

New parking deck could reduce downtown Durham parking issues

WRAL.com By Arielle Clay May 5, 2016



Durham, N.C. — As the downtown Durham area has grown, the number of available parking spaces hasn't kept pace, causing the area to lose business.

The Durham Performing Arts Center said it could be losing up to \$100,000 per year because of parking. In an email to the City Council, its general manager said a recent client plans to move their event to Raleigh next year because of parking issues.

Arthur Rogers owns an old bank building on Main Street and Mangum Street. He said the lack of parking has made it difficult to fill vacancies in the building.

"We recently had one really great company that wanted to put 40 people in one of our buildings and they wanted 40 parking spaces and it's not available," he said.

There are several parking garages in downtown Durham that fill to capacity each day, so the city's solution is to build a new one.

The proposed deck on Morgan Street would have between 750 and 850 available spaces and cost about \$25 million to build.

"We'll be able to meet the current parking needs and have some availability for daytime special events as well," said parking division manager Thomas Leathers.

One of the design proposals the city received had affordable housing as part of the deck, along with retail space. Leathers said that's something the city hadn't considered before. The city is in what some have called an affordable housing crisis, but with no city-owned housing in existence, it's unfamiliar territory.

"We decided to evaluate that option," Leathers said. "[We're] really deliberating a policy decision regarding affordable housing on city parcels."

Rogers said the delay to add affordable housing could add two more years to the current two year project. He supports affordable housing but said more parking is needed as soon as possible.

"I just don't think we can afford to wait," he said.

The city's transportation department is looking at the major impact of adding the affordable housing on the deck and will report back to the city council on May 19.

The deck will cost about \$25 million to build.

Charbonneau joins the flow from NCDOT to GoTriangle

NCDOT's communications chief will have similar duty at GoTriangle

He follows two other deputy secretaries who left NCDOT for the regional transit agency

They'll move to higher pay at a smaller public agency

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER ROAD WORRIER BLOG BY BRUCE SICELOFF MAY 2, 2016

Mike Charbonneau, a deputy secretary and communications chief at the state Department of Transportation since 2013, is moving to a similar role with GoTriangle, the three-county bus service and transit planning agency.

He becomes the third deputy secretary to leave DOT for GoTriangle in the past year.

Charbonneau will become communications and marketing director for GoTriangle, based in Research Triangle Park. He previously worked as a WRAL-TV reporter and chief spokesperson for Wake County schools.

"I'm very excited to join the GoTriangle team," Charbonneau, 36, of Cary said Monday. "There's really a lot of things happening with transit now and the future of transit in the Triangle."

Jeff Mann, who took charge as GoTriangle's general manager in June, previously was DOT's deputy secretary for transit. Shelley Blake, a DOT deputy secretary and chief counsel, recently was [named GoTriangle's general counsel](#). Like Charbonneau, she begins her new job May 16.

While they are moving to a much smaller public agency – GoTriangle has 265 employees, and DOT has 12,000 – both Charbonneau and Blake will start their new jobs at higher salaries. Blake's annual pay is rising from \$125,000 at DOT to \$165,000 at GoTriangle, and Charbonneau's will rise from \$104,000 to \$117,000, according to state payroll database records and GoTriangle.

The new hires come as GoTriangle moves ahead on engineering work for a [\\$1.6 billion light rail line](#) from Durham to Chapel Hill, and works with Wake County on a proposed [\\$2.3 billion transit plan](#) that would quadruple bus service and augment it with commuter trains and bus rapid transit service.

"We are excited to bring Mike on board during this important time of growth and innovation at GoTriangle," Mann said in a [news release](#). "His background, experience and diverse skills will be valuable for our organization and our community."

Legislature looks to drop light rail funding cap that's harming Orange-Durham project

A \$500,000 state funding limit has jeopardized plans for light rail connection between Durham and Chapel Hill

House budget would also drop ferry tolls

A study would look at using abandoned rest stops to keep napping truckers off exit ramps

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER STATE POLITICS BY COLIN CAMPBELL MAY 12, 2016

House lawmakers want to remove a cap on light rail funding that has harmed plans for a Durham-Chapel Hill light rail project.

The \$500,000 cap enacted last year would be dropped under the House transportation budget that received initial approval from a subcommittee Thursday. The budget plan would also eliminate ferry tolls and launch a study of trucker parking options along highways – a response to truckers getting ticketed for parking and sleeping next to exit ramps when truck stops are full.

The light rail cap was a surprise provision added to last year's budget. It prompted concerns from urban legislators in both parties and canceled the state's commitment to provide \$138 million for the planned \$1.5 billion Durham-Orange light-rail line.

