

Durham adding 1,000 metered parking spots to meet downtown demand

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DURHAM, N.C. — Get ready to pay a bit more for on-street parking in downtown Durham.

Beginning Feb. 27, the Bull City will debut parking meters for about 1,000 spaces located throughout the downtown area.

City officials say many of the meters will have a time limit enforced during peak usage hours to encourage faster turnover.

According to Durham Parking Management Division Administrator Thomas Leathers, the installation of the meters comes after a recommendation made in a comprehensive parking study.

"If you've been downtown lately, you've seen just how busy it is and how scarce our on-street parking has become," Leathers said in a statement. "Through the implementation of this new metered parking, we're going to provide more access to downtown parking with the added convenience of having multiple ways to pay."

The on-street parking will be a combination of single-space parking meters and multi-space pay stations that will accept credit and debit cards, cash and coins. They will also be compatible with Passport's pay-by-phone app.

The on-street hourly parking rate will be \$1.50 per hour.

For visitors to Durham who need to park a little longer than an hour at a time, Leathers says four parking garages and three surface lots near downtown are good options.

"While the rate in our garages and surface lots will increase by 25 cents, to \$1.25 per hour, beginning Feb. 27, there are no time constraints on these parking spaces, so this is a great option if you're going to be downtown for a considerable amount of time," he said.

The city also announced Monday that special event parking in the city's parking garages will increase from \$3 to \$5 on Feb. 27.

Meters, paid parking coming Feb. 27 to downtown

The Herald-Sun From Staff Reports February 6, 2017

DURHAM — Durham will begin metered on-street parking on Feb. 27, with new parking meters for approximately 1,000 spaces throughout the downtown area.

The on-street hourly parking rate will be \$1.50 an hour, and many spaces will have a time limit enforced during peak usage hours. The limit, the city said in a news release, "will be to encourage faster turnover."

Installation of the new parking meters and signage will begin this week in preparation for the Feb. 27 launch.

The city is installing single-space parking meters and multi-space pay stations, which will accept credit and debit card payments, cash and coin payments, and be compatible with Passport's pay-by-phone app.

"If you've been downtown lately, you've seen just how busy it is and how scarce our on-street parking has become," said Thomas Leathers, parking management division administrator in the City's Transportation Department. With the meters, he said, "we're going to provide more access to downtown parking with the added convenience of having multiple ways to pay." (CONTINUED...)

Hourly rates in the city's four downtown parking garages and three surface lots will increase by 25 cents to \$1.25 an hour Feb. 27. "There are no time constraints on these parking spaces, so this is a great option if you're going to be downtown for a considerable amount of time," Leathers said.

Special event parking in the city's parking garages will increase from \$3 to \$5 per hour effective Feb. 27.

For more information, including how-to videos, parking guide, downtown parking map and instructions on how to download and use the pay-by-phone app, visit the ParkDurham website (<http://www.parkdurham.org/>) or watch the latest episode of CityLife (<http://bit.ly/2keBGt1>), which features in-depth details on Durham's new on-street metered parking.

Cooper submits wish list of transportation projects for federal funding – including Durham-Orange light rail

The News and Observer-State Politics By Colin Campbell February 15, 2017

RALEIGH – Gov. Roy Cooper on Wednesday released a list of eight major transportation projects to be considered for federal funding as President Donald Trump develops his infrastructure plan.

The National Governors Association is compiling a list of projects for the Trump administration to consider, and Cooper sent the group North Carolina's wish list – mostly interstate highway upgrades along with the planned Durham-Chapel Hill light rail line. A list of 428 "shovel ready" projects was submitted to Trump last week.

"Moving ahead with shovel ready projects like these will create good paying jobs and provide a shot in the arm to our state's economy," Cooper said in a news release Wednesday. "Improving highways and mass transit will make North Carolina an even better place to live and do business."

The list includes funding to complete the \$1.87 billion, 18-mile light rail project connecting Durham and Chapel Hill. Backers of the project are [working to fill a \\$254 million funding gap](#) after the legislature capped state funding for light rail projects.

The other projects on the list are:

- Improvements to Interstate 95 throughout the 182-mile segment that runs through the state. The upgrades include paving projects, interchange additions, bridge safety projects and other improvements. Cooper's release doesn't mention any proposal to widen the highway.
- Completing the I-295 Fayetteville outer loop in Cumberland and Robeson counties.
- Completing the Winston-Salem northern beltway.
- Improving the I-40 and I-77 interchange in Iredell County, including more lanes, new bridges and ramps.
- Widening 22.2 miles of I-26 in Buncombe and Henderson Counties, including the replacement of the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge.
- Widening U.S. 74/Independence Boulevard in Mecklenburg County to three lanes with additional express toll lanes.
- Widening I-485 in Mecklenburg County, adding an express toll lane in each direction along from I-77 to U.S. 74 (Independence Boulevard).

