

Comprehensive Transportation Plan Amendment #4 Public Comments

Greetings Kayla:

Thank you for your service to the city. I am writing to offer a suggest in regards to Amendment #4's adoption for the city's public transit plan. I see there are to be improvements to bus transit on North Roxboro Road, which I think will be excellent. I'd like to suggest there be additional traffic lights and safe crosswalks between Club Blvd. and Old Oxford Road on North Roxboro. Right now there are only two or three lights and so it makes it nearly impossible to cross the street safely. I live on this road and everyday I see people speed and nearly hit a person. Additional traffic lights would make it much safer for people to get to the bus stops they need.

Thanks for your consideration,
Jade Brooks

.....
Hello-

I was researching a site in Durham and came across the proposed Amendment #4 to the CTP. I'm a resident of Old North Durham and one of the TEC-designated routes is within a block of my house on West Lynch Street. I have the following comment:

The route (current GoDurham route 4) seems unnecessarily circuitous just north of downtown. I can understand the need to go right past the Senior Center, but why the turn onto Geer, going all the way to Foster, then back to Rigsbee for a big "s" route? It seems like using Broadway or Hunt would make this route far more efficient. At the very least, moving the Foster leg to Rigsbee (or using Corporation) would eliminate two blocks' worth of travel.

Also, I have seen where GoDurham has placed at least one bench in the sidewalk on Geer, instead of taking the time to pour a new slab next to the sidewalk. This impedes pedestrian flow and make the bench less useful. Could we do better than that perhaps?

Thanks for your attention.

Grayson Baur
Catalpa Land Design, PLLC
919-451-6863

.....
Hard to imagine success for a route not including Duke University or the RDU Airport.

rich

Richard Bruch, M.D.

Hi Ms. Peloquin,

Good work on the CTP's proposed changes, especially the creation of the Transit Emphasis Corridors and some protected measures for the Hopson Road Extension.

As a traveler on GoDurham's busy Route 5, the planned bus and infrastructure improvements are greatly appreciated. I look forward to these improvements.

And thanks for keeping the Hopson Road Extension out of the wetland, as well as considering wildlife crossings where possible. These actions will help preserve some precious natural resources.

Best Wishes,

Kathy Claspell
Durham, NC

.....
The Headwaters Group (representing Durham, Granville, Person and Vance counties) is one of 13 local groups of the North Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has policies in favor of equity, infill, and alternatives to automobiles.

Thank you for the Transportation Enhancement Corridors and for keeping the Hopson Road Extension out of the wetlands. We continue to be concerned about wildlife crossings of the Hopson Road Extension. Also the Transportation Enhancement Corridors may need to be adjusted to meet the long-time requests of residents of Bragtown and Merrick Moore, two historically Black communities northeast of downtown Durham, for better service.

Sincerely,
Emmy Grace and Pat Carstensen, co-chairs, Headwaters Group of the Sierra Club

.....
Hello,

I am not sure how the Metropolitan Transportation Plans translate into individual projects and the maps seem unclear. I have some comments regarding projects that might have been completed by the time frame considered in the report, but they might still be useful.

Politicians are campaigning on addressing climate change and other environmental issues, but then preside over the building of unnecessary and environmentally destructive roads. I have heard claims that building new roads just causes about more car use, so new roads only temporarily reduce congestion and presumably increase carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollution over time. Why was a Glover-Ellis connector considered necessary, and if it was necessary, why was construction allowed to block it? I realize that this document does not include Wake County, but I question why government facilities, etc. were allowed to block the

preferred route of the 540 extension, so it was then built in a way that threatened endangered species. How are rare and threatened species doing in southern Wake County following the freeway construction?

