2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Preferred Option – *Compilation of Comments*

Background

This document is a compilation of the comments received by Email (electronic mail) and various social media platforms, as of November 9th, in response to the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Preferred Option. The Preferred Option was released October 27th and the DCHC MPO will receive comments through December 7th. The email and social media comments start on pages 1 and 11, respectively.

Electronic Mail

09/19/21

Dear Mr. Henry
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2050 MTP.
As a Hillsborough resident I am concerned about the increase in daily congestion in our town, Orange County and the surrounding areas. With the pending increase in large employers in Orange/Durham/Wake (RTP) counties it is critical that these metropolitan areas work together to address transportation needs and demands. Regardless of the listed goals and measures, without a comprehensive approach to transportation planning, problems in any goal area will persist and possibly worsen if unilateral metro-area planning is the primary approach.
My household is supportive of any and all goals to increase non-car modes of transportation that allow for the greatest number of area residents to find at least one mode that best suits their needs, including accessibility and cost. My household makes use of daily express bus service from downtown Hillsborough to Chapel Hill. This option should be seen as a primary approach across all communities, given that rail service seems to be an unlikely
option in the near or distant future. My last comment, where is the Hillsborough Amtrak train station in the plan? The 2045 plan presented the station as being completed in 2020!
Respectfully submitted,
Will Lang

10/28/21

I like that the preferred option de-emphasizes highway widening... we have enough concrete and asphalt!
The one glaring deficit is rail... whether it be light rail, trams/trolleys, existing rail, heavy rail, elevated/ and or monorail, double tracking the NCRR, re-opening abandoned rail corridors, ALL should be explored and exploited.

Tad DeBerry

10/29/21

Hi Andrew,

Thanks so much for your work on this. I read through the preferred option and I have just a few comments:

1. I am absolutely thrilled with the inclusion of certain items:
- The two-way conversion of the downtown loop
- The downtown stretch of 147 converted into a boulevard
- The inclusion of bike boulevards
- The focus on sidewalk additions/repairs

I want to reiterate my support for keeping those items in the final plan. They have the potential to fundamentally change Durham for the better from a prosperity lens, and equity lens, and a sense of place for all lens.

2. For the two-way conversion of the downtown loop and the 147 boulevard conversion, there is no mention that I see of a timetable for that. There is not even a priority ranking for those projects. I would want to see that in the final plan and I would advocate for those two being at the top of the list of the expensive projects. Please do not widen the southern portion of 147 or really any widening projects before those. Even other bike/ped projects should occur after those two because they will help create a great node for a bike/ped network to radiate out from!

3. On a smaller scale, I would really like to see Chapel Hill Rd in Durham on the list of projects in terms of "modernization". Streets have the ability to cultivate great places if pedestrians are given priority. The stretch of Chapel Hill Rd between West Lakewood and Bivins has the potential to be one of the best village centers in Durham outside of downtown, but before that can happen, that stretch needs "modernization", specifically:

- A road diet - lanes are too wide
- Conversion of gigantic shoulder areas to bike lanes, parklets, on-street parking, and bulb outs for pedestrians at intersections.
- Street trees to give the sense that this is a slower street for cars.
- Lower speed limits to reflect the design changes outlined above

Thank you for considering my input. On point number 3, I have started a walkability study of that corridor and would be happy to talk further about it.

Best,
Dave

10/31/21

Hello,

I am writing in to say I am in full support of the Preferred Option and interested in deemphasizing highway widenings and encourage more support for public transportation as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. The commuter rail is my biggest priority and hope that it recieves the funding and schedule for building in the very near future.

Thank you,
Natalie

11/4/21

Good evening Andrew,

Please consider including Morehead Ave --> Cranford Rd. as a key bike and pedestrian thoroughfare in the Preferred Option. It is a direct shot from downtown --> Morehead Hill --> Lakewood --> Al Buehler trail. Hundreds of pedestrians and cyclists use it on a daily basis. In the absence of sidewalks and any other significant traffic control measures on Cranford Rd, there is too high of a chance of a significant accident or injury. This is entirely avoidable.