The 17-mile rail line would be anchored by UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill, and in Durham by the Duke and VA medical centers and the downtown core.

Rep. Paul Tine, who co-chairs the Transportation Appropriations Committee, said removing the cap allows DOT to fund projects based on an objective ranking system.

"We wanted to make sure that we continue to list all the options in the state in transportation," he said. "They (backers of the Orange-Durham project) still have to go through all the process to make sure they can do one of those projects, but it doesn't take it off the table from a legislative perspective."

Rep. Grier Martin, a Raleigh Democrat, praised the decision to remove the cap. "It helps districts like mine and districts adjacent to mine," he said.

In the Senate, Durham Democratic Sen. Floyd McKissick filed a separate bill this week to eliminate the light rail cap. "I think we're very supportive" of the proposal, said Republican Sen. Bill Rabon of Southport, one of the chamber's lead transportation budget writers.

Ferry tolls

House legislators are making another push in their budget to eliminate tolls on state-run ferries. Senate leaders have been less willing to drop the tolls in previous budget cycles.

"We've been working with the Senate during the interim to see if we can come to an agreeable spot," Tine said. "We're not there yet, but I'm hopeful that we can get there."

Rabon said Senate budget writers are considering the proposal but said it would be "premature" to say whether they'll support it.

While some coastal ferry routes are free, others include tolls ranging from \$3 to \$45. Coastal leaders have argued that the routes should be treated like roads because some riders use them for daily commutes.

"Ferries are the only part of our transportation system that's being treated differently," said Tine, an unaffiliated legislator from Kitty Hawk. "What this does is create consistency. ... Oftentimes, we say these are floating bridges."

The state collects about \$1.8 million annually in tolls, but collecting the tolls costs up to \$600,000, Tine said. The House budget includes \$13.8 million for the ferry system, fully funding it without tolls.

Trucker parking

The House budget also calls for a study in response to complaints that the state has been aggressively ticketing truckers who park alongside freeway exit ramps to sleep. Truckers, particularly those traveling Interstate 77, say they have little choice when private truck stops are full and they've hit the maximum number of hours behind the wheel.

The crackdown by the state Highway Patrol was prompted in part by complaints from Charlie Shelton, a donor to Gov. Pat McCrory who owns a winery near I-77.

The budget bill calls for the Department of Transportation to "study ways to provide additional off-highway parking and rest areas," including opening up abandoned rest stops as safe place for truckers to park. The study report would be due to legislators by next February.

"It's safety for our drivers, it's safety for the public," Tine said. "If we have the available resources to safely provide those spaces, I think we should take a look at it."

Colin Campbell: 919-829-4698, @RaleighReporter

HOUSE BUDGET

Other items approved by budget panels Thursday would:

- Eliminate vehicle emission inspections in 31 counties, with additional gradual decreases over several years. Wake, Durham and Mecklenburg are among the counties that would no longer require those inspections. Newer vehicles would not have to be inspected.
- Delay the N.C. Guaranteed Admission Program (NCGAP) by one year. The program diverting some students admitted to UNC schools to community colleges for two years was to begin this year. UNC officials want a delay.
- Hire literacy coaches for low-performing elementary schools, using money that would have been used to hire more first-grade teachers to reduce class size.
- Spend \$750,000 on Zika virus prevention efforts.
- Use \$25 million in proceeds from selling the Dorothea Dix hospital property to the city of Raleigh to improve mental health care in rural hospitals.
- Launch a three-year pilot program to address a growing opioid addiction problem.
- Budget \$300,000 for a pilot program to address "food deserts," putting local fresh fruit and vegetables in convenience stores in areas that have few grocery stores.

- Suspend the State Bureau of Investigation's Air Wing if the state fails to purchase a new plane to replace one that has fallen into disrepair.

Staff writers Lynn Bonner, Craig Jarvis, Colin Campbell and Dan Boylan

Census: Raleigh, Durham move up list of nation's largest cities

The US Census Bureau released its latest municipal population estimates Thursday

It estimates that 8 of the 25 fastest-growing municipalities in North Carolina last year were in the Triangle

Report shows that 228 of the state's municipalities lost population last year

How the U.S. census will change in 2020 02:36

The 2020 census "will be unlike any other in our nation's history" and save billions of dollars, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The agency says it will use different innovative tools to get the most accurate and cost effective count. This means you may see less census workers in your neighborhood. **U.S.**

Census Bureau

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY RICHARD STRADLING AND DAVID RAYNOR MAY 19, 2016

RALEIGH -- Raleigh is now bigger than Omaha, Durham has more residents than St. Petersburg, Fla., and eight of the 25 fastest-growing municipalities in North Carolina last year were in the Triangle, according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau's annual report on municipal population shows most of the big gainers are in the South and West, matching the shift in the nation's population. Seattle and Denver now each have more residents than Detroit, while Arlington, Texas, displaced Cleveland on the list of the nation's 50 largest cities.