I have objections to extending Hopson Road west to Grandale and extending Grandale south. Grandale cuts across Northeast Creek and is surrounded by gameland, resulting in a lot of roadkill as is, and traffic has increased. The Northeast Creek bottomlands are considered significant natural areas by the NC Natural Heritage Program, but the DCHCMPO wants to sacrifice them for redundant roads, possibly benefitting Cary more than Durham. I think the complete paving of Grandale reduced floral diversity along the road and increased use and probably roadkill. Building a new road parallel to Northeast Creek or along other waterways would harm species that regularly migrate between the bottomlands and higher ground, such as many amphibian species, or animals that have to move upland to escape flooding. The area around the bridge is also unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. Scott King Road, soon to be the site of a Durham elementary school, seems even more unsafe, and extending Hopson Road would presumably increase traffic on Scott King. Speeding far above the 25 mph limit is a problem on Sedwick Road in Parkwood, but Sedwick, Green Level Church, and Wake roads already connect 55 and Grandale, and Hopson was extending through RTP to 55 in a way that made it harder to use the Wake Road connection. I don't like the way scenic hills and ridges have been destroyed in the area, for Hopson east of 55 and for fill to create freeways, possibly with tolls, which I also oppose. How much carbon dioxide and siltation of waterways results from leveling hills? Would Grandale be expanded and streetlights added, degrading the surrounding gameland for nocturnal wildlife and possibly driving some species out? Would extending Hopson towards 751 be in a future plan if this goes through?

There is also an obscene amount of roadkill on Highway 98, especially east of Sherron Road, and along Highway 50 to the north in Wake County. There is also a problem on a side road on the north side of 98 extending NE to 50, where even a flock of cedar waxwings was hit on a snowy day. Pets have also been hit. Deeper roadside ditches or fencing might deter some animals and signs could be installed to warn drivers. The speed limit is also a factor.

Roadkill and human fatalities are also problems along 54 from Durham to Chapel Hill. More sidewalks and wide shoulders would be good, though I like the roadside trees.

I also object to the way the DOT indiscriminately sprays vegetation along roads, including on parkland, even spraying trees far from the road and herbaceous plants. Issues with the shoulders and lack of guard rails seem like bigger safety problems along straight Scott King Road than vegetation several feet from the road, beyond a deep stream or ditch. I thought a colony of rare pinxterflower azaleas was safely on public land, but then there was spraying, though not enough to wipe out the local population.

If new roads have to be built, I would like the environment to be given more consideration. Streetlights bordering parkland would be a problem and light pollution harms my view of the night sky in southern Durham. I have monitored the exceptionally abundant and diverse firefly population in a dark area along Grandale for several years as a volunteer with the Firefly Watch program, based in Massachusetts. Would the bridge at Grandale be raised, so that

animals might be more likely to go under it and also reducing erosion caused by the constriction of floods? What else could be done to reduce roadkill? Would there be more traffic lights? At times many people park around the bridge and it would be good if the shoulders were more level and wider in places, though I would not want many trees to be cut. It was difficult to get the DOT to pick up wooden shipping pallets, a vector for non-native forest pests and diseases, dumped on the shoulder, even though their mowing equipment was obviously running into them. One of the few benefits of the proposed extensions might be a reduced risk of roadside harassment of people legally using the gamelands and road shoulder, due to the increased traffic, though the traffic would also be detrimental to the use of the gameland.

Thank you for your consideration.

I'm not sure if it was published anywhere, but I sent out a letter to the editor on the Hopson and Grandale road extensions, and the related NC55-Hopson rezoning proposal:

Protect the gamelands along the Durham-Chatham-Wake county line

February 7th the City Council will hold a second hearing on the rezoning of an area extending from east of 55 to within sight of Grandale Road for a research/manufacturing-type “business park,” with Hopson Road extended west. Hopson and Grandale extensions are included in Amendment #4 to the DCHCMPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, accepting comments through February 22nd (links at northeastcreek.org).

This rural section includes a large area of protected public land. The Northeast Creek bottomlands' significance was recognized by the NC Natural Heritage Program, which recommended the “Preservation of upland buffers” and a moratorium on new utility corridors there.