Gratefully,

Ari Medoff

11/4/21

Mr. Henry

As a Durham county resident who is hyper local, I live much of my life (work and social) in durham city limits. I think we should definitely focus on better public transportation and less highway widening. We need to get the energy back for a train/light rail system sooner rather than later.

Thanks
Matt Herman

11/5/21

Hi Andy,

I saw you are compiling responses to the 2050 MTP. My two cents:

I read through the MTP, and while I appreciate that the report suggests that bike and ped facilities get built, I would disagree with the underlying assumption (pg. 21):
However, the 2050 MTP financial plan assumes that the majority of the NC First Commission recommended income, which is $1.1 billion in each of the two later decades, i.e., 2040 and 2050, will be available for bicycle and pedestrian projects

As far as I can tell, the NC First Commission is just that--a commission. It made non-binding suggestions about how to raise and distribute funds. Their suggestions for increasing NCDT revenue involves pulling funds for the NCDOT from the General Fund and raising the state sales taxes, both of which I imagine are going to be politically unachievable.

Therefore, I think a more honest version of this MTP statement (pg 21):
As a result, there will be $2.332 billion available to fund the $2.679 billion of projects in the local plans. That funding covers 87% of the projects in the local plans
would be:

As a result of the lack of prioritization and restricted funding for bike and pedestrian projects at the state level, there will be $132 million available to fund the $2.679 billion of projects in the local plans. That funding covers 4% of the projects in the local plans, unless the state shifts course and adopts the suggestions of the NC First Commission to dramatically change how transportation is funded in the state. In the meantime, local governments must rely upon and find alternative sources of funding to cover these projects.

I don't think it benefits anyone to pretend that state funding will suddenly be available for bike and pedestrian projects.

Emily

11/5/21

Hello. There is a real need for public transportation in the southern part of Orange County. Smith level Road, the last bit of 15 501 in orange county and the side roads that feed into them as well as northern Chatham county - see Mann's chapel road - are public transport waste lands. We don't need buses … we need circulating vans. See Mexico for excellent cheap public van transport.

Thanks, Nancy Park

11/5/21

I am providing my comments on the Draft 2050 MTP.

1. As you are seeking comments, you should not encourage comments only from people who agree with the premise of the proposal, but rather seek input from everyone. This is a biased and non-inclusive way to seek public input. The first sentence of the email states: "If you're interested in deemphasizing

highway widenings and more support for public transportation as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, now is the time to give your input on our region's future transportation system."

2. I completely support more funding for public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrians. It should not be done at the expense of car commuters though. We should increase funding to support all of our transportation needs, which is one of the most fundamental infrastructures to support a vital economy. We have already raised taxes for a decade to support mass transit... AND we have absolutely NOTHING to show for it due to failed and incompetent leadership. You won't fix the problem by now defunding highways. You will only make things worse.

3. I also COMPLETELY support WIDENING of certain highways, including the Durham Freeway (147) to 4 lanes each way between the new East End Connector and I-40. That road was already congested before the new connector started construction and will only get worse as more traffic easily travels north of Durham into the heart of the triangle. Having one of these new lanes be a bus / rapid transit / HOA lane makes a lot of sense.

4. I ABSOLUTELY OPPOSE reducing the flow of traffic through the heart of Durham along 147 by converting it from a freeway to a boulevard. After the East End Connector opens, that artery through Durham will remain essential to traffic flow as people still need to get to Duke and to Downtown. Most of the traffic clogging 147 during rush hour is going between Duke or Downtown and I-40. The East End Connector will not reduce that congestion along 147. Also important is the ability for emergency vehicles to quickly traverse through the heart of downtown as they can today. This is even more vital given the easy access to Duke University Hospital and Emergency Room along that route. I can't believe people want to increase the time it takes to get to the hospital; hopefully, they just need to be made aware. We cannot reduce capacity by removing this important highway.

