

DCHC MPO

Regional Rail Alternatives Analysis – *Summary of Comments* (as of 9/14/11)

Comment Period

Public comment period closes today (1/11/12) at the close of public hearing.

Summary

The remainder of this document summarizes the issues identified in letters and emails from citizens, community groups, a neighborhood association, and resource agencies received from 9/14/11 to 01/11/12. A separate document is available that compiles the complete text of all comments.

NC 54 Corridor [Prefer C2 (NC 54/Hillmont) alignment]

1. C2 is less expensive, less impact on wetlands, higher ridership, not a new cut into wetlands, will have dedicated parking, and will have more destination ridership (e.g., non-residential).
2. C2 will adversely impact Meadowmont, Rashkis Elementary School, UNC Wellness Center, and the Cedars retirement and care community, and access to the DuBose Health Center.
3. This natural area has been protected through community efforts and public funds, and a recent UNC-CH decision not to expand business school facilities toward the wetland.
4. Want information solicited from N.C. Natural Heritage Program, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
5. Support study of both C1 and C2 as equal alternatives.
6. Advancing both C1 and C2 will be costly to taxpayers.

NC 54 Corridor [Prefer C1 (Meadowmont) alignment]

1. C2 would make it impossible to use George King Road as a future collector to connect a Leigh Village development with NC 54.
2. Woodmont can be connected to a Meadowmont station by shuttle service.
3. Wetland impacts can be mitigated if either C1 or C2 is constructed.
4. Marginal wetland impacts from constructing C1 might be much less if Southwest Durham Drive is built in the same corridor.
5. Hillmont is a concept – it is not yet built. Meadowmont already has mixed use development within walking distance of the proposed rail station.

Patterson Place-MLK Parkway Corridor

1. Do not support alignment between Patterson Place and MLK Jr. Parkway because of negative environmental and recreational impacts to New Hope Creek and Sandy Creek lands, and harm to long-term water quality.
2. This area has been protected through community efforts and public funds.
3. Want rail alignment along US 15-501 or Old Durham-Chapel Hill Rd.
4. Support the need to study the New Hope Corridor swath, not just the current alignment.
5. Want information solicited from N.C. Natural Heritage Program, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Patterson Place Station and Maintenance Facility

1. Patterson Place station and maintenance facility development will have a negative impact on the New Hope Creek floodplain. There are better areas for locating the station and facility that are away from the slopes adjacent to the floodplain.

Alston Avenue Station

1. Support Alston Avenue commuter rail station to serve transit dependent population and help economic development in east Durham.

Maintenance Facility – Cornwallis Road

1. Proposed operations and maintenance facility near Cornwallis Road will have extremely negative impact on growing campus of Judea Reform synagogue, Lerner Jewish Day School, and Lerner Jewish Community Center.

Extension in Orange County

1. Support a rail transit extension to downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Ensure that UNC Hospital station [A3(d) in the report], University Square Redevelopment and the updated 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan support this extension, as well.

Process Related

1. More detailed environmental impact study is needed before the Locally Preferred Alignment (LPA) is endorsed.
2. There is confusion with the term Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). In the current process, the LPA is to identify a project for more detailed environmental study and public input in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

3. Concerns of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Durham City/County Planning and several resource and conservation agencies should be discussed in the Alternatives Analysis report.
4. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and USACE will be involved in the route selection process.

Other Issues

1. Respondents almost unanimously support mass transit and passenger rail.
2. Prefer D3 (i.e., alignment and station on Shannon Rd.) because of potential support to the proposed University Marketplace.
3. Prefer Option A -- station in front of Duke Medical Center and Veterans' Hospital because it is more centrally located for employees and patrons.
4. In implementation, make sure that park-and-ride facilities do not preclude opportunities to build transit oriented development.
5. Significant barriers exist to building operations and maintenance facilities at Patterson Plan, Leigh Village and Farrington Road. The Cornwallis maintenance and operations facility site is preferred.
6. Use MARTA (Atlanta) experience for guidance: provide station uses within ten minute walk of station; provide station parking; and, make rail transit time competitive.
7. Add direct rail transit route between Chapel Hill and RDU airport.