

ORANGE  
DURHAM

LaSalle Street

15

DukeVA  
Medical Centers

Ninth  
Street

Dillard Street

Co  
vallis Road

Alston A

Patterson Place

Patte

Gateway

Appendix

H

\*Leig

Farrington Road

Meadowmont  
Lane

Leigh Village

Woodmont

Friday Center  
Drive

40

# Scoping Report

## Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project



**Triangle Regional** Transit Program  
*our transit future*



SEPTEMBER 2012

---

Prepared for: Triangle Transit

Prepared by: URSTeam

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
1.1. PURPOSE OF THE SCOPING REPORT .....	1-3
<b>2. Overview .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
2.1. HISTORY OF PROJECT .....	2-1
2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT .....	2-2
2.3. SCOPING PROCESS .....	2-2
2.4. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS .....	2-3
2.5. SCHEDULE .....	2-4
<b>3. Purpose and Need for Action .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
3.1. PURPOSE AND NEED .....	3-1
3.2. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3-2
<b>4. Alternatives .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
4.1. ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED DURING SCOPING .....	4-1
4.1.1. No Build .....	4-1
4.1.2. Transportation System Management (TSM) .....	4-2
4.1.3. Build Alternative –LPA .....	4-2
4.1.3.1. Alignment Option C1 .....	4-4
4.1.3.2. Alignment Option C2 .....	4-4
4.1.3.3. Alignment: US 15-501 Corridor (I-40 to South Square Study Area) .....	4-4
4.1.3.4. Hamilton Road Station Locations .....	4-4
4.1.3.5. Duke Medical Center Station Locations .....	4-4
4.1.3.6. Rail Operations & Maintenance Facility Locations .....	4-4
4.2. ALTERNATIVES PROPOSED DURING SCOPING .....	4-5
4.2.1. UNC Hospitals Station Location .....	4-5
4.2.2. Others .....	4-5
<b>5. Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
<b>6. Public Involvement .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
6.1. PROCESS OVERVIEW .....	6-1
6.1.1. Notification Methods .....	6-2
6.1.2. Opportunities for Participation - Website, Scoping Meeting .....	6-2
6.2. SCOPING MEETING SUMMARIES .....	6-3
6.2.1. Regulatory Agency Meeting .....	6-3
6.2.2. Public Meeting 1: Chapel Hill .....	6-3
6.2.3. Elected Officials and Partners Meeting .....	6-3
6.2.4. Public Meeting 2: Durham .....	6-4
6.2.5. Regulatory Agency Scoping Summary Meeting .....	6-4
<b>7. Summary of Scoping Comments .....</b>	<b>7-1</b>
7.1. COMMENT COLLECTION AND PROCESS METHODOLOGY .....	7-1
7.2. AGENCY COMMENTS SUMMARY .....	7-1
7.3. ELECTED OFFICIALS AND PARTNERS COMMENTS SUMMARY .....	7-13
7.4. PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY .....	7-13

**8. Summary of Next Steps ..... 8-1**

**LIST OF FIGURES**

FIGURE 1.1 DURHAM ORANGE CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVE ..... 1-2  
 FIGURE 2.1 PROJECT SCHEDULE ..... 2-6  
 FIGURE 4.1 TSM ALTERNATIVE ..... 4-3

**LIST OF TABLES**

TABLE 3.1 DURHAM-ORANGE CORRIDOR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ..... 3-2  
 TABLE 7.1 AGENCY COMMENTS SUMMARY ..... 7-2

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: SCOPING PHASE NOTIFICATION ..... 1  
 APPENDIX B: SCOPING INFORMATION BOOKLET ..... 1  
 APPENDIX C: OFFICIALS BRIEFING PACKET BOOKLET ..... 1  
 APPENDIX D: SCOPING MEETING MATERIALS ..... 1  
 APPENDIX E: SCOPING COMMENTS ..... 2  
 APPENDIX F: COOPERATING AGENCIES CORRESPONDENCE ..... 2  
 APPENDIX G: AGENCY SCOPING FOLLOW-UP MEETING ..... 2

## 1. Introduction

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations in April 2009 identified corridors for major investments in fixed guideway transit over the next 30 years. Through a Transitional Analysis, the first step in the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process which began in March 2010, the Durham-Orange (D-O) Corridor was identified for further consideration. The AA which was completed in April 2012 also included the evaluation of alternative transit technologies and alignments that met the identified transit needs of the D-O Corridor. On February 8, 2012, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) adopted the D-O light rail transit (LRT) project as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) project to be advanced for further study in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal environmental review process.