5. I FULLY SUPPORT the commuter rail between Durham and Raleigh, and points east and west. It SHOULD go to the airport as well, but government officials have ignored this public feedback for 25+ years of the rail project going through multiple design phases with again NOTHING to show for it. But we need the rail, so I have to continue supporting it.
In conclusion, IMAGINE a TRIANGLE AREA with no congestion, where we drive our electric cars, take commuter rail, and bus rapid transit, and ride our bikes and walk safely. We can have it all if we dream that vision. We don't have to pit electric cars against buses. We can have it all. And it can all be carbon neutral.

Thank you.

11/5/21
Just FYI – the links on the congestion maps do not match the map that comes up.

Also, we have been told for years that there is a traffic light planned for the intersection of Garrett and Swarthmore Rd to ease people turning left out of the neighborhoods off Garrett and Swarthmore. Is

this still in the planning or are there plans to actually widen Garrett Rd to ease the congestion on the road and the ingress and egress from the neighborhoods ?

Thank you,

Adrienne

11/5/21

We have suggested for years and highly endorse a crosswalk at the intersection of Union Street and Churton Street in Hillsborough. I understand there is an issue because of NCDOT regulations concerning curb and handicap access. At this intersection, there are no sidewalks on East Union Street. We walk on the street. There is no need for handicap access on the east. What we need is a crosswalk on Churton Street, so cars will stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk. One day before I get run over there trying to cross the road at this intersection, I would be happy to go down to Dual Supply and buy a can of paint and paint a crosswalk, at no charge.

Please note, I am not the sole pedestrian here. Many visitors to the Burwell School Historic Site park on East Union and cross to the site at this intersection. In addition, West Union Street leads to HillsboroughElementary School and Central ElementarySchool, and school buses and parents take EastUnion Street as a connector to RiverPark Elementary School. West Union is a major route for parishioners attending Mt. Bright Baptist Church. This isa busy intersection for turning traffic, which further impedes pedestrians attempting safe crossing.

If NCDOT rules disallow a pedestrian crossing, it would be helpful to paint SLOW across the road here. It would help to install a bucket of flags to carry across for pedestrian visibility (the only time in the last 50 years thata car ever stopped for me to cross,Iwas carrying a giant bird puppet).

At this crosswalk, the speed of traffic is irregular. Coming from the signals two blocks north and two blocks south, traffic hits top speed at this intersection. There either will be a five minute wait for traffic to clear or a thirty second window to cross with no traffic. Another possible solution would be a speed camera, a lower speed limit, or flashing light if a pedestrian is crossing.

But the best option would be a crosswalk, because the driving law recognizes crosswalks mean stop for pedestrians.

Betty and Jerry Eidenier
Keep calm and wash your hands

11/5/21

You have received this feedback from Jack Meredith < meredijr@wfu.edu > for the following page:

https://www.dchcmpo.org/what-we-do/programs-plans/transportation-plans/2050-metropolitan-transportation-plan?fbclid=IwAR3XWjqFYx3HAeF54C4-Q1_Xx85olGCqXUlvmpPhW5LCYkcJlVPxl9rbPss

My concern is old Hwy 86/Churton St. through Hillsborough. About 4 pm, especially on Fridays, the traffic backs up for blocks, and that's before Collin's Ridge, entrance across from Orange Grove Road, fills up with hundreds of more houses. We need a way for traffic from Hwy's I-40 and I-85 to get around the town without going through the the 20mph downtown.

11/6/21

It is the opinion of me and my husband that roads and streets not be widened but that we strengthen public transportation, bicycles and sidewalks.

Thank you,
Marywinne Sherwood

11/8/21

Dear Committee,

Just one suggestion. Please be sure there is a good connection between the ground transportation hub and RDU airport. Having traveled in numerous countries, I can assure you that the cities that did not do this all regret it later.