The report shows the uneven growth of North Carolina, which topped 10 million residents last year. Of the 552 North Carolina communities counted by the Census Bureau, about 41 percent lost population last year, including sizable cities such as Fayetteville, Rocky Mount and Jacksonville.

[\[Look up NC population estimates\]](#)

Among the report's findings:

- Raleigh's population reached an estimated 451,066 last July 1, making the city the 42nd largest in the country just behind Virginia Beach.
- Durham's population was an estimated 257,636 last July, making it the 79th largest city in the country just behind Buffalo. Durham solidified its position as the state's fourth largest city, ahead of Winston-Salem but behind Greensboro.
- Rolesville continues to be the Triangle's fastest-growing community. Nearly 6,300 people lived in the town last July 1, about 65 percent more than in 2010.

- In addition to Rolesville, Fuquay-Varina, Clayton, Morrisville, Zebulon, Wake Forest, Holly Springs and Apex were among the top 25 fastest-growing towns in the state last year.
- Chapel Hill added fewer than 200 residents in the year ending July 1. Its population has grown less than 4 percent since 2010, to an estimated 59,568.
- Charlotte's population grew by 17,695 in the year ending July 1, the 10th largest numerical increase in the country. Charlotte remained by far the state's largest city and the 17th largest in the country, with 827,097 residents.

Wake transit plan sails through first of 3 votes

Environmentalists, Millennials and executives endorse \$2.3 billion trains-and-buses plan at a public hearing

Wake County voters are expected to decide in November on a half-cent sales tax to help pay for it

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY BRUCE SICELOFF MAY 19, 2016

RALEIGH -- The proposed Wake County Transit Plan won unanimous approval Wednesday from the first of three local boards that will decide whether to ask voters in November to levy a special half-cent sales tax, which would help finance a \$2.3 billion investment in commuter trains and beefed-up bus service.

The CAMPO executive board – mayors and town council members who set transportation priorities for Wake and parts of neighboring counties – endorsed [the plan](#) after a public hearing in which more than 30 speakers had mostly good things to say about it.

The heaviest improvements would be focused in high-traffic zones through central Raleigh and Cary. But the mayor of one outlying town said she was confident that Wake's smaller communities also will benefit in the years ahead.

"I think there is some concern in outlying communities," said Wake Forest Mayor Vivian Jones. "But this is the beginning of a transit program in Wake County, and I expect that as we go forward, it will become even more robust for the outlying communities as well as Raleigh and Cary and the inner core. I am expecting that and I will continue to push for that to happen."

The plan starts with buses – more frequent service, more hours of the day and night, and on new routes that would provide the first transit links to some towns. Planners say it would quadruple transit ridership in Wake County by 2027. Twenty miles of bus rapid transit (BRT) service – deluxe buses with some of the amenities of trains – would be built along major north, south, east and west streets through downtown Raleigh.

Wake also would aim to partner with Durham County to launch 37 miles of rush-hour commuter trains from Durham through Research Triangle Park to Morrisville, Cary, Raleigh and Garner.

The board of GoTriangle, the regional planning and bus service agency formerly known as Triangle Transit, is expected to approve Wake's transit plan next week. The Wake County commissioners also are expected to vote their approval on June 6.

A few speakers told the combined [CAMPO](#) and [GoTriangle](#) boards that the plan would cost the taxpayers too much.

"I am very much against subsidy," said Robert Fuller of Raleigh. "If it is needed and makes sense, an entrepreneur will get it done."

But the critics were outnumbered by environmentalists, technology executives and [young adults who don't like to drive cars](#).

"Millennials like myself ... expect public transit systems in their areas," said Kristin Athens of Apex, a 25-year-old law student. "Millennials expect to be able to shop, eat, be entertained and receive apartment housing all in one walkable or bikable place, which the transit plan fully facilitates."

Other speakers said better transit will stimulate economic development.

"I have hundreds of clients that are small businesses that hire thousands of people throughout the area, and transit is a large piece of our ability to be competitive and grow," said Nathan Spencer, a MassMutual executive.

FUNDING WAKE'S TRANSIT PLAN

Some of the expected funding sources, 2017-2027:

- \$962 million half-cent transit sales tax.
- \$720 million federal funds (half the capital cost for commuter trains and bus rapid transit).
- \$512 million bond proceeds.
- \$112 million passenger fares.
- \$95 million car registration fees.
- \$41 million rental car tax.
- \$14 million state bus funds.