Despite the parkland, species could still be lost. The rezoning application considers the State gameland only a “buffer.” There is no public site plan and industrial light zoning allows many uses. If large greenhouses are built, reflected light would be obvious for miles, likewise with blasting and traffic noise. What of spills? Hundreds of fireflies of several species glimmer, gathered amphibians roar, and herons, nightjars, and likely turkeys have nested nearby. If hunting ends, will deer overpopulate? I would like consideration for the welfare of this valuable, public land. Additionally, the claypit has paleontological significance. I suspect that rezoning would trigger more land sales, like the boom (of moonscaping) along Ellis.

Durham claims to care about emissions, but plans to level ridges for a redundant road. Nearby roads already seem unsafe and Grandale threatens wildlife, which the government knows. Does the Council need to see the roadkill from a short stretch?

Michael Pollock

Response: Staff responded to Mr. Pollock with the following points. The DCHC MPO is changing the Hopson Road Extension from a divided roadway to a non-divided roadway (cross-section 2E), which will reduce the footprint of the roadway. As far as staff understands, the inclusion of the roadway in the CTP

has no bearing on whether or not a business park will be constructed on the site. And, the roadway will only be built if a private concern develops the site because public funding is unlikely to become available for this roadway. As a result, in the case that the site is developed, the CTP helps to direct the resulting roadway alignment as far away from Northeast Creek and the wetlands as possible, and to create greater local access by increasing the overall roadway grid. The grid will help to more evenly distribute trips among the Hopson Road Extension, Sedwick Rd., Green Level Church Rd. and Wake Rd. It should be noted that any proposed development on the site will be required to obtain the necessary permits and environmental approvals through the site development process.

.....

Statement on Amendment #4, Comprehensive Transportation Plan
By Rebecca Winders

Thank you for the opportunity to convey my thoughts about the Amendment #4, and for giving me the motivation to learn more about the complex process of planning and financing the infrastructure and services that enable residents to access jobs, education, and services. I have a long way to go, however, and offer these comments with humility.

Decision-makers and planners today have the opportunity to partially redress past transportation inequities by addressing the needs of low wealth black, brown, and indigenous people, especially those in Durham's historic Black neighborhoods, FIRST, before the needs or wants of residents of wealthy suburbs and expensive downtown high-rises.

I fully support the concept of Complete Streets. To the extent possible under State policy, investment in safe sidewalks and bike paths or lanes should be directed toward the most dangerous incomplete existing streets and roads, not toward new streets. To pass over existing low wealth, transit dependent, underserved existing neighborhoods in order to provide wide, safe streets in new neighborhoods is insulting to the long term residents of Durham.

Also, the Transit Equity Corridors are greatly needed. However, I question that corridors have been defined with adequate community consultation and data. A big problem is the omission of Dearborn Drive, the central spine of Route 9, used by both 9A to Riverside and 9B to Northern. Lakeview School and the Bragtown branch library are also located on Dearborn. Automobile traffic is heavy on this two-lane road, and shoulders are narrow, uneven, and muddy or weedy. Even able-bodied pedestrians are at risk of falling, and access for the disabled is surely impossible. Route 9 has higher ridership than Route 4, running on Roxboro.

I call on DCHC MPO to designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A, and 9B a Transit Equity Corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible, perhaps FY 23. Please consider whether this TEC should be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

.....

Greetings wonderful transit planning person!

A member of my church Pilgrim United Church of Christ gave us an update on the good work for public transportation that is being planned for Durham. As a Christian I deeply believe that public transportation is critical! It is a more sustainable way to travel/ healthier for our planet, it's more affordable and accessible for folks no matter their income or physical ability.

Bragtown is a diverse neighborhood in need of some attention and love for it's bus route. It is a well used route and an unsafe street, with very little shoulder and no bus shelters. I think it would be strategic and would show care to our community if the DCHC MPO would designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible. As a Durham community member I believe this should be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

-love and prayers,

Felix Flanders

Dear Ms Peloquin, I am a 78 year old active senior and a relatively new (11 years) resident of Durham. I recently had the opportunity to walk Dearborn Drive and ride the Rte 9 bus. It reminded me of living in a large city many years ago as a teenager. The riders were students, working people, elderly residents still working, grocery shoppers.....many of whom were immigrants. I stayed on the bus with a companion for two bus runs, handing out information and surveys. It was 1:00 P.M, and the bus was never empty—no one standing, but full enough that new passengers had to walk to the back.