Thanks,
Munsie Davis

11/8/21

Hello Andy,

I got the notice that DCHC MPO is seeking public input on the 2050 MTP Preferred Option. I'm planning to listen in on the virtual public hearing on Wed Nov 10 @ 9am. I think the Preferred Option is great, especially the parts pertaining to converting Hwy 147 into a boulevard. You and I corresponded about this in Sept 2020 and myself and a number of the Morehead Hill neighbors have been hoping that the Preferred Option would include a plan to repurpose the central Durham portion of Hwy 147 in a way that's equitable, inclusive, attempts to address past injustices and is sustainable for the long term. I read through the 2050 MTP Preferred Option and it looks like multiple projects are pointing us in this direction. Thanks for your leadership and enginuity on this front. I have a few questions specifically about the Hwy 147 boulevard conversion, I'll list them here. I also see that the public can sign up to address the board during the virtual public hearing. I'm happy to follow up these questions via email, or If you'd like me to ask 1 or more of these questions during the hearing, I'm happy to request a speaking slot and do that as well.

- Is there a target date for having the Hwy 147 boulevard conversion work complete?

- Will conversion to a boulevard entail excavation and fill to return the Hwy 147 alignment to pre-1960 grade?
- More specifically, will the roadways that are currently traversed by Hwy 147 via overpasses and underpasses be reconnected to the new boulevard at their existing elevation?
- As part of the conversion to a boulevard, will parcels of land be made available for purchase and development
- There seems to be significant community support for this boulevard conversion idea, do you expect that this idea might meet with resistance and if so from where might that come?
- Myself and neighbors / residents that I've spoken with really want to see this project feature a strong equity component and I'm delighted to see this mentioned several times in the 2050 MTP Preferred Option. As I've discussed with neighbors, we think the approach should not just be to have black and brown voices present during the planning phases, but to actively seek out expertise and leadership from members of this community and demographic. We think that accomplishing this aspect is as important as actually getting the boulevard in place and operational. So is there a plan for making sure that the planning and oversight of this project is led and staffed by this demographic?
- For the broader 2050 MTP Preferred Option plan, do the population growth projections consider that DCHC will likely receive a large influx of climate refugees? Thanks also for ensuring that carbon reduction and sustainability feature prominently in this plan.

I'm sure I'll have additional questions, but that's good for now.
Thanks for thinking and planning as far into the future as you are. It's nice to know that someone is considering a longer time horizon and I hope these exciting long range plans give Durham's residents and leaders a clear objective to work toward!

Thanks for you time and have a great week,
- Ryan Moody, P.E.

11/9/21

Dear Sir,

We do not support the proposed 2050 MTP plan that goes before the Board tomorrow that does not include improvements to reduce congestions on our road, reduce delays, improve safety, and provide a better travel time/experience. We need the improvements or expansion that serve the area growing developments that they continue to approve.

We live and own land on Sherron Rd. Durham, NC. The traffic is so congested it is near impossible to get out of our driveway.

We all know US 70, I-40, I-85, NC 54, etc are already over capacity or congested. We need improvements for car travel.

Please do not support this 2050 MTP plan.

Michael and Debra Young

11/9/21

Good Morning, All,

I wanted you to know that me and my household of 3, do not support the proposed 2050 MTP plan that goes before the Board tomorrow that does not include improvements to reduce congestions on our road, reduce delays, improve safety, and provide a better travel time/experience. We need the improvements or expansion that serve the area growing developments that they continue to approve.

Hwy 70 is already so congested that it takes forever to get down 70 from Leesville to Cheek Rd where a member of our household works.
My sister lives on Sherron Rd. and traffic is backed up all the way to Holder Rd some mornings to go through the intersection at 70. I lived with her recently and could not believe what I saw.

Also, cars from 70 who don't want to wait at the 70 light going into Durham now come up Leesville Rd and go down Doc Nichols Rd to Olive Branch to avoid that intersection. And there is already congestion on Doc Nichols Rd due to new subdivisions. I live near the intersection on Leesville and Doc Nichols and watch about 3 to 5 cars turn from 70 to Leesville to Doc Nichols every 5 to 8 minutes and they are not locals.

