

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Official Public Comment

Please leave your comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Please
return this
form to
the comment
box

Dear Patricia Murock,

I arrived today to attend the
Durham - Orange Light rail hearing only
to find that it is not starting at
4 PM but 4:15 PM.

When I find out the Court reporter
is late. I don't know how long we
will have to wait for them to
arrive.

With all the controversy over this
project, it is disappoint to see how
things are being run.

I had better hopes for this
organization & project

Sincerely

Paul McArthur

Get Involved Contact Form

John Neter [REDACTED]

Sent: 9/24/2015 10:46 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: John Neter

Phone Number:

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Message Body:

I am writing in support of the decision to make Route C2A the preferred route. It avoids fragmenting the Little Creek Bottomlands area, it avoids fragmenting the Cedars retirement community and presenting hazards to the Du Bose Nursing facility, it is the best alternative according to analysis with respect to cost, time of transit, and ridership, and it is supported by the Corp of Engineers.

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C2A route for light rail

Victoria Neunert [REDACTED]

Sent: 9/9/2015 4:10 PM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Thank you for choosing the C2A route over the other three alternatives. It is clearly the most efficient, in cost as well as in land use, and also the least disruptive to the established community of Meadowmont and its wetlands.

Sincerely,
Victoria Neunert

[REDACTED]

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Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Official Public Comment

Name: Inell Neutres Email: [REDACTED]
Mailing Address: [REDACTED] City: S Zip Code: [REDACTED]

How to Comment on the DEIS

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2. Submit a web-based comment form: ourtransitfuture.com/comment
3. Mail a letter to D-O LRT Project - DEIS, C/O GoTriangle, Post Office Box 530, Morrisville, NC 27560
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Please leave your comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I like the idea

Please Turn Over →

Get Involved Contact Form

Giang Nguyen [REDACTED]

Sent: 9/8/2015 2:46 PM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Giang Nguyen

Phone Number:

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Message Body:

I object the light rail project because it is too expensive while beneficial to only a small portion of our population. Unlike densely populated cities, the Chapel Hill - Durham area is spread out. In order to serve the transportation needs of the majority of our population, a public transit system needs wide coverage, something that the light rail project can not address.

In particular, the light rail does not go to the RTP, where there is a huge demand for public transit for commuters and where I expect future population growth to come from. Instead, it only connects the two universities (UNC and Duke). The population related to these universities is expected to be stable over time. I don't see a need to address "future population growth" for the population related to these universities. Also, for transportation needs between the two campuses, we already have the Robertson bus.

I still see the bus system as being superior, cheaper, and yet capable of serving more people in our area than this light rail project. I prefer my tax dollars being invested in improving bus services (increase frequency, expand routes etc...).

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Our Transit Future (<http://ourtransitfuture.com>)

From: Nathan Nicely [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 3:14 PM
To: Jeffrey Sullivan
Subject: Re: Collected questions from Pope's Crossing neighborhood

I was told I should email these again so that they become part of the written record, so here they are.

Nate N

1.
At the homeowner's association meeting at the Pope's Crossing neighborhood July 30, 2015 a representative from GoTriangle stated clearly that studies showed homes near light rail stations averaged a 3 to 25% increase in property value. I have reviewed a fair number of studies and have never seen one that would justify this statement - the effect she spoke of, when it appears, is generally modest, is not well described by percentage, and if it were forced into percentage would be an average of 3 to 5 percent. It is possible that the representative found one very specific instance of a home going up 25%, but we could easily find one that goes down the same percentage if that is the case. Please supply the references that show homes are likely to go up in value as high as 25% and include links to these studies so we can review them.

2.
At the homeowner's association meeting at the Pope's Crossing neighborhood July 30, 2015 a representative from GoTriangle described the horn used by a light rail train to warn of its approach to a complex railroad crossing as being between 100 and 105 decibels and being four blasts, 2 long, 1 short and 1 long. Given that the crossing at the intersection of Pope Road and Old Durham Chapel Hill Road includes a roundabout with four roadway connections and is intersected diagonally by the light rail, the likelihood of the horn being required for safety is extremely high. The horn blasts starting 15 seconds before the train meets the intersection, as the requirements state, would put homes nearby, one only 80' from the tracks right where the

horn would sound, at great risk of a severe drop in value due to extreme noise and vibration. Please send links to the guidelines for how the horn decision is made and explain what Triangle Transit would do to protect these homes.

3.

After an informative presentation by Go Triangle on 7/30 by Juanita, Dick and Jeffery my biggest concerns are the removal of trees and the effect of erosion, pollution and noise from I40 until the new landscaping has a chance to mature. I don't think my property will be as severely affected as the owners further down and I sure feel bad for them but I am fearful of the unknown problems that could arise from removing so many mature trees with their massive root system and also the impact on our drainage systems.