Source: waketransit.com

Four new parking decks? Durham city, county leaders get serious about downtown growth

Triangle Business Journal By Amanda Hoyle, Staff Writer May 19, 2016, 3:10pm EDT

Durham City Council at its work session on Thursday evaluated a new recommendation by staff to not delay the start of construction for a \$23 million, 7-story parking deck at the corner of Mangum and Morgan streets.

It is one of four new parking deck projects that both Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners have already started budgeting for over the next three years. The projects combined would add about 3,200 new parking options for downtown workers and visitors.

(continued)



Downtown Durham, N.C. - TBJ FILE PHOTO

The new Durham city deck on Mangum Street, across from the McDonald's restaurant, would create about 850 new parking spaces by late summer 2018 under its current timeline. The structure would also include about 20,000 square feet of ground-level retail and office space.

An alternative idea to incorporate affordable housing units on top or around the building could delay delivery until 2020, according to a memo from Durham interim Transportation Director Harom Crutchfield. Council is expected to vote on the proposal at its meeting June 6.

Durham County commissioners are also evaluating a public-private partnership plan to build an even bigger parking deck with close to 1,000 spaces on the 500 block of E. Main Street. The site is currently a 400-space parking lot between the Human Services Complex and the future headquarters of the Durham Police Department. The project is also expected to support future parking needs for development at the adjacent Gateway project on the old Hendrick Durham Auto Mall site.

But on a more urgent timeline are two other parking decks that are being proposed by [private developers that will both be getting financial incentives from local government.](#)

Longfellow Real Estate Partners in September was approved for a \$5.25 million incentive package to help pay for the construction of an 820-space parking deck. The deck would be needed to support construction of two new office buildings that Longfellow has on the drawing boards for the newest phase of the Durham Innovation District, or Durham I.D. Construction of the deck and at least one of the two new office buildings are planned to begin before year-end.

Read: [A new Durham is dawning](#)

The owners and developers of The Chesterfield building have also been approved for up to \$6 million in incentives over 15 years to build a 544-space parking deck to support the parking needs of its office development project.

Read: [Wexford's \\$128 million Chesterfield project](#)

Construction of The Chesterfield is currently underway and slated to be finished in early 2017. The new parking deck across from Brightleaf Square would be under construction around the same time.

Amanda Hoyle covers commercial and residential real estate. Follow her on Twitter @TBJrealestate

Ex-transportation chief Ray LaHood addresses challenges facing RTP region

The Herald-Sun By Alex Dixon May 23, 2016

DURHAM — The key to attracting talent in the Research Triangle region lies in planning for the future of transportation, addressing infrastructure needs and offering affordable housing, former US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said in Durham Tuesday.

LaHood, who served as the secretary from 2009 to 2013, visited the Research Triangle Foundation headquarters for a Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce discussion on how transportation impacts the area and the state.

"You've had a lot of success here, but you can do more. You could offer more," he said. "The one thing that you don't want to happen, you don't want to see the Googles and the Ubers come here and snatch up all your smart graduates from these great universities and send them off to Mountain View or San Francisco or wherever else they're located."

LaHood described America as "one big pothole" when discussing the state of the country's transportation infrastructure and deficiency in funding required for upgrades and planning.

"I believe in looking at the idea of looking at VMTs (vehicle-miles-traveled tax); I believe in looking at the idea of tolling. That is all fine but it does not compare to the big pot of money that built America: the gas tax in our country hasn't been raised in 23 years," he said. "Name me anything that hasn't been raised in 23 years: a gallon of milk, a dozen eggs, a gallon of gasoline."

LaHood said there are 57,000 structurally deficient bridges throughout the country and that without resources to improve funding "America's going to become a third-world country when it comes to transportation."

"And with gasoline as low as it is now, I say to politicians in Washington raise the gas tax 10 cents a gallon and index it," he said.

N.C. State University economist Michael Walden said that as the area's population is set to double over the next four decades, all discussions about housing costs and transportation are going to become even more pressing.

Walden said with urban centers becoming more attractive yet also more expensive, this creates more commuting opportunities for mass transit that could also be addressed by the private sector.

"Don't discard the private sector in addressing mass transportation," he said, providing a hypothetical scenario where an entrepreneur organized bus routes to come into downtown Durham from northern Durham County. "If there's demand for something and a profit can be made, there will be a private sector response."

Walden said the time is now to borrow and pay for infrastructure improvements at the federal level given interest rates, and that this would lead to more jobs and improved economic efficiency with the work.