The walk to the bus had been treacherous. There were no sidewalks and shelters, and ditches were the steepest I had seen in Durham. Walking abreast was out of the question as traffic whizzed by too close to pedestrians.

I am requesting that Bus Route 9 make it onto the priority list in the MPO as a TEC. I read all of the reasons why the Route 4 corridor is mentioned and I can see on the map that it is straighter, and therefore, faster. But the geographical area covered is not where the greatest residential need lies. Obviously Rte 9 is more circuitous, and therein lies the accessibility for so many people! We talked to so many riders that day, February 14, 2022, and none knew anything about the low priority of their ride to work, school, hospital, etc etc etc. Our greatest resource: PEOPLE! Let's invest in them!

Margaret Dolbow

DCHC MPO should designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B as a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible. Please consider this TEC to be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

Thank you.
Susan Barco

.....

Regarding Amendment 4, Transit Equity corridors:

DCHC MPO should designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B as a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible. Please consider this TEC to be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

Thank you!!!

--
Mary Anna Hovey

.....

Ms. Peloquin

DCHC MPO should designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B as a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible. Please consider this TEC to be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

Thanks
Shelley Beason

.....

Hello,

I have some comments on Amendment #4 to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, especially regarding the proposed extension of Hopson Road, and I want to clarify a few possibly related points in my February 1st comments on the 2050 CTP. I have several points regarding the Hopson and Grandale extensions, and the NC Natural Heritage Program and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission have made similar statements regarding this area, though they might not comment on this specific amendment.

I did not follow the light rail project closely and it was on the other side of Durham from where I live or might need to commute, but at the same time, I question whether it was necessary to give Duke University a veto over the project. Could a light rail route have been planned without involving the Duke Hospital area? On the other hand environmental concerns were raised along Little Creek, and I visit the waterfowl impoundment there and other areas. I suppose there will

still be high density construction, even without the light rail that was supposed to justify that density. I value the public and private green spaces or vacant lots downtown, but at the same time, there is plenty of room for density in downtown Durham, where density is normal, rather than out on the fringes of the City like Farrington Road. Also, there has long been a lot of congestion around rush hour along Highway 54 where it meets Farrington Road and nearby I-40, as well as at Barbee Road, etc.

Politicians campaign on addressing climate change and other environmental issues, but then preside over the building of unnecessary and environmentally destructive roads. I have heard claims that building new roads encourages more car use, so new roads only temporarily relieve congestion, and presumably increase carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollution in the long run. Why was a Glover-Ellis connector cutting through scenic headwaters of Northeast Creek considered necessary, and if it was necessary, why was construction then allowed to block it? I thought a new residential road had been built connecting the roads. I understand that people will build what they want, consistent with laws, and that elected leaders approve rezonings, etc., but it seems like the Durham Planning Department can't be portrayed as a passive bystander in "The alignment of the Ellis-Glover connector" becoming "compromised."

The possibility of building the planned Northeast Creek trail is probably also becoming compromised.

In Wake County I question why town public facilities, etc. were allowed to block the preferred route of the 540 extension, so it was then built in a way that threatened the endangered dwarf wedgemussel and other species. What is the situation in southern Wake County following freeway construction? It is unclear which organizations (CAMPO? the NC DOT?) are responsible for what decisions regarding new roads and maintenance. In Durham, who decided to cut the large, mossy red maples that lined Alston by Lowes Grove Elementary School?