Progress is good and for that I am not opposed to the general idea of getting ahead of transportation issues we are sure to face 20 yrs from now. I want to hear the bad with the good. No need to sugar coat it. I personally prefer to be prepared for the worse and pleased in the end when it "wasn't that bad". There are certainly cons and I want to hear FACTS on those along with the obvious sales pitch we heard last night. I do appreciate the time and efforts on both sides.

4.

I am concerned about several issues:

Noise abatement - the trees proposed to be removed and replaced won't do the job. The noise of trains running every 10 min. means possibly two trains every 10 minutes, since trains go both directions. Noise of accelerating and decelerating due to station: Measure of decibels reported at our HOA meeting was of train going smoothly and consistently at 40mph? (Not the case here.) Train horns, bells and flashing lights at crossing 18 hours/day. Vehicles idling, starting to move again. Traffic WILL increase on Pope Road (no, Olde Coach is unlikely to be affected, as stated at meeting), but Pope Rd WILL be, and numerous houses back up to Pope Rd. Overall if I phrase this as a question, it would be if you have really considered all the factors contributing to noise and unease in the Pope's Crossing neighborhood, because it seems you have only considered each contribution on its own merits?

Also, construction noise - and for how long...a year?

I am general unhappy with the transit company for the lack of information provided to our neighborhood. Even though the website stated that all affected homes would be notified, it appears they meant only those that would be able to reach out and touch the train (I don't know if even those people at the north end of Pope's Crossing were contacted). I was literally told via email that, since my home is 750 feet from the rails, I won't be affected! That is ridiculous.

5.

Where the light rail comes closest to a house in the neighborhood - a distance of 80' is awfully close. Is there no way to make the arc greater so that the train can swing farther away from that house? Maybe extend the distance to 100' or 120'?

6.

Can we get a sidewalk running from Gateway station down the west side of Pope Rd to Fountain Ridge Rd? Would there be a pedestrian bridge over Old Durham/Old CH Rd connecting Pope Rd sidewalk to Gateway Station, 50 yds south of the traffic circle?

7.

The neighborhood without a doubt is noisier than when I arrived in 1988. When I moved in, you could not tell there was a highway there at all. Since then I-40 has been extended and widened. The traffic and noise have gone way up as the trees have come down. Lane construction some years ago created powerful thumping noises and vibration at night, enough to wake me from sleep.

I'm very concerned about the noise level. You claim the addition of the train will not increase what is already there. But as I said, noise has gone up dramatically over the years. I worry your evaluation is akin to the frog in the pot. Turn the heat up gradually and the frog will never jump out. In the same way, I worry that you consider only incremental changes at a given time and not the cumulative effect over the years.

Will you accept a third party noise evaluation by the neighborhood before and after the rail project, and if that evaluation determines noise has increased, will you then be bound to remediate that noise back to the pre-rail level?

How will you manage construction noise so that it does not disturb the neighborhood?

The thought of a horn and/or barrier bells every 10 minutes as the trains run worries me too. What are your plans to eliminate this noise from the neighborhood. Remember, you claim the train will not add to the existing noise level because noise does not combine. I worry this will prove false.

The benefit of a local rail station to me will depend largely on my ability to walk to it. Pope Road is not pedestrian friendly. What will you do to make a safe walking route from Pope's Crossing to the rail station?

What is the type, initial size, growth rate, adult height, lifespan, and replacement schedule for the trees you said you'd plant to replace the ones you remove?

How long will the construction of the Gateway station and the rail line near Pope's Crossing

take?

Will you monitor traffic on Pope Road and what measures will you take if traffic goes up?

8.

I don't have any questions. I just hate this whole plan. It won't solve the problem of increasing traffic on 15-501, and it's painfully obvious you haven't thought through and modeled every aspect - the noise, the cost, the long-term financial support. If you really want to provide a viable public transit option, you need to stop looking at congested corridors (54, 15-501), and START looking at where people are trying to go. The RDU airport. The hospitals. Downtown Durham. Franklin St. Existing park-and-rides and garages. Build a route linking those focal points cleanly and efficiently. As it is you're linking just a few key locations with this one circuitous route. Then instead of tracking through easements, woods, and watersheds, use eminent domain to devise a sane, efficient route. Specifically with regards to Pope's Crossing, it'd be the greater justice to simply buy and demolish all the homes than try to convince us of the lies that the noise won't be noticeable, that the property values will increase, traffic will be the same, and other such rubbish.