"We have such pressing infrastructure needs," he said. "We need to have a 21st century program of reviving the nation's infrastructure."

Speakers also touched on technological innovations such as driverless cars and virtual reality that make for more unpredictability on planning and predicting how the move toward urbanization will continue.

But with the so-called millennial generation relying less on automobiles, the country and localities need to address and plan for alternate modes of transportation, they said.

"I think this area has a lot of room to grow and develop," Walden said. "But, along the way, it will have to deal with these challenges like transportation. If not dealt with, this could take the luster off the region. We don't want to become a Washington, DC (with traffic)."

Rep. John Torbett, chairman of the state's House Appropriations Transportation Committee, said that the state "has to start looking at our future and planning and programming it now" or that it will be too late.

Torbett said there is a climate of people who don't want change when it comes to construction related to transportation and infrastructure upgrades, and that the General Assembly is dealing with a transportation budget that allows for it to fund about one-third of its needs.

Torbett said the committee is focusing on transportation work like improving secondary roads to offload more traffic from the Interstate system and utilizing existing railways for transportation.

"We need to get people motivated to move less cars, more independently," he said, providing an example of Washington DC extending its subway lines out further as traffic increased in the city. "You apply that to Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham. Are we ready for it today? Maybe not; the population can't sustain it, but we better get ready for it because we will be in the next 20 years...if we don't do something relatively quickly, we'll be bound up and it'll be too late."

City hopes to build 187 new bus stop shelters

The Herald-Sun By Lauren Horsch May 23, 2016

DURHAM — While shelters for GoDurham bus stops are still a few years away, the City of Durham Department of Transportation and GoTriangle are working to begin the building process.

The hope is to build 187 bus stop shelters over the next five years, with the design process for 40 to begin this winter.

Harmon Crutchfield, interim director of transportation for the city, said Wednesday the city's transportation department will hire a design consultant in the fall to start the process.

"In (fiscal year 2016-17) we should see two shelters hit the street," Crutchfield told the City Council. "Whereas in (fiscal year 2017-18) you're going to see about 26 shelters hit the street."

The city's public works department has submitted a list of locations where the improvements would be needed. GoTriangle is set to manage about 112 shelters, while the city's public works department and the N.C. Department of Transportation would manage 75 more.

Crutchfield said there is about \$500,000 available now in grant funding for shelters and other bus stop improvements, but the majority of the money would be funded through new service money coming into the department.

City Councilman Steve Schewel put the bus shelter to bus stop ratio into perspective.

He noted there are about 1,100 bus stops in the city, but 100 bus shelters — the new construction thus effectively tripling the number of bus shelters available.

GoTriangle Transit Administrator Brian Fahey said the current number is closer to 128 bus shelters. The shelters answer a real need for those utilizing public transportation — especially on busy streets.

"Has anyone had the opportunity to go out and look at where the bus stops are located?" Mayor Pro Tem Cora Cole-McFadden asked. "On Roxboro Road I see people standing up in the grass and it's just horrible."

A GoTriangle intern recently did an inventory of bus stops as well as amenities at the stops.

"Any request that comes in from citizens ... We will send those to our stops and amenities coordinator," Fahey said. "Typically we can work on an arrangement to move that stop to a safer location, which I know we've done numerous times on Fayetteville (Street) and the Cornwallis (Road) area over the last six months."

Stop standards are also being considered in order to determine where to best put new bus stops.

North Carolina gets designations for 2 more interstates

WRAL.com By Brian Shrader May 26, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. — State officials in North Carolina say they've received approval for two new proposed interstate highways.

The Governor's Office said in a statement Wednesday that a national association has approved two new interstate designations for eastern North Carolina. ¹

Officials approved Interstate 42 for the U.S. Highway 70 corridor between Interstate 40 and Morehead City.

Permission also has been given for Interstate 87 along U.S Highway 64/17 between Raleigh and Virginia.

"It makes it easier in terms of economic development. When people are looking for a place to locate or expand a business, they ask, 'Does it have interstate access?'" said Joe Milazzo II, Regional Transportation Alliance executive. "We'll have counties that will now have that, and eastern North Carolina will get their first interstate to Hampton roads."

Milazzo said the I-87 designation pays tribute to important dates in North Carolina history. The Roanoke Colony was founded in 1587, James Madison's Virginia plan, an important part of the development of the United State Constitution, was created in 1787, and North Carolina State University was created in 1887.

Gov. Pat McCrory says the roads would provide improved links to the Hampton Roads area in Virginia as well as improving links between important military bases.

There is no word on how the state would pay for the interstates or when they might be built. But the state can put up signs that read "Future I-42" and "Future I-87."