natural disaster, pandemic and/or sudden, dramatic and unexpected conditions outside the control of the organization where operational needs may have changed and it may become necessary to implement furloughs as one cost-saving measure.

A furlough may consist of (a) reduced number of work hours in a day with proportionate reduction in pay; (b) reduced number of workdays in a week with proportionate reduction in pay; or (c) specific days off without pay. A furlough is not a layoff or reduction in force. Furloughs will be conducted in a manner that is fair and consistent and Centralina will continue to take responsible steps to address its economic and operational circumstances. Once a furlough has ended, affected employees will usually be reinstated to the position held at the time of the furlough.

**Disability.** The NC Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (LGERS) disability retirement provides payments to its members in the form of monthly disability retirement benefits an employee is vested in the retirement system and becomes disabled while they are a regular employee under LGERS and meets certain eligibility requirements. The employee must refer to the LGERS Disability Retirement Eligibility Requirements for more information.

**Voluntary Retirement.** An employee who meets the conditions set forth under the provision of the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System may elect to retire and receive all benefits earned under the retirement plan. It is desired that department directors provide at least six months' notice of retirement in order for the organization to properly prepare for the transition.

**Dismissal.** An employee may be dismissed in accordance with the provisions and procedures outlined in the Unsatisfactory Job Performance and Failure in Personal Conduct section.

**Death.** The date of death shall be recorded as the separation date for computing compensation due. Any death benefits will be paid to the estate of a deceased employee.

## **SECTION 18: Reinstatement and Rehiring**

An employee who is separated because of reduction in force may be reinstated within one year of the date of separation, upon recommendation of the department director, and upon approval of

Executive Director. An employee who is reinstated in this manner shall be re-credited with his/her previously accrued sick leave.

A former employee who was employed in a regular position for at least one (1) full year or more and who resigned in good standing, may be considered for re-employment provided his/her qualifications are suitable for a vacant position.

**Recovery of Leave Status.** The re-hired employee will regain his/her previous years of service eligibility for vacation leave accrual. On all other benefit terms and conditions, the re-hired employee shall be treated as a new employee.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

### **SECTION 1: Commitment to Safety**

Centralina is committed to establishing a safe work environment for employees and shall establish policies and procedures regarding safety practices and precautions as needed and/or required. Further, employees are expected to work in a safe and responsible manner during the performance of their duties and shall notify their supervisor in the event of an injury or property damage occurring in the office or while on business for Centralina. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.

In the event of an emergency, employees must notify the appropriate emergency personnel by calling 911.

### **SECTION 2: Drug-Free Workplace Policy**

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, Centralina is committed to providing a safe and productive work environment for its employees. Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of Centralina employees and to the security of our equipment and facilities.

This policy statement outlines the practice and procedure designed to correct instances of identified alcohol and/or drug use in the workplace.

**Work Rules.** Centralina employees are not to arrive at work or conduct Centralina business (whether or not the employee is actually on work premises at the time) while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. This policy also covers the times when employees are driving Centralina vehicles.

Centralina further prohibits all employees, including employees performing work under contracts, from possessing, selling, or distributing alcohol or illegal drugs at the workplace or while conducting company business. Illegal drug use also includes the misuse of otherwise legal prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs.

**Employee Assistance and Drug-Free Awareness.** Illegal drug use and alcohol misuse have a number of adverse health and safety consequences. Information about these dangers and sources of help for drug/alcohol problems are available through Centralina's Employee Assistance Program. Employees who think they may have an alcohol or drug usage problem are urged to voluntarily seek confidential assistance from Centralina's Employee Assistance Program. Centralina will assist and support employees who voluntarily seek help for such problems before becoming subject to discipline and/or termination.

Employees who have work performance related problems and who continue to be substance abusers and refuse to seek help or continue substance abuse even while enrolled in counseling or rehabilitation programs will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Crimes Involving Drugs.** Centralina does not wish to intrude into the private lives of its employees but recognizes that employee's off-the-job involvement with drugs and alcohol may have an impact on the workplace. Therefore, Centralina reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action for drug usage/sale/distribution while off company premises. All employees who are convicted of, plead guilty to, or are sentenced for a crime involving illegal drugs or alcohol are required to report the conviction, plea or sentence to their supervisor within five days. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **SECTION 3: Workplace Violence Prevention**

Centralina is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we prohibit employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at company-sponsored functions.

All Centralina employees bear the responsibility of keeping the work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their department director, supervisor or Human Resources. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence or presenting the threat of violence against the organization, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Weapons.** In accordance with Building policies and procedures, Centralina expressly prohibits the possession of weapons on its property at all times, except for law enforcement acting in an official capacity.

Centralina employees may not, at any time while on any property leased or controlled by Centralina Regional Council possess or use any weapon.

Additionally, Centralina employees may not, at any time, possess or use any weapon on any property where Centralina business is conducted, such as customer locations, client locations, field or site visits, other governmental offices or facilities, trade shows, conferences, Centralina event venues, and so forth.

Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, and knives that can be used as weapons (excluding pocketknives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open packages, cut string, and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas.

Regardless of whether an employee possesses a concealed weapons permit or is allowed by law to possess a weapon, weapons are prohibited on any Centralina property. This includes the building and parking lots. They are also banned in any location in which the employee represents Centralina for business purposes, including those listed above and in Centralina owned or leased vehicles.

Additionally, Centralina employees must also adhere to the policy statements of other local governments and businesses as it relates to weapons while at those locations for Centralina business.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including termination. The employment termination would be characterized as termination for cause due to detrimental personal conduct.



## **SECTION 4: Smoke and Vape-Free Workplace**

As noted above, Centralina is committed to providing a safe work environment for employees and in promoting the health and well-being of its employees. As such, it is Centralina's policy to prohibit smoking and vaping in the office and in the building in accordance with Building policies.

Smoking is defined as the "act of lighting, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering cigar, cigarette or pipe of any kind." Vaping refers to the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems or electronic smoking devices such as e-cigarettes, e-pipes, e-hookahs and e-cigars.

This policy applies to:

- All areas of the office/building occupied by Centralina employees.
- All Centralina-sponsored offsite conferences and meetings.
- All vehicles owned or leased by Centralina.
- All Centralina employees.
- All visitors (customers and vendors) to Centralina premises.
- All contractors and consultants and/or their employees working on the premises.
- All temporary employees.
- All student interns.

Smoking and vaping is permitted *only* in outdoor areas designated by the Building policies.

## **SECTION 5: Emergency Closings and Inclement Weather**

Centralina will always make every attempt to be open for business. However, in emergency situations the Executive Director may advise employees to leave the office or not come into the office due to emergency conditions. In this instance the Executive Director will implement an emergency plan for operations and the employee may utilize vacation leave and/or temporarily work from home.

In cases of inclement weather, the Centralina office shall also make every attempt to be open for business. However, employees are asked to use their best judgment and if they believe the driving conditions are beyond their comfort level, the employee may utilize vacation leave and/or temporarily work from home. The Executive Director also reserves the right to close the office in extreme circumstances.

In both instances of an emergency closing and inclement weather, employees who have exhausted their vacation leave and do not utilize the option of working from home may elect to receive leave without pay by notifying their supervisor.

Temporary work from home arrangements due to emergency closings and office closure due to inclement weather are allowed by the Executive Director on an as-needed basis only; employees not approved for an alternative work arrangement are expected to return to their normal work schedules once directed.

## **SECTION 6: Administrative Leave with Pay Due to Emergency Closing**

The Executive Director or his/her designee has the authority to authorize administrative leave with pay in situations that warrant emergency closures such as in national emergencies, natural disasters, pandemics, civil disturbances or in other circumstances as when such leave is in the



best interest of the organization and ensures operational continuity. Such leave shall be for a duration of time determined by the Executive Director or his/her designee or as authorized by public health authorities or other officials. The Executive Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for implementing a plan for business continuity during an emergency closure to ensure essential business functions are maintained.

## **WORKPLACE GUIDELINES**

### **SECTION 1: Residency**

As a condition of employment, all persons employed subsequent to the adoption of this manual shall establish and maintain residence within the boundaries of the Centralina Region "F" within nine months from the beginning date of employment. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Executive Director.

### **SECTION 2: Employee Orientation**

The purpose of the employee orientation is to ensure that new employees have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their job responsibilities. The Human Resources Manager will be responsible for initially acquainting the new employee with the basic information needed to accomplish this objective including providing an overview of benefits and other information related to the employment process.

Department directors and supervisors are expected to continue the orientation process for new employees by explaining departmental procedures and specific job assignments.

### **SECTION 3: Office Location and Hours**

Centralina maintains an office location as its principle place of business for the organization and all employees. Employees shall use the Centralina location as their business address for official correspondence and identification; and as their principle place of work unless alternative work arrangements have been approved (See Section 4 below).

The standard office hours for Centralina shall be from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm; Monday through Friday. The payroll week shall be Saturday at 12:00 a.m. to Friday at 11:59 p.m.

### **SECTION 4: Work Schedules and Alternative Arrangements**

Centralina has the expectation that all employees follow an established work schedule that meets the operational needs of their department and the organization. Centralina allows for flexibility in individual work schedules which permits employees to vary their arrival and/or departure times from the standard office hours. These schedules are a matter of agreement between the Department Director and/or supervisor and the employee, provided the majority of the employee's workday occurs during standard office hours. An employee's work schedule shall be assessed on an ongoing basis during the performance review period and may be suspended or cancelled at any time. Employees are expected to fulfill necessary job duties, i.e. meetings, coverage, deadlines regardless of their work schedule.

Due the nature of the organization, many employees may have job duties or responsibilities that require them to visit locations within and outside of the region. Centralina expects clear communication between employees and their Department Director and/or Supervisor when they have occasional business outside of the office. Employees providing services outside of the office on a regular basis shall have their schedules approved in advance by their Department Director and/or supervisor.

Once an employee's work schedule is established, there may be situations when additional flexibility in work schedule and/or location is desired. In these situations, an employee may request an alternative work arrangement as follows:

- Flex Work Arrangement: request to alter an established work schedule and/or location on an occasional basis.
- Work from Home Arrangement: request to establish a set day(s) to work outside of the Centralina office and at home.
- Compressed Work Schedule: request to compress hours in an 80-hour work week to nine business days.

See Sections 4a-4c below for additional information.

#### **SECTION 4a: Flex Work Arrangement**

The employee may request a flex work arrangement, a variation in their established work schedule or location, due to unusual personal circumstances, unusual workloads, or in the interest of more efficient operations. Flex work arrangement requests shall be limited in duration and be requested in response to a specific situation; examples can include but are not limited to:

- Alternate hours due to travel or appointments.
- Alternate hours due to after-work or evening Council, Board or Committee meetings.
- Work from home prior to an appointment to close to an employee's residence.
- Work from home to supervise contractors or technicians completing work at the employee's residence.
- Work from home following a medical procedure as recommended by a physician.

Employees shall request a flex time arrangement in advance from their supervisor. The supervisor will approve or deny the flextime request based on staffing needs, the employee's job duties, the employee's work record and the employee's ability to temporarily or permanently return to a standard work schedule when needed.

All Centralina employees are eligible to request flex time regardless of their employment status.

#### **SECTION 4b: Work from Home Arrangement**

Centralina considers working from home a viable, flexible work arrangement when both the employee and the job are suited for it. Working from home may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. It is not an employee right, nor is it an organizational wide benefit and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment.

Employees may request the option to work outside of the Centralina office at their home on a set day or days of the week via an established and approved work schedule. Under this policy, employees may request to work from home up to 3 days (or 24 hours) in a work week.

The work from home alternative work arrangement is not for occasional or temporary work outside of the office (see Section 4a above); rather it is a set change to the employee's established work schedule and requires high level of predictability. Employees that require occasional flexibility with their approved work from home schedule may seek advance approval from their supervisor via the Flex Work Arrangement policy (See Section 4a above).

The remainder of this section outlines eligibility and general terms of the work from home arrangements offered by Centralina. All employees whose work from home arrangements have been approved shall be required to sign a "Work from Home Agreement" which outlines the specific terms and conditions of the arrangement.

Centralina expects that the employee working from home maintain an acceptable level of performance and productivity. Thus, a work from home arrangement is subject to ongoing review by the employee's supervisor and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the supervisor (although it is recommended that prior notice be given and a mutual agreeable end point established).

**Eligibility.** Employees who are eligible for a work from home arrangement shall:

1. Have completed their initial Introductory Period of employment.
2. Have portable job duties as defined by Human Resources.
3. Consistently meet or exceed the performance expectations of their position as documented in past performance evaluations or other established means.
4. Designate a worksite suitable for working at home.
5. Attest that they will limit distractions and interruptions from dependents and others in the home during core office hours.
6. Be reliable in meeting their day-to-day responsibilities effectively.
7. Be able to work independently and productively with minimal supervision. To be productive in a work from home capacity, the employee must:
  - Be fully proficient in all job functions as defined by the job description.
  - Be available to attend staff meetings, training, etc. and adjust their work at home schedule if and when business needs dictate.
  - Consistently work independently with limited intervention by their supervisor.
  - Demonstrate the ability to learn and communicate using remote applications, in lieu of face-to-face interactions (e.g., e-mail; telephone; conference calls, video calls).
  - Demonstrate conscientiousness about work time and productivity, and self-motivation.
  - Be able to communicate effectively with supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors and Centralina members.

**Request and Approval Process.** Employees shall complete a Work from Home Arrangement request form and submit to their Department Director for review. The Department Director can either deny the request or forward the request to Human Resources with a recommendation for approval. Human Resources Manager shall approve all requests, except for the following which are subject to approval by the Executive Director: (1) requests from any Centralina supervisor; (2) requests seeking approval for 3 days per week or more than 8 days per month. Department Directors shall notify Human Resources of any denied requests. The Human Resources Manager shall work with the Department Director and employee to customize the Work from Home Agreement template; the final draft of the Agreement shall be signed by the employee, Department Director and Executive Director.

**Compensation and Work Hours.** The employee's compensation, benefits, work status and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in the work from home arrangement. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or pay period does not change as a

result of participation. Hourly employees will continue to be required to clock in and out each day.

**Location and Leave.** Employees are expected to be working at their home during their work from home schedule. Employees are discouraged from working from public locations for extended periods of time due to potential internet security issues and privacy concerns; employees participating in video or conference calls from public locations should be cognizant of their surroundings. Rest and recovery are critical for employee wellbeing and is a core Centralina value; therefore, Centralina does not allow “working vacations” (working either full time or partial time from a remote location) except for special circumstances and with a supervisor’s prior approval. Personal leave time normally scheduled during a teleworking employee’s scheduled workday must be arranged in the same manner with their immediate supervisor as employees at the centrally located worksite.

**Policies.** Employees who are approved for a work from home arrangement remain obligated to comply with all Centralina policies and procedures, practices and supervisor instructions.

**Privacy and Safety.** Employees shall retain the Centralina office as their primary mailing and business correspondence address; and are advised not to release their home address and telephone number while conducting Centralina business. Employees are prohibited from meeting with clients, member governments, vendors or other external parties at their home.

**IT Equipment.** Centralina, under normal operating conditions, generally does not provide specific IT tools or equipment for the employee to perform their current duties at home; an IT assessment will be part of the request form and work from home agreement. Any Centralina equipment that is taken offsite will be inventoried and must be returned at the conclusion of the work from home period. The use of equipment, software and other peripherals when provided by Centralina for business use is limited to the employee; the employee is responsible for maintaining equipment in good working condition and promptly notifying Centralina of any broken, damaged or malfunctioning components. Employee shall follow all IT policies and procedures while working from home.

**Office Supplies and Functions.** Office supplies are centrally provided by Centralina; employees working from home may request office supplies through the online Administrative Work Request system. All printing, copying, mailing and other business functions shall be completed at the Centralina office. Centralina will not reimburse out-of-pocket expenses for office supplies, printing or copying; Department Directors may approve out-of-pocket expenses in special circumstances and with prior approval by the Finance Director.

**Work-Space Requirements.** Permission to work from home is dependent upon the employee having a suitable work location at home that meets the requirements set forth below:

- A dedicated workspace to limit distraction in the home and safely secure all business information or work product.
- Reliable, secure and high-speed internet connection.
- Access to all required Centralina systems and platforms.
- Ability to keep equipment and files accessible to the employee yet safeguarded from access by other members of the household and visitors.

**Tax, Liability and Worker’s Compensation.** Centralina’s main office shall remain the employee’s primary place of work. It is the employee’s responsibility to determine any income tax

implications of maintaining a home office area. Centralina will not provide tax guidance nor will Centralina assume any additional tax liabilities related to an employee's work from home arrangement. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.

Employees are covered by workers compensation during the performance of official Centralina business at the home worksite during work hours. The employee shall report work-related injuries immediately to their Supervisor and comply with all Centralina reporting requirements established for the purpose of reporting such claims. Centralina is not liable for injuries to third persons, including family members, at the home worksite and is not liable for damages to the employee's personal or real property.

**Supervisor Responsibilities.** Expectations of supervisors managing employees under work from home arrangements include:

- Monitoring internal and external relationships and mitigating potential impacts from remote work.
- Utilizing effective communication and reporting systems to measure employee productivity and performance.
- Conducting regular reviews with the employee to provide feedback and evaluate the success of the arrangement.
- Ensuring a consistent approach to team or department management irrespective of individual employees' approved work arrangements.
- Ensuring a fair and equitable process in work distribution and assignments.

## **SECTION 4c: Compressed Work Arrangement**

Centralina considers a compressed work schedule to be a viable, flexible option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. A compressed work arrangement is a set change to the employee's established work schedule whereby an employee works the 80 hours of a pay period in nine business days; the resulting schedule is 8 x nine-hour days, 1x eight-hour day and one day off every pay period.

A compressed work schedule may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. It is not an employee right, nor is it an organizational wide benefit and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment. A compressed work arrangement is subject to ongoing review by the employee's supervisor and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the supervisor (although it is recommended that prior notice be given and a mutual agreeable end point established).

Employees may not combine a Compressed Work with a Work from Home Arrangement.

**Eligibility.** Employees who are eligible for a compressed work arrangement shall:

1. Be a full-time employee.
2. Have completed their initial Introductory Period of employment.
3. Have job duties suitable for a compressed schedule as defined by Human Resources.
4. Consistently meet or exceed the performance expectations of their position as documented in past performance evaluations or other established means.

5. Be able to work independently and productively to meet day-to-day responsibilities within a compressed schedule.
6. Demonstrate conscientiousness about work time and productivity, and self-motivation.
7. Be able to communicate effectively with supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors and Centralina members.

**Request and Approval Process.** Employees shall complete a Compressed Work Arrangement request form and submit to their Department Director for review. The Department Director can either deny the request or forward the request to Human Resources with a recommendation for approval. Human Resources Manager shall approve all requests. Department Directors shall notify Human Resources of any denied requests.

## **SECTION 5: Employment of Relatives**

No member of the immediate family of members of the Centralina Board of Delegates may be hired by Centralina. This provision shall not apply to an employee's family member who is appointed to the Board of Delegates subsequent to the hiring of the employee.

Centralina prohibits the hiring and employment of relatives in regular positions within the same work unit. Further, no employee shall be in position to supervise relatives. For the purposes of this policy, relatives include: spouse, parent, child, sibling, in-law, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, cousin, step-relative, or any individual with whom an employee has a close personal relationship and where an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest could arise.

In the event, that two employees become related while working for Centralina, and hold regular positions within the same work unit, one employee will have to transfer to another position within Centralina.

## **SECTION 6: Outside Employment**

Employees are not prohibited from other employment. However, the work of Centralina shall have precedence over other occupational interests of employees. Outside employment for salary, wages or commission or self-employment by an employee must be approved in advance by the employee's Department Director with notification to Human Resources.

Approval or denial will be based on the following:

- Conflicts of interest
  - Outside employment could present a conflict of interest if the work activities are related to the employee's responsibilities at Centralina or if the employer (or client in the case of self-employment) is a Centralina partner, vendor or other stakeholder.
  - Outside employment could also present a conflict of interest if it has any type of negative impact or potentially negative impact on Centralina or its operations. Please see Centralina's policy on *Conflict of Interest*. The department director and/or supervisor shall consult the Executive Director on areas of concerns and/or ambiguity.
- Any interference with the employee's ability to perform their duties for Centralina; and
- Any interference with the employee's regular working hours.



Any activity related to outside employment may not take place during the employee's regular hours nor involve the use of Centralina's resources.

Any employee who is permitted to hold outside employment is still expected to demonstrate satisfactory performance in his or her job responsibilities with Centralina; will be evaluated by the same performance standards; and will be subject to Centralina's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If Centralina determines that an employee's outside work requirements interfere with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of Centralina, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment and be given a specified period of time to complete that separation.

**External Activities.** Any employee who wishes to serve in an advisory capacity for another organization or serve on the board of any organization that may in anyway influence work time or be a potential conflict with Centralina mission/goals, must first obtain approval from the Executive Director. The Centralia Board Chair shall approve such requests made by the Executive Director. Approval will be granted based on possible conflict of interest; the amount of time and type of activity involved; any interference with the employee's regular work schedule; and the benefit to the employee and Centralina.

**Honoraria.** Employees may, with the prior written approval of the Executive Director, receive honoraria for lectures and other such activities while on personal days, annual leave, or leave without pay. If the employee is acting in any official capacity, honoraria received by an employee in connection with activities relating to employment with the Centralina are to be paid to Centralina.

## **SECTION 7: Political Activity**

As a quasi-public entity, Centralina is a non-partisan organization; as such, productive working relationships with elected and appointed officials at the local, state and federal levels are essential to fulfilling our mission. While at work and representing the organization, employees are asked to uphold Centralina's neutral, non-partisan status. Every employee has a civic responsibility to support the principle of good government. Employees may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or political nature, may attend political meetings, and may advocate the principals or policies of civic or political organization in accordance with the constitution and laws of the United States and the State of North Carolina.

However, employees shall not:

- Engage in any political activity while at work, representing the organization.
- Use official Centralina communications (such as individual or group emails, social media accounts and the Centralina website) to share political comments or views. To the extent that employees are using private communications to convey political comments or views, they should be cautious not to suggest that their view are the views of the organization.
- Solicit, or act as a custodian of funds for a political purpose.
- Solicit a political contribution of other employees.
- Use any supplies or equipment of Centralina for political purpose.
- Hold any publicly elected governmental office.
- Hold any campaign office or paid position for or on behalf of any candidate for public office.



Employees should consult their department director, supervisor, Human Resources or Executive Director on any areas of concern and/or ambiguity.

## **SECTION 8: Workplace Civility and Respect**

Centralina is committed to creating a culture of respect and civility where all staff share a commitment to treating others with respect and consideration and acting with regard for their feelings. Maintaining an environment supportive of cooperation and collaboration and free of disruptive conduct is important to the success of Centralina programs and initiatives. It is also the intent of this policy to encourage positive communication and discourage disruptive, volatile, hostile or aggressive communication or actions.

**Expected Level of Behavior.** Civility requires treating others with dignity, respect, and making a “good faith effort” with regard to other’s feelings. Corrective actions may be taken by managers to enhance work performance. The language used to correct or reinforce work standards must be respectful and work-related. Civility requires that even the most critical feedback be delivered respectfully, privately, and courteously.

Examples of civility include:

- Treating others with dignity, courtesy, respect, politeness and consideration
- Speaking in tones of voice that are appropriate for the circumstances
- Being respectful of others’ right to express their views, even if you disagree
- Managing conflict with others in a respectful way rather than a confrontational way

**Unacceptable / Disruptive Behavior.** Incivility deals with a broad range of behaviors including, but not limited to, unprofessional behavior; rudeness; shouting or swearing; intimidation or bullying; threatening comments or behaviors/actions; unsolicited and unwelcome conduct, comment (oral or written, including email communication), gestures, actions, or contact that cause offense, humiliation, physical, or emotional harm to any individual.

Incivility can be subtle or overt. It may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents and may involve the abuse of authority or position. Uncivil behavior may be unintended or deliberately directed at another individual. In any case, the impact on that individual is what must be addressed.

Incivility can also create a poisoned work environment, which may affect more than one employee.