We need large capacity roads.

Beverly Mills

11/9/21
Hello,

I would like to weigh in on the transportation future. I usually commute into Chapel Hill for work so I don’t know if that makes me eligible or not but as someone who commutes- I will say Chapel Hill is better than most but that it would be so much nicer if the options available were quicker- often times the buses are overcrowded and in order to take one you have to wait for several and being they get stuck in traffic or broken down. Personally I think a train would make sense and be more direct and remove a lot of travelers from the roads which would help the buses. Obviously a subway seems like the best idea but I don’t know if that is even possible with the current infrastructure in place and I didn’t see it listed on the DCHC MPO website. Also walkways above roads where people can cross safely and not impact traffic flows as much are also better. Bus lines that have their own stops spots off the main road and buses that have their own designated roads work better.

When I drive my car it takes 25 minutes but when I have to factor in public transport it takes an hour or more and this is one way- so when I take public transport it steals more than an hour from my home life daily. That affects how I am able to interact with my kids and how I am able support my family's needs. I know this area is growing fast and I've lived in Charlotte where the roads are horrid and the traffic is a nightmare and buses are barely used so I know what this can turn into and I am hoping that you all will keep that from happening.

Best,

Billie Simonson

11/9/21

Hi Aaron/Andrew,

My concern with the change of Rt 70 sections from Lynn Rd to Miami Blvd and Miami Blvd to the Wake County is concerning for traffic flow from Durham into Raleigh and, significantly to RDU Airport. RDU is significantly dependent upon the road infrastructure surrounding the airport and the ability to access is key to the vitality of the airport.

While reducing the proposed lanes from 6 to 4 and to change the status to a more modernized street layout could be desirable, the change of the 2050 plan would reduce transportation funding approximately 85 million to Durham City and County in which road infrastructure is sorely needed.

My suggestion is to not reduce the funding for these projects in the 2050 plan until a more defined plan for the actual "modernization" be better defined.

Another concern is the that the City of Durham has approved a significant number of housing developments in SE Durham which will increase the traffic flow in this area. Thus, Rt 70 throughput is key as well as the extension of Aviation Parkway to Rt.70 and the improvements scheduled in Wake County need to sync up with the original Durham freeway plan.

Please hold off on releasing the funding and provide more opportunity for study and input from the community as well as NCDOT.

I will be in attendance tomorrow for the meeting and can speak, but I need more information and direction.

