

Michael D. Page
Chairman
702 Basil Drive
Durham, NC 27713
Email: mpage@dconc.gov

Brenda A. Howerton
Vice-Chair
3325 Tarleton West
Durham, NC 27713
Email: bhowerton@dconc.gov



COUNTY OF DURHAM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fred Foster, Jr.
5718 Whippoorwill Street
Durham, NC 27704
Email: ffosterjr@dconc.gov

Wendy S. Jacobs
4308 Rivermont Road
Durham, NC 27712
Email: wjacobs@dconc.gov

Ellen W. Reckhow
11 Pine Top Place
Durham, NC 27705
Email: ereckhow@dconc.gov

October 8, 2015

Mr. Jeff Mann
General Manager
GoTriangle
P.O. Box 13787
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Mr. Mann:

Durham County, as an integral leader and partner of the Bus Rail Improvement Plan (BRIP) writes today in support of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed D-O LRT Project and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

The NEPA Locally Preferred Alternative includes:

C2A Alternative in the Little Creek section of the Alignment
New Hope Creek 2 (NHC2)
Trent/Flowers Station
Farrington Road Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility ROMF
Build Option

While the DEIS assessed the environmental, transportation, social and economic impacts associated with the alignment, stations and transportation improvements in the Durham-Orange (D-O) Corridor and provided recommendations to mitigate issues, there are additional impacts that the project will have on Durham County which we want to address. As you know, we have previously discussed many of these issues with the GoTriangle staff and continue to have discussions and receive responses to address our concerns. We seek your continued commitment during this process to provide further consideration and analysis of our issues noted here and others that may arise as a result of comments received during the 45-day comment period.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS TO DURHAM COUNTY (Buildings, Streets and Traffic)

1. The proposed electric substation location on the Detention Center property

The proposed location of the electrical substation on the detention facility property, which typically houses over 500 inmates, presents potential access, safety and security risks. Specifically, the proposed location experiences significant foot traffic from visitors to the detention facility. At times, protestors also coordinate demonstrations around the detention facility. Demonstrations could result in damage to the structure. While the final specifications of the structure are unknown, the proposed size and proximity of the substation to the facility could pose safety risks to the inmates in the event of a fire or explosion. It is the County's preference that GoTriangle locate an alternate location for the electric substation during the Engineering phase.

2. The closure of Pettigrew Street to two-way traffic and impacts on the Detention Center

The loading area for the Detention Center is off of Pettigrew Street and the proposed changes to Pettigrew Street will impact operations. This impacts access of truck ranging in length from 25 to 53 feet that regularly deliver supplies to the detention facility. Any change in the traffic pattern on Pettigrew Street/lane closures would adversely impact the truck ability to turn and access the facility. Both the entrance to the drive and driveway would require reconfiguration and substantial renovation as a result of the change. The other access to the facility along Pettigrew Street provides for prisoner intake. This area currently presents access challenges, so any change in the traffic pattern may further complicate navigating an already hectic entrance and exit point. It is critical that Pettigrew Street remain open to traffic during the construction phase and that GoTriangle coordinate with the County staff during the Engineering Phase to determine the maintenance of traffic requirements to include the construction plans and specification so continued use will be permitted.

3. General Construction & Utility Impacts

- a. **Fiber optic cables cross Pettigrew Street/Magnum/Roxboro.** These cables provide critical federal, state, and local public safety communications to the Sheriff's Office and Detention Facility. This function operates continuously and must remain operational at all times. Any impact to underground fiber optic and copper telecommunications and CATV lines, cables or hand holds, underground telecommunications ductbank, such as line replacement, cutovers and other potential impacts to underground power and feeds for signals and street lights, gas mains to the detention service will be the responsibility of the LRT Project. These efforts must be well planned and coordinated in advance with Durham County Government Information Services & Technology, the Durham County Office of the Sheriff, and Durham City Government Technology Solutions.
- b. **Stormwater/Utilities.** While the project team has determined that no water or sanitary sewer services along Pettigrew Street, Mangum Street or Roxboro Street appear to be affected by the LRT project. To assure our stormwater facilities and water, sewer, and gas lines in the vicinity remain in good working condition, we will work closely with

GoTriangle to assure that during construction these facilities and operations will remain clear.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION

1. Durham County commends Go Triangle for ensuring that the DEIS is widely available in a number of mediums for the public to review and for the public to comment either in writing or at one of the public hearings being held throughout the corridor. Durham County values the input of our residents whose homes/property are along the alignments and strongly believes that consideration of the community comments not only be heard by GoTriangle as part of the DEIS process, but as appropriate /evaluated for feasibility for modifications to the plan. While Durham County recognizes that there will be impacts with such a large scale long-term capital project, Durham County highly encourages GoTriangle to pursue the necessary strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to the community, natural and cultural resources that are caused by the recommended NEPA Preferred Alternative in the DEIS.

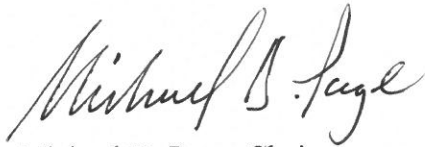
The County request that GoTriangle continue to work to:

- a. Comply with City and County plans and policies in the development and construction of the alignment and station areas.
- b. Give consideration to the recommendations from the Durham Area Designers to: shift the Buchanan station closer to Buchanan Blvd to increase visibility and access to Burch Ave, West End, Trinity Park and W. Chapel Hill Street businesses; restore the Downtown Transit Center station to the original GoTriangle-owned site to improve intermodal connections; add the City Center station as recommended by all 3 DAD charrette teams to provide convenient access to Durham's government buildings including the County Courthouse, Detention Center and City Hall, to better serve Main Street retail and offices and to anchor the Ballpark to Ballpark arts corridor
- c. Address community and roadway impacts to the proposed Park and Ride facility in the Leigh Village area and surrounding neighborhoods.
- d. To the extent possible, reduce negative impacts of the alignment on the Downing Creek neighborhood and address specific safety concerns.
- e. Implement methods to abate noise, vibration, stormwater, and lighting by measures such as landscaping/walls, storm water management, aesthetics and other appropriate measures associated with the ROMF Facility on Farrington Road to mitigate the impact on low density residential and housing for seniors in the area.
- f. Should problems arise from the recommended Farrington Road ROMF, the County suggests that the feasibility of using the alternative sites be revisited.

- g. Include provisions for bike and pedestrian connectivity as extensively as possible at each station area to enhance accessibility to nearby neighborhoods, employers, and commercial areas.
- h. Coordinate light rail planning and engineering with the widening and improvements of NC54 to ensure a multi-modal solution to meet the future demands and the long-term vitality of the corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods. Highway 54 is a primary route connecting much of Durham, Orange and Wake Counties, and the corridor requires a multimodal solution to meet future demand. Strategies that link transit, light rail, pedestrian access and bicycling are needed to make transit an effective travel option.
- i. Address concerns and pursue further analysis so as not to preclude future extensions beyond the Alston Avenue transit station.

Durham County recognizes the multi-faceted benefits that the D-O LRT project brings to our community -- creation of jobs, economic and transit-oriented development opportunities, congestion relief and enhanced mobility for our residents. We encourage and support continued planning and coordination to advance the project while working to mitigate impacts on the community. We are ready to work with Go Triangle, all the other stakeholders, and the community to enhance mobility options for Durham County and the region.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Page, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

cc: Durham Board of County Commissioners