I object to extending Hopson Road west to Grandale and extending Grandale south. The attached maps show the connector barely avoiding the Jordan/New Hope gameland and seemingly still cutting through a large area of wetland. If the idea is to avoid crossing the county line, Wake Road is a short distance beyond the line, so why build a new connector? Grandale cuts across Northeast Creek and is surrounded by public gameland, resulting in a lot of roadkill as is, and traffic has increased, I imagine because of Cary rather than Durham, but Durham's landscape is to be sacrificed. I can't remember the title now, but I saw a government document demonstrating public knowledge that Grandale crosses wildlife migration routes along the Northeast Creek corridor.

The bottomlands along Northeast Creek at the south end of Durham County are listed as a significant natural area by the NC Natural Heritage Program. The inventory reports noted nesting black-and-white warblers and probably nesting sharp-shinned hawks and the presence of ribbon snakes as rare animal species in the areas studied, as well as Douglass' bittercress and other state or regionally rare or unusual plants, and there were river otters and mink along the Creek. The area has not been re-surveyed since 1999. Otters have been reported more recently on a tributary

of Northeast Creek nearby in RTP and I saw what might have been evidence of otters a short distance upstream from Jordan Lake. I know mink live east of Jordan Lake near the Tobacco Trail in Chatham County, and along the Eno, and there have been reports of bobcats near Indian Creek at Jordan Lake, a short distance south of Northeast Creek. Apparently bobcats are easily driven out by human activity, so I wonder how close they come to my area, and without bobcats, coyotes, or hunting by humans there are few checks left on the deer population, leading to problems. Increased construction adjacent to the gameland might end hunting. Turkeys, woodcocks, wood ducks, indigo buntings, prothonotary warblers, pileated and red-headed woodpeckers live in that area of gameland and several species of amphibians breed in the wetlands and waterways. The most recent Durham inventory recommended that "Preservation of upland buffers along the edges of the bottomlands should be given a high priority. These slopes provide denning areas for terrestrial species, as well as refuges during periods of high water" while the 1999 Jordan Lake Inventory recommended that "No more utility corridors should be allowed in the area" along the Creek between 55 and 751. Did the authors not imagine that new roads, which seem worse than utility easements, would be proposed? Building a new road parallel to Northeast Creek or along other waterways would harm species that regularly migrate between the bottomlands and higher ground, such as toad and salamander species, or animals that have to move upland to escape flooding. Roadbuilding along the Eno River was stopped, but unfortunately for Northeast Creek and fortunately for the Planning Department there are few to oppose it here in this round, though it is an election year for some local, State, and Federal officials. Would extending Hopson towards 751 or O'Kelly Church Road be in a future CTP if this goes through?

I think the complete paving of Grandale in recent decades reduced floral diversity and no doubt increased traffic, speed, and probably the amount of roadkill. Was it the DOT that cut a large oak, maybe a post oak or possibly a white oak, near the northeast corner of Grandale and Sedwick many years ago? It could be called a historic oak, from before Parkwood existed, and was left in large pieces hidden off the road. Maybe it lived when the road network was much different and what is now called Sedwick Road was forked. Now I can't remember if the tree was cut when Grandale was paved or later. More recently Duke Energy on its own decided to cut a landmark relatively old oak, maybe a Spanish/Southern red oak, on a berm beside 751 in front of an abandoned house.

If Grandale is widened, black walnuts at the south end might be cut. They are small trees, but at least one produces many nuts and black walnuts are rare trees in this part of the Triangle. In theory they could also be a food source for people, so roadwork would reduce the local food supply and the diversity of foods.

Speaking of history, there has long been a lack of clarity in what Grandale is called, and roads could reflect the landscape and history, such as in the appropriate name of the Northeast Creek Parkway.