Thanks,
David Morgan
Raleigh / Durham Airport Authority Board Member

Social Media

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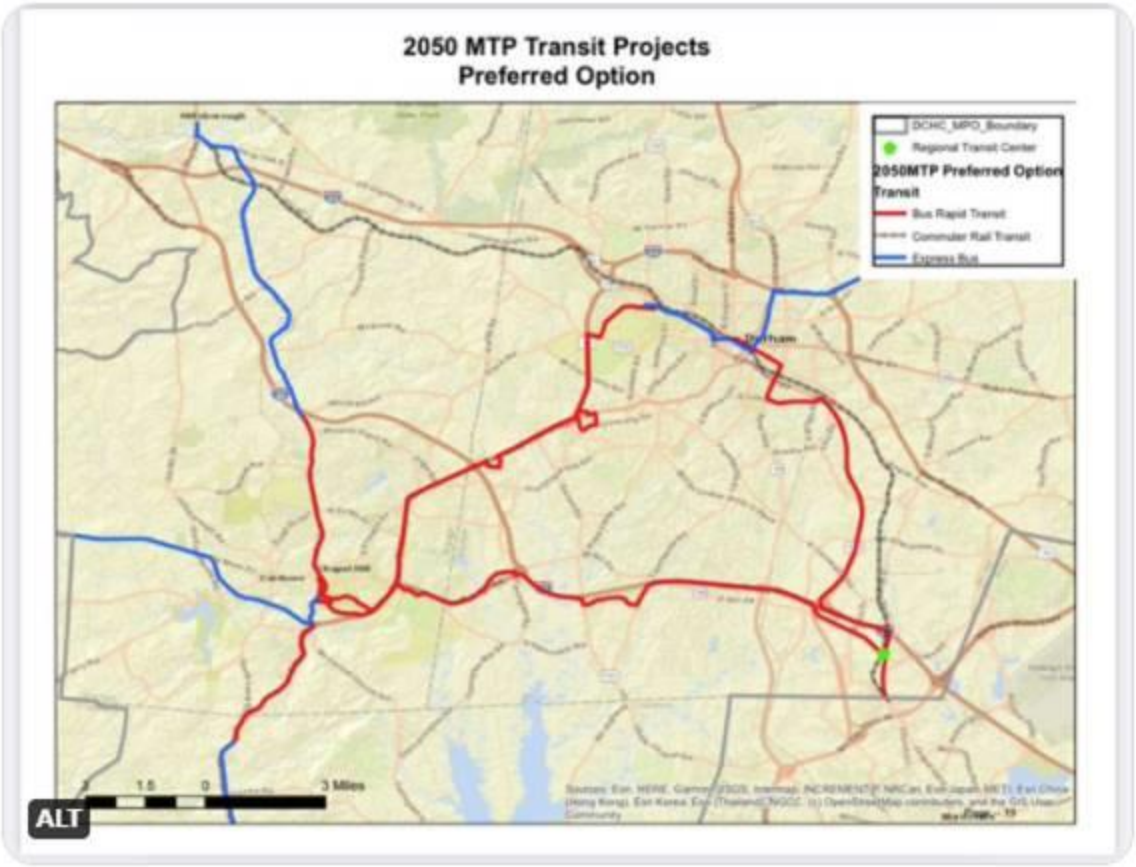
If you're interested in deemphasizing highway widenings & more support for public transportation, give your input by Dec. 7 to the @DCHCMPO on their 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Preferred Option.

➡️ More info & ways to participate here:
dchcmpo.org/what-we-do/pro...



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Jessalee Landfried @JessaleeL · 11h

Replying to @CityofDurhamNC and @DCHCMPO

Wow yes please!!

Matt H @southerblue2 · 13h

Replying to @CityofDurhamNC and @DCHCMPO

Less highways. Bring back plans for a train. Don't let @DukeHealth ruin that. Rich people care ruining this city with big condos, political influence, and clogging up roads all while driving up housing. #gentrification needs to stop. #ClimateCrisis #HousingCrisis

2

← **Quote Tweets**

Matt H @southerblue2 · 13h

More public transit!

CityofDurhamNC @CityofDurhamNC · 16h

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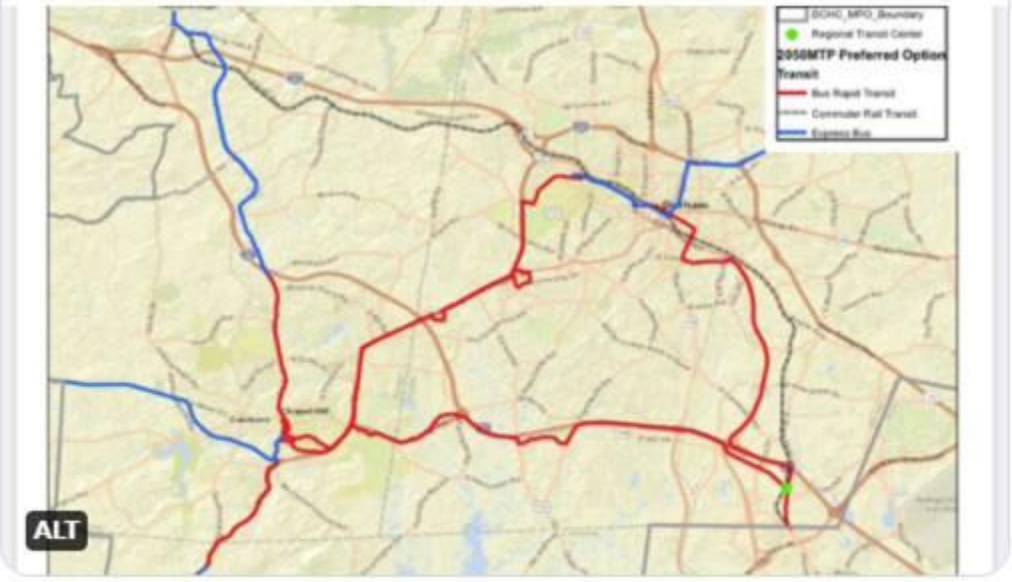