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Official Public Comment

Name: *Norbert Medner*

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]

City: [REDACTED]

Zip Code: [REDACTED]

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Please leave your comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

- *light rail is too expensive*
- *it is the most expensive way of transportation*
- *it is not save (Takes 400 FT to stop by 35 MPH)*
- *it takes only 15 minutes onto light rail*
- *there is not enough parking*
- *economical it does not make sense*
- *light rail commute only to and from 2 Hospital it does not pick up more riders at other places*
- *No connection to Airport - RDU*
- *light rail does not stop at Hospital directly so riders still has to walk a fair distance*

Please Turn Over →

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The cost per rider-ship does not add
up. Minnesota dropped Ridership to
from 19000 to 15000

- Charlotte is the worst in traffic in the nation
with light rail

- light rail as of today is on outdated
system. Alternatives already exist such as
car-less vehicle, ~~smart bus~~ smart Bus-system

- Once light-rail is build you cannot change
it's route, ~~or~~ bus lane can be changed in days

COMMENT: Light Rail Concerns: Route

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/6/2015 11:08 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

The route is not along densely-populated areas and does not serve low-income population in downtown Durham (less likely to have a car).

UNC station will not serve Chapel Hill nor be convenient to most of UNC's campus:

- Station will be at distant edge of southwestern corner of campus (see attached map)
- Must transfer to bus or shuttle to get anywhere on campus, even to the hospitals

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED MAP OF THE UNC CAMPUS and comments on it.

Attachments:  [UNC Campus map .pdf](#)

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COMMENT: Light Rail Concerns: SAFETY ISSUES

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/6/2015 10:41 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

At-grade crossings:

Number of at-grade crossings in 17 miles of track = 39 in Durham County alone.

- Each gate will have about **150** crossings every work day, Mon.-Fri.

There will be an at-grade crossing that goes through a new traffic circle at Old Durham Chapel Hill Road and Pope Road, right next to my neighborhood - **1/4 mile from my house.**

- Increased traffic on both roads due to the park-and-ride at the station
- Increased noise from train horns and crossing's warning bells
- Increased noise and air pollution of cars lined up and idling while waiting for trains to pass.

Accidents:

- Fatality rates across all modes of transportation are significantly higher for light rail (22.6 fatalities per 100 million miles); only motorcycles have a higher fatality rate.
- Light rail has 22 more accidents per passenger mile traveled than cars do.
- A motorist is almost 20 times more likely to die in a crash involving a light rail train than involving another motor vehicle.
- 50% of all car crashes occur within 5 miles of home.

Light rail crossings are not synchronized with traffic lights, which will cause back-ups and increased auto accidents.

Emergency Vehicles:

As an emergency room doctor stated at the Sept. 29, 2015 public hearing, the at-grade crossings pose significant time delays in reaching accidents/homes, and even a one-minute delay can mean the difference between life and death.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do **NOT** build light rail. Implement an improved bus system, which is considerably less expensive and more flexible.

COMMENTS: Light Rail Concerns: GoTriangle's Communication

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/6/2015 10:55 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

Information about this process was largely unknown to most of the local people, even though it's been in the works for about 20 years. Not until plans and the route were fairly firm was information provided and input requested.

GoTriangle's communication about this process was poor until about a year ago.

Their website promised they would contact every homeowner "directly affected" by the light rail, but at that time contact appeared to be dependent on the homeowner first making contact to request alerts to meetings.

While on their website there now is a letter to homeowners dated 8/6/14 with an alert of the first informational meeting on 8/20/14, I first learned of that meeting on 8/20/14 via an email forwarded at my work, not via any communication from GoTriangle.

Later, after I had given GoTriangle my contact information, I received no alerts via email, and every communication sent via USPS arrived after the announced meeting.

GoTriangle told me in an email that my house is **not affected** because it's 750 feet from I-40. Apparently they mean my property will not physically be touched. However, added noise for at least 18 hours/day WILL affect the livability of my property.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do **NOT** build light rail. Implement an improved bus system, which is considerably less expensive and more flexible.

COMMENT: Light Rail Concerns: Inaccuracies/Misleading Information

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/6/2015 10:59 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

Travel times have increased from 34 to 42-44 minutes (plus 10 min. at terminus and plus waiting and travel time for buses to get to ultimate destination).

Costs have increased significantly:

- Anticipated to cost \$1.6 BILLION (up from \$100 MILLION in 1992) and will undoubtedly far exceed that amount.

Even if the State of North Carolina and the federal government fund this project, taxpayers will carry an ever-increasing share of the load. Every purchase funds it, and homeowners will likely see an increase in property tax to fund it.

This puts an undue burden on local people who may never ride the light rail (or still be alive when it's completed).

Taxpayers who ride must also pay a fare. Given the experience of peer systems, fare box collections account for less than 20% of operation costs.

Projected ridership appears to be inflated:

- In 2011, ridership was estimated at 12,000.
- In 2015, ridership was inexplicably increased to 23,000 (first projected to be in 2035 and then in 2040).