On April 3, 2012 the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (the federal lead agency) and Triangle Transit (the local project sponsor) announced their intention to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on proposed high capacity transit improvements in the D-O Corridor (Figure 1.1). The next step in the FTA Project Planning and Development Process for projects that may be considered for federal funding was Environmental Scoping. Through the scoping process, the public, elected and appointed officials, and interested government agencies were able to comment on the proposed project's draft Purpose and Need, the alternatives to be evaluated, and the impacts of the alternatives. The scoping process defined a range of issues that will be studied through preparation of the EIS. In accordance with NEPA and FTA, the EIS will include the development and analysis of the following three primary alternatives between the UNC hospitals in Chapel Hill and east Durham:

- The No-Build Alternative.
- Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative consisting of an enhanced bus network that provides a level of transit service and capacity roughly equivalent to that of a fixed-guideway transit service.
- LRT alternative consisting of a new fixed-guideway rail alignment and support facilities. This alternative represents the LPA as currently proposed.

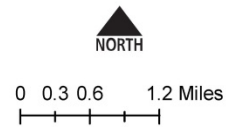
Federal funding will be requested by Triangle Transit for permission from FTA to enter Preliminary Engineering (PE) in accordance with the Federal New Starts regulations 49 CFR Part 611. Upon receipt of approval from FTA, PE and preparation of an EIS will be undertaken concurrently for the D-O LRT Project.