Charlie Reece GET VAXXED 💉
@CharlieReece

Please weigh in!

> **CityofDurhamNC** @CityofDurhamNC · 16h
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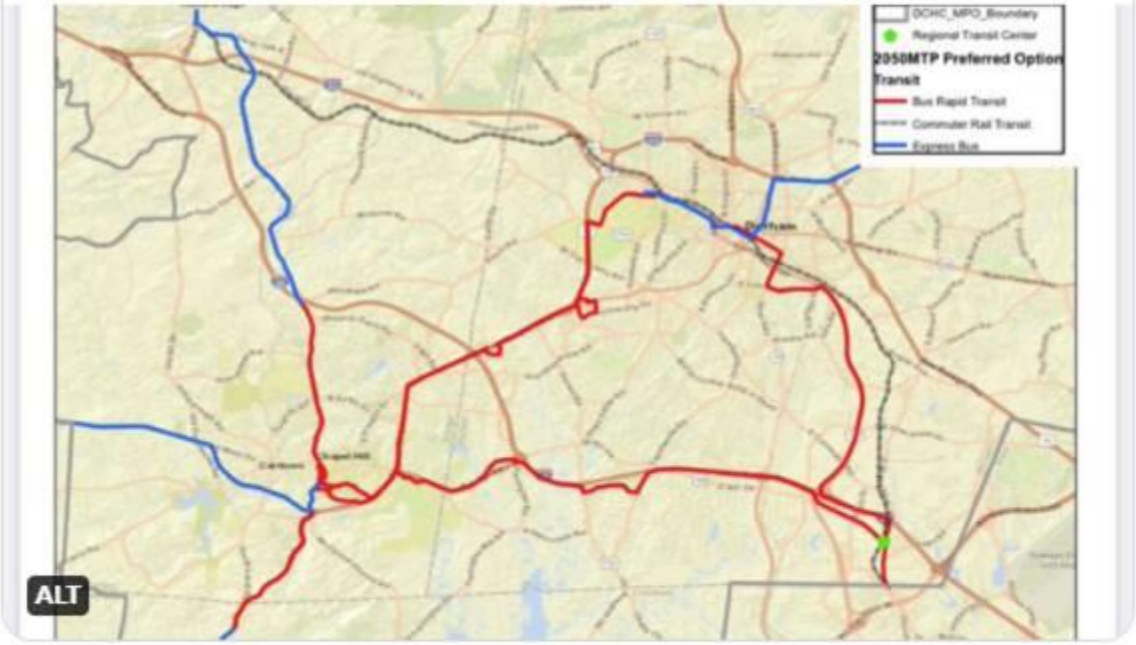

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Oldest

Matt Roberts
You have been allegedly working on a public transportation project since I was born, yet you cannot even keep the roads in some areas driveable. I have great faith nothing will change.

Like · Reply · Hide · Message · 16h

Brad Hutchens
Matt Roberts you have to love how this post wasn't leading in the least... 😉 Perhaps they can finish the 147/70/85 connecter in the next two years before they talk about this bullshit.

Like · Reply · Hide · Message · 13h