Examples of incivility include:

- Shouting.
- Profane, abusive, aggressive, or violent language directed at an individual or individuals.
- Using props suggestive of violence.
- Slamming doors.
- Throwing objects.
- Humiliating, degrading, demeaning, belittling, insulting, frightening, or intimidating another person.
- Distributing comments about an individual, whether verbally or in writing, including online, that are unjustified and are likely to have a negative impact on the individual if they were to see them.

- Telling inappropriate jokes.
- Disallowing divergent points of view from being heard—including observations about job performance and collegiality.

This policy is also in adherence with the following Centralina policies:

- Anti-Harassment
- Complaint Reporting Process

**SECTION 9: Performance Evaluations**

The performance evaluation process is intended to assist in the development of each employee’s full potential and to improve effectiveness and efficiency of Centralina operations.

**Annual Evaluation Process.** Department Directors and/or Supervisors shall conduct Annual Performance Evaluations with their employees. New employees beginning employment after the mid-year review mark (between January 1 – June 30) will be added to the annual review process at the beginning of the new evaluation year.

The Annual Performance Evaluation Cycle is July 1 through June 30 and will follow the general timeline below:

July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation cycle opens</li> <li>• Supervisor discusses goal setting expectations with staff for the fiscal year</li> <li>• Staff drafts goals for feedback from supervisor</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online evaluation form is opened for staff to input their goals</li> <li>• Goals are finalized in the evaluation tool</li> </ul>
August – March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing feedback and guidance</li> <li>• Mid-year check in to provide feedback and check progress on goals</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Period officially opens for self-evaluations</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee self-evaluations are due</li> </ul>
May – June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation and Employee/Supervisor Meetings</li> </ul>
June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation cycle closes</li> </ul>

**Mid-Year Evaluation.** The Mid-Year evaluation is conducted in the middle of the annual evaluation period to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.

**Performance Evaluation at 6-month Employment Mark.** The *6-Month* Performance Evaluation is generally for introductory employees and is linked to the employee’s hire date. These evaluations should be conducted at the end of the employee’s first 6-months. (However, Supervisors may meet with the employee before the end of the 6-month probationary period if performance issues arise.) These performance evaluations can follow the same format as existing evaluations and shall be documented in writing and placed in the employee’s personnel file.

**Performance Evaluation Outside Evaluation Periods.** Supervisors may also meet with employees at other times during the year other than the *Annual or 6-Month* Performance Evaluation Periods, if there are performance issues.

#### Goal Setting Expectations:

- Goals should align with the core responsibilities or duties of the position, assigned projects or initiatives and specific tactics in the organization's workplan where applicable.
- Directors shall provide additional guidance and expectations for goal setting to their staff and supervisors as needed.
- Supervisors are expected to discuss staff draft goals and give feedback or guidance prior to goals being entered into the evaluation system.
- Additional guidance on SMART goal-setting and other topics will be available from the Human Resources Manager.

Ongoing Supervisor and staff expectations regarding the evaluation process and any additional guidance regarding the evaluation tool shall be communicated with staff as needed throughout the evaluation process and is also available from the Human Resources Manager.

Upward movement within the established salary range for an employee is not automatic, but rather based on specific performance-related reasons. Employees may be considered for advancement within the established salary range based on the quality of their overall work.

**Employee Development Plan.** An employee may be placed on an Employee Development Plan when there is a need to improve skills, knowledge and/or competencies to help them grow within the organization. The Employee Development Plan is intended to provide a structured framework to address and improve employee performance issues, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and promote employee development.

When a performance issue is identified, the supervisor will consult with Human Resources (HR) to determine if an Employment Development Plan is appropriate. If the Plan is deemed necessary, the supervisor and Human Resources will develop a written plan detailing the performance issues, desired outcomes and steps to achieve improvement.

## **SECTION 10: Dress Code**

The staff represents the organization and is expected to be clean, neat and dressed appropriately for the job function. Centralina trusts each employee's good judgment and offers the following guidelines concerning appropriate dress in the work environment.

- It is the responsibility of all employees to represent Centralina in a manner that is suitable for the public service environment and reflects favorably Centralina's role. When in doubt, employees should seek guidance from their supervisor.
- Centralina adopts a business casual dress code but emphasizes that more formal business attire may be more appropriate for certain occasions. (This policy does NOT require employees to purchase casual business attire. Employees who prefer to dress in formal or traditional business attire should feel free to do so.)
- Times when more customary business attire would be more appropriate include occasions: when you are conducting or attending Centralina meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. where you come in contact with other professionals; when clients come to meet you in the office; when you go out to meet clients; and when you have to represent Centralina at an outside community function.

- The employee's supervisor or Human Resources will discuss the subject of personal appearance with the employee on occasions of confusion or oversight.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### SECTION 1: Eligibility

Regular, full-time and part-time employees are eligible for employee benefits. Term employees are only eligible for federal or state-mandated employee benefits such as Workers' Compensation and Social Security. Benefits are subject to change at the discretion of Centralina and the Board of Delegates.

### SECTION 2: Group Health Insurance

Centralina provides group health insurance programs for all regular employees who work thirty (30) or more hours per week on a regular basis. Group health and hospitalization insurance programs are provided as follows for full-time regular employees:

- 100% of the medical premium is paid for all full-time regular employees.
- 50% of the dental premium is paid for all full-time regular employees.
- 50% of the vision premium is paid for all full-time regular employees.

If an employee is not employed full time, he/she must pay the pro rata portion of the premium.

Dependent coverage is available with employee paying the additional cost. Information concerning costs and benefits can be obtained from Human Resources.

Coverage begins thirty (30) days following the date of hire.

### SECTION 3: Group Life Insurance

Centralina provides paid life insurance to its employees in ranges which correspond to two and one-half (2.5) times the annual base salary, and accidental death and dismemberment coverage of two and one-half (2.5) times that amount.

Part-time employees can continue to participate in the Group Life Insurance as long as they work thirty (30) or more hours per week on a regular basis.

Coverage begins thirty (30) days following the date of hire.

### SECTION 4: Supplemental Health and Life Insurance

Centralina makes available supplemental health and life insurance products through Colonial, Washington National and Municipal Benefits in which employees can voluntarily choose to participate. These options are employee paid benefits.

### SECTION 5: Retiree Health Insurance

An employee who meets the conditions set forth under the provision of the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System may elect to retire and receive all benefits earned under the retirement plan.

**Medical Insurance.** Centralina will pay a fixed amount towards the cost of an eligible retiree's

monthly premium for retiree medical insurance, which amount will be established by the Executive Board or Board of Delegates (the "Base Premium Supplement"). The Base Premium Supplement is Centralina's contribution to the cost of an eligible retiree's medical insurance. The Base Premium Supplement implemented and effective as of July 1, 2015 is four hundred and twenty-five Dollars (\$425).

This Base Premium Supplement may be adjusted at the sole discretion of the Executive Board or Board of Delegates, and will be administered as follows:

- If the retiree has less than fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, no Base Premium Supplement will be paid by Centralina;
- If the retiree has completed at least fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, Centralina will pay the Base Premium Supplement; and
- If the retiree has completed more than fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, the Base Premium Supplement will be increased by two (2%) percent for each full year of completed service in excess of fifteen (15) years with a maximum benefit of eighty (80%) percent (the resulting amount is the "Enhanced Premium Supplement").

Any eligible retiree's premium in excess of the Base Premium Supplement or, if applicable, the Enhanced Premium Supplement, will be the responsibility of the retiree. Beginning, January 1, 2018, the Retiree is responsible for paying the cost of the medical premium themselves. Centralina will then make base payments to the employee upon receipt of the retiree's payment to the recognized insurer.

Retiree medical coverage will be made available to eligible retirees annually, and if renewed a retiree may accept and pay for such coverage until the retiree is eligible for Medicare.

**Retiree Dental and Vision Insurance.** The Premium Supplement for the retiree's dental and vision insurance is dependent upon the retiree's years of service with Centralina. The Premium Supplement for Dental and Vision Insurance shall be administered as follows:

- If the retiree has less than fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, no portion of the premium for dental and vision will be paid by Centralina;
- If the retiree has completed at least fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, Centralina will pay 50% of the active employee coverage amount for dental and vision;
  - For example, if the monthly premium for dental insurance is twenty-eight (28) dollars, Centralina will pay fourteen (14) dollars, or fifty percent towards an active employee's coverage. A retiree with 15 years of service to Centralina will receive 50% of the active employee's covered amount or seven (7) dollars.
- If the retiree has completed more than fifteen (15) years of service with Centralina, as of his/her retirement date, the premium for dental and vision will be increased by two (2%) percent for each full year of completed service in excess of fifteen (15) years with a maximum benefit of eighty (80%) percent.

Retirees are responsible for paying the remaining portion to satisfy the monthly premiums. Retirees must designate a payment schedule for this excess at the beginning of the insurance plan

year. Any payments not made by the scheduled date could result in the termination of insurance coverage.

Upon eligibility for Medicare, the retiree can maintain dental and vision coverage by paying the full cost of the premium.

## **SECTION 6: North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (NCLGERS)**

Each regular employee whose position requires at least 1,000 hours of work in a calendar year must participate in the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System. You are not considered a contributing member of NCLGERS if your work is considered temporary employment. Employees contribute, through payroll deduction, six (6) percent of their income on a pre-tax basis to this program. The NCLGERS annually determines the employers' contribution amount, which is paid monthly to the system. This is a defined benefit plan and the employee is vested in the plan after five (5) years of contributions. The employee becomes a NCLGERS member on their hire date and begins to make contributions with their first pay.

## **SECTION 7: Supplemental Retirement Benefits**

Centralina offers supplemental retirement benefits for regular full-time and part-time employees through the NC 401K and NC 457 Prudential plans, which is a defined contribution plan. Centralina makes an automatic three (3) percent contribution to each regular employee's NC 401K supplemental retirement fund.

Part-time employees can continue participation into the NC 401K plan as long as they are actively contributing to NCLGERS.

## **SECTION 8: Social Security**

Centralina, to the extent of its lawful authority and power, has extended Social Security benefits for its eligible employees and eligible groups and classes of such employees.

## **SECTION 9: Workers' Compensation**

All employees of Centralina (regular full-time, part-time, and term) are covered by the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act and are required to report all injuries arising out of and in the course of employment to their immediate supervisors at the time of the injury in order that appropriate action may be taken at once.

Responsibility for claiming compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act is on the injured employee.

## **SECTION 10: Unemployment Compensation**

Centralina employees who are terminated due to a reduction in force or released from service may apply for benefits through the North Carolina Division of *Employment Security* where a

determination of eligibility will be made.

### **SECTION 11: Disability Insurance**

Disability insurance is provided through the NCLGERS for all employee who have vested in the retirement system. Additional disability insurance options are available through supplemental insurance programs.

### **SECTION 12: Short-Term Disability**

Centralina's short-term disability plan is a benefit that provides sixty (60) percent of gross weekly earnings for employees who are unable to work due to illness, injury or disability not related to work, after an absence of more than seven consecutive calendar days. Benefits begin on the eighth day of disability and continue for related absences up to a maximum of twenty-six (26) weeks, as approved by employee's health care professional and disability carrier.

- Short-term disability leave must be certified by a physician's or licensed health care professional's statement identifying the nature of the disability and stating or estimating the date when the employee will be able to return to work. Three forms must be submitted to the disability carrier to initiate the claim: Employee Form, Provider Form, Employer Form. The employee can obtain the form from human resources.
- If the employee cannot return on the date specified, another statement from a physician or licensed health care professional, with a new return date, will be required.
- Employees will not be able to return to work without submitting to Human Resources a note from a physician or licensed health care professional authorizing the employee's return.
- Employees are responsible for informing human resources of return-to-work dates or of any changes to the end date.
- Supplemental Pay Option: Employees may utilize up to forty (40) percent (or sixteen hours) of leave time per week to supplement the sixty (60) percent received through the employer paid short-term disability plan.
- If a Centralina observed holiday falls within the period that the employee is utilizing the supplemental pay option, the employee can utilize the holiday at a prorated amount.
- If utilizing supplemental pay option, the employee is responsible for completing their own timesheet for the duration of their short-term disability leave.

### **SECTION 13: Employee Assistance Program**

Centralina recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt an employee's personal and work lives and therefore provides assistance for the health and well-being of its employees through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides free and confidential access to short-term professional counseling services to help employees deal with a wide range of personal problems that can affect their job performance. Employees may choose to go to the EAP on their own or they may be encouraged or mandated to use the EAP by their supervisor, which will not, in any way, have a negative impact on employment or employment status.

Regular full-time and part-time employees and their immediate family members (specifically those family members living with the employee and financially dependent on the employee, including college students up to 21 years of age) are also eligible for benefits under this policy.



## **SECTION 14: Flexible Spending Accounts**

The Flexible Spending Account is an IRS sanctioned benefit that allows employees to use pre-tax dollars to cover eligible expenses including: un-reimbursed, out-of-pocket medical related expenses that are not covered by the insurance plan and dependent/child care expenses.

Regular full-time and part-time employees that work thirty (30) or more hours per week are eligible to participate in the plan.

Coverage begins thirty (30) days following the date of hire.

## **SECTION 15: North Carolina Local Government Employees' Federal Credit Union**

Membership in the NC Local Government Federal Credit Union is open to all Centralina employees and their family members for various loan services, checking and savings accounts.

## **SECTION 16: Professional Development**

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with professional development opportunities that increase their skills and enhance their contributions to the organization.

All regular full-time and part-time employees are eligible for professional development time to be used to attend relevant training programs (workshops, seminars, and conferences, etc.) that will assist the employee in performing his/her essential job functions and increase the employee's contribution to the organization, providing the availability of funds.

Employees must request permission from their immediate supervisor and finance for approval to attend the training, for payment of training programs and to receive reimbursement for associated training expenses.

## **SECTION 17: Professional Memberships and Dues**

In order to promote active employee participation and membership in professional organizations related to the employee's field of work, Centralina will cover the costs of relevant membership dues for local, state and national organizations, providing the availability of funds.

Employees must request permission from their immediate supervisor for Centralina payment of membership dues to professional organizations.

## TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

### SECTION 1: Policy

The policy of Centralina is to provide vacation, sick, and holiday leave to regular full-time and part-time employees. Leave balances accrue with each bi-weekly payroll and will be pro-rated for employees that work less than a full-time schedule.

### SECTION 2: Vacation Leave: Accrual Rates

Vacation leave with pay shall be earned by all introductory and regular employees at an accumulative rate as follows:

<b>Years of Employment</b>	<b>Hours Earned per Pay Period</b>	<b>Days Earned Per Year</b>
0-3	3.69	12
3-8	4.62	15
8-15	5.54	18
15+	6.46	21

- The new accrual rates begin the day after the employee reaches the milestone.
- Vacation time shall be charged in units of actual hours taken. Requests for vacation leave should be submitted to the supervisor for approval.
- To assist in the recruitment process for new positions, the Executive Director or Department Directors may request approval to adjust the accrual rates and/or add time to a new employee's vacation leave bank in recognition of that employee's prior years of relevant experience.

### SECTION 3: Vacation Leave: Maximum Accumulation

Effective July 1, 2020, the maximum accrual of vacation is 30 days or 240 hours. For employees hired prior to July 1, 2020, vacation leave may be accumulated up to the following amount of days based on years of employment:

<b>Years of Employment</b>	<b>Limit of Accrued (Days/Hours)</b>
0-3	24 / 192
3-8	45 / 360
8-15	54 / 432
15+	63 / 504

In circumstances where new staff members have been granted advanced leave rates, the maximum accumulation will be based on days earned per year.

#### **SECTION 4: Excess Vacation Leave**

Employees have until the earlier of termination or the end of the fiscal year (June 30) to use vacation leave that is above the maximum number of days allowed per years of employment. Any excess vacation not used by the earlier of termination or the end of each fiscal year, shall be converted to sick leave.

#### **SECTION 5: Vacation Leave: Manner of Taking**

To schedule vacation time, employees should submit their request to the supervisor for approval. Employees must ensure that they have enough accrued leave available to cover the dates requested. Vacation leave is earned and should be granted by the supervisor unless there is some major work responsibility that will not be met in the employee's absence.

Vacation will be paid at the employee's base rate at the time the leave is taken and shall be charged in units of actual hours taken. If a holiday falls during the employee's vacation, the day will be charged to holiday pay, as applicable rather than vacation pay.

Normally, employees must have vacation accrued before it can be taken. However, the Executive Director may, under unusual circumstances, advance an employee vacation (pre-payment of wages) or permit the employee to utilize the option of leave without pay.

#### **SECTION 6: Vacation Leave: Payment Upon Separation**

Upon separation, an employee who has left in good standing shall be paid for unused accrued vacation leave but not to exceed the "limit of accrued maximum days".

**Payment Plan for Payout of Vacation Leave Upon Separation.** Centralina reserves the right to implement a payment plan not to exceed 1 year with the employee for payout of unused accrued vacation leave when payout of the entire amount at one time may cause a hardship to business operations. This payment plan may include accrued interest, not to exceed 3%.

#### **SECTION 7: Sick Leave**

Sick leave with pay may be taken for personal illness, doctor's appointments or hospitalization, maternity/paternity related absences and for illness or death of members of the immediate family and/or household members. Sick leave taken due to illness or death of immediate family shall not exceed five (5) days. Employees must get approval from their supervisor for the use of additional days.

In terms of sick leave due to personal illness, the employee's supervisor or Human Resources may require verification in writing by an attending physician for employees taking sick leave for personal illness of three (3) days or more, or where a pattern of use indicates a need to request documentation.

## **SECTION 8: Sick Leave: Accrual Rates and Accumulation**

Employees shall accumulate sick leave time at the rate of one (1) day per completed month of service with no limit on the amount that may be accumulated (3.69 hours per pay period).

Any sick leave not used, shall accrue to the employee's account without limit while he or she is in the employ of Centralina; upon retirement the employee shall receive one month of additional work credit for each twenty days of unused sick leave reported to the NCLGERS.

Normally, employees must have sick leave accrued before it can be taken. At the discretion of the Executive Director, an employee in unusual circumstances may be advanced sick leave. For non-exempt employees, upon termination, any deficit in accrued sick leave shall be withheld from the employee's final paycheck.

## **SECTION 9: Transfer of Sick Leave from Previous Employer**

Employees whose date of employment at Centralina was subsequent to July 1, 1983 and who were previously employed by a local governmental entity in North Carolina may receive credit at Centralina for accumulated sick leave, provided verification of that accumulated sick leave is received from the entity and that the employee was not reimbursed for these days. This only applies to local governmental entities that were the employee's place of employment immediately prior to their employment at Centralina. Up to twenty (20) days may be transferred into the employee's current sick leave accrual bank. Sick leave accumulation over twenty (20) days may also be transferred but will be held and recorded for purposes of retirement only.

## **SECTION 10: Sick Leave: Payment upon Separation**

For regular, full-time employees hired prior to January 1, 2018 upon separation, an employee may be paid for unused accrued sick leave at the rate of one-third days pay for each day of accumulated sick leave, not to exceed a maximum of fifteen (15) days (i.e., 45 days of accrued sick leave). This shall be computed at the rate of annual base salary at the date of separation. The daily rate of pay shall be computed on the basis of a fifty-two (52) week year, forty (40) hours per week. Employees shall not be paid for sick leave accumulated at any other governmental entity and transferred to Centralina.

Regular, full-time employees hired after January 1, 2018 will not be eligible for the above described benefit.

## **SECTION 11: Donation of Leave**

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees an opportunity to assist fellow employees who are unable to work due to their own or immediate family members' prolonged and catastrophic<sup>1</sup> illness or injury. The immediate family shall include: spouse, parent, child, sibling, in-law, grandparent, grandchild spouse and household members. Some prolonged medical conditions cause employees to exhaust all available leave and as a result, be placed on leave without pay status. This program allows fellow employees to *voluntarily* donate up to five (5) leave days (per year, per prospective recipient) of their earned sick or vacation leave accrual to help provide assistance to employees in need.

**<sup>1</sup>A prolonged and catastrophic illness or injury is defined as a single life-threatening medical condition that requires the employee’s absence from work for a minimum of ten (10) cumulative workdays.**

This program shall be administered by Centralina’s Finance Department with approval from the Executive Director.

### **General Guidelines**

1. An employee may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten or coerce any other employee for the purpose of interfering with any right which such employee may have with respect to donating, receiving, or using leave under this program. Such action shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination on the basis of personal conduct.
2. Employees must have completed one (1) full year of employment with Centralina to be eligible to receive compassionate leave.
3. The employee must have exhausted all available leave before using donated leave.
4. Medical certification of the prolonged catastrophic illness or injury from the primary attending physician must be provided to the Human Resources Manager prior to receiving donated leave.
5. The birth of a child **does not** qualify as a prolonged catastrophic illness or injury and should be addressed by the Short-Term Disability policy.
6. This program does not apply to employees on worker’s compensation leave.

### **Recipient Guidelines**

1. Recipients may confidentially request compassionate leave donations for a prolonged and catastrophic illness or injury requiring an extended treatment and/or recovery period for the employee or immediate family member. Requests for donated leave must be made in writing to the Executive Director.
2. Employees may also recognize the need to help a colleague and voluntarily choose to donate leave to assist the employee.
3. The salary of any employee receiving compassionate leave shall be unaffected by the salary or salaries of employees who donated their accumulated leave.
4. All donated leave will be credited to the recipient’s sick leave account.
5. No other compensable benefits are available to any employee receiving a donation of leave time. Compensable benefits include, but are not limited to: holiday pay, workers compensation, vacation, or accumulated sick leave.

### **Donor Guidelines**

1. Any donation must be initiated by a written request from the donor to the Finance Director and must have final approval by the Executive Director. The donation is non-reversible and may be anonymous to the recipient if so requested by the donor.

## **SECTION 12: Bereavement Leave**

Sick leave benefits may be used when time off is needed due to a death in the employee's immediate family. Sick leave taken due to death of immediate family shall not exceed five (5) days. Employees must get approval from their supervisor for the use of additional days.

## **SECTION 13: Medical Leave of Absence**

**Non-FMLA Leave.** Full time employees who are not eligible for FMLA leave, because they have not worked for Centralina for at least 12 months, have not worked at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months, or do not work at a location where there are at least 50 employees within 75 miles, are eligible for an unpaid Non-FMLA leave of absence." An employee desiring to take a leave of absence from work for reasons caused by a medical condition shall apply in writing for approval by their immediate supervisor. The employee must state the nature of the condition and anticipated dates and duration of the requested leave and the types of leave requested. The employee may request leave for a period of up to 12 weeks total. The employee is obligated to return to duty by the end of the time determined appropriate. If an employee finds that they will not return to work, at that time, they shall request an extension from their immediate supervisor. Failure to report at the expiration of a leave of absence unless an extension has been requested and approved shall be considered a resignation.

The employee may elect to use accumulated vacation leave (1) before going on sick leave; (2) after accumulated sick leave has been exhausted, and/or (3) after the temporary disability has ended. If an employee wishes to retain all accumulated sick leave and vacation leave, leave without pay may be requested for the entire period.

Employees who are in a paid status during a period of Medical Leave of Absence (Non-FMLA Leave) shall continue to accrue paid leaves of absences (sick and vacation leave). If the employee is in a part-time paid status the leave will be pro-rated.

To the extent allowed by the insurance contract and applicable laws, Centralina will continue to provide medical, dental and vision insurance coverage for employees on an approved Medical Leave of Absence (Non-FMLA Leave). During this time, the employee will be responsible for paying his or her portion of the monthly premium(s) through payroll deduction (when the employee is on paid status) or by making arrangements with Centralina's finance department.

**FMLA Leave.** The Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") provides eligible employees the opportunity to take unpaid, job-protected, leave for certain specific reasons. The maximum amount of leave an employee may use is either 12 or 26 weeks within a 12-month period depending on the reasons for the leave.