The curve on Grandale at the bridge is already unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists and nearby Scott King Road, soon to be the site of a Durham elementary school, seems even more unsafe, and extending Hopson Road would presumably increase traffic on Scott King. Speeding far above the 25 mph limit is a problem on Sedwick Road in Parkwood, but Sedwick, Green Level

Church, and Wake roads already connect 55 and Grandale. Hopson was extended through RTP to 55 in a way that made it harder to use the old Green Level and Wake Road connection. Members of my family used to be able to unicycle or bicycle along a circuit of a few miles, but South Alston was cut and is now treated as the property of the Social Security Administration printing facility on “Louis Stephens Drive” and the intersection was changed, which also destroyed a young woods with many fox (?) grapes running from the very tops of the relatively young pines down to the roadside, unusual in that the large cluster[s] of sweet black grapes were so easy to reach on those September weekends. On the other hand the large copperheads that would enter the road in late September benefitted by the road being effectively removed, if they survived a large hill being levelled, clearcutting, and a new electrical substation being built.

I don't like the way scenic hills and ridges have been destroyed along Highway 55 there, to extend Hopson to 55 and earlier at the corner of TW Alexander Drive and 55 for fill for a freeway, possibly tolled, which I also generally oppose. That hill with an old farm house on top was blasted away day and night, leading to noise complaints from Scott King Road, and I heard that the excess was dumped in the old Triangle Brick Company claypit the Hopson extension would skirt. The spoil seems to be visible in aerial photos. Given the presence of rare plants and animals along 55, probably because of the presence of igneous rocks, what was lost on those hills over the last 10 years, and might still live on the hills west of 55?

After it was too late for the public hearings I realized that maybe Scannell's intends to level the hills on the west side of 55 for their “business park,” to build who knows what under an Industrial Light zoning, and also making road building easier. The likely presence of dikes of very hard igneous rock would make it harder to tear down these hills. How much carbon dioxide and siltation of waterways results from levelling hills? It would be better regarding greenhouse gas emissions if businesses along 55 relied on the freight railroad on the east side, rather than locating on the west side and relying on trucks.

Would Grandale be expanded and streetlights added, possibly blue-rich, degrading the surrounding gameland for nocturnal wildlife and possibly driving species out? Blue-rich white light is especially polluting to human eyes; for example see: www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/led-guide/ Except for passing aircraft little or no artificial light is visible in a large area along Northeast Creek between 55 and Grandale, shielded by the width of the gameland and the high surrounding hills. Noise pollution would also degrade the gameland, even if a road is outside of it. Grandale is audible south of Sedwick Road and what must be noise mainly from I-40 as well as highways is often very loud in other parts of Parkwood. 751 is audible from the vast expanse of gameland along lower Northeast Creek south of O'Kelly Chapel Road.

This winter the gameland along Northeast Creek between Grandale and the powerline corridor seems much smaller, because of the clearcutting around it a few years ago, and Hopson Road would skirt the south side, where there is an unusually winding and low-lying small tributary with flood-tolerant forest.

I saw a breeding whip-poor-will or chuck-will's-widow at the school site nearby a few years ago, and I thought they had been driven out of the Triangle. What about the beaver ponds adjacent to Grandale? At times there has been a great blue heron rookery nearby and hundreds of turkey vultures and a few black vultures roosted in the summer. Construction also encourages non-native plants, and a few non-native trees have sprouted in utility corridors and clearcuts near this planned road.

Grandale also sometimes floods by the bridge during hurricanes, though raising the road would dam up the floodwaters.

The NC Wildlife Resources Commission and US Army Corps of Engineers might not comment, though Grandale cuts through the public land they are charged with protecting and Grandale, might be expanded, impacting their area. Since neighbors aren't notified about proposed roads, people probably are not aware of what is being planned.

There is also an obscene amount of roadkill on Highway 98, especially east of Sherron Road, and along Highway 50 to the north in Wake County. Admittedly it is mostly small animals that are killed on Grandale and 54, but entire lanes are dyed red on 98 when deer are killed and two cats or foxes were left on the centerline in front of a professed church for something like half a year. Around early to mid-summer there are often brief showers or downpours just before 5pm followed by clearing, and aquatic turtles leave the ponds a short distance east of Sherron and are killed. Sometimes they manage to get to the center but then stop and are killed. I commented (assuming they received it) to some agency regarding work on 98 a few years ago. There is also a problem on Old Creedmoor Road north of 98 extending northeast to Highway 50 and on 50. I tried to be careful there and elsewhere, but I hit animals. Some how a flock of cedar waxwings that had come down to a puddle at the Highway 98 end was hit during a snowstorm, when traffic should have been moving slowly. Pets have also been hit on rural 98.

