

Comprehensive Transportation Plan Amendment #4 Public Comments as of  
February 16, 2022

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

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*Staff response: MPO staff forwarded this comment to City of Durham transportation staff for further follow-up.*

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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

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*Staff response: MPO staff forwarded this comment to GoDurham staff for follow up.*

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

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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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> ([links at northeastcreek.org](http://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

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*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.

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*Staff response: After Ms. Winders read this comment at the February 9, 2022 MPO Board meeting public hearing, the Board acknowledged these important comments.*