### ***Employee Eligibility:***

To be eligible for FMLA leave, you must:

1. Have worked at least 12 months for the Company;
2. Have worked at least 1,250 hours for the Company over the preceding 12 months; and
3. Currently work at a location where there are at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

### ***Conditions Triggering Leave:***

FMLA leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. Birth of a child, or to care for a newly-born child (up to 12 weeks).
2. Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care (up to 12 weeks).
3. To care for an immediate family member (employee's spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition (up to 12 weeks).
4. Because of the employee's serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job (up to 12 weeks).
5. To care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness related to certain types of military service (up to 26 weeks) (see Military-Related FMLA Leave for more details); or
6. To handle certain qualifying exigencies arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status in the Armed Forces (up to 12 weeks) (see Military-Related FMLA Leave for more details).

The maximum amount of leave that may be taken in a 12-month period for all reasons combined is 12 weeks, with one exception. For leave to care for a covered service member, the maximum combined leave entitlement is 26 weeks, with leaves for all other reasons constituting no more than 12 of those 26 weeks.

**Using Leave.** Eligible employees may take FMLA leave in a single block of time, intermittently (in separate blocks of time) or by reducing the normal work schedule when medically necessary for a serious health condition of the employee or immediate family member, or in the case of a covered service member, his or her injury or illness. Eligible employees may also take intermittent or reduced-scheduled leave for military qualifying exigencies. Intermittent leave is not permitted for birth of a child, to care for a newly-born child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care. Employees who require intermittent or reduced-scheduled leave must try to schedule their leave so that it will not unduly disrupt the Company's operations.

**Use of Accrued Paid Leave.** You may be required to use accrued paid leave such as vacation concurrently with some or all of your FMLA leave.

**Maintenance of Health Benefits.** If you and/or your family participate in our group health plan, the Company will maintain coverage during your FMLA leave on the same terms as if you had continued to work. You must make arrangements to pay your share of health plan premiums while on leave. In some instances, the Company may recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage or other benefits for you and your family. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of your leave.

**Notice and Medical Certification.** When seeking FMLA leave, you are required to provide:

1. Sufficient information for us to determine if the requested leave may qualify for FMLA leave and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that you are unable to perform job functions; a family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider; or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. You must also inform the Company if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.
2. If the need for leave is foreseeable, this information must be provided 30 days in advance of the anticipated beginning date of the leave. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, this information must be provided as soon as is practicable and in compliance with the Company's normal call-in procedures, absent unusual circumstances.
3. Medical certification supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting you or an immediate family member within 15 calendar days of the Company's request to provide the certification (additional time may be permitted in some circumstances). If you fail to do so, we may delay the commencement of your leave, withdraw any designation of FMLA



leave, or deny the leave, in which case your leave of absence would be treated in accordance with our standard leave of absence and attendance policies, subjecting you to discipline up to and including discharge. Second or third medical opinions and periodic re-certifications may also be required.

4. Periodic reports during the leave regarding your status and intent to return to work.
5. Medical certification of fitness or duty before returning to work if the leave was due to your serious health condition. The Company will require this certification to address whether you can perform the essential functions of your positions.

Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in delay or denial of leave, or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Employer Responsibilities.** To the extent required by law, the Company will inform employees whether they are eligible under the FMLA. Should an employee be eligible for FMLA leave, the Company will provide the employee with a notice that specifies any additional information required, as well as the employee's rights and responsibilities. If employees are not eligible, the Company will provide a reason for the ineligibility. The Company will also inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave and, to the extent possible, note the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the Company determines that the leave is not FMLA leave, the Company will notify the employee.

**Job Restoration.** Upon returning from FMLA leave, eligible employees will typically be restored to their original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

If an employee does not return to work at the end of the leave of absence period, it will be deemed that the employee has voluntarily resigned from employment and his/her employment will terminate immediately on the last day of the leave of absence period.

## **SECTION 14: Military Leave**

Eligibility for military leave of absence shall be governed by and subject to the limitations and restrictions set forth in USERRA and other applicable federal and state laws.

Employees must give advance notice to their supervisor of their military leave, unless impossible, impracticable or because of military necessity.

An employee who is absent from work as a result of service in any of the United States uniformed services, will continue to receive pay for the first ten days of any such absence in a calendar year. Thereafter, further absence shall be without pay, although the employee may, but is not required to, apply accumulated vacation leave towards the further absence.

During a military leave of absence, an employee's length of service accumulates, and benefits will continue as required by applicable law. Provided an employee's absence does not exceed applicable statutory limitations, employees on military leave will retain reemployment rights in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws.

## **SECTION 15: School Visitation Leave**

Employees who are parents, guardians or acting in place of the parents of a school-aged child are



allowed four hours of unpaid leave per calendar year, at a mutually agreed upon time, to attend or otherwise be involved at that child's school. Requests for School Leave must be made in writing at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the leave and a verification from the school that you attended or were otherwise involved at the school during the time of the leave. When possible and with supervisory approval, non-exempt employees may be allowed to recover expended time by restructuring their hours within the same workweek that the School Leave was used, in order to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

### **SECTION 16: Jury Duty and Civil Leave**

An employee called upon for jury duty shall receive leave with pay for up to ten (10) days to perform such duty. Other civil leave as may be required from time to time may be granted upon the approval of the Executive Director. A copy of the summons or subpoena shall be attached to the bi-weekly work report. In no case, however, will employees be granted civil leave to appear at any trial or hearing where the employee is charged with a violation of criminal or motor vehicular law.

### **SECTION 17: Educational Leave with Pay**

Leave at full pay during regular working hours may be granted to an employee with the prior approval of the Executive Director or supervisor, to permit an employee to take courses of study which will better equip the employee to perform assigned duties. Only one (1) course may be taken at a time.

### **SECTION 18: Leave without Pay**

A regular full-time or part-time employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for a period of up to one (1) month by the Executive Director. The leave shall be used for reasons including: continuation of education, special work that will permit Centralina to benefit by the experience gained or the work performed, or for other reasons deemed justified by the Executive Director.

The employee shall apply in writing to his/her supervisor for leave. The employee is obligated to return to duty within or at the end of the time determined appropriate by the Executive Director. Upon returning to duty after being on leave without pay, the employee shall be entitled to return to the same position held at the time leave was granted or to one of like classification, seniority, and pay. If the employee decides not to return to work, the supervisor shall be notified immediately. Failure to report at the expiration of a leave of absence, unless an extension has been requested, shall be considered a resignation. The following factors will be considered in Leave Requests: 1) reason for leave; 2) performance record; 3) business conditions; 4) tenure.

### **SECTION 19: Continuation of Fringe Benefits**

Centralina will continue contributions on behalf of employees taking paid vacation, sick, civil, military or education leave for life insurance, disability, group health and retirement coverage.

Those employees on leave without pay may lose these benefits for the period that they are out but may be eligible for medical coverage through COBRA (medical, dental and vision).

## **SECTION 20: Holidays**

The following days are observed as holidays with pay:

*With the exception of the Christmas Holiday, when a holiday below falls on Saturday, Friday shall be observed as the holiday; when the holiday below falls on Sunday, Monday shall be observed as the holiday.*

**New Year's Day**

**Martin Luther King's Birthday**

**Memorial Day**

**Independence Day**

**Labor Day**

**Veteran's Day**

**Thanksgiving Day and day after**

**Christmas** - when Christmas falls on:

- Saturday or Sunday, take Friday and Monday;
- Monday, take Monday and Tuesday;
- Tuesday, take Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday;
- Wednesday, take Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday;
- Thursday, take Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday;
- Friday, take Thursday and Friday.

Employees who are authorized or required to work one of the holidays listed above shall be granted leave credit commensurate with the time worked up to a maximum of eight hours per holiday. Such work must be approved in advance by the supervisor and Executive Director.

Employees will also receive one floating holiday with pay during the year to use at their discretion.

The earned holiday hours will be pro-rated for part-time employees according to their part-time schedule.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS: UNSATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE AND FAILURE IN PERSONAL CONDUCT**

### **SECTION 1: Disciplinary Actions Defined**

A regular employee may be placed on disciplinary suspension, demoted, dismissed, or otherwise disciplined for unsatisfactory job performance or failure in personal conduct at any time for any lawful reason. Unsatisfactory Job Performance and Failure in Personal Conduct is defined below.

In both circumstances outlined, the Department Director shall consult with Human Resources prior to communication with the employee and coordinate with Human Resources on the issuance of performance warnings to ensure compliance with the policy.

**Unsatisfactory Job Performance.** Unsatisfactory job performance includes any aspects of the employee's job which are not performed as required to meet the standards set by the organization and/or the department.

Examples of unsatisfactory job performance include, but are not limited to the following:

- Inefficiency, negligence or incompetence in the performance of duties.
- Careless, negligent or improper use of Centralina property or equipment.
- Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees.
- Harassment of employees because of race, color, and religious creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, genetic predisposition, or any other classification protected by applicable discrimination laws.
- Absence without approved leave.
- Habitual pattern of failure to report for duty at the assigned time and place.
- Failure to meet work standards over a period of time.

*Communication and Warning Procedures.* An employee whose work is unsatisfactory over a period of time shall be notified by the Department Director in collaboration with Human Resources in what way the employee's work is deficient and what must be done if the work is to be satisfactory. Depending on the circumstances, an employee should generally receive at least three (3) warnings before the disciplinary process is engaged and a recommendation for suspension, demotion or dismissal is initiated.

1. First, one or more oral warnings should be issued by the employee's Department Director;
2. Second, an oral warning with a follow-up letter to the employee which sets forth the points covered in their discussion should be issued by the Department Director; and
3. Third, a written warning should be issued by the Department Director serving notice upon the employee that corrective action must be taken immediately in order to avoid disciplinary actions.

The Department Director must record the dates of their discussion with the employee, the performance of deficiencies discussed and the corrective actions recommended and must coordinate with Human Resources to file the information in the employee's personnel folder.

**Failure in Personal Conduct.** An employee may be immediately suspended, demoted, dismissed, or otherwise disciplined for causes relating to personal conduct detrimental to Council service (1) in order to avoid undue disruption of work, (2) to protect the safety of persons or property, or (3) for other serious reasons.

The following causes relating to failure in personal conduct are representative of those considered to be adequate grounds for suspension, demotion or dismissal:

- Fraud in securing appointment.
- Conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor which would adversely affect performance of duties, or entry of a plea of "no contest" to either.
- Misappropriation of Council funds or property.
- Falsification of Council records for personal profit or to grant special privileges.
- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or narcotic drugs or partaking of such things while on duty or while on public property, except that prescribed medication may be taken within the limits set by a physician so long as medically necessary.

## **SECTION 2: Disciplinary Process**

In the case of unsatisfactory job performance, the Department Director should normally have followed the procedure outlined above on communications and warning. The employee should normally be allowed at least ten (10) workdays to respond to the charges before any recommendation is made to Human Resources concerning a suspension or a demotion or a determination is made by the Executive Director concerning dismissal.

In the case of failure in personal conduct, the employee shall be given a statement of the charges, will be allowed to respond in writing, and be given a prompt written statement of the decision of the Department Director, and the Executive Director. These steps shall normally be taken before the disciplinary action except in cases of suspensions where a written statement will be sent to the employee by certified mail or email.

All cases of disciplinary suspension, demotion or dismissal must be approved by the Executive Director prior to giving final notice to the employee. Human Resources shall provide the employee with a written notice including the recommended effective date, reasons for the action and appeal rights available to the employee.

**Disciplinary Suspension.** An employee who is suspended for disciplinary reasons shall be relieved temporarily of all duties and responsibilities and shall receive no compensation for the period of suspension.

**Immediate Disciplinary Suspension.** An employee may be suspended without prior notice for causes related to personal conduct in order to avoid undue disruption of work, to protect the safety of persons or property, or for other serious reasons. When a recommendation is made by the Department Director for Immediate Disciplinary Suspension and approval is given by the Executive Director for this suspension, the Department Director shall inform the employee to leave Council premises at once and remain away until further notice. Upon written notification, an employee shall receive no compensation for the period of suspension.

A written summary giving the circumstances and facts leading to the suspension shall be prepared; one copy shall be delivered to the employee by certified mail or email, and one copy shall be filed in the employee's personnel folder.

**Non-Disciplinary Suspension.** During the investigation, hearing or trial of an employee on any criminal charge or during the investigation related to alleged detrimental personal conduct, or during the course of any civil action involving an employee, when suspension would, in the opinion

of the Department Director or Human Resources, be in the best interest of the organization, the Department Director may recommend suspension of the employee for part or all of the proceedings as a non-disciplinary action. In such cases, the employee may be:

1. Temporarily relieved of all duties and responsibilities and placed on paid or unpaid leave for the duration of the suspension, or
2. Assigned new duties and responsibilities and allowed to receive such compensation as is in keeping with the new duties and responsibilities.

If the employee is reinstated following the suspension, such employee shall not lose any benefits, other than lost pay, to which otherwise the employee would have been entitled had the suspension not occurred. If the employee is terminated following suspension, the employee shall not be eligible for any pay from the date of suspension; provided, however, all other benefits with the exception of accrued annual leave and sick leave shall be maintained during the period of suspension.

**Dismissal.** Before a regular employee may be dismissed on the basis of unsatisfactory job performance or failure in personal conduct, the following shall occur:

1. The Executive Director may dismiss an employee with consultation from Human Resources and the Department Director.
2. A pre-dismissal conference shall normally be held between management representative(s) and the employee. No attorneys or other such representatives for either party shall be present at this conference; a witness or security personnel may be present if management deems it necessary. The management representative shall present the employee with the specific reasons for the proposed dismissal and a brief summary of the information which management believes supports the proposed dismissal. The employee shall have a right to respond to that notice of proposed dismissal in the conference.
3. If, at the end of the pre-dismissal conference, the Executive Director determines that dismissal is justified, he/she may present the employee with a letter of dismissal. However, the management representative may elect to defer the dismissal based on information presented by the employee, and reconsider the proposed dismissal. If, following such reconsideration, the decision is to dismiss, then no further pre-dismissal conference is required.
4. The employee must be given written notice of the dismissal. The written notice must include specific reasons for the dismissal and the employee's right of appeal.
5. Upon dismissal on the basis of job performance, an employee may be given up to two (2) weeks' notice. A payment of up to two (2) weeks salary may be made in lieu of notice.

### **SECTION 3: Employee Appeal**

A regular employee wishing to appeal a demotion, suspension, dismissal, or other discipline may present the matter in accordance with the provisions of the complaint procedure prescribed in this Manual.



# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 6**

## Executive Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	9/11/24	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>		<b>Regular:</b>	X
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Sarah Niess	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	30 minutes			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	Jason Wager Sarah Niess Andy Grzymiski	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2707			
		<b>Email:</b>	jwager@centralina.org			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Sarah Niess	<b>Phone Number:</b>	980-355-2022			
		<b>Email:</b>	sniess@centralina.org			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	Planning	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	Jason Wager			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda: CONNECT Beyond Update</b>						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
<p>Centralina staff will provide key updates on the CONNECT Beyond project to keep the Executive Board apprised of current implementation activities, with a focus on updates on (1) the Advancing the Plan Committee; (2) the development of a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and (3) Centralina's Integrated Mobility Center.</p>						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
<p>Centralina Regional Council is leading the implementation of the over 120 recommendations from CONNECT Beyond's regional mobility plan. Project staff has made significant progress on several near-term recommendations and would like to provide updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>(1) Advancing the Plan Committee (10 minutes)</u>            The Advancing the Plan Committee is an official ad-hoc Centralina advisory committee to steward regional conversation and action that advances the implementation of CONNECT Beyond's plan. The Committee met throughout 2023 and early 2024 to develop a model for how our region can coordinate on mobility issues. The Committee drafted a report of its recommendations for a regional mobility governance approach and submits this report for the Board's approval.</li>   <li>• <u>(2) Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) (10 minutes)</u>            A key recommendation of CONNECT Beyond's plan was to develop a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan for the greater Charlotte area. TDM refers to a program of education and incentives that are meant to encourage everyday travel choices to support more sustainable, livable communities. State, regional and local partners have worked with Centralina over the last 16 months to develop this regional TDM plan. Project staff will share highlights from the final draft plan, provide an overview of next steps and engage Board members on the greatest transportation needs of employers in their communities. Staff submits the final regional TDM plan for the Board's approval.</li>   <li>• <u>(3) Centralina's Integrated Mobility Center (10 minutes)</u></li> </ul>						

NCDOT Rail has received funding to study the potential for passenger rail in corridors across the state, several of which cross the Centralina region. The Integrated Mobility Center’s staff has been working with regional partners to coordinate local efforts related to NCDOT Rail’s studies of these corridors. Center staff will give an overview of the NCDOT Rail corridors and the local efforts Centralina is leading to support these corridors.

Board input will be used to inform and prioritize next steps for these projects. Project staff looks forward to informing and engaging the Board on these important topics.

**Requested Action / Recommendation:**

Motion to approve the following: (1) Approval of the Advancing the Plan Committee’s final report and (2) Approval of the final Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan

**Time Sensitivity:**  
*(none or explain)*

None

**Budget Impact:**  
*(none or explain)*

None

**Attachments:**  
*(none or list)*

Advancing the Plan Committee’s Final Report and Executive Summary  
Final Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan



# Advancing the Plan Committee Report

FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL MOBILITY GOVERNANCE

## Final Report

The Board Chair of Centralina Regional Council established an official ad-hoc advisory committee of its Executive Board to steward regional conversation and action that advances the implementation of the **CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan** within the greater Charlotte region. The Advancing the Plan (ATP) Committee was formed to ensure that interests from across the region are heard, provide a forum for communication across jurisdictional lines and serve as the test ground for collective action on regional mobility projects.



The CONNECT Beyond ATP Committee convened elected officials, city and county managers and members of the business community throughout 2023 and early 2024 with the goal of shaping **recommendations for a regional mobility governance approach**.

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**What is CONNECT Beyond?** CONNECT Beyond is a bold regional transit vision and plan that provides real mobility solutions and opportunities for residents and visitors across the two states and 12 counties that make up the greater Charlotte region. The plan was adopted by its lead sponsors, Centralina Regional Council and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and all North Carolina transportation planning organizations in the region. Project efforts now are focused on implementing the plan's 120+ recommendations.



**CENTRALINA**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

93

August 2024

# INTRODUCTION

The Board Chair of Centralina Regional Council (Centralina) established an official ad-hoc advisory committee of its Executive Board to steward regional conversation and action that advances the implementation of the [CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan](#) within the greater Charlotte region. The Advancing the Plan Committee was formed to ensure that interests from across the region are heard, provide a forum for communication across jurisdictional lines, and serve as the test ground for collective action on regional mobility projects.

The Advancing the Plan Committee was formed in late 2022 and held its kick-off meeting in January 2023. The Committee's Co-chairs are Mayor Vi Lyles (City of Charlotte) and Mayor Darrell Hinnant (City of Kannapolis).

## Members of the Committee include:

- **Co-Chair:** Mayor Vi Lyles (*City of Charlotte*)
- **Co-Chair:** Mayor Darrell Hinnant (*City of Kannapolis*)
- Mayor Karen Alexander (*City of Salisbury*)
- Commissioner Leigh Altman (*Mecklenburg County*)
- Former Mayor Melinda Bales (*Metropolitan Transit Commission*)
- Joe Bost (*Charlotte Regional Business Alliance*)
- County Manager Dena Diorio (*Mecklenburg County*)
- County Manager Mike Downs (*Cabarrus County*)
- Former County Manager Kim Eagle (*Gaston County*)
- Councilmember Tommy Green (*Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO*)
- Commissioner Bob Hovis (*Gaston County*)
- City Manager Marcus Jones (*City of Charlotte*)
- Mayor Rusty Knox (*Metropolitan Transit Commission*)
- Janet LaBar (*formerly with Charlotte Regional Business Alliance*)
- Tony Lathrop (*NC Board of Transportation*)
- County Manager Andy Lucas (*Stanly County*)
- Pat Mumford (*Gaston Business Association*)
- Former Mayor Scott Neisler (*Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO*)
- City Manager Lloyd Payne (*City of Concord*)
- Commissioner Lisa Qualls (*Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization*)
- Former Mayor Ron Pappas (*Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization*)
- David Rhew (*NC Public Transportation Association*)
- Commissioner Lynne Shue (*Cabarrus County*)
- Councilmember Jennifer Stepp (*City of Gastonia*)
- Mayor Woody Washam (*Metropolitan Transit Commission*)
- Commissioner Jarvis Woodburn (*Anson County*)

# Background

## CONNECT Beyond Project Overview (Plan Adopted October 2021)

CONNECT Beyond is a regional mobility plan designed to transform how residents and visitors travel throughout the 12-county Charlotte region. The result of an 18-month stakeholder driven process, the first-of-its kind plan includes over 120 recommendations that will serve as the blueprint for how to implement a robust, interconnected transportation network across the region. Lead project sponsors are: Centralina and the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC).

As part of the planning process, Centralina convened a small group of project advisors in the Spring of 2021 to (1) assess the current state of transit funding and partnerships in the region and (2) develop an initial scan of partnership models from peer agencies across the country. From this series of meetings, CONNECT Beyond’s plan included a recommendation to create a formal committee to further explore regional funding and partnership opportunities and to help guide the implementation of CONNECT Beyond recommendations.

## Committee Goals

The CONNECT Beyond Advancing the Plan Committee convened elected officials, city and county managers and members of the business community throughout 2023 and early 2024 with the following goals:

1. Shape a recommendation for a regional mobility governance approach
2. Endorse a regional communications framework for CONNECT Beyond and support its implementation
3. Form a unified and coordinated legislative strategy for CONNECT Beyond and advocate for local funding initiatives in the region

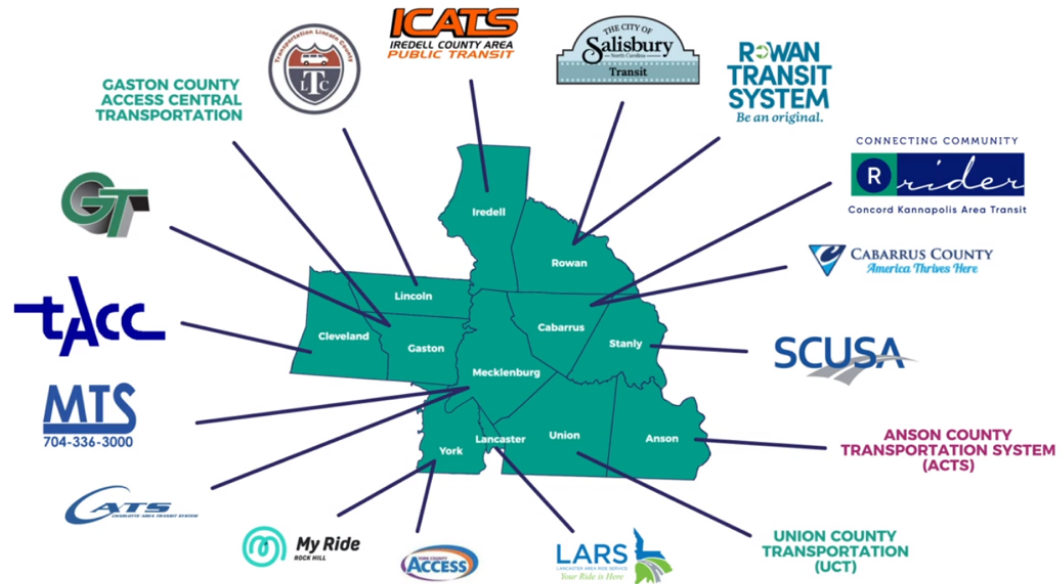
CONNECT Beyond project staff and Committee members provided regular updates to the Centralina Executive Board throughout the Committee’s tenure. While the Committee advanced work on all of its goals, the focus of this report is on Goal #1 and the Committee’s recommendations for a **regional mobility governance approach**.

## Why Focus on Regional Governance & Coordination?

The greater Charlotte region is home to 17 transit agencies, both fixed route (6) and demand response (11), resulting in a complex system to navigate for any user trying to travel regionally. During the development of CONNECT Beyond’s plan, project staff heard from transit riders that had 3+ hour commutes that crossed county lines and moved between transit agencies. The plan’s recommendations called for more collaboration across transit agencies to streamline travel and to explore regional partnership structures to better implement recommendations. (*CONNECT Beyond Plan, page 141*)



## Regional Transit Operators



Each of the 17 transit agencies have their own Boards and governance structures with independent operations. Fixed route agencies adjacent to the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), the largest transit operator in our region, do coordinate on transfer points and cross-county express bus routes. Two transit agencies, CATS and Concord Kannapolis Area Transit, have intra-county governance structures (within one county), however, there is an absence of any multi-county regional governance structure.