In places there have been efforts to reduce roadkill, but except for lobbying about raising the new 15-501 bridge over New Hope Creek, a few old deer and livestock warning signs, and the fencing full of holes along freeways, I am not aware of any effort at all in the Triangle or elsewhere in the State. Deeper roadside ditches and fencing might deter some animals and signs could at least be put up to warn drivers. Would intentionally hitting an animal and leaving it in the road count as littering? The speed limit is also a factor. On the other hand, there could be conservation problems if roads become impassable barriers for plant and animal species.

Roadkill and human fatalities are problems along 54 from Durham to Chapel Hill. More sidewalks and wider shoulders would be good, though I like the roadside trees, ever decreasing with dense residential building along 54. I suppose that the shady overhanging trees along 54 where it crosses the gameland protecting New Hope Creek will be cut and will not return, if 54 is expanded in Durham. There was a shady dark green tunnel along 751 where it crosses Crooked Creek, but the trees were cut for a utility line or some other reason. Weedy verges along 54 beneficial to pollinators are also being replaced with close-cropped grassy lawn, though Durham supposedly cares about pollinators.

I also object to the way the DOT indiscriminately sprays vegetation along roads, including on parkland, even spraying trees far from the road, high branches, and herbaceous plants such as goldenrods. Issues with the shoulders and the lack of guard rails seem like bigger safety problems along straight Scott King Road than vegetation several feet from the road, beyond a deep stream or ditch. I thought a population of rare pinxterflower azaleas was safely on public land, but then the DOT sprayed them in the summer of 2017 or 2018, though fortunately not enough to kill them off.

If new roads have to be built, I would like the environment to be given more consideration. Installing streetlights next to gameland would be a problem and light pollution harms my view of the night sky as is. I have monitored the exceptionally abundant and diverse firefly population in a dark area east of Grandale since about 2008 as a volunteer with the Massachusetts-based Firefly Watch program. Would the bridge at Grandale be raised, so that animals might be more likely to go under it, as well as reducing erosion caused by the constriction of floods? Note that aquatic turtles such as yellow-bellied sliders sometimes seem to intentionally climb on to the bridge and are killed. What else could be done to reduce roadkill? Animals will be killed on roads, including pets and livestock, but I have seen little evidence that governments want to reduce the carnage, though people do sometimes attempt to assist animals or shed tears. Would there be more traffic lights to slow traffic on Grandale, Scott King, Sedwick, and Wake roads? At times many people park around the Grandale bridge to access the gameland for hunting, fishing, and hiking and it might be good if the shoulders were levelled and wider in places, though I would not want to see many trees cut. It was difficult to get the DOT to pick up wooden shipping pallets dumped just off the road next to the bridge, even though their mowing equipment was obviously running into them. Wooden pallets are a vector for non-native forest pests and diseases such as emerald ash borers, already killing trees in Durham and Chapel Hill, and redbay ambrosia beetles, which haven't reached this far inland yet, but have sassafras as a food source as they leave the Wilmington area and the redbays and related trees near the coast. These pests can't travel very far on their own, but have spread much faster with human help, after getting here from East Asia through shipping. One of the few benefits of the proposed extensions might be a reduced risk of roadside harassment of people legally using the gameland and road shoulders, though the traffic would be detrimental to enjoyment of the gameland to begin with.

Thank you for your consideration.