To meet the projected ridership, our area would require a population density akin to that of Barcelona, Spain (**40,870** people/square mile).

The DOLRT corridor study reported 2,071ppsm in 2005 and projects **4,052ppsm** by 2035.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do **NOT** build light rail. Implement an improved bus system, which is considerably less expensive and more flexible.

COMMENT: Light Rail Concerns: High Temperatures Affect Rails

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/6/2015 11:05 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

High temperatures require trains to slow down:

GoTriangle has made no mention of heat-related findings in significantly-cooler Portland, Oregon:

- At temperatures above 90 degrees, trains must slow down due to sagging power lines and "sun kinked" rails.
- Above 100 degrees, trains cannot exceed 35mph.

How many days/year do Durham/Chapel Hill have that are above 90 degrees?

- 1995: 24 consecutive days of 90 degrees
- 2007: 83 days above 90
- 2010: 84 days above 90
- 2015: 12 consecutive days (in June) above 95

With global warming, these numbers will likely only increase.

Train travel times will increase significantly.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do **NOT** build light rail. Implement an improved bus system, which is considerably less expensive and more flexible.

COMMENT: Light Rail Concerns: NOISE POLLUTION

Candace [REDACTED]

Sent: 10/7/2015 9:06 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Candace Noel

Address: [REDACTED]

Due to a station located right next to my neighborhood, **trains will always accelerate and decelerate in front of our neighborhood.**

Noise levels quoted by GoTriangle were for a train moving steadily at 40mph, not accelerating or decelerating, which **will increase decibel levels.**

Trains are planned to run 18.5 hours/day, 5:30am-12:00 midnight:

- Every 20 min. during non-rush hours
- Every 10 min. during rush hours (6:00-9:30am and 3:30-6:30pm)

Trains running both directions effectively means **every 5 minutes for 6.5 hours** of every day and **every 10 minutes for the remainder**, with **reprieve only for 5.5 hours of sleep time between 12:00 midnight and 5:30am.**

Per GoTriangle, every time a train approaches the at-grade crossing:

- Trains will blow horn
- Crossing's warning bells will ring
- Crossing's lights will flash

There will be increased traffic and noise on Pope Road (immediately behind my house) due to the park-and-ride at the station.

GoTriangle maintains that noise of trains is not additive to existing noise of I-40:

- They will not erect a noise barrier.
- They will cut down many trees between I-40 and houses in our neighborhood.
- They have stated they will to plant trees that will muffle noise, but those will take years to reach sufficient size to be at all effective.

Construction will be along the entire length of my neighborhood - about 1 mile:

- How long will construction go on, and during what hours?
- Construction noise and traffic and driving delays will certainly affect all those who dwell in the neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do NOT build light rail. Implement an improved bus system, which is considerably less expensive and more flexible.

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Official Public Comment

Name:

Phillip Norman

Email:

[Redacted]

Telephone:

[Redacted]

Mailing Address:

[Redacted]

City:

[Redacted]

Zip Code:

[Redacted]

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Please Turn Over →

Get Involved Contact Form

Brian Norris [REDACTED]

Sent: 9/10/2015 10:41 AM

To: info@ourtransitfuture.com

Name: Brian Norris

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Message Body:
Hello...

There was a recent article in Wired magazine title "The World Could Save Trillions With Buses and Bikes." This is a relatively short article, generic in it's scope (the entire world), but I believe it is especially relevant in this discussion. The major takeaway for me was this line: "The report cites a study that found a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) system costs about \$10 million per mile to establish, one tenth the price of a metro rail system." In my opinion, it is this major statistic above all else that merits a serious reconsideration of BRT instead of LRT for Chapel Hill / Durham. Beyond that there are many, many reasons I believe BRT is the better solution in both the short term and the long term. My hope is that there is an immediate pause on the LRT solution and a serious reconsideration of the BRT solution, as I believe the return on investment of our tax dollars will be much, much higher with BRT.

Here is a link to the Wired article: <http://www.wired.com/2015/09/world-save-trillions-buses-bikes/>.

Thank you for listening!

Brian Norris
[REDACTED]

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Our Transit Future (<http://ourtransitfuture.com>)

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Official Public Comment

Name Judy Nyberg

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address [REDACTED]

City [REDACTED]

Zip Code [REDACTED]

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I believe the light rail will be of positive impact to our region. It will be the solution to getting our growing population from Point A to Point B. The congestion has gotten out of control on our highways / 2nd Roads & this is part of the solution, I believe. If we don't pass it now, traffic & congestion will be unmanageable & this will have a negative affect on the raleigh / Durham economy. I also fall strongly about light rail because we are a college community & this mode will help transport the additional population each September. The Draft did a very good job with keeping our environment as aesthetically appealing as possible.

Please Turn Over →