## Guiding Principles for Regional Collaboration

Early in 2023, Committee members developed together the following guiding principles for their work on developing a regional governance approach. The Committee stated that their purpose for Regional Collaboration is to:

- Strengthen **Economic Competitiveness** of Our Region
- Increase **Investment** in Region through State/Federal Grants
- Increase **Local Input**
- Improve **Regional Service and Access**
- Improve **Operational Efficiencies**

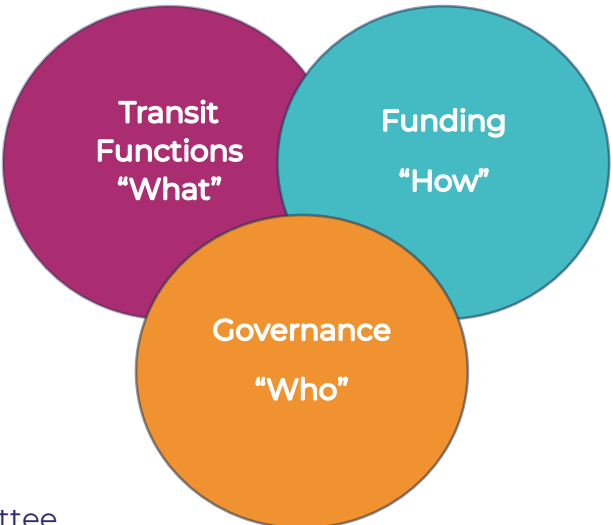
The remainder of this report outlines the results of the extensive research, discussion and collaborative decision making of the Committee to advance a regional governance framework.

# BUILDING BLOCKS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE: TRANSIT FUNCTIONS

## Peer Research Overview

Centralina’s region has a complex system of transportation and transit planning, investment and operations. Local control of transit operations, coupled with multiple cross-county transportation planning organizations, creates an opportunity for regional collaboration. This challenge is not unique to our region, therefore, Centralina and its consultant team at HDR conducted peer region research to review national models and good practice for regional transit governance. Peer regions researched included:

- ATL (Atlanta, GA)
- Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco Bay Area)
- Central Virginia Transportation Authority (Richmond, VA region)
- Go Triangle (Raleigh, NC region)
- Metro Transit (Minneapolis, MN)
- Piedmont Authority Regional Transportation (Greensboro, NC region)
- Sound Transit (Seattle, WA)
- Valley Metro (Phoenix, AZ)
- WeGo Transit (Nashville, TN)



Through the lens of peer research, the Committee developed a framework for evaluating regional governance approaches. The framework included evaluating what services an agency offered (Transit Functions); revenue sources for these services (Funding); and who is directing the agency (Governance Structure).

## Peer Regions: Transit Functions

For the Committee, “what services offered,” or transit functions, of peer agencies was the first consideration to evaluate given how much this influenced the other two elements of the framework: funding and governance structure.

There are several organizational models for delivering transit functions. Some metropolitan areas share responsibilities, with one or more agencies providing strategic direction, prioritization, or resource allocation, while other agencies manage operating transit services, delivering capital projects, or both. Some metropolitan areas consolidate implementation duties in one fully integrated

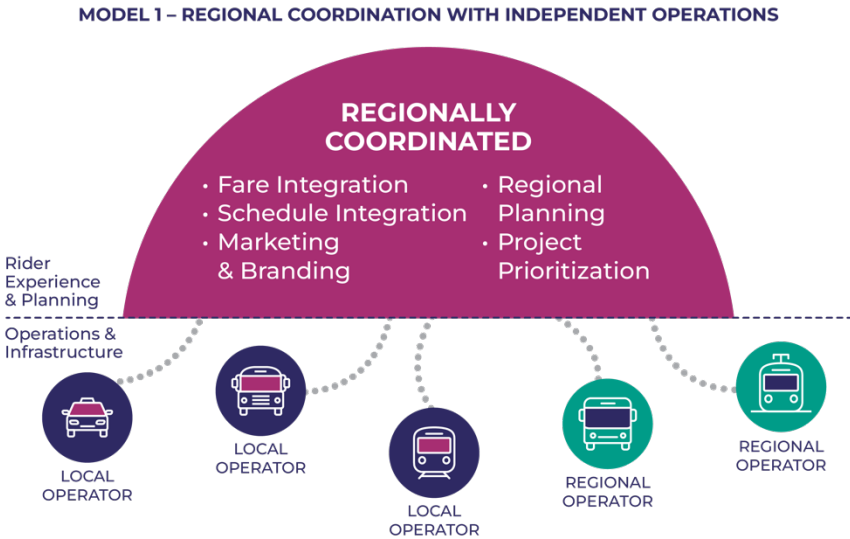
Regional Transit Authority (RTA). National experience suggests there is not necessarily an advantage to one approach over another; transit expansion programs have grown and thrived under both models.

Based on a review of peer agencies, the Committee defined two alternative model organization frameworks for consideration:

**Model 1: Regional Coordination with Independent Operations**

In the Model 1 approach, the entity would facilitate regional coordination mainly focused on Rider Experience and Planning. Under this model, the regional entity oversaw:

- Shared marketing and branding
- Integrated fare, regional scheduling and technologies
- Regional vanpool, carpool programs

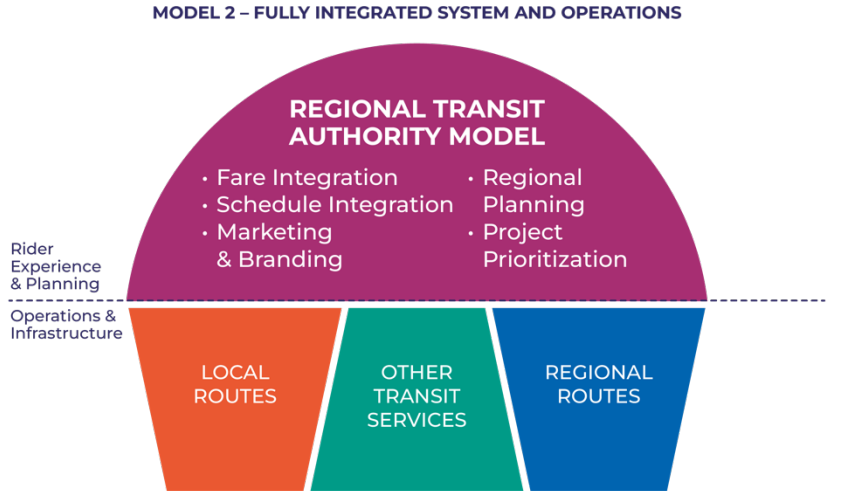


Local transit operators maintain control over transit operations and system infrastructure. The Model 1 approach is used in Atlanta, Nashville, and San Francisco Bay Area.

**Model 2: Fully Integrated System and Operations**

In the Model 2 approach, in addition to the regional collaboration functions of Model 1, the regional entity also oversees transit operations and infrastructure.

This fully integrated approach encompasses strategy, planning, prioritization, and project and service delivery. The Model 2 approach is used in Minneapolis, Phoenix, and Seattle.



## Committee Recommendation #1: Regional (Multi-County) Transit Partnership Model

Through engagement exercises and discussions, the Committee recommended that the Charlotte region should start with a model for regional (multi-county) collaboration that reflected Model 1 and focused on Rider Experience and Planning. The Committee wanted to leave open the possibility that in the future the model could develop into a more fully integrated entity.

### Recommended Model



### Specific Regional Partnership Model Transit Functions could include:

- Developing a coordinated marketing and branding campaign for participating transit agencies
- Overseeing transit coordination on technology, fares and scheduling integration
- Coordinating federal/state grants to maximize funding for region
- Leading regional planning on land use readiness for transit, regional trail planning, mobility hubs design, and project prioritization for the region.
- Addressing emerging technologies (e.g. autonomous vehicle readiness, zero-emission transition)

### The benefits of this Model could include:

- Increasing ridership and intra-regional movement through coordinated marketing, transit integration and regional planning for mobility
- Building trust across local and regional operators, local governments and riders
- Leveraging resources for efficiency across transit agencies
- Attracting investment to region by collaboratively pursuing state/federal funding opportunities

# BUILDING BLOCKS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE: FUNDING & REVENUE SOURCES

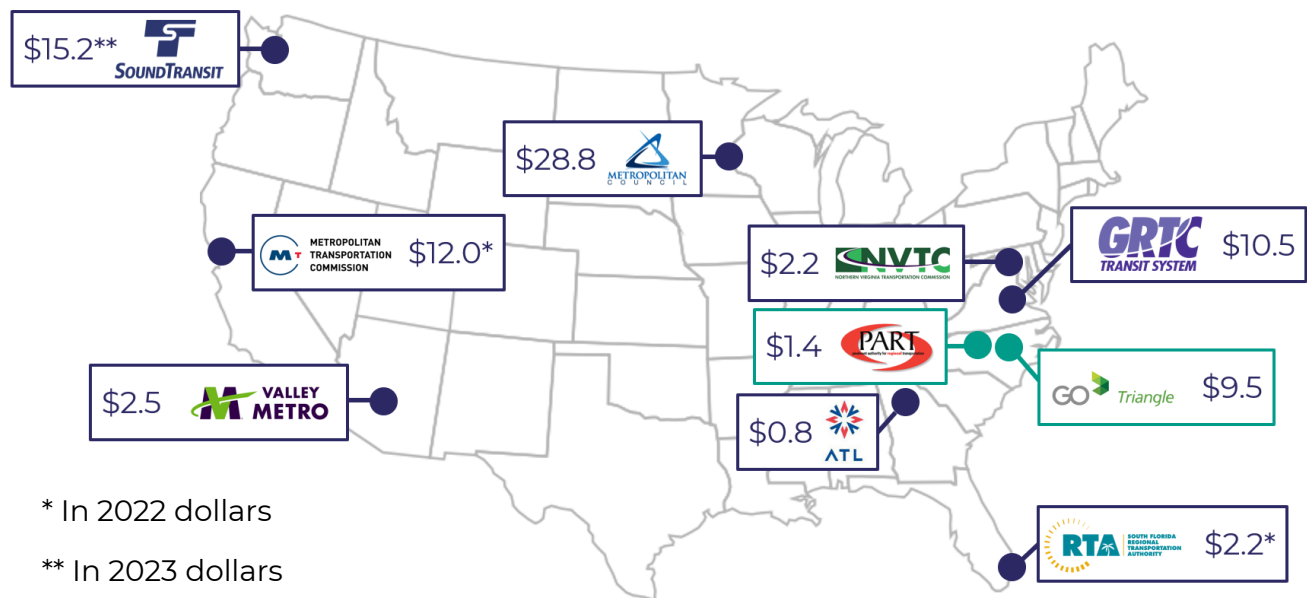
## Peer Regions: Funding & Paying for Transit

The ATP Committee reviewed the funding mechanisms and revenue generated by other RTAs across the United States, including two examples from North Carolina: Piedmont Authority Regional Transportation, PART (Greensboro NC area) and GoTriangle (Raleigh, NC area).

Sales taxes are common across peer agencies: Minneapolis, Seattle, Denver, Dallas and many other metro areas use sales tax as a primary revenue source. Motor vehicle taxes are also common. Portland, Oregon funds transit with a payroll tax. San Francisco and Austin use parking fees, in addition to other revenues, to pay for public transportation.

The level of spending on public transportation per capita varies widely. The graphic below shows the per resident spending in several peer regions on the activities contemplated in the Regional Transit Partnership Model.

### Peer Rider Experience & Planning Funding Levels (\$ Per Capita)



\* In 2022 dollars

\*\* In 2023 dollars



## Existing NC Transit Revenue Options

The Committee was most interested in reviewing revenue sources that would be “new” sources of funding for the region. The following chart summarizes these sources of RTA funding:

<b>Vehicle Registration Tax</b> <i>Article 51</i>	<b>Vehicle Rental Tax</b> <i>Article 50</i>	<b>Sales Tax</b> <i>Article 43</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to \$8 annual license tax on motor vehicles with a tax situs within the Authority’s jurisdiction</li> <li>Available to public transportation authorities under Articles 25, 26, or 27</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 5% privilege tax on short-term leases or rentals made by a retailer whose place of business or inventory is located within the Authority’s jurisdiction</li> <li>Available to public transportation authorities under Articles 26 or 27 only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 0.25 percent local sales and use tax in individual counties* (<i>Not available in Mecklenburg County</i>)</li> <li>Available to public transportation authorities under Articles 25, 26 or 27</li> </ul>
<p><i>* Under the existing NCGS, there are six counties (Mecklenburg in our region) in North Carolina that have access to a ½-cent sales tax option for public transportation purposes that must be approved by voters in a referendum. The other 94 counties have access to a ¼-cent sales tax. Only Mecklenburg County in our region has activated the ½-cent sales tax.</i></p>		

The Vehicle Registration and Rental Vehicle tax are only available to RTAs formed under specific North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS), noted in chart above.

Sales tax and percentage-based vehicle rental taxes are partially or substantially indexed to inflation, while a capped vehicle registration fee of \$7 loses purchasing power over time. In a survey of ATP members, fees or taxes levied on visitors (i.e. hotel stays, rental cars) had the most support, while those levied on residents had support, but not as much as visitor-levied options. All Committee members recognized that local governments should have the flexibility to determine which source of revenue to use for RTA funding and that any fee or tax would need to be approved locally.

## Revenue Potential In Our Region

The chart below details potential for these revenue streams by county:

	Vehicle Registration Tax			Vehicle Rental Tax			Sales Tax
	\$3	\$5	\$8	3%	4%	5%	0.25% (existing authority only)
Anson	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.2	\$0.5
Cabarrus	\$0.5	\$0.9	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$1.7	\$2.1	\$12.2
Cleveland	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$0.7	\$0.5	\$0.7	\$0.9	\$3.3
Gaston	\$0.5	\$0.9	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$1.7	\$2.1	\$9.0
Iredell	\$0.5	\$0.8	\$1.4	\$0.5	\$0.7	\$0.8	\$9.1
Lincoln	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$0.7	\$1.1	\$1.4	\$1.8	\$3.4
Mecklenburg	\$2.4	\$4.0	\$6.4	\$9.5*	\$12.7*	\$15.9*	-
Rowan	\$0.4	\$0.6	\$1.0	\$0.8	\$1.1	\$1.3	\$5.0
Stanly	\$0.2	\$0.3	\$0.5	\$0.8	\$1.1	\$1.3	\$2.4
Union	\$0.6	\$1.0	\$1.7	\$1.3	\$1.8	\$2.2	\$8.2
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>\$5.7</b>	<b>\$9.5</b>	<b>\$15.3</b>	<b>\$17.3</b>	<b>\$23.0</b>	<b>\$28.8</b>	<b>\$53.2</b>

Notes: Totals may not sum due to rounding. Preliminary revenue estimates are order-of-magnitude and based on third-party data, placeholder assumptions, and recently prevailing conditions. See disclaimer. Sources for each revenue estimate are provided in the prior slides.  
\* Mecklenburg currently uses full 5% authority. Would require policy decision to dedicate funds for regional transit activities.

## Committee Recommendation #2: Maximum Revenue Flexibility

The Committee recognized that raising revenue for any regional authority would require local action by a county or municipality. In order to maximize flexibility, the Committee recommends that any regional authority formed should allow for all possible revenue sources, including but not limited to: vehicle registration tax, vehicle rental tax and sales tax. The Committee indicated a preference for those revenue sources that are paid more by visitors but wanted to leave specific funding decisions to be determined locally.

## Peer Regions: Formation & Governance

To understand the state legislative framework for creating RTAs in North Carolina, the ATP Committee examined the NCGS and Articles that supported the formation of the Research Triangle Regional Public Transportation Authority (GoTriangle), and the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART).

Both agencies were created with an NCGS Article that was specifically crafted for their region. GoTriangle’s enabling legislation (Article 26) requires any county empowered in that article to be in or adjacent to a county with a research park of a certain size and having a fixed route bus system. Only Wake, Durham, and Orange counties can meet such criteria. Similarly, PART’s enabling legislation (Article 27) contains a series of interacting requirements which lead to the conclusion that only Guilford and Forsyth County and the surrounding counties are eligible to form an RTA.

Both Articles 26 and 27, outline specific Board memberships representing a mix of counties, municipalities, state officials and transportation planning organizations. Having reviewed GoTriangle and PART's enabling legislation, ATP Committee did not find that these statutes provided a suitable fit for the CONNECT Beyond region. Both Articles were developed for the formation of an RTA in a specific region and did not easily apply to other areas.

## Committee Recommendation #3: RTA Formation Through New Legislation

The Committee recommended that new legislation would be more effective than trying to amend existing statutes for the creation of an RTA. The new legislation would need to be designed to accommodate the needs and goals of the region, as outlined below in the Committee's recommendations for RTA authorization legislation.

### Governance Models – Establishing How an RTA Works

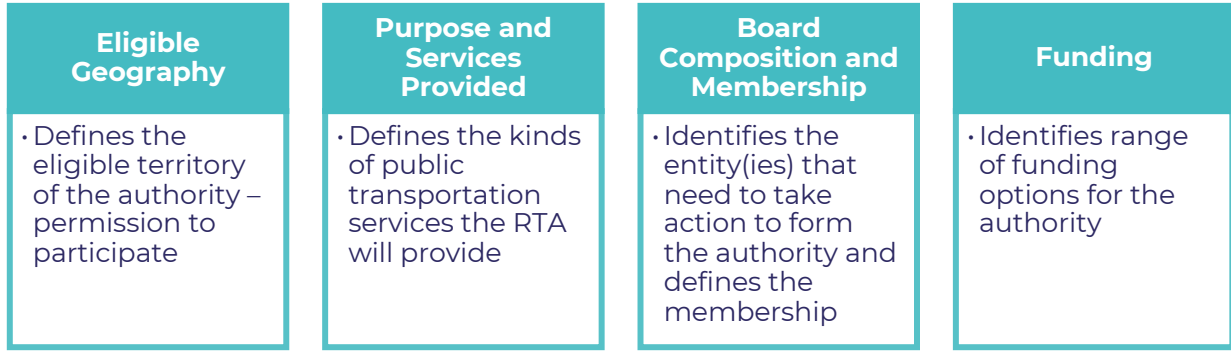
To prepare for any engagement with the North Carolina General Assembly on new legislation, the ATP committee worked to develop a few synthetic governance models for the Regional Transit Authority.

In the ATP Committee's March 2024 meeting, the committee reviewed the board governance structures of both GoTriangle and PART and identified the requirements for board membership at each agency. Some of the key discussion questions at this meeting included:

- *How large should an RTA board be? Are there board sizes that are either too small or too large?*
- *Which entities should be eligible to be represented on the board? Cities, counties, towns, transportation planning organizations, and state agencies like NCDOT?*
- *Is there a minimum number of entities that would be required to create an RTA?*
- *How long should terms be on the Board?*
- *What can be done to ensure that smaller communities are appropriately represented?*
- *How might the composition of the Board change over time as new members join?*

### Framework for Potential RTA Authorization Legislation

The Committee broke down their analysis of any potential RTA authorization legislation into the following elements defined below:



Using this framework as a guide, the Committee developed recommendations for each element of any potential RTA authorization legislation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RTA AUTHORIZATION LEGISLATION

In 2024, the ATP Committee found consensus on the following recommendations for potential RTA authorization legislation for our region:

Recommendation for Legislation	Committee Rationale
<p><b>Eligible Geography:</b> 10 county CONNECT Beyond area – Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties</p>	<p>The Committee agreed that all of the counties in North Carolina that were part of the Connect Beyond effort would be eligible to be part of the RTA. A bi-state authority was not recommended due to its complexity. Additionally, any adjacent county should be given a legislative pathway to joining the RTA, if desired.</p>
<p><b>Purpose and Services Provided:</b> Inclusive of Model 1 and Model 2 activities <i>(See Article 26 for example language)</i></p>	<p>The Committee reached consensus that a new RTA in the Connect Beyond region should begin by focusing on regional coordination (Model 1), while maintaining a clear path to becoming a fully integrated RTA (Model 2) without having to return to the North Carolina General Assembly for additional legislative action.</p>

Recommendation for Legislation	Committee Rationale
<p><b>Purpose and Services Provided:</b> Include a no takeover clause</p>	<p>The Committee supported a stipulation that prohibits the RTA from taking over the operation of another transit provider without that provider’s consent.</p>
<p><b>Funding:</b> Local governments should be able to access a variety of funding to join RTA</p>	<p>The Committee supported creating flexibility for localities in joining the RTA. Local governments should be able to join the RTA at a time of their choosing and have a choice for the type of revenue stream (e.g. sales tax, vehicle registration tax, vehicle rental tax) they use to fund transit investments.</p>
<p><b>Board Composition and Membership: Formation:</b> At least four (4) entities, inclusive of two counties</p>	<p>At least four entities, including two counties with voting seats, would be required for RTA formation. Include a pathway for entities to opt-in and opt-out after formation.</p>
<p><b>Board Composition and Membership:</b> Board membership (voting) for paying entities only</p>	<p>The Committee had a strong preference that entities with seats on the RTA Board also contribute money to the RTA in exchange for voting rights. The committee also recognized that county involvement is critical due to their role in providing human services transportation and could potentially hold nonvoting seats on the Board.</p>
<p><b>Other Board Composition and Membership Considerations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board size</b> that ranges from 15 to 30 members. There was a preference from some of the rural counties for not using an executive committee as part of the governance structure.</li> <li>• <b>Appointees &amp; Expertise:</b> Appointees to the Board should represent both public and private sector perspectives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Regional and State Perspectives:</b> Board seats potentially reserved for transportation planning organizations and NCDOT.</li> <li>○ <b>Fixed Route Systems:</b> There was also interest in some of the seats on the Board being reserved for entities that operated fixed route transit services.</li> <li>○ <b>Small Communities:</b> Recognizing that there are dozens of smaller communities across the region, the Committee saw a need to allow for a variety of communities to sit on Board, either as a primary or alternate member.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## Conclusion

Our region's complex transit network requires thoughtful and systematic collaboration across transit agencies to streamline travel, improve the rider experience and gain efficiency. The recommendations detailed in the Advancing the Plan Committee report elevate the benefits of improving mobility and provide a framework for achieving a level of regional coordination envisioned in CONNECT Beyond. Although the Committee did not fully represent every jurisdiction, these recommendations reflect a consensus-based process of elected officials and county leaders from across the North Carolina counties of the CONNECT Beyond region.

The Committee submits this report for approval by the Centralina Regional Council Executive Board on September 11, 2024. With its approval, Centralina and its member governments endorse these recommendations for inclusion in any future legislation authorizing a regional governance entity or transportation authority within the CONNECT Beyond's 10-county region in North Carolina.





**CONNECT  
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# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PLAN



## A Blueprint for Launching a Regional TDM Program in the Greater Charlotte Region

AUGUST 2024



**CENTRALINA**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Integrated Mobility Division  
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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# 01 INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)?



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### CONNECT CENTRALINA IS A TDM PROGRAM FOR THE GREATER CHARLOTTE REGION.

Transportation Demand Management is a broad term that may include any type of program or infrastructure that helps people shift their travel behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and toward healthier, more sustainable travel choices, like walking, biking, carpooling, riding transit, making shorter trips, remote/flex-work, and travel during off-peak hours. TDM also helps communities meet goals related to creating walkable and bikeable places, supporting business and job growth, addressing public health challenges, reinforcing sustainability measures, and providing access for all.

TDM programs:

- “Seek to change how and when people travel<sup>1</sup>;”
- Influence the everyday travel choices that people make to support more livable, sustainable; communities and a more efficient transportation system;
- “Are either focused on increasing mobility options or changing travel behaviors<sup>1</sup>;”
- Can be tailored to urban, suburban, and/or rural communities; and
- Proven to be successful and effective in other metropolitan areas around the country.