I'm not sure if it was published anywhere, but in late January I sent out a letter to the editor on the extensions, and the NC55-Hopson rezoning (approved by the Durham City Council February 7th):

Protect the gamelands along the Durham-Chatham-Wake county line

February 7th the City Council will hold a second hearing on the rezoning of an area extending from east of 55 to within sight of Grandale Road for a research/manufacturing-type "business park," with Hopson Road extended west. Hopson and Grandale extensions are included in

Amendment #4 to the DCHCMPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, accepting comments through February 22nd (links at northeastcreek.org).

This rural section includes a large area of protected public land. The Northeast Creek bottomlands' significance was recognized by the NC Natural Heritage Program, which recommended the “Preservation of upland buffers” and a moratorium on new utility corridors there.

Despite the parkland, species could still be lost. The rezoning application considers the State gameland only a “buffer.” There is no public site plan and industrial light zoning allows many uses. If large greenhouses are built, reflected light would be obvious for miles, likewise with blasting and traffic noise. What of spills? Hundreds of fireflies of several species glimmer, gathered amphibians roar, and herons, nightjars, and likely turkeys have nested nearby. If hunting ends, will deer overpopulate? I would like consideration for the welfare of this valuable, public land. Additionally, the claypit has paleontological significance. I suspect that rezoning would trigger more land sales, like the boom (of moonscaping) along Ellis.

Durham claims to care about emissions, but plans to level ridges for a redundant road. Nearby roads already seem unsafe and Grandale threatens wildlife, which the government knows. Does the Council need to see the roadkill from a short stretch [I could fill a several gallon bucket or buckets with bloody bodies on a summer night and go to a government office in the daytime or send photos.]?

Michael Pollock

Please considered my comment for the Transit Equity Corridor Amendment 4 as I wish for our diverse community to benefit from our actions.

DCHC MPO should designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B as a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible.

Please consider this TEC to be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors

Sincerely,
Denise Sailstad



Comments on Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Comprehensive (DCHC MPO) Transportation Plan

Amendment #4

Feb 22, 2022

Dear DCHC MPO staff and Board,

Bike Durham is a local non-profit that believes everyone should have access to safe, affordable, and sustainable transportation regardless of race, wealth, gender identity, ability, or where they live. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Amendment #4.

Bike Durham is excited about the inclusion of the updated North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Complete Streets policy and implementation guide in the CTP. We also strongly support comments in a letter from DCHC MPO staff to NCDOT staff on January 19th requesting improvements to the implementation guide to ensure that NCDOT builds and maintains non-auto oriented infrastructure along its roadways moving forward.

We also support the changes proposed for the Hopson Road extension project to include sidewalks and bike lanes. We request that the Amendment be clear that any bike lanes added need to be physically protected from auto traffic. We also request that NCDOT continue to work with organizations such as the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and Sierra Club to mitigate any disruptions to wildlife habitat in the corridor.

We understand why the light rail needs to be removed from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, but high-capacity transit is still needed between Durham and Chapel Hill and Bike Durham requests that projects be added to replace the light rail corridor in Amendment #4. Specifically, we request that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors shown to the public during the Durham Transit Plan update process between downtown Durham and Research Triangle Park (RTP) and downtown Durham and the Chapel Hill line near US 15-501 and I-40 be included in Amendment #4.

We also request that a Transit Emphasis Corridor be included along portions of Route 9, especially along Dearborn Drive and East Club Boulevard. Bike Durham supports Bragtown Community Association's efforts to improve access and safety for people walking, biking, and using transit to and along these streets. The transit ridership on Route 9 and current lack of safe walking and biking infrastructure in Bragtown warrant the inclusion of a Transit Emphasis Corridor along Route 9.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions about any of the comments Bike Durham has provided.

Sincerely,

Erik

Landfried
Board member, Bike Durham
919.257.9782

Dear Ms. Peloquin,

DCHC MPO should designate at least the Dearborn Drive part of Route 9, 9A and 9B as a transit equity corridor and begin improvements as soon as possible, including shelters from the weather. Please improve the service so people can get to work. Please consider this TEC to be next in line after the Fayetteville and Holloway Corridors.

Thank you for your consideration.
Lucy Rozier