Figure 1.1 Durham Orange Corridor Alternative

DURHAM-ORANGE  
ADOPTED  
LOCALLY PREFERRED  
ALTERNATIVE

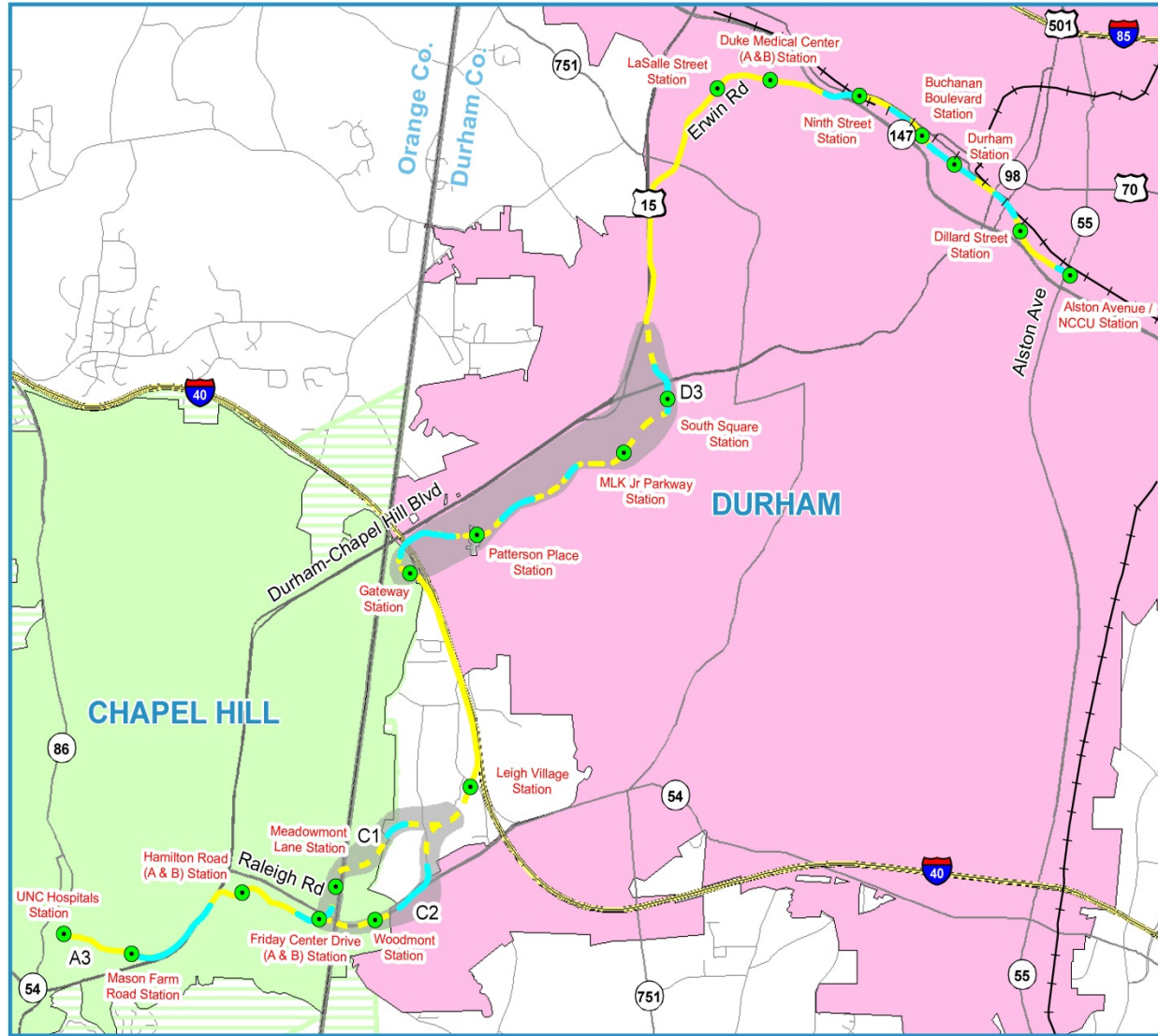
**LEGEND**

- Aerial Segment
- At-Grade
- Routes to be studied further
- Interstate
- US Route
- NC Route
- Railroad
- County Boundary
- Town of Chapel Hill
- Chapel Hill ETJ
- City of Durham
- Expanded Study Area
- Conceptual Station



SEPTEMBER 2012

Our Transit Future  
Triangle Regional Transit Program  
Durham-Orange  
Light Rail Transit Project



## 1.1. Purpose of the Scoping Report

Environmental Scoping is part of a process required under the regulations and guidelines issued by the FTA to implement the NEPA of 1969 in conformance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing regulations, as amended. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide information to the public and agencies regarding the D-O LRT EIS process, issues, and alternatives and an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on and provide input into the D-O LRT EIS process as it is initiated.

This Scoping Report for the D-O LRT EIS addresses the following topics:

- **Overview:** outlines the history of the project's planning and development, related projects and studies; the basis of the EIS; the scoping process; Project Participants and the proposed Schedule.
- **Purpose of and Need for the Project:** describes the purpose and need for improved transportation services in the D-O Corridor and identifies the related goals and objectives of the study.
- **Alternatives:** summarizes the preliminary alternatives that will be examined in the EIS.
- **Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts:** identifies the types of environmental issues that will be analyzed in the EIS.
- **Public and Agency Involvement:** summarizes the public and agency participation program and identifies the public participation elements.
- **Summary of Scoping Comments:** summarizes the comment collection methodology, public and agency meetings held during the scoping process, and comments from the agencies and public.

Prior to the initiation of the EIS, a concluding stakeholders meeting was held on August 21, 2012, during which interested federal, state, and local government agencies collectively processed all input and formally developed the scope of the EIS. Agencies were given 3 weeks to provide comments. This meeting and subsequent comment period served to complete the Scoping Report and Scoping process.



## 2. Overview

### 2.1. History of Project

Planning for fixed-guideway transit in the Triangle Region began over 20 years ago, and a number of transit studies have been conducted to advance major transit investments in the area. In recent years important advancements have brought implementation of a major transit investment in the D-O Corridor closer to reality.

Evaluation of fixed guideway alternatives such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and LRT in the D-O Corridor began with the 1998-2001 US 15-501 Major Investment Study (MIS). This multi-phase effort which included extensive public involvement resulted in the establishment of an adopted transit corridor between Chapel Hill and Durham. That corridor continues to be protected and preserved for transit use by these local governments. In 2006, Triangle Region stakeholders began collaborating to restructure the vision for a regional transit system. Between 2007 and 2009, system-wide planning for future fixed-guideway transit corridors was conducted through a cooperative regional planning effort. The D-O Corridor was identified as one of the future rail transit corridors in the region. Recommendations from this planning process were jointly adopted by the Region's two metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) as the transit element of the Triangle Region's 2035 long range transportation plan (LRTP).

In 2009, the NC General Assembly passed House Bill 148 enabling the County Commissioners in Durham, Orange, and Wake counties to establish local funding for transit projects through a half-cent sales tax, subject to referenda. On November 8, 2011 Durham County residents voted in favor of a half-cent sales tax dedicated to transit; Orange County voters will be able to make their decisions on November 6, 2012. The Wake County Commissioners have not yet determined if or when a referendum may be considered.

Beginning in March 2010, through a Transitional Analysis, the rail transit corridors in the 2035 LRTP were analyzed to determine the most appropriate initial major transit investments. As a result, the D-O Corridor was identified as a priority transit corridor to be evaluated in greater detail through an Alternatives Analysis (AA), the first step in the FTA Project Planning and Development process. In accordance with NEPA, the alternatives evaluated in the AA for the D-O Corridor included No-Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), and Build alternatives along with various alignments and transit technologies such as BRT and LRT.