**CENTRALINA**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

## WHY CENTRALINA?

Centralina Regional Council (Centralina) is a lead sponsor and implementor of the regional [CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility plan](#) (2021) for the greater Charlotte area. This effort created a shared regional vision with specific recommendations for attaining a reliable, efficient, and well-connected transportation system that benefits everyone. Developing a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program was a key recommendation of the CONNECT Beyond Plan (see next page). Through the CONNECT Beyond plan development process, Centralina was identified to serve as a lead agency for hosting a future regional TDM program, now called CONNECT Centralina.

<sup>1</sup> **CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan.** (page 58). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.

## Key CONNECT Beyond Recommendation

### “DEVELOP A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PLAN

#### TIMEFRAME: IMMEDIATE.

CONNECT Beyond recommends our regional partners work together to develop a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan.”<sup>1</sup>










<sup>1</sup>CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan. (pg. 59). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.

## WHY NOW?

Centralina’s region has been one of the fastest growing metro regions in the country over the past decade and is continuing to experience rapid growth. The region is at a crossroads. Elected officials, policymakers, local planners, and residents are involved in frequent conversations about navigating the region’s transportation challenges. Decisions made now will shape the region’s mobility future for decades.

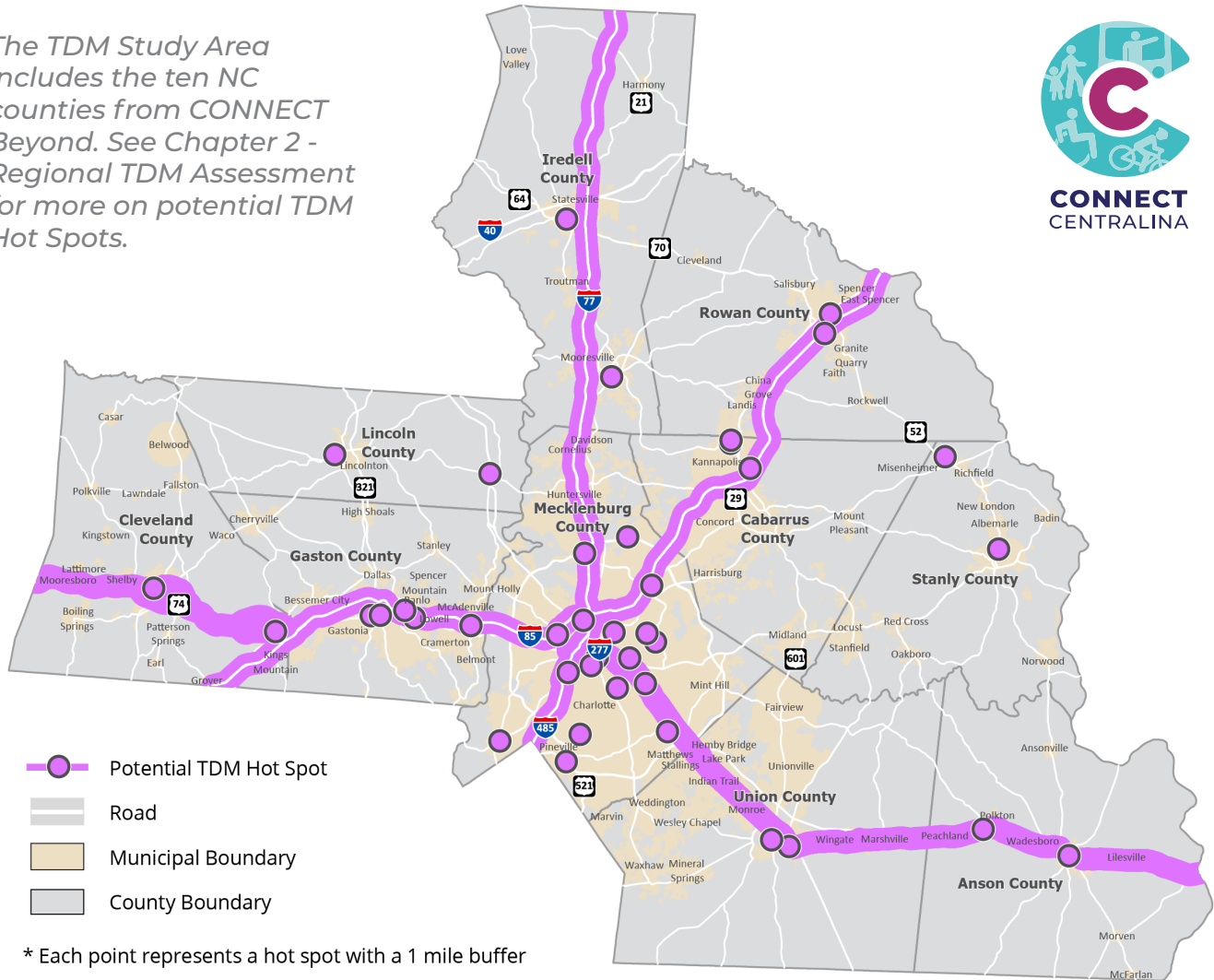
The transportation challenges facing the Charlotte region include:

-  Providing transportation choices that keep pace with growth;
-  Serving an increasing diversity of transportation needs and preferences;
-  Prioritizing safety, health, and livability, particularly for the region’s most vulnerable residents and roadway users;
-  Understanding how to maximize existing transportation assets and reduce the strain on road networks;
-  Navigating a post-Covid reset of travel behavior and mobility expectations;
-  Implementing policies and regulations that manage the transportation impacts of new development; and
-  Addressing the public health and climate impacts of air pollution from the transportation sector.

Through a coordinated, region-wide effort, the CONNECT Centralina TDM program can help shift regional travel behaviors to support a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable mobility system. This approach complements ongoing regional efforts to advance large-scale investments in roads, transit, and other infrastructure.

# CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM STUDY AREA

The TDM Study Area includes the ten NC counties from CONNECT Beyond. See Chapter 2 - Regional TDM Assessment for more on potential TDM Hot Spots.



**WITH THE LARGEST POPULATION IN NORTH CAROLINA AND THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONGESTION ISSUES, THE CHARLOTTE METROPOLITAN REGION COULD BENEFIT THE MOST FROM TDM STRATEGIES...**



*(North Carolina Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) Statewide TDM Strategic Plan Update | 2018)*



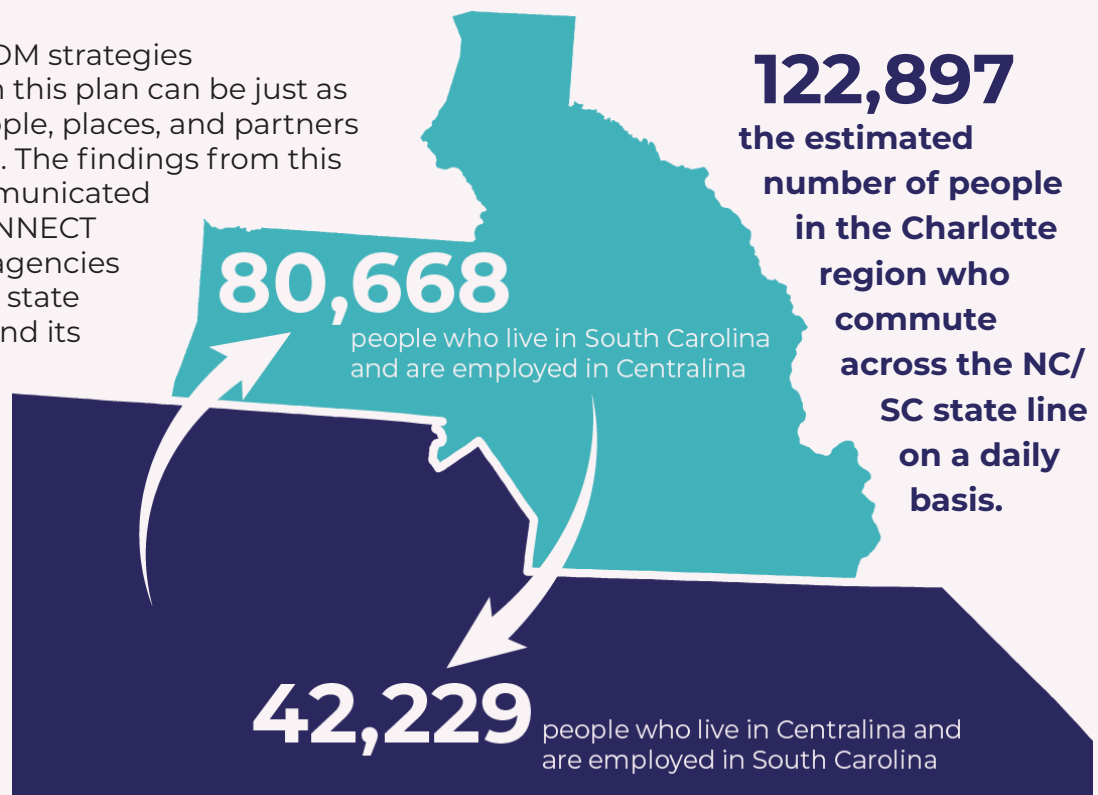
# A BI-STATE TRANSPORTATION REGION



The greater Charlotte area is at the center of a region that sees significant travel across state lines. There are extensive daily commute patterns to/from South Carolina counties like York County, Lancaster County, and Chester County. I-77 and I-85 are major transportation arteries that carry drivers and freight between the Carolinas. At the finalizing of this document, the Charlotte Area Transit System has two routes that cross state lines, the 42 (Carowinds) and 82X (Rock Hill Express) bus routes, which serve local stops and three park & ride locations in York County. Recently, the Cross Charlotte Trail (Little Sugar Creek Greenway) was completed through southern Mecklenburg County to the South Carolina State line, with plans in development to extend that major pedestrian and bicycle trail to the Anne Springs Close Greenway. Tourism/recreation destinations also reinforce a bistate transportation pattern as residents on both sides of the state line travel to enjoy amenities like Anne Springs Close Greenway, the US National Whitewater Center, Lake Wylie and Lake Norman, Carowinds, and the Rock Hill BMX Supercross complex, among many others.

Due to the timing and funding of this regional TDM Plan, this effort is focused on the ten North Carolina counties from CONNECT Beyond. However, the reality of bi-state transportation patterns is not absent from the plan’s context. Some of the maps and takeaways in the Regional TDM Assessment (Appendix B) are based on data from the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model, which includes York County, SC and a portion of Lancaster County, SC.

Ultimately, the TDM strategies recommended in this plan can be just as applicable to people, places, and partners in South Carolina. The findings from this plan will be communicated to applicable CONNECT Beyond partner agencies across the NC/SC state line. Centralina, and its partners, will be eager to champion coordination with any future South Carolina TDM activities.



“Centralina” in the graphic above refers to the ten North Carolina counties from the CONNECT Beyond study area as shown on page 6. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2021). Accessed on 07.02.2024 at <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov>. LODS 8.1.



# OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the CONNECT Centralina TDM plan was built upon the extensive engagement conducted for the CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan. The regional engagement behind CONNECT Beyond resulted in a clear recommendation for the development of the CONNECT Centralina TDM program.

Like CONNECT Beyond, this CONNECT Centralina TDM plan and program development was a stakeholder-driven process. The planning process was informed by four primary audiences:

1. **The Project Management Team (PMT),**
2. **The Program Development Steering Committee,**
3. **Stakeholder Groups, and**
4. **Focus Groups.**



## TDM PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT RECAP

- 3 TDM Focus Groups
- 4 NCDOT Coordination Meetings
- 6 Stakeholder Meetings
- 5 Interviews/Case Studies of Peer Programs
- 8 Steering Committee Meetings
- 12 Interagency Project Management Team Meetings

The **Project Management Team (PMT)** was a decision-making group that provided specific guidance on project coordination and direction. This group reviewed all deliverables, assisted in coordination among critical stakeholder groups, and helped navigate any interagency sensitivities.

The **Program Development Steering Committee** guided the plan/program development process and ensured that our region's diverse viewpoints were represented. As Centralina staff prepares to launch the CONNECT Centralina TDM program, it is anticipated that the Steering Committee will also support and inform immediate next steps to support the program's launch.

Additionally, a series of meetings was conducted with **Stakeholder Groups** who have an interest and influence in our region's travel patterns. Through these outreach opportunities, the project team engaged with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), economic and workforce development groups, transit service providers, and other key partners.

Finally, to receive additional input from specific focus areas, the project team facilitated three **Focus Groups** with sustainable transportation advocates, major employers, and local land use planners.



*Steering Committee Meeting Kick off June 7, 2023*



# TDM PROGRAM STRUCTURE & GOALS

During the planning process, Centralina and its partners developed a vision statement and identified five guiding principles with corresponding TDM program goals to help guide the TDM program development and future implementation.



The **vision statement** describes the desired future vision for the greater Charlotte region.



The **guiding principles** are intended to communicate broad aspirations for the region, which the TDM program hopes to support.



The TDM **program goals** are intended to guide the TDM program's efforts to achieve the vision.



**VISION STATEMENT** – Comprehensive statement that defines the future we want

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES** – Used to communicate broad aspirations for the region



**TDM PROGRAM GOALS** – Used to guide the TDM program's efforts to achieve the vision

**PERFORMANCE METRICS** – Used to track progress on goals over time



## RECOMMENDED TDM STRATEGIES & PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

What the TDM program actually does to support the things above

*The structure of the TDM plan & program was developed and confirmed by the Steering Committee and key agency partners.*





## CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT: THE GREATER CHARLOTTE REGION IS A PLACE WHERE SUSTAINABLE AND AFFORDABLE TRAVEL OPTIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE, KNOWN, AND CONVENIENT FOR ALL.

### SUSTAINABLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - ◇ Participants integrate travel options into their daily lives that benefit environmental sustainability, personal health, and regional quality of life.
- **Program Goal**
  - ◇ Centralina's TDM program has reliable funding and is administered effectively as an enduring program.

### AFFORDABLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - ◇ A growing number of residents are able to choose travel options that are more affordable than owning and maintaining a car.
- **Program Goal**
  - ◇ Participating in Centralina's TDM program is affordable to members, partners, and employers.

### ACCESSIBLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - ◇ Residents across the region have equitable access to transportation options.
- **Program Goal**
  - ◇ Centralina's TDM program actively identifies and works to resolve barriers to increasing travel options throughout the region.

### KNOWN

- **Guiding Principle**
  - ◇ Residents and employers are aware of the various travel options available to them and the support available for choosing non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) options.
- **Program Goal**
  - ◇ Centralina's TDM program actively promotes the availability, use, and benefits of travel options to local governments, partners, employers, and people throughout the region.

### CONVENIENT

- **Guiding Principle**
  - ◇ It is convenient for residents to use non-SOV trips to accomplish a growing number of daily needs.
- **Program Goal**
  - ◇ Centralina's TDM program provides a range of programs and strategies that are applicable in rural, suburban, and urban areas.



**CONNECT  
CENTRALINA**

# 02 REGIONAL TDM ASSESSMENT

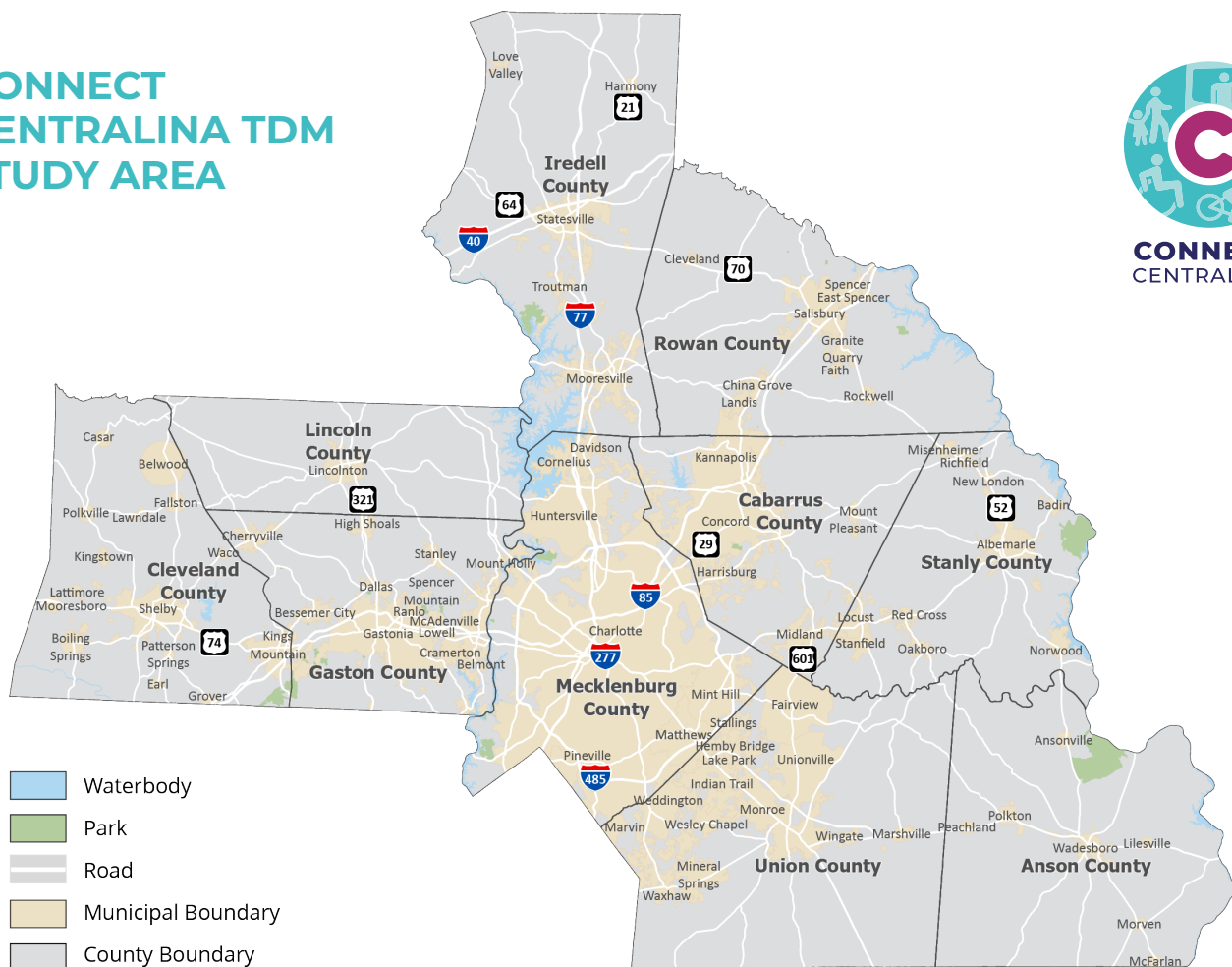
## HOW “READY” IS OUR REGION FOR A TDM PROGRAM?

Completing a Regional TDM Assessment (see Appendix B) was the first step in the development of a TDM plan and program for Centralina’s region. The report included:

1. Assessment of existing conditions (transportation, demographic, socio-economic, and spatial data); and
2. Identification of potential TDM “Hot Spots” (to help Centralina staff focus their early efforts for the CONNECT Centralina TDM program).

Important context and key takeaways have been included in the full Regional TDM Assessment. The study area for the Regional TDM Assessment covers the ten North Carolina counties included in the CONNECT Beyond Plan geography.

### CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM STUDY AREA



# EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The existing conditions assessment details high-level regional trends and includes a multi-modal evaluation of needs and challenges facing the region. It evaluates a variety of factors including socioeconomic patterns; equity considerations; trip attractors; traffic, congestion, and other road network characteristics; existing and future active transportation and transit infrastructure and facilities; land use; and existing TDM programs and activities.

The Existing Conditions Assessment resulted in seven key takeaways:



**1.** Driving is the easiest and most convenient way to get around the region. It's not close.

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**2.** TDM efforts to date have been fragmented and lack geographic coverage.

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**3.** The multi-centric region lends itself to Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)\* that focus on district-scaled strategies.

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**4.** The next frontier in supporting affordable living for more people is access to high-quality, non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) transportation choices.

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**5.** Rural areas are the most challenging to reach. TDM strategies here will require creativity and strategic partnerships.

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**6.** TDM is about more than work commutes. The types of trips people take, and the way they are taking them, is changing.

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**7.** The public transit landscape is changing (microtransit, micromobility, demand-responsive service, autonomous shuttles, Mobility as a Service (Maas), cleaner fuels and technologies, etc.). TDM should help people in the region understand options and support increased coordination across service providers and service types.

---

*\*TMAs are member-controlled non-profit organizations focused on managing the movement of people and goods in particular area. They can vary significantly in size, geography, membership, structure, and approach. They have been used effectively in other regions to support district-scaled strategies for influencing travel behavior. See pages 21-22.*

# TDM “HOT SPOTS” IDENTIFICATION

Because the ten-county Study Area is so large (4,750 square miles), it will be necessary for Centralina to determine where and how to focus their early TDM implementation efforts through the CONNECT Centralina TDM program. The Hot Spot Assessment provides some preliminary guidance for early TDM program focus by identifying the places that are the most “ready” for the implementation of TDM strategies.

Identifying Hot Spots also follows a recommendation from the CONNECT Beyond plan to “identify highest priority locations to target through the TDM Plan, i.e., largest employment centers and congested corridors.”<sup>1</sup>

The identified Hot Spots are a combination of Places and Corridors.

**PLACES:** Determined through a data-driven screening of the potential mobility hubs identified in CONNECT Beyond

**CORRIDORS:** The primary SOV commuting corridors across the ten-county region

*(For more information on the Hot Spot Assessment see Appendix B).*



*TDM Hot Spots look different in different places. The TDM project team was careful to identify potential TDM Hot Spots across the region that are located in all six Community Character Types described in the CONNECT Beyond plan.*

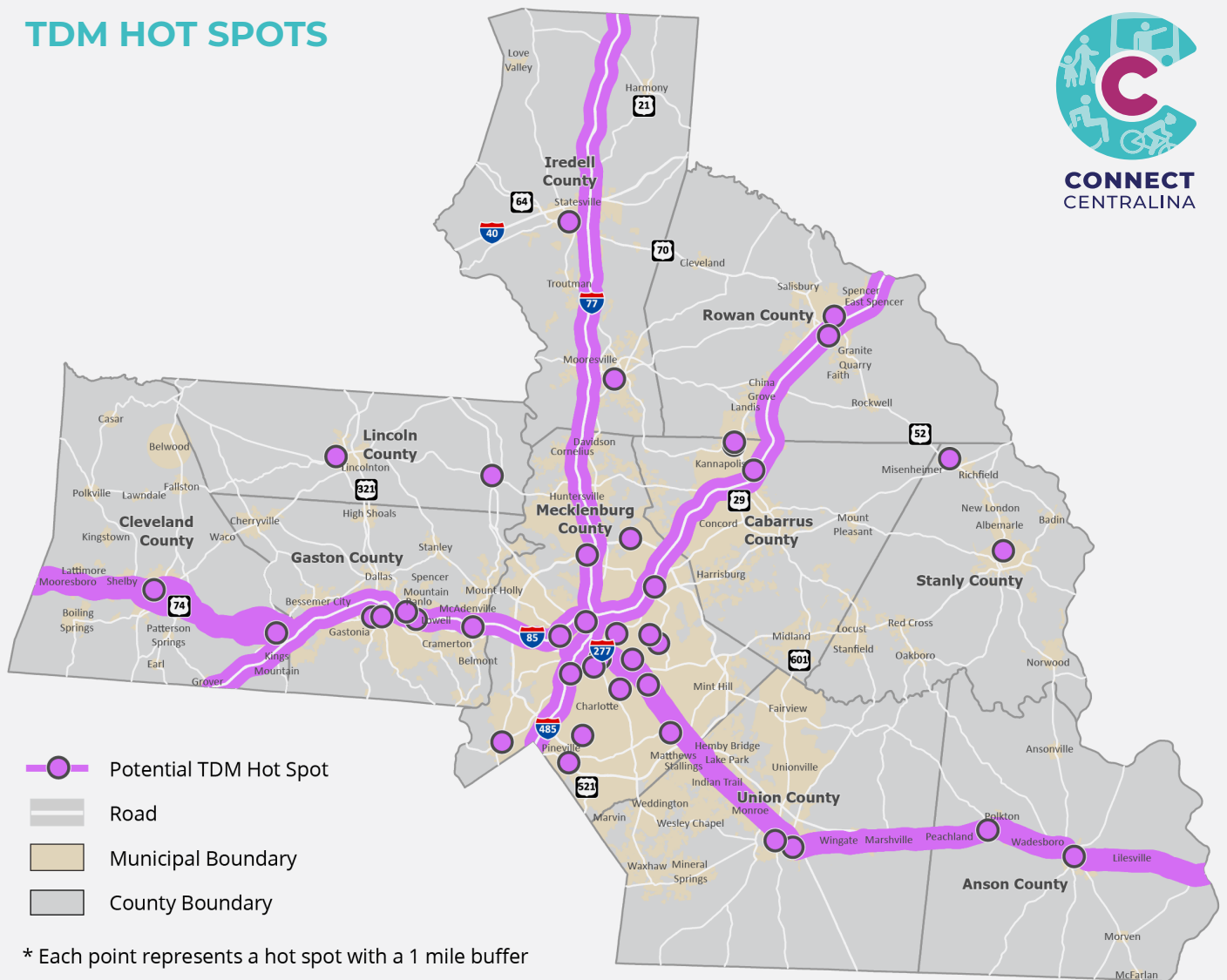
The Hot Spots are simply a snapshot, using the best available regional data. They are the locations in the Study Area that have demonstrated a propensity toward future mode shift away from SOVs and where Centralina may elect to focus early TDM implementation efforts. They are NOT intended to limit where and how Centralina responds to future TDM implementation opportunities or spends future TDM program funding.