GoTriangle to levy \$3 vehicle registration fee increase in Wake

The News and Observer By Kathryn Trogon February 22, 2017

DURHAM – GoTriangle, a regional transportation authority, will increase a vehicle registration tax it levies on qualifying vehicles registered in Wake County on Aug. 1 to help fund the \$2.3 million Wake County Transit Plan.

The GoTriangle Board of Trustees unanimously approved the fee increase from \$5 to \$8 Wednesday. It will go into effect about a month after Wake County will begin levying its own \$7 vehicle registration tax for the same purpose.

GoTriangle's \$3 increase is one of several sources that will pay for a majority of the 10-year Wake County Transit Plan, which is expected to connect the Triangle with more buses and trains by 2027. The plan calls for commuter rail between Garner and Durham, as well as more and higher frequency bus routes throughout the county.

"There's several revenue streams that are going to empower us to be able to provide transit to our region, and this is one of them," GoTriangle Board of Trustees Chairwoman Jennifer Robinson said.

Other funding sources include a half-cent local [sales tax](#) that voters [approved](#) in November and the \$7 county vehicle registration tax that Wake commissioners [approved](#) in December. Funding also will come from a 5 percent tax on vehicle rentals in Wake, Durham and Oranges counties that GoTriangle already levies.

These revenue sources are expected to generate \$91 million the first year, with a majority coming from the half-cent sales tax.

GoTriangle is considering a work plan for fiscal year 2017-18 that would dictate how money collected from these revenue sources from July 2017 through June 2018 would be used. The public can comment on the draft work plan until April 3 at www.waketransit.com/fy18-work-plan/.

"We are a growing, vibrant region," said Mike Charbonneau, GoTriangle's director of communications. "At a time when many cities of our size usually equate commuting with congestion, pollution and frustration, the projects built under the Wake County Transit Plan will provide essential transportation links and choices that are designed to help commuters bypass traffic and get to their destinations quickly."

If the draft plan is approved, most of the funding from the first year of revenue collections would go toward capital projects and establishing a funding reserve. It also would pay for planning, staff and increased transit operations.

The plan also outlines proposed bus service improvements that can be made starting this year without needing new buses, including extending routes later into the night and adding midday and weekend trips to regional, Raleigh and Cary routes.

Additional trips would be added to GoTriangle's Route 100 and Route 300, which run from downtown Raleigh to the Regional Transit Center in Durham and from downtown Raleigh to downtown Cary respectively; Raleigh's Route 7 from Moore Square Station to Garner; and several Cary routes that serve major destinations such as downtown, Crossroads Plaza and WakeMed.

Chapel Hill residents consider what they want in planned light-rail stations

The News and Observer-Chapel Hill News By Tammy Grubb February 23, 2017

CHAPEL HILL – Development around planned light-rail stations should make it easy for everyone to get from home to work, shopping or entertainment without a car, residents said Wednesday at an inaugural planning [workshop](#).

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Others suggested making it safer to cross highways and rail tracks with greenways and pedestrian bridges. A few also expressed lingering concerns that only those who can afford to live near the 17.7-mile route between UNC Hospitals and N.C. Central University will see its benefits.

Consultants also met with neighborhood representatives earlier Wednesday to get a better understanding of local issues.

The comments and questions from the Glen Lennox, Abernathy Place, Downing Creek and Sherwood Forest representatives were similar to written comments they got Wednesday night, Gateway Planning consultant Brad Longerger said.

Residents were curious about the potential effects on flood-prone areas and how buses would link all of Orange County to the stations, he said. They asked to see more retail options, music venues and local restaurants, as well as ideas about affordable housing and bike and pedestrian connections.

"They've been making a lot of their own personal trails, in essence, between some of the neighborhoods, so trying to get those to be more official would be one approach to making sure that these folks have a safe route to walk their dogs or connect to stations themselves," Longerger said.

The conversation will continue at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, and at noon Saturday, Feb. 25, in The Franklin Hotel ballroom, 311 W. Franklin St. It wraps up with an open house and Town Council review Monday, Feb. 27.

While the Orange and Durham counties' boards of commissioners have the final say about the light-rail transit project, the council would decide on projects proposed for the stations within Chapel Hill. Durham's City Council would approve projects at a dozen rail stations within its jurisdiction.

The Chapel Hill-Durham route "is going to be one connected market, with one connected corridor, with a string of opportunities," Gateway Planning founder Scott Polikov said.

"People who want to self-select and live a transit life ... the different stations are part of their life, so they go to different stations for different parts of their lives. These stations are not competitive; they're complementary," Polikov said.

Southern Village resident Heather Brutz was among a number of younger adults in the room. She and her husband share a car or rely on walking and the bus. Their generation is more comfortable with dense housing, she said, but they've struggled to find what meets their needs.

"It's really hard to find housing that is transit accessible to the point where you really don't need a car, where you can go and get to the grocery store and everything you need. So I just want to say I think that we really do need more transit in Chapel Hill of all sorts, buses and light rail," Brutz said.

Station-oriented neighborhoods also should welcome diverse groups of people, said Dianne Pledger, who lives in Chapel Hill.

"I want to make sure as we talk about developing that we are looking at opportunities for entrepreneurs, for the diversity in the development," Pledger said. "We're talking about real affordable housing, because affordable housing in Chapel Hill is not affordable housing in Durham. Opportunities for older adults, and also looking at how people in north Chapel Hill, north Orange County or out (N.C.) 54, how they're going to benefit from this, because ... we need some jobs in our community."

Palikov noted that the area – with or without light rail – will keep attracting jobs and people, and face affordability challenges. Transit can't serve everyone, he said, but it can serve those who live nearby and generate revenues to invest in more affordable housing.

The team's affordable housing experts will use public feedback to develop some ideas, Longerger said.
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"We feel that through this process, we're going to be exploring what are those affordable housing issues," he said. "What is affordable housing for Chapel Hill and Durham, and how to we appropriately and legally figure out a way to bring that kind of development into the station areas."

Cooper appoints 10 new Board of Transportation members, replacing McCrory appointees

The News and Observer-State Politics By Colin Campbell February 17, 2017

Gov. Roy Cooper on Friday named 10 new members to the state Board of Transportation, replacing members with expiring terms who had been appointed by former Gov. Pat McCrory.

The new members represent all but two of the board seats up for appointment this year. Seven other McCrory appointees have terms that don't expire until 2019. Under state law, the governor appoints the entire board, which addresses state transportation policy and oversees the Highway Trust Fund.

Most of the board members represent specific divisions, which are clusters of counties grouped together by the Department of Transportation for funding and planning purposes.

Cooper's picks include prominent Democrats, included former legislators and former transportation board members, to replace Republicans.

Here's who Cooper appointed, and who they'll replace:

Michael S. Fox of Guilford County is a land-use attorney who previously served on the Transportation Board from 2010 to 2013. He'll represent Division 7 (Alamance, Caswell, Guilford, Orange and Rockingham), replacing Cheryl McQueary, who'd worked as a federal transportation official in President George W. Bush's administration.

Grady Hunt of Robeson County is a government, education, and real estate attorney. He'll be an at-large board member representing rural issues, replacing Jim Crawford, a former state legislator from Oxford.

Valerie D. Jordan of Wake County, an account manager at Cisco Systems, will represent Division 5 (Wake, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Person, Warren and Vance), replacing Jeff Sheehan, a senior vice president at Duke Realty Corporation.

Anthony T. Lathrop of Mecklenburg County, an attorney and chairman of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission, will be an at-large member representing government-related finance and accounting issues. He replaces Ned Curran, CEO of a Charlotte development firm.

Daniel F. McComas of New Hanover County is a former state legislator and former chairman of the N.C. Ports Authority, and is also president and CEO of MCO Transport, Inc. He'll serve as an at-large member representing state ports and aviation, replacing Wilmington attorney Robby Collins.

John R. Pope of Catawba County, board chairman for Cargo Transporters, will represent Division 12 (Alexander, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell and Lincoln). He replaces Lou Wetmore of Hickory, a wealth adviser who founded Triad Packaging Inc.

Nina Szlosberg-Landis of Wake County has served three previous terms on the Transportation Board. She will be an at-large member representing environmental issues, replacing Ferrell Blount, a former N.C. Republican Party chairman and chairman of an agricultural holding company. (CONTINUED...)

Cullie S. Tarleton of Watauga County is a former state legislator and the retired senior vice president and general manager of WBT, WBTV, and WCCB-TV in Charlotte. He will represent Division 11 (Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes and Yadkin), replacing Jim Palermo, a former executive vice president at Bank of America.

R. Michael Wells Sr. of Forsyth County is an attorney and will represent Division 9 (Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Rowan and Stokes). He replaces Jake Alexander of Salisbury, a former deputy secretary of the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Landon G. Zimmer of New Hanover County is an attorney and a commissioner on the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. He will represent Division 3 (Sampson, Duplin, Onslow, Pender, New Hanover and Brunswick), replacing Sandra Fountain, who owns a real-estate firm in Jacksonville.

Cooper has not yet named replacements from Division 1 board member Malcolm Fearing and Division 13 board member David Brown.

"These talented new members bring years of experience and commitment to public service to North Carolina's Transportation Board," Cooper said in a news release Friday. "I look forward to working with them to make important improvements to our state's transportation system."