For example, Centralina should be opportunistic by engaging with employers and key partners who demonstrate interest in participating in a regional TDM program, whether or not those partners are located in a Hot Spot.

The map on the following page shows the TDM Hot Spots identified in the study area.

<sup>1</sup>CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan. (pg. 60). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.

# TDM HOT SPOTS



## METHODOLOGY

Data-driven screening of Mobility Hubs identified in CONNECT Beyond (103 mobility hubs total)



Primary SOV commuting corridors across the ten-county region

(For more information on the methodology for identifying Potential TDM Hot Spots, see Appendix B: Regional TDM Assessment.)

### TDM HOT SPOTS ARE:

- Places where Centralina **may elect** to focus early TDM implementation efforts;
- Places that have demonstrated a propensity toward future mode shift away from SOV.

### TDM HOT SPOTS ARE NOT:

- **Intended to limit** where Centralina directs their TDM implementation efforts
- Intended to indicate where/how and TDM programming funds are spent.

**SIMPLY PUT – HOT SPOTS PROVIDE SOME PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE FOR EARLY TDM PROGRAM FOCUS.**



# 03 TDM STRATEGIES

## HOW WILL WE INFLUENCE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR?

After confirming the program vision and goals, Centralina's TDM project team developed a menu of TDM strategies for consideration. TDM strategies represent actions that the TDM program will pursue to influence regional travel behaviors and support the goals and guiding principles of the TDM Plan.



# SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON TDM STRATEGIES

Over the course of six months, Centralina TDM project team studied TDM programs in peer regions and listened to stakeholders, focus groups, and the Steering Committee to understand the types of TDM strategies that would be most engaging and effective for Centralina's region. A summary of that benchmarking and listening effort is included below.

## PROGRAM FOCUS

In the near term (Years 0-2) Centralina should focus TDM program efforts in two areas:

### 1. Coordinating/Convening

- ◆ Driving force for advancing regional TDM vision and goals
- ◆ Providing resources and incentives to partners

### 2. Marketing/Education

- ◆ Focus on interested employers and working across jurisdictional boundaries
- ◆ Pilot projects – test TDM in different community types (urban, suburban, rural) and along key corridors

In the longer term (Years 3+) Centralina should seek to expand its TDM program to offer additional services:

### 3. Funder/Grant Provider

- ◆ Explore providing “pass-through” grant funds to support TDM implementation by partners

### 4. Research & Policy

- ◆ Creating analysis reports, model ordinance and policy recommendations, assessing other opportunities for implementation.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR TDM STRATEGIES

- Centralina plays a unique and important role within the region. Centralina is different from some other TDM program host agencies across the United States in that they do not have access to direct funding (like some Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)), nor do they have regulatory authority to implement TDM policies/requirements (like municipal governments). Centralina's organizational role and strengths are focused on supporting regional collaboration, convening multi-jurisdictional partnerships, providing technical assistance, and supporting local governments to take action. **The TDM strategies that Centralina pursues should be calibrated to the unique role that they play in the region, acknowledging their organizational authority, capacity, and strengths.**
- It is also clear that Centralina's TDM efforts must work across a wide range of places. **The TDM program should focus on strategies that can reach people in the diverse community contexts that exist across Centralina's region.** While urban areas have the greatest potential for prompting travel behavior change across larger numbers of people, the rural and suburban areas within the region are a significant asset and play a key role within our overall transportation story.



- **Partners expressed enthusiasm for TDM strategies that can support their existing work and promote greater awareness and collaboration for supporting non-SOV travel across the region.** Feedback emphasized the following ideas:
  - ◇ Promote and incentivize sustainable commuting (unified website/app – Mobility as a Service (MaaS); [SharetheRideNC](#); commuter training/ambassador programs; discounted/free transit passes)
  - ◇ Worksite/employer-based strategies are important (flex-work/telework & enhancing the commuter experience; guaranteed ride home)
  - ◇ Provide technical guidance (opportunity to develop model ordinances and policies for the region)
- ◇ Urban planning integration (unbundling the cost of parking from office or apartment leases; developing walkable employment centers; connection between transportation and land use needs to be an ongoing focus)
- ◇ Diversify transportation options (district shuttles; vanpools; pass-through grant funding to service providers)
- The target audience for TDM strategies is important. Some program strategies will be targeted directly to travelers across the region, others may be directed to employers, campuses, or local governments. **Understanding the desired outcome of TDM strategies, and calibrating communications and outreach to the right audiences, will be critical.**



*Groups such as the Advancing the Plan Committee were engaged at various points throughout the planning process to hear ideas and feedback about the TDM program development.*



# TDM STRATEGIES MENU

The TDM Strategies Menu (see Appendix A) describes potential program activities to help guide the launch and future direction of a TDM program hosted by Centralina. Centralina staff may also elect to use this menu as a dynamic tool for tracking implementation and outcomes of various TDM strategies over time.

The TDM strategies reflect opportunities to leverage existing resources and tools at the state, regional, and local levels (e.g., Share The Ride NC). The menu features descriptions of each TDM strategy, examples of successful applications in other places, regional organizations most likely to be responsible for implementing/supporting the strategy, and the relationship of each strategy to the TDM program goals and community character types identified in CONNECT Beyond.

Informed by the peer agency benchmarking, the focus groups/stakeholder meetings, and the TDM Steering Committee, Centralina's potential TDM strategies fell into four primary categories:



**Education & Marketing:** Through these strategies Centralina would lead communications and outreach efforts to advance TDM throughout the region.

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**Regional Partnerships & Coordination:** Through these strategies Centralina would work across jurisdictional boundaries to convene partnerships that advance TDM goals.

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**Incentives & Facilitation:** Through these strategies Centralina would seek to overcome barriers, real or perceived, to choosing non-SOV travel options. This category of strategies may include offering people incentives, or encouraging/equipping partners to provide direct incentives, for choosing non-SOV travel.

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**Technical Assistance:** Through these strategies Centralina would provide technical assistance to support the implementation of TDM plans/policies/regulations by others.

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## HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

The specific strategies that were identified as most important for early implementation are described in the following table. In general, high priority TDM strategies include those that focus on partnerships, communications, and marketing. These are the most effective TDM strategies to pursue as Centralina launches the programs and builds internal staff capacity and communications resources. As the TDM program matures, Centralina should consider pursuing a broader range of TDM strategies. Appendix A includes the full TDM Strategy Matrix with strategies beyond those identified as high priority.

# HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

STRATEGY CATEGORY	STRATEGY - NAME	STRATEGY - BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Education & Marketing	<b>Launch a Regional Marketing Campaign</b>	Centralina will conduct a region-wide marketing campaign to help promote their TDM program and educate residents/employers about the resources available for non-SOV travel in the region.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	<b>Pursue Dedicated Funding &amp; Grants</b>	Pursuing sustainable funding is a critical TDM program strategy. With a sustainable funding mix - one that is not heavily reliant on competitive yearly grants - a regional TDM program will mature to have adequate staff support and broad influence. Centralina will pursue dedicated funding set-asides and low-match grant opportunities to support its regional TDM activities. Centralina will collaborate with potential program funders including North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), regional MPOs/RPOs, USDOT, local governments, etc. to demonstrate the value the TDM program can bring to their shared goals.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	<b>Form a Regional TDM Advisory Committee</b>	Centralina will form and manage a regional TDM Advisory Committee. This will be a working group charged with recruiting the participation of major employers in the TDM program, provide guidance on funding strategies, and overseeing regional branding, messaging, and communications for the program, among other tasks.
Education & Marketing	<b>Develop a Travel Options/ TDM Program Website</b>	Centralina will develop and maintain a new TDM program website that provides a central hub of information where commuters and employers can find detailed information about all travel options in the region (what the CONNECT Beyond plan refers to as the region's "Total Mobility Network"). The website will aggregate information about existing non-SOV travel options from transit providers, ShareTheRideNC, non-profits (e.g. Carolina Thread Trail), local governments, MPOs/RPOs, and NCDOT in one, easy-to-use resource.

STRATEGY CATEGORY	STRATEGY - NAME	STRATEGY - BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Education & Marketing	<b>Promote Carpool Matching</b>	ShareTheRideNC is the best existing statewide resource for facilitating carpool matching and coordinating new vanpools. Centralina will use the education and marketing activities of its TDM program to promote ShareTheRideNC to partners, employers, and commuters through pop-up events, sign-up drives, promotional campaigns/contests, and other communications.
Education & Marketing	<b>Promote Vanpool</b>	ShareTheRideNC is the best existing statewide resource for facilitating carpool matching and coordinating new vanpools. Centralina will use the education and marketing activities of its TDM program to promote ShareTheRideNC to partners, employers, and commuters through pop-up events, sign-up drives, promotional campaigns/contests, and other communications.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	<b>Support Expansion of the Emergency Ride Home Program</b>	The Emergency Ride Home program offered through ShareTheRideNC is currently not available within Centralina's region. Centralina will encourage participation from employers in the Emergency Ride Home program and engage transit providers and other organizations in conversations about supporting (financially and administratively) broad regional coverage, similar to the Triangle area.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	<b>Support the Development of TMAs</b>	A Transportation Management Association (TMA) is a member-controlled, non-profit organization formed to help manage the movement of people and goods in a particular area. TMAs can provide structure and focus for the implementation of broader TDM programs in multi-centric regions. Centralina will target key areas for the development of TMAs and provide education and technical resources to areas/organizations interested in starting a TMA. The multi-centric greater Charlotte region is well-suited to the development of TMAs that focus on district-scaled strategies championed by large employers and existing municipal service districts. (For more information on TMAs see pages 21-22.)
Education & Marketing	<b>Provide Workplace Travel Resources &amp; Planning</b>	Centralina will partner with major employers (e.g. healthcare providers and university campuses) to conduct needs assessments and develop a toolbox of strategies for employers to engage their employees. Centralina will support employers in providing commuter education and provide resources/advice to employers and employees on transportation options available at their worksite.

# TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS (TMA)

A TMA is a member-controlled, non-profit organization formed to help manage the movement of people and goods in a particular area.

TMA's can provide structure and focus for the implementation of broader TDM programs in multi-centric regions. Typical TMA coverage areas often include employment campuses, activity centers, colleges/universities, healthcare districts, airports, and large mixed-use developments.

TMA members may include employers, developers, property managers, building owners, local government representatives, and others. TMA members work together to establish policies, programs, and services to address transportation needs within a specified geographical area. TMAs can be funded through grants, member dues, and/or developers/property managers.

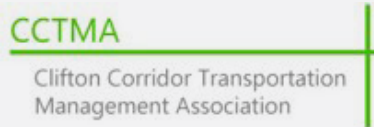
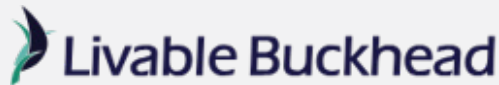
## TYPICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY TMAS INCLUDE:

- District shuttles (first/last mile to transit stations and “park-once” connections within activity centers)
- Workplace travel planning & education resources (events, websites, toolkits)
- Sustainable commute incentives (free transit passes, gas cards for carpoolers, prize drawings, etc.)
- Emergency ride home programs/ reimbursement
- District-level parking management (parking pricing and parking cash-out programs)
- Ride matching services (carpool/ vanpool)

## TDM PROGRAM AND TMA PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS

Georgia Commute Options (GCO) is Atlanta's regional TDM program serving 20 counties in the metro-Atlanta area. GCO has over 600 participating employer/property manager partners who support TDM at their jobsites, many through district-scale TMAs. GCO partners with seven TMAs:

- Airport Employee Ride Options
- Atlantic Station Access Program
- Clifton Corridor TMA
- Livable Buckhead
- Midtown Transportation
- Perimeter Connects
- Atlanta Downtown TMA



GCO and TMAs have different roles to assist in furthering the TDM program:

<b>GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS (REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM)</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (DISTRICT-SCALED IMPLEMENTATION)</b>
Umbrella organization; regional convener and connector	Implementor/provider of localized services and resources
Manages federal grants for program funding (e.g. Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ))	Membership fees fund the local match for federal grant funds.
Provides a flexible TDM evaluation framework based on: Awareness, Influence, Participation, and Impact.	Customizes performance goals based on local conditions and unique strategies.

# 04 PERFORMANCE METRICS

## HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS? PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS

Performance metrics allow TDM program staff to evaluate program activities and progress against broader TDM program goals. They also allow program staff to demonstrate the value of TDM programs to potential partners and funders.

NCDOT's TDM grant program includes a scorecard of performance metrics that grant recipients are required to track and report each year. That NCDOT scorecard informed the development of the recommended performance metrics, but it was not the primary driver in identifying recommended metrics, which are included in the tables below.











It is important to note that program staff may need to track and report on additional performance metrics in order to satisfy the requirements of specific grant programs. The metrics recommended in this plan are not presumed to satisfy all potential funding sources and grant requirements. Instead, they are suggested as a smaller, more accessible, set of performance metrics.

The intent of the evaluation process is to identify TDM performance metrics that:

- **Succinctly communicate what the TDM program is about;**
- **Align with the TDM plan goals;**
- **Are easily understood by potential funders and the general public;**
- **Are supported by available data; and**
- **Can be measured/updated on an annual basis.**

### TRIANGLE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FY23 SCORECARD

#### IMPACTS OF TDM IN FY23:

	<b>6 million</b> vehicle trips avoided	That's over <b>104,000 days</b> not spent driving a car	
	<b>3.5 million</b> gallons of gas saved	It would take <b>411 tanker trucks</b> to hold that much gas	
	<b>87 million</b> commute miles reduced	That's roughly <b>30,000 trips</b> from San Francisco to New York	
	<b>33,000</b> alternative transportation users supported	If they all drove alone, their cars would span <b>94 miles</b> bumper-to-bumper	
	<b>68 million</b> pounds of Carbon dioxide (CO2) release prevented	That's the same as <b>6,000 homes</b> not using electricity for a year	

*The Triangle Transportation Choices program publishes an annual scorecard that estimates the impact of that TDM program in the Triangle area (Central Pines Regional Council).*



## MEASURING INPUTS VS. OUTCOMES

Recognizing that the specific “outcomes” of TDM strategies (like Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction, and shift in mode share) are difficult to accurately quantify, the recommended performance metrics also include benchmarks for key “inputs” of the TDM program (like number of key partners, and number of educational events hosted by program staff). It is easier to control and achieve performance metrics related to program inputs, especially in the short term.

As the program matures, it may be possible to measure the most significant outcomes of the TDM program more accurately and consistently. Centralina might deploy survey tools and more sophisticated data analytics that help to describe the impact of the program on transportation behaviors across the region. Those types of performance metrics will likely require more resources, more time, and more data than other types of performance metrics. For that reason, several of the more outcome-focused performance metrics have been recommended as “Future Potential Metrics” for Centralina to consider.



## AN EVOLVING APPROACH FOR MEASURING SUCCESS

As the TDM program changes and matures, the way that Centralina evaluates the program’s success should also change and mature. Program staff may discover that some performance metrics are less useful than originally expected, while other potential metrics may be needed to describe a different program direction. The performance metrics used to measure success should be evaluated and adjusted at least every two years to make sure they are still serving the needs of the program.

The two tables below suggest a possible evolution in the approach for measuring success of Centralina’s regional TDM program. The first table highlights important performance measures that Centralina should use to evaluate success in the early years (years one-two) of the program’s operation. The second table includes performance metrics that Centralina may choose to add in later years (years three+) of the program’s operation if more resources become available for data tracking/analytics, region-wide surveys, and staff support.

Centralina should publish an annual TDM program year-in-review report that documents the program’s activities and progress on performance metrics. The year-in-review report should be used as a key tool for demonstrating the value and impact of the TDM program to key partners, potential funders, and regional decision makers. To a lesser extent, the media and general public may have some interest in the content of a year-in-review report.

# RECOMMENDED TDM PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS

RECOMMENDED METRIC	DATA AVAILABILITY
	DATA
<b>1. FUNDING SOURCES</b>	Calculated total - Percentage of grant funds vs. dedicated funds
<b>2. DEDICATED STAFF SUPPORT</b>	Calculated total - Number of FTEs dedicated to the program
<b>3. PROGRAM COST-EFFECTIVENESS</b>	Overall expenditures divided by number of program participants
<b>4. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES REACH</b>	Estimate of the number of people taking advantage of some sort of financial incentive for utilizing non-SOV modes – Calculated total from Transit Service Providers (TSP) programs (Discounted transit passes) + employer/TMA programs (parking cashout, bikeshare subsidy, free transit passes, guaranteed ride home, etc.)
<b>5. COMMUTE MODE SHARE</b>	Number or % of commute trips by mode of transportation
<b>6. EQUITY POPULATIONS REACH</b>	Number or % of ShareTheRideNC users located in areas with high NCDOT Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) rating; and/or Number or % of partner organizations working in areas with high NCDOT Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) rating <i>(NOTE – could also benchmark to NCDOT Environmental Justice Index instead of TDI)</i>
<b>7. PROGRAM EVENTS REACH</b>	Number of TDM events held annually; Total events in each county; Attendance; Level of Engagement at events
<b>8. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS REACH</b>	Website & Social Media Traffic - Total Page Views, New Visitors/Users, Average Session Duration, Total Followers/Impressions
<b>9. PARTNERSHIPS REACH</b>	Number of organizations involved as key partners OR Number of counties/municipalities with key partners
<b>10. COMMUTERS REACH</b>	Number of commuters represented by partner organizations; Reported totals from partners



	SOURCE/ RESPONSIBILITY FOR UPDATING	PRIMARY TDM GOAL	OTHER RELATED TDM GOALS
	Centralina	<b>Sustainable</b>	Accessible, Known
	Centralina	<b>Sustainable</b>	Accessible, Known
	Centralina	<b>Affordable</b>	Convenient, Sustainable
	Transit Service Providers, Employers, TMA's	<b>Affordable</b>	Accessible, Convenient
	US Census, ShareTheRideNC, Centralina	<b>Accessible</b>	Known, Convenient
	NCDOT, Centralina, ShareTheRideNC	<b>Accessible</b>	Known, Convenient
	Centralina	<b>Known</b>	Accessible, Convenient
	Centralina	<b>Known</b>	Accessible, Convenient
	Centralina	<b>Convenient</b>	Sustainable, Accessible
	Centralina	<b>Convenient</b>	Affordable, Known

# FUTURE PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS TO CONSIDER

POTENTIAL FUTURE METRIC	DATA AVAILABILITY
	DATA
<b>1. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GHG) EMISSIONS REDUCED</b>	Calculated total from household travel survey responses and other sources
<b>2. VMT REDUCED</b>	Calculated total from household travel survey responses and other sources
<b>3. PARTNER AFFORDABILITY</b>	Partner cost per participant
<b>4. HOUSEHOLD COST-EFFECTIVENESS</b>	Proportion of household income spent on transportation
<b>5. TDM ORDINANCE ADOPTION</b>	Number or % of jurisdictions that have integrated TDM requirements into local zoning or regulations. (NOTE - could include parking unbundling requirements)
<b>6. LAND USE INTEGRATION</b>	Number or % of jurisdictions with land use policies/regulations that support mixed-use and transit-oriented development
<b>7. TOTAL SHARETHERIDENC TRIPS</b>	Logged trips (by mode – carpool, vanpool, other logged trips)
<b>8. TOTAL SHARETHERIDENC USERS</b>	Active registered users, New accounts created, Change in total registered users over time
<b>9. NON-SOV SERVICE COVERAGE</b>	Percent of region served by non-SOV modes/services; Land area within half mile of non-SOV access points (bus stops, park and ride, bikeshare stations, greenways) vs. total land area
<b>10. NON-COMMUTE TRIPS BY MODE</b>	Number or % of non-commute trips by mode of transportation

	<i>SOURCE/ RESPONSIBILITY FOR UPDATING</i>	<b>PRIMARY TDM GOAL</b>	<i>OTHER RELATED TDM GOALS</i>
	ShareTheRideNC, Centralina, Replica	<b><i>Sustainable</i></b>	Known, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC, Centralina, Replica	<b><i>Sustainable</i></b>	Known, Convenient
	Centralina, Partner organizations	<b><i>Affordable</i></b>	Accessible, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC, Replica	<b><i>Affordable</i></b>	Accessible, Convenient
	Municipalities, Centralina	<b><i>Accessible</i></b>	Sustainable, Affordable
	Municipalities, Centralina	<b><i>Accessible</i></b>	Sustainable, Known
	ShareTheRideNC	<b><i>Known</i></b>	Accessible, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC	<b><i>Known</i></b>	Sustainable, Convenient
	Centralina, Transit Service Providers, NCDOT	<b><i>Convenient</i></b>	Sustainable, Accessible
	Replica, ShareTheRideNC, Centralina	<b><i>Convenient</i></b>	Known, Accessible

# 05 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

## HOW WILL WE SUPPORT AN ONGOING REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM?

The TDM project team developed program management recommendations after reviewing Centralina's current organizational structure and staff time availability, interviewing Centralina staff, and conducting a review of five peer-region TDM programs. The team reviewed the program structure, funding sources, program costs, number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, and staff roles for the following peer TDM programs.

- **Triangle Transportation Choices** – Triangle Region, NC
- **Regional Travel Options** – Portland, OR
- **Get There ATX** – Austin, TX
- **Go Coast** – Wilmington, NC
- **Georgia Commute Options** – Atlanta, GA

Of these peers, the TDM programs in the Triangle Region, Portland, and Austin best represent the scale of a potential TDM program in the greater Charlotte region. They serve relatively similar population sizes, demographics, and geographic areas. The examples from Wilmington and Atlanta also offer important insights into funding and operating a TDM program.



# ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW TAKEAWAYS

## STAFFING

- TDM programs that operate in regions similar to the greater Charlotte area employ between 1.5 and 4.75 FTEs.
- Primary roles in all five peer programs include TDM program managers, grants administrators, program administrators, and transportation planners, with some programs also employing marketing and communications staff, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or data analysts.
- Centralina's current staff has necessary policy and technical expertise, but they need more bandwidth to support a TDM program. Similarly, current staff has the necessary grant management/accounting expertise to administer the launch of a TDM program. However, with the anticipated number and complexity of the funding streams, and the associated reporting requirements, adding a dedicated grant administrator may be needed as the program grows.

## FUNDING

- The mix of funding for peer programs includes dedicated funds (set asides that are allocated to TDM programs on a year-over-year basis from funding organizations) and other revenue available through competitive grant processes.
- TDM programs that operate in regions similar to the greater Charlotte area receive between \$1.2 million and \$3.4 million in annual funding.
- All five peers receive some amount of federal funding, especially through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and Carbon Reduction (CRP) programs. These funds may be administered through MPOs.
- Some peer programs also receive funding through state DOTs.
- Centralina is a unique region, which includes multiple MPOs and an RPO. This can impact the way requests for funding are made. However, support has already been received from NCDOT to assist with the exploratory TDM efforts taken to date.
- Match requirements vary based on the grant and the funder. NCDOT's TDM grant program requires a 50/50 match. Most federal programs have 80/20 or 90/10 match requirements. It is difficult for Centralina to find cash to meet match requirements. It will be critical for Centralina to find low-match funding to support their early TDM program operations.
- Some funding sources have limitations that can be restrictive for supporting TDM strategies like providing direct incentives to commuters/employers. Currently, the only Centralina funds that are accessible without these limitations are membership dues, but these can be difficult to access. Finding more flexible funding options is a priority.



## PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

- All five peer programs have a “host” agency – such as a local government, regional council or MPO – which manages the program and coordinates between TDM program partners.
- All five peer programs partner with local transit service providers to implement program services.
- In Austin and Wilmington, host agencies are partially responsible for administering TDM funds. In the Triangle Region, Portland, and Atlanta, funds are administered by MPOs, state DOTs, and/or regional councils or advisory committees.
- Existing Boards and departments within Centralina are available to help manage the TDM program.
- Centralina is interested in convening a TDM Advisory Committee, which can help to tie together and coordinate between the various boards, working groups and transit providers already working on TDM or TDM-adjacent programs.





# PROGRAM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROGRAM STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Within four years of the program launch, Centralina should hire staff necessary to allocate 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTE) staff to TDM program support.** The 3.5 FTEs should include a program manager, communications and outreach specialist, a grant writer/administrator, and a part-time data or GIS analyst. *(Appendix F includes descriptions of these proposed roles and example job descriptions from case study agencies. Chapter 6 - Implementation Action plan includes more information on the proposed timing and order of these hires.)*
- This recommendation is in line with Centralina staff's goals to add capacity in the next one to three years, and in particular, to hire a communications and outreach expert. This increase in capacity could start with the program manager and the communications expert. As the program grows, the grant administrator and the data/GIS analyst could be brought in. Adding these new employees would help to support current staff by opening bandwidth for TDM. This staffing strategy is similar to Centralina's Clean Fuels Coalition, which currently employs a program director, a planner, and an intern.
- These roles would be similar to positions utilized in peer TDM programs, which cover program management, data and/or GIS analysis, communications, and finances (at a minimum). Having both dedicated staff and part-time staff in these roles has been crucial to the success of peer TDM programs.

*(Also see Appendix F: Recommended Staff Roles & Job Descriptions)*





## PROGRAM FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Dedicated funding set asides will be critical, especially in the early years of the TDM program.** It will be very challenging and inefficient to build a sustainable program based on competitive yearly grant cycles. The program will not be able to achieve its goals and reach the broader region without dedicated funding. Discretionary funds from the MPO's/RPO in the region and NCDOT are the most likely sources of dedicated funding.
- **Funding “cocktails” will be required to align funding to program activities across the region.** The ten-county TDM planning region crosses boundaries of likely funders. This is a key reason why NCDOT and MPO/RPO funds are so critical to achieving the program's desired geographic reach.
- **Low-match funding will be important for supporting Centralina as the host agency for the TDM program.** Centralina should continue to advocate for TDM in the Charlotte region by requesting low-match administrative support funding from NCDOT. NCDOT TDM funds come from state sources, so they may be able to be leveraged as match funds for certain federal programs to further support TDM in Centralina's region.
  - ◆ In some instances, match funds can be made from non-cash or in-kind sources. Calculating the value of the advisory committee's time and efforts is one way to capture some of these dollars. Another is to document the value of any donated or discounted materials, supplies and services provided on behalf of the program.
- **Centralina should seek out further federal funding, based on the success of peer programs in receiving federal grants for TDM.** In addition to their application for CRTPO funding, Centralina should seek out Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding. Peer programs have been successful in winning these federal grants. Both Wilmington, North Carolina and Portland, Oregon have received STBG funding with an 80/20 match requirement, while Austin has received CRP funding, also with an 80/20 match requirement. Depending on the strategies deployed, other grants may be an opportunity, such as [Safe Routes to School funding](#), which has been used to support TDM in Portland, OR. The Association for Commuter Transportation also published [a list of potential grants](#) for TDM available through the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- **Seek funding from regional employers and/or community foundations who may also be willing to provide support for the program launch or specific pilot projects.**



## TDM ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Centralina should form and manage a regional TDM Advisory Committee.** The purpose of TDM Advisory Committee is to influence the broad TDM goals of the region, coordinate program activities with other regional boards/organizations, and help demonstrate the value of TDM for supporting transportation equity, economic prosperity, public health, and livable communities.
- As with other Centralina programs, Centralina’s Board of Delegates and Centralina staff leadership would oversee the TDM program activities and expenditures. The TDM Advisory Committee would play a supporting role to the Board of Delegates and Centralina staff.

- The TDM Advisory Committee should be a working group charged with:



**Collaborating with other regional boards/working groups (like the CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group) to coordinate regional TDM activities;**



**Convening regional stakeholders, similar to Centralina’s Clean Fuels Coalition’s standing board meetings, to promote a common regional TDM vision;**



**Using its membership and industry relationships to facilitate the participation of major employers and the development of TMA’s;**



**Advising staff on the policy direction, overall focus, and messaging for the TDM program; and**



**Encouraging an equity lens when developing new TDM programs and policies.**

- The TDM Advisory Committee would be strategic in purpose, while being able to provide feedback on operational issues (as needed). The members could include representatives from the MPOs/RPO, transit operators, business community, local municipalities, workforce development specialists, health & human service providers, educational institutions, non-profits, and interested commuters. The membership of this committee could draw from the current TDM Plan/Program Development Steering Committee.
- The TDM Advisory Committee should adopt bylaws to formalize the structure and composition of the committee and ensure a diverse membership – in terms of geographic and public/private representation. Peer TDM programs have utilized similar advisory committees to create long- and short-term plans for TDM programs, to facilitate stakeholder buy-in on TDM projects, to help implement and monitor TDM strategies and performance measures, and ensure the goals and objectives of TDM programs, policies, and strategic plans are aligned with the other regional goals.



## LEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Approach all services as opt-in to insulate Centralina from liability.** For example, Centralina may issue disclaimers about inherent risks of TDM programs and may require program participants to sign waivers. Centralina may not necessarily need to hire a dedicated TDM attorney but should consult with an attorney on strategies that help Centralina avoid liability.
- **Provide any direct services through “Purchased Transportation” agreements.** By not directly operating the service, Centralina can be indemnified and held harmless, so long as this is written in applicable contracts/agreements with service providers. Centralina may contract TDM services directly (e.g., a vanpool operator), or can provide funding to transit agencies to contract companies, which can provide further insulation from liability.
- **Remain transparent with TDM participants regarding physical risk, as well as the use of their personal information.** Provide public notice of the inherent risk from all transportation-related activities (i.e., taking transit, riding bike, carpool, etc.), and provide suggested tips for safe travel. When implementing any TDM program, disclose what personal information will be collected and how it will be used.
- **Consult an attorney who can help Centralina understand the potential need to:**
  - ◇ Alter by-laws or implement additional financial controls.
  - ◇ Address potential authority or jurisdiction issues with implementing TDM.
  - ◇ Operate the TDM program as a non-profit to insulate Centralina from legal risk.









# 06 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

## WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR PROGRAM LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENTATION?

Transportation Demand Management programs play an important role in addressing transportation challenges, promoting sustainable mobility, and creating more efficient, equitable, and environmentally conscious transportation systems.

There are a variety of different roles that TDM programs can play in supporting non-SOV travel, including:

1. **Coordinator/Convener**
2. **Marketer/Educator**
3. **Researcher/Policy Developer/Technical Assistance Provider**
4. **Funder/Grant Provider**
5. **Direct Services Provider**

Centralina staff, the Project Management Team, the Steering Committee, and other stakeholders offered thoughtful insight on the type of role that a TDM program, hosted by Centralina, should play within our region.



## WHAT WE HEARD FROM PMT, STEERING COMMITTEE, AND STAKEHOLDERS:

In the first years after program launch Centralina should lean into the regional coordinator/convener role that it already plays. This is a clear organizational strength that Centralina should leverage to advance the TDM program. Focus on Marketer/Educator roles early on will also enable Centralina to have influence in TDM-related efforts of its partners.

**THERE IS STRONG INTEREST IN A COORDINATED REGIONAL STRATEGY AROUND TDM EFFORTS.**

Centralina should start by focusing on a small number of achievable strategies and goals. If Centralina staff try to pursue too many implementation actions at that outset, it may dilute the messaging and effectiveness of the program.

**As Centralina's TDM program matures, staff should consider broadening efforts to include additional roles, like being a Research/Policy Development/Technical Assistance leader for the region.**

In the long-term, and with sufficient funding and staff capacity, Centralina's TDM program should consider expanding its efforts into the roles of Funder/Grant Provider and Indirect/Direct Services Provider.



Based on feedback from project partners, the program management recommendations, the identified high priority TDM strategies, and benchmarking against peer programs, the project team developed the following action plan for implementation of a TDM Program in Centralina's region. Action items are listed by program year to provide staff clear steps for launching and implementing a TDM Program

## PROGRAM LAUNCH AND TRANSITION YEAR (FISCAL YEAR 2025)

**Focus: Leverage existing staff resources to launch the program and secure additional funding.**

### FIND A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM FUNDING "COCKTAIL"

As Centralina launches the program with existing staff resources, its primary goal should be securing funding in future fiscal years to support a transition toward hiring a full-time TDM program manager. Centralina will receive fiscal year 2025 funding for TDM activities through CRTPO's Discretionary Projects Program. This will be the first available funding to support the TDM program's early efforts. (See "Use pilot projects to deploy and demonstrate high priority TDM Strategies" below.) Additional sources of funding will be necessary for the TDM program to hire full-time staff and expand its footprint beyond this CRTPO pilot project.

Finding additional, sustainable program funding will require securing funds from multiple sources.

**State Funding:** Ideally, NCDOT's TDM grant funds would play a significant role. Centralina's ability to come up with local grant match funding is limited, with available funding already spoken for by other grant match and staff commitments. Centralina will have to calibrate future NCDOT funding applications to their ability to meet the state's current 50/50 match requirement. (See "Secure low-match funding from NCDOT" below.)

**TPO Funding:** Discretionary funds from the MPOs/RPO in the region may be the most likely conduits for regular funding set asides. As is the case for other TDM programs across the country, funding from these transportation planning organizations will likely be an important part of establishing sustainable TDM program funding.

**Federal Grants:** Federal grant funds (e.g. Climate Pollution Reduction Grants) will likely play an important role as well.

In this transition year, Centralina staff should continue their efforts to secure dedicated, low-match funding with a focus on these three sources. Centralina staff should expect grant-writing and conversations/presentations with TPO staff and boards to be a significant part of the workload in this initial transition year of the TDM program.



## PRESENT THE TDM PLAN TO KEY PARTNERS

The first audience for the TDM program will be key organizational partners that may be involved as future funders and implementers of the CONNECT Centralina TDM Program. Staff should schedule presentations to Centralina’s Board of Delegates; the CATS Metropolitan Transit Commission; and the boards of the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Gaston Cleveland Lincoln MPO, the Cabarrus Rowan MPO, and the Rocky River RPO. The purpose of these presentations should be to:

- Introduce these partners to the TDM plan and the CONNECT Centralina program;
- Clarify the alignment of the TDM plan and program with the broader CONNECT Beyond implementation effort;
- Discuss the planned activities for the first several years of the CONNECT Centralina TDM program and how those activities will support the work of those partners; and
- Highlight the need for sustainable program funding from key partners.

This series of partner presentations can serve as a precursor to the yearlong traveling TDM education program to follow in the next year of the CONNECT Centralina program implementation.

## USE PILOT PROJECTS TO DEPLOY AND DEMONSTRATE HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

Because Centralina’s regional TDM program will serve such a large geographic area, pilot programs should be developed to determine the best methods for implementing TDM strategies. Using the identified “TDM Hot Spots” can help focus pilot project efforts. These pilot programs should dedicate efforts towards testing a small number of TDM strategies in different ways and with different audiences.

For example, Centralina will receive fiscal year 2025 funding for TDM activities through CRTPO’s Discretionary Projects Program. This is the first available funding to support TDM program implementation. It will focus the TDM program’s early efforts on identifying pilot projects through key partners, ideally located within previously identified “TDM Hot Spots.” Partners will be engaged in the development of TDM toolkits that could be use to engage their employees, and ultimately, rolled out to the broader region.

## LAUNCH THE TDM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The TDM Advisory Committee will be staff’s first resource for help in implementing the high priority TDM strategies. Advisory Committee members can assist in collaborating with other regional boards/ working groups and amplifying the message of the TDM program within their own organizations. Advisory Committee members can also use their relationships to recruit the participation of major employers. Establishing a committed TDM Advisory Committee with diverse representation will help give staff the support necessary for the TDM program to be successful and effective.

# YEAR ONE (FISCAL YEAR 2026)

**Focus: Build awareness of the TDM program and establish key partners.**

## HIRE A FULL-TIME TDM PROGRAM MANAGER

Dedicated staff capacity is necessary for the TDM program to have the desired reach and impact. This starts with hiring a full-time TDM program manager. *If funds become available sooner, this should be an earlier action.* Centralina should expect that early work for the TDM program manager will be focused on 1) seeking funding from grants and potential partners, and 2) implementing the high priority TDM strategies. As the program matures, and more dedicated staff are hired to support grant writing and revenue growth, the TDM program manager responsibilities can shift toward expanding the reach of the TDM program.

## SECURE LOW-MATCH FUNDING FROM NCDOT

Centralina staff should continue to collaborate with NCDOT on the future availability of low-match funding to support the administration of the TDM program, ideally as early as fiscal year 2026.

## HOST A YEARLONG TRAVELING TDM EDUCATION PROGRAM

A coordinated, regional, TDM education and marketing effort is one of the most important actions that Centralina can take in the program's early years. Centralina should host a program event in all ten counties. The identified "TDM Hot Spots" can provide some focus for targeting launch events throughout the region.

The TDM program should develop a simple narrative and messaging that can be easily shared with potential partners. Simple, quick, and repeated messaging will help with program recognition, allow community members and leaders to become quickly informed, and help the media and other marketing efforts remain consistent.

A calendar of events should be targeted toward a variety of audiences, and could include pop-up events at existing festivals, briefings to elected officials, presentations at MPO/RPO board meetings and technical coordinating committee meetings, "lunch-and-learn" presentations for local planners and decision-makers, and engagement drives at large worksites/campuses.





## DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND ESTABLISH TEN “KEY PARTNERS”

The first year should be about developing partners to help amplify the message of the TDM program and reach targeted audiences with the TDM strategies. Staff should cultivate a mix of partners from the private and public sector, and focus partner recruitment efforts within the identified “TDM Hot Spots.”

It will be important to define exactly what it means to be a “partner” to the TDM program. Over the first year, staff should develop and refine an internal facing partnership structure based on varying levels of involvement and effort in advancing TDM. An organization could be multiple “partner” types. For example:

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**Education Partner:** Partner provides opportunities for Centralina staff to distribute educational resources and promote non-SOV travel options to partner’s audiences/ employees.

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**Marketing Partner:** Partner actively promotes non-SOV travel to their own audiences/ employees.

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**Incentive Partner:** Partner provides direct incentives for non-SOV travel options to their own audiences/employees.

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**Funding Partner:** Partner provides significant funding to Centralina’s TDM program or operates a third-party non-SOV transportation service.

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Centralina should establish a goal to cultivate partnerships with 20 organizations/agencies. Ten of those should be key partners at higher levels of participation.



## MODEL TDM STRATEGIES IN YOUR OWN WORKPLACE POLICIES/PRACTICES

Employer-based TDM implementation will be an important growth area for the TDM program as it matures. Centralina should start by implementing TDM policies within their own workplace. This will help staff and Centralina leadership to better understand the implications of the employer-based TDM strategies that they'll be encouraging others to adopt.

Specific workplace policies/practices that Centralina should consider adopting include:

- A parking cash-out program,
- A guaranteed ride home program for non-SOV commuters,
- A commuter training program,
- Direct incentives like transit passes, bike share memberships, access to physical bicycle maps, and bicycle maintenance reimbursement, and
- Telework/flexwork policies.

Centralina should reassess how internal TDM policies/practices are working every year to better understand how they might hone strategies for their own employees and for employers/employees across the region. This will help in the development of technical guidance that the TDM program offers to other employers. It will also allow TDM program staff to speak from a place of authority and internal innovation.

## KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR POTENTIAL TMA “EARLY ADOPTERS”

Our multi-centric region lends itself well to the creation of TMAs that can help develop and implement district-scaled TDM strategies. A TMA is a membership organization formed to provide a forum for employers, developers, building owners, local government representatives, and others to work together to collectively establish policies, programs, and services to address local transportation needs within a specified geographical area. TDM programs have successfully established TMAs by identifying a geographic area that can benefit from a shared mission and service, through a membership structure that is tailored to meet the specific needs of people living or working that geographical area. TMAs are typically located in areas where there are large concentrations of employers or business parks and can also be corridor specific.

As staff host launch events and recruit partners over the program's first year, they should keep in the mind the future goal of establishing TMAs in the region. The first year of the program is an opportunity to identify potential employers, municipal service districts, non-profits, campuses, etc. that may have an interest in helping organize a TMA. In particular, staff should pay attention to places like South Park, University Research Park, Ballantyne, Charlotte Douglas International Airport, North Mecklenburg/Lake Norman towns, and areas along I-77 and I-85. The identified “TDM Hot Spots” should help guide the identification of potential TMA candidates as well. At the end of the first program year, staff should develop a strategy for convening organizations that may have interest in organizing TMAs. That strategy should become a part of the following program year action items.

## REFINE YOUR TDM TOOLBOX

This regional TDM plan describes a variety of “tools” (TDM strategies, communications resources, performance metrics) that staff will use to launch and implement the TDM program. The first year of Centralina’s TDM program should be viewed as an opportunity for staff to learn, test, and refine those tools.

Centralina’s successful grant application with CRTPO will give staff an opportunity to test and refine the recommendations of this plan through a pilot project, which will inform the TDM program approach in subsequent years. Centralina staff should use the foundational actions proposed within the CRTPO pilot project:

- Test their communications and outreach approach to potential partners, especially major employers; and
- Confirm the types of TDM strategies that are most attractive/effective to employers in the region.

At the conclusion of the year, staff should plan to complete a comprehensive program evaluation. This should include documenting and evaluating:

**TDM Strategies:** Did the TDM strategies deployed achieve program goals and influence travel behaviors?

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**Communications Tools:** Did the program’s marketing and outreach activities drive engagement, attract partners, reach a diverse regional audience, and compel action?

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**Performance Metrics:** Are the performance metrics working as intended to help measure success and demonstrate the value of the program?

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**Program Management:** Do program staff have the capacity, funding, and guidance to effectively manage an ongoing TDM program.

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This exercise should start as an internal evaluation completed by program staff and Centralina leadership. It should conclude with a session with the TDM Advisory Committee to get useful feedback from external partners.





# YEAR TWO (FISCAL YEAR 2027)

**Focus: Build internal capacity and amplify your message.**

## LAUNCH AN INTEGRATED TRAVEL OPTIONS WEBSITE

The TDM program should develop a regional travel options website as a primary communication tool within the early years after the program launch. The website should be a mobile-friendly, one-stop-shop that aggregates the variety of transportation options and programs available throughout the region. The website should promote the Share the Ride NC program and link to non-SOV travel providers and resources. *If funds and/or staff capacity become available to support this sooner, this should be an earlier action.*

## SUPPORT THE RESEARCH AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TMAS

After identifying ideal candidates for the development of TMAs in Year One, Centralina should focus on supporting the development of TMAs in Year Two. This can start by convening the organizations most likely to be the “early adopters” in creating and leading a TMA. Staff should profile successful TMAs in other regions to understand how they started, how they’re governed, and what TDM strategies they deploy. There are several TMAs partnered with the [Georgia Commute Options](#) program in the Atlanta metro that could provide instructive examples for this. Centralina staff should provide technical guidance as necessary to help external organizations organize and launch TMAs following that model.





## HIRE A FULL-TIME TDM COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Reaching a broad and diverse audience of TDM program partners and participants requires specific communications expertise. Hiring a full-time TDM communications & outreach specialist will amplify program engagement and increase the TDM program manager's bandwidth to pursue additional TDM strategies and funding sources. *If funds become available sooner, this should be an earlier action.*

## HONE YOUR MESSAGE

Staff should build on lessons learned from the first program year, and the program evaluation completed after Year One, to hone the program's messaging, communication, and partner outreach. Program staff should update their communications toolkit to highlight success stories from Year One. Performance metrics and success stories from Year One can help demonstrate the value of the program to additional partners and funders.

## GO BACK OUT TO THE REGION

Consistent and ongoing regional engagement should be a hallmark of Centralina's regional TDM program. As a follow up to the Year One traveling TDM education series, and after taking time to hone/refine the program's message and communications, staff should go back out to the region to with another series of education and outreach events. The focus should be on demonstrating the value that the program provided in its first year, highlighting the partnerships that were cultivated, and encouraging others to participate.

## INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS

Building on the partnership structure and program partners established in Year One, staff should increase participation across the region. Centralina should establish a goal to cultivate at least one program partner within each of the ten participating counties. This could be accomplished through an expansion of the TDM pilot program funded through a CRTPO discretionary grant.



# YEAR THREE (FISCAL YEAR 2028)

**Focus: Target worksites and broaden external partnerships.**

## BROADEN TDM STRATEGIES

With the benefit of established staff and communications resources, Centralina staff should start exploring additional TDM strategies from the TDM Strategies Menu. Toward the end of program Year Three, staff should look at deploying strategies in the “Technical Assistance” and “Incentives & Facilitation” categories. This could include strategies like:

- Pass-through grants to third party transportation/TDM service providers;
- Development of model ordinance language (parking unbundling ordinance; TDM ordinance);
- Development/training on model street design guidance (complete streets policies) that recommend reallocation of existing roadway space to support transportation equity; or
- Develop a direct incentives initiative for non-SOV travelers through the Share The Ride NC platform or the program website.

Broadening the program to provide pass through grants will be an important part of the evolution of the current mechanisms for TDM deployment in the region (i.e. NCDOT grants to individual TDM providers) to a more coordinated approach through Centralina’s TDM program.

As part of the annual program evaluation at the end of program Year Three, staff should document the strategies deployed to date and develop a strategy for deploying additional TDM strategies that will expand the reach and impact of the program.

## FOCUS ON WORKSITE/ EMPLOYER-DRIVEN STRATEGIES

TDM programs work best when major employers/worksites are actively engaged in promoting/encouraging non-SOV travel among their employees. Program staff should focus first on large employers and worksites, taking advantage of resources like the Charlotte Business Journal’s list of largest companies/employers.

In 2027 our region will be seven years removed from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and five-years removed from a return-to-work posture for most places of employment. We’ll have more understanding for how Covid-19 has permanently shifted employer/employee expectations and travel behaviors. With the benefit of that knowledge, it will be possible to craft more precise and informed employer-based TDM strategies – strategies that balance the ongoing reality and quality-of-life benefits of telework/work-from-home schedules and the economic and innovation benefits that come from in-person collaboration and increasing office space occupancy across the region.

Using their experience from implementing workplace TDM policies/practices within Centralina, program staff should consider encouraging employers to adopt key strategies like:

- A parking cash-out program,
- A guaranteed ride home program for non-SOV commuters,
- A commuter training program,
- Direct incentives like transit passes, bike share memberships, and bicycle maintenance reimbursement, and
- Telework/flexwork policies.



## DIVERSIFY YOUR MIX OF PARTNERS/PARTICIPANTS

Program staff should assess the TDM program's partners and participants to figure out what groups/populations/audiences are missing. Early outreach to partners should be guided by the identified "TDM Hot Spots." As the program matures staff should verify that Hot-Spot-based outreach is achieving the desired breadth of geographic participation and an appropriate diversity of partner organizations (public/private, various industry sectors, etc.). Similarly, staff should verify that individual participants in the TDM program (e.g., Share the Ride NC users and/or recipients of any direct incentives) reflect the diversity of the region. If any gaps are identified in current program partners or participants, staff should begin targeting recruitment and outreach efforts to fill those gaps.

## START A REGIONAL RECOGNITION/AWARDS PROGRAM

Staff should consider creating an awards program to recognize and celebrate program partners and individual program participants who are the greatest champions for TDM efforts in the region. This could be integrated with an existing awards program like [Centralina's Region of Excellence Awards](#). Or, it could become part of a larger, statewide recognition of TDM efforts through the [NCDOT Mobi Awards](#), [Sustain Charlotte Awards](#), [CommuteFriendly NC](#), [BikeWalkNC](#), or something similar. Celebrating the people and organizations who advance TDM in the region, or across the state, can become a regular part of the program's communications calendar and documenting the program's impact.



# YEARS FOUR+ (FISCAL YEAR 2029+)

**Focus: Expand the program to reach more people and places.**

## HIRE ADDITIONAL TDM SUPPORT STAFF

Reaching more people and places will require more dedicated staff capacity. The recommended staffing goal for the TDM program is to achieve 3.5 dedicated FTEs within four years of program launch. Centralina should hire grant writing/administration support and planning/GIS support to hit that target and expand the program's capacity. *If funds become available sooner, this should be an earlier action.*

## TRAIN TDM AMBASSADORS

Marketing and education efforts can be enhanced by equipping others to help spread the word. Centralina staff should develop a TDM Ambassador program to train residents across the region to serve as ambassadors for people who might want to try non-SOV commutes. TDM Ambassadors can be embedded with major employers/worksites or TMAs to support things like Commuter Training Programs. TDM Ambassadors can also be an effective resource for supporting vulnerable populations. Ambassadors can be people who are already trusted and active within minority communities, senior centers, and youth-oriented programs.



## EXPLORE PROVIDER APP INTEGRATION (MAAS)

Building on the integration of information in the travel options website, Centralina should explore different levels of potential integration for transportation service providers throughout the region. By program Year Four (2028), conversations around MaaS are likely to have advanced significantly, globally and within Centralina's region. A useful example to track will be the Concept grant project that Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is pursuing over the next two years to integrate surrounding transit providers into the CATS mobile app.

Leveraging the partnerships and experiences developed over the early years of the program, the regional TDM program should convene transportation providers to help identify possibilities for integrating various travel options/service providers into a single digital platform. Ideally users would be able to plan, book, and pay for a variety of travel options/service providers in one app or website. Progress may come slowly, but provider app integration offers an opportunity to significantly enhance the non-SOV travel experience and support TDM. Centralina's regional TDM program will be uniquely positioned within the region to lead those efforts.

## ACKNOWLEDGE OUR BI-STATE TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS

Centralina's region is a bi-state region with bi-state travel patterns. As the program matures, coordinating with partners across the state line on TDM activities should be a goal. Staff should pursue funding and partnerships that support TDM coordination across the stateline.



## SERVE AS A STATEWIDE MODEL

Program staff should seek out partnerships with organizations like BikeWalk NC, American Planning Association North Carolina, and Association for Commuter Transportation to help lead conversations around TDM on a statewide scale. This may include education and outreach to NCDOT and statewide policymakers. There are a wide variety of TDM strategies that would require state legislation to advance. Broadening North Carolina’s toolkit of TDM strategies will be dependent upon demonstrating the success of regional TDM programs in supporting transportation network efficiency, economic prosperity, and sustainability/ climate goals.

The ultimate goal for Centralina’s regional TDM program should be to serve as a model, within NC and beyond, for effective transportation demand management. As NCDOT’s Integrated Mobility Division pursues TDM implementation across the state, the development, launch, and maturation of Centralina’s TDM program should be an example that is used to demonstrate success.







**CENTRALINA**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



charlotte regional **transportation** planning organization

GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN



Metropolitan Planning Organization



Integrated **Mobility** Division

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION





# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 7**

## Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>		<b>Regular:</b>	X
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Kelly Weston	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	20 minutes			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	Kelly Weston	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-348-2728			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:kweston@centralina.org">kweston@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Christina Danis	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-688-6502			
		<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:cdanis@centralina.org">cdanis@centralina.org</a>			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	Community Economic Development	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	Christina Danis			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda:</b> In Focus Discussion: Regional Digital Inclusion						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
<p>The Board will receive an overview of Centralina’s digital inclusion planning project, including a framework for a regional approach to addressing the digital divide.</p>						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
<p>Within each county across our region, there are communities lacking consistent internet access. This digital divide is a barrier to individuals, preventing them from fully participating in their communities.</p> <p>Centralina recently received funding from the Institute for Emerging Issues at NC State University to lead a digital inclusion planning initiative to help bridge the digital divide in our region. This project is part of a statewide effort to ensure every county in North Carolina has a local-level digital inclusion plan. We are working with county governments to help them identify their community’s broadband and technology needs and develop digital inclusion strategies to eliminate the barriers to internet access. The goal of this initiative is to not only increase access to the internet, but also to support the development of skills necessary to access it to its fullest potential.</p> <p>Through a collaborative planning process, Centralina has developed a regional framework for advancing digital inclusion, along with recommended strategies to help counties within our region close the digital divide. This fall, we will invite our member governments to review and provide feedback on a draft of the framework document. While this framework is a planning document and does not provide for obtaining hardware devices, it does offer recommendations to help communities achieve their hardware goals. In the spring of 2025, we will finalize this document and launch an online digital resources tool for stakeholders across the region.</p>						
<b>Requested Action / Recommendation:</b>						
Motion to identify local partners to participate in the digital inclusion framework document development.						
<b>Time Sensitivity:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	None.					
<b>Budget Impact:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	None.					
<b>Attachments:</b> <i>(none or list)</i>	Digital Inclusion in the Centralina Region					



# Digital Inclusion in the Centralina Region

Centralina Regional Council is helping to advance digital inclusion and equity across our region by assisting county governments in identifying their community's unique broadband and technology needs and developing strategies to meet those needs through existing assets, partnerships and new resources. The goal of this initiative is to not only increase access to the internet, but also to support the development of skills necessary to access it to its fullest potential through the development of a Regional Digital Inclusion Framework and County-Specific Digital Inclusion Plans.

## WHY IT MATTERS

- 📍 Increased participation in the digital economy
- 📍 Enhanced overall economic vitality and quality of life
- 📍 Bolstered connections to valuable resources, services and learning opportunities
- 📍 Strengthened preparedness for future digital federal and state grant funding
- 📍 Refined public safety warning awareness and community resilience planning
- 📍 Reinforced collaboration and partnerships with digital stakeholders across the region and state

## CENTRALINA REGION DIGITAL INCLUSION ELEMENTS



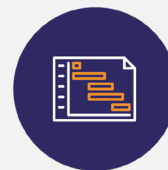
### **Regional Digital Inclusion Framework:**

Our regional framework assesses what broadband digital access, literacy resources and tools our region currently has, does not have or has insufficiently to meet community needs.



### **County-Specific Plans:**

County's Digital Inclusion Plans serve as a roadmap for implementation strategies to ensure digital access for all residents. These strategies guide gap-closing opportunities.



### **Digital Resources Webpage:**

The Digital Resources Webpage serves as a resource hub for digital stakeholders across the region. The Centralina Regional Framework Plan and County Plans will reside here.



### **Collaboration with Digital Leaders:**

The goal is to collaborate with existing leaders in the digital inclusion and equity space to ensure sustainable connections and solutions.

## DIGITAL AWARDS BY COUNTY

<b>Anson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital Champions Grant – Southwestern NC Planning EDC; The Caraway Foundation (awarded); and South Piedmont Community College Foundation (awarded)</li> <li>Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) Grant – Spectrum</li> </ul>
<b>Cabarrus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Grant – Windstream</li> <li>GREAT Grant – Spectrum</li> <li>Digital Champions Grant- The Center for Digital Equity (awarded)</li> </ul>
<b>Gaston</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GREAT Grant – Spectrum</li> <li>Digital Champions Grant- The Center for Digital Equity (awarded) and TechWorks Gaston (awarded)</li> </ul>
<b>Iredell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GREAT Grant – Zirrus</li> </ul>
<b>Lincoln</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GREAT Grant – Spectrum</li> </ul>
<b>Mecklenburg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital Champions Grant – Lions Services Inc; The Center for Digital Equity (awarded); Camino Community Development Corporation (awarded); Caterpillar Ministries (awarded); and City Startup Laps Inc. (awarded)</li> </ul>
<b>Rowan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GREAT Grant – Spectrum</li> </ul>
<b>Stanly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAB Grant – AT&amp;T and Windstream</li> <li>GREAT Grant – Windstream</li> <li>Digital Champions Grant – Stanly County (awarded)</li> </ul>
<b>Union</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAB Grant – Windstream</li> <li>Digital Champions Grant – Southwestern NC Planning EDC; South Piedmont Community College Foundation (awarded); and Center for Digital Equity (awarded)</li> <li>GREAT Grant – Spectrum</li> </ul>

Source: <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/dashboards/awards-county>

## Centralina Digital Inclusion Framework Timeline



**STAY TUNED** for potential federal grant opportunities!

## MORE INFORMATION?

Contact Anna Lu Wilson at 704-385-4790 or [alwilson@centralina.org](mailto:alwilson@centralina.org) OR visit our Digital Inclusion Webpage at [www.centralina.org/digital/](http://www.centralina.org/digital/)





# **CENTRALINA**

## **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Item 8**

## Board Agenda Item Cover Sheet

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	September 11, 2024	<b>Agenda Item Type:</b>	<b>Consent:</b>		<b>Regular:</b>	X
<b>Submitting Person:</b>	Geraldine Gardner	<b>Presentation Time:</b>	10 minutes			
<b>Presenter at Meeting:</b>	Geraldine Gardner	<b>Phone Number:</b>	704-351-7130			
		<b>Email:</b>	ggardner@centralina.org			
<b>Alternate Contact:</b>	Kelly Weston	<b>Phone Number:</b>				
		<b>Email:</b>	kweston@centralina.org			
<b>Submitting Department:</b>	Executive	<b>Department Head Approval:</b>	G.Gardner			
<b>Title of documents as shown in the Agenda: Process Overview: Setting Priorities for State and Federal Engagement</b>						
<b>Description of Agenda Item:</b> <i>(This wording will be used to summarize the item on the agenda cover page.)</i>						
The Executive Director will provide an overview of the forthcoming process to establish priorities for Centralina's Raleigh Relations and Federal Relations agendas.						
<b>Background &amp; Basis of Recommendations:</b>						
<p>Centralina has pursued a robust bi-partisan state and federal engagement strategy for the past several fiscal years. The upcoming elections will bring in new elected officials and changes in leadership of many state and federal offices. To guide this transition, the Executive Board will lead the development of priorities for 2025 state and federal legislative sessions and relationship building activities.</p> <p>Centralina has a strong delegation in the North Carolina General Assembly and US Congress with 24% of State House members, 24% of State Senate members and 35% of the US House of Representatives from our region. In the upcoming election, there is the potential for 15 new State and Federal representatives, in addition to changes at state and federal Executive level. This transition is an opportunity to build new relationships and introduce our region to new partners. Delegates are asked to participate in an interactive discussion to share their perspectives on regional strengths and challenges. Delegates' inputs will be used by the Executive Board to develop and finalize Centralina's state and federal engagement agendas that guide activities in the NC General Assembly's Long Session and 119<sup>th</sup> US Congress.</p>						
<b>Requested Action / Recommendation:</b>						
Receive as information and provide feedback on the proposed process, timeline						
<b>Time Sensitivity:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	Input from the Board at the September meeting will inform Fall 2024 engagement activities.					
<b>Budget Impact:</b> <i>(none or explain)</i>	None					
<b>Attachments:</b> <i>(none or list)</i>	State and federal candidate listing and district maps for 2024 elections					

# 2024 Candidates

**District 6:** Addison McDowell (Unopposed)

**District 8:** Justin Dues (D), Mark Harris (R),

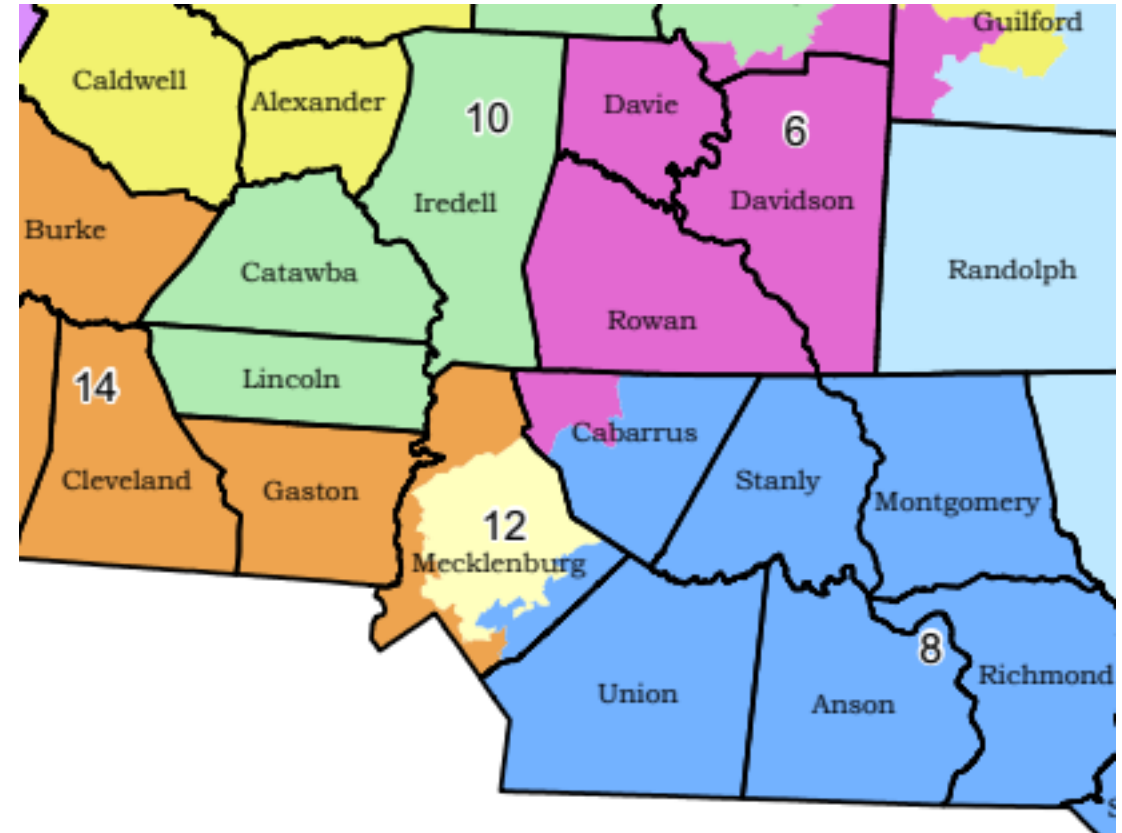
**District 10:** Ralph Scott Jr. (D), Pat Harrigan (R), Steven Feldman (Libertarian)

**District 12:** Alma Adams (I - D), Addul Ali (R)

**District 14:** Pamela Genant (D), Timothy K. Moore (R)

# Centralina Congressional Districts

5 House Members: 1 incumbent; 4 open contests

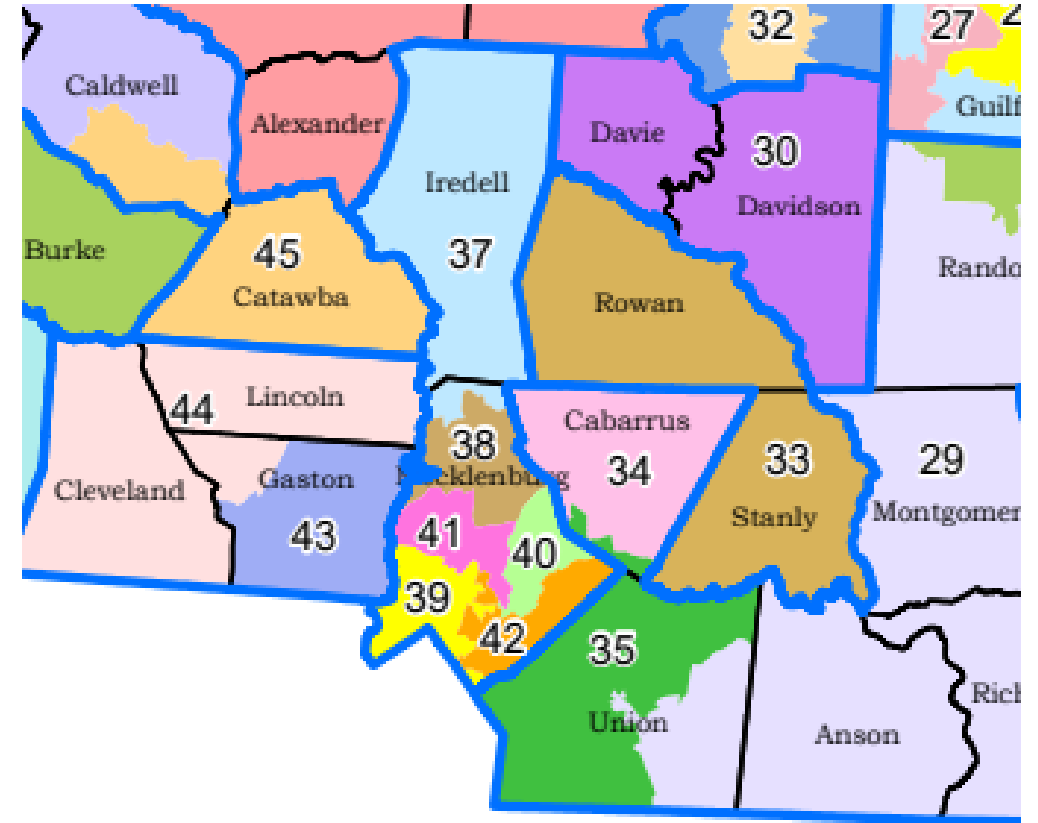


## 2024 Candidates

- 44 - T. Goode (D), **Ted Alexander (i-R)**
- 43 - Corey Creech (D), **Brad Overcash (i-R)**
- 42 - Woodson Bradley (D), Stacie McGinn (R)
- 41 - **Caleb Theodros (i-D) unopposed**
- 40 - **Joyce Waddell (i-D) unopposed**
- 39 - **DeAndrea Salvador (i-D) unopposed**
- 38 - **Mujtaba Mohammed (i-D) unopposed**
- 37 - Kate Compton Barr (D), **Vickie Sawyer (i-R)**
- 35 - Robin Mann (D), **Todd Johnson (i-R)**
- 34 - Kim Sexton-Lewter (D), **Paul Newton (i-R)**,  
Thomas B. Hill (Libertarian Party)
- 33 - Tangelia Morgan (D), **Carl Ford (i-R)**
- 29 - Kevin Clark (D), **Dave Craven (i-R)**

## Centralina State Senate Districts

12 Senators: 11 incumbents; 1 open contest

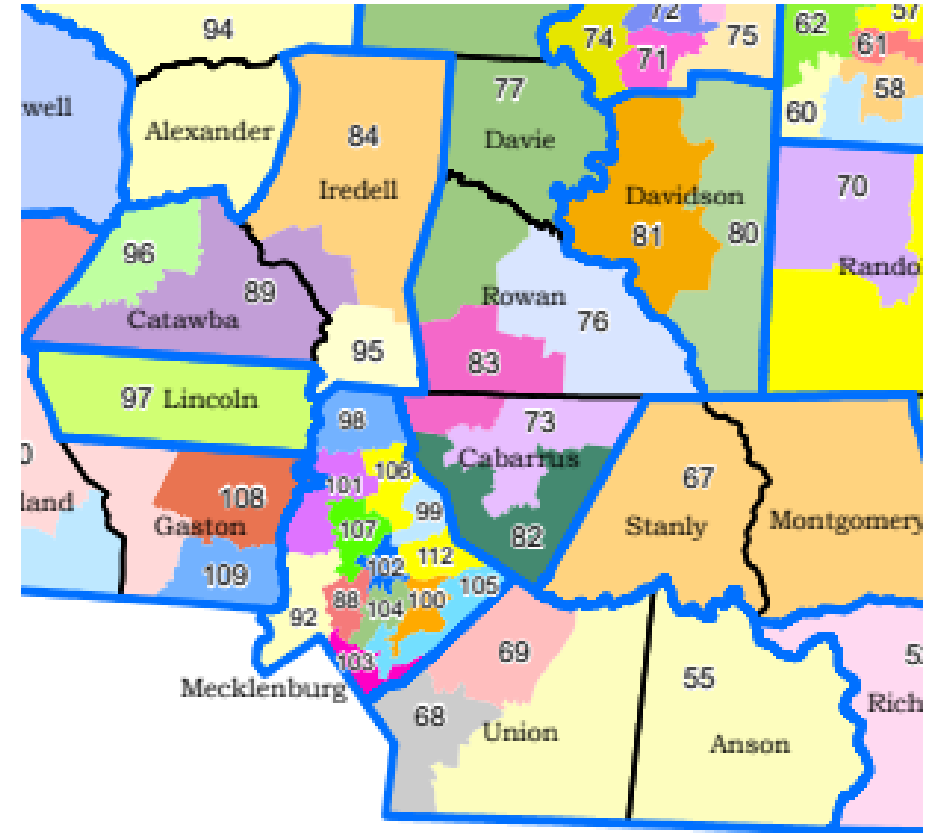


# 2024 Candidates

	Democrat	Republican
District 55	Judy H. Little	<b>Mark Brody (i)</b>
<b>District 67</b>	<b>Daniel Quick</b>	<b>Cody Huneycutt</b>
District 68	Cristal Robinson	<b>David Willis (i)</b>
District 69	Leigh Coulter	<b>Dean Arp (i)</b>
<b>District 73</b>	<b>Diamond Staton-Williams (i)</b>	Jonathan Almond
District 76	Alisha Byrd-Clark	<b>Harry Warren (i)</b>
District 77	Kashmir R. Sibby	<b>Julia Howard (i)</b>
<b>District 82</b>	<b>Sabrina Berry</b>	<b>Brian Echevarria</b>
<b>District 83</b>	<b>Joanne Chesley</b>	<b>Grant Campbell</b>
District 84	Chris E. Gilbert	<b>Jeffrey McNeely (i)</b>
District 88	<b>Mary Belk (i)</b>	
District 89	Greg Cranford	<b>Mitchell Setzer (i)</b>
District 92	<b>Terry Brown Jr. (i)</b>	
<b>District 95</b>	<b>Mike Robinson</b>	<b>Todd Carver</b>
<b>District 97</b>	<b>Jason Saine (i) - Resigning</b>	

# Centralina State House Districts

29 House Members: 20 incumbents; 9 open contests



**Bold** – Incumbent; **Red** – Open Contest <sup>167</sup>





# 2024 Candidates

	Democrat	Republican	Third Party
District 98	Beth Gardner Helfrich	Melinda Bales	
District 99	<b>Nasif Majeed (i)</b>	Isaiah Payne	Rob Yates (Lib)
District 100	Julia Greenfield		
District 101	<b>Carolyn Logan (i)</b>		
District 102	<b>Becky Carney (i)</b>		
District 103	<b>Laura Budd (i)</b>	Joshua Niday	
District 104	<b>Brandon Lofton (i)</b>	Krista Bokhari	
District 105	Nicole Sidman	<b>Tricia Cotham (i)</b>	
District 106	<b>Carla Cunningham (i)</b>		
District 107	Aisha O. Dew		
District 108	Sydnie Hutchinson	<b>John Torbett (i)</b>	
District 109	Pam Morgenstern	<b>Donnie Loftis (i)</b>	
District 110	Justin Matthews	<b>Kelly Hastings (i)</b>	
District 112	Jordan Lopez		

**Bold** – Incumbent; **Red** – Open Contest

# Centralina State House Districts

29 House Members: 20 incumbents; 9 open contests