These alternatives were evaluated based upon their ability to meet the project's draft Purpose and Need and factors such as ridership and transportation operations, land use, expansion potential, economic development potential, public and agency support, environmental impacts, technical and financial feasibility, and cost. Triangle Transit conducted the AA in coordination with the jurisdictions and agencies with interests in the corridor, including Durham and Orange Counties, the Town of Chapel Hill, City of Durham, DCHC MPO, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

The AA concluded by identifying a locally preferred alternative (LPA), the most promising alternative for further analysis (Figure 1.1). It identified LRT as the only technology that satisfies the draft Purpose and Need for premium transit service in the D-O Corridor by enhancing mobility, expanding transit options between Durham and Chapel Hill, serving populations with a high propensity for transit use, and fostering compact development, and economic growth.

On February 8, 2012, the DCHC MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (MPO's policy board) unanimously adopted the LRT Alternative as the LPA for further study through Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the NEPA process.



In May 2012, following publication in the Federal Register of a Notice of Intent (NOI) indicating that the FTA and Triangle Transit would be preparing an EIS for the D-O LRT Project, scoping meetings were held with Regulatory Agencies, Elected Officials and Project Partners and the public. An agency scoping summary meeting was held in August 2012 to complete the Scoping process. Information regarding Public Involvement and the outcome of these meetings are included in Sections 6 and 7 of this Report.

In September 2012, with the completion of Project Scoping, Triangle Transit will submit a New Starts application to the FTA for the D-O LRT Project. The outcome of this application process will include a determination by FTA regarding the advancement of the D-O LRT Project into the next phase of the Project Planning and Development Process: Preliminary Engineering (PE) which would include concurrent preparation of a Draft EIS (DEIS) in accordance with NEPA. The PE/DEIS phase will include public involvement and agency coordination, culminating in publication of the DEIS by FTA, public hearings and the receipt of comments from all stakeholders. Subsequent to completion of the official public comment process, feedback and comments will be addressed to formulate the NEPA Preferred Alternative that will be evaluated during preparation of the Final EIS (FEIS).

When all the documentation is complete, FTA is anticipated to publish the FEIS and subsequently issue a Record of Decision (ROD), concluding the NEPA process in 2017. With funding and FTA's authorization to proceed, Final Design and Engineering, which is anticipated to take about 3½ years, will occur. Construction and testing are estimated to take an additional 4 to 5 years allowing LRT Service in the D-O Corridor to begin in 2025/2026.

## 2.2. Environmental Impact Statement

The EIS will be prepared in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508) and with the FTA/Federal Highway Administration regulations “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures” (23 CFR Part 771). In accordance with 23 CFR 771.105(a) and 771.133, FTA will comply with all Federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the environmental review process to the maximum extent practicable.

These requirements include, but are not limited to, the environmental and public hearing provisions of Federal transit laws (49 U.S.C. 5301(e), 5323(b), and 5324), the project-level air quality conformity regulation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (40 CFR part 93), the section 404(b)(1) guidelines of EPA (40 CFR part 230), the regulation implementing section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR part 800), the regulation implementing section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (50 CFR part 402), section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (23 CFR 771.135), and Executive Orders 12898 on environmental justice and 11988 on floodplain management.

## 2.3. Scoping Process

The purpose of the scoping process was to provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on and provide input to the D-O Corridor EIS as it is initiated. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on April 3, 2012 to initiate the D-O Corridor EIS, the subject of this Scoping Report. This effort builds upon the planning and public outreach activities previously conducted as they relate to development of goals and objectives, screening of alternatives, and evaluation of impacts.

The environmental scoping process provided the public, their elected officials, and interested government agencies with information about the LPA in order to assist in shaping the course and direction of the environmental review process and ultimately the project which will be implemented.

The purpose of the scoping process was to inform the public and governmental review agencies that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (as the federal project sponsor) and Triangle Transit (as the local project sponsor) will be preparing an EIS for this project; to present information about the project, and to formally request input from these groups on the alternatives under consideration and the impacts to be evaluated.

Information and scoping materials can be found on the project website, [www.ourtransitfuture.com](http://www.ourtransitfuture.com). The Comment Period on scoping for the D-O LRT Project concluded on June 18, 2012.

## 2.4. Project Participants

The following groups have been identified as project participants and partners:

- General Public / Stakeholders
- Environmental / Business / Community Interest Groups (and others who have an interest in the project)
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Local Governments
- State Agencies
- Transportation Providers
- Institutions
- Regional Entities
- Regulatory & Review Agencies
- Consultant Team

The role and number of agencies listed in this section may change as this plan is refined.

The two lead agencies for the proposed D-O LRT project are the FTA and Triangle Transit. FTA is the lead federal agency and project sponsor for the environmental documents prepared for the D-O LRT project. As such, FTA is responsible for supervising the preparation of the EIS. In general, FTA will be responsible for the following:

- Provide oversight in managing the environmental process and resolving any associated issues.
- Facilitate the timely and adequate delivery of the environmental review process.
- Be responsible for the content of the EIS, furnish guidance, independently evaluate and approve documents, and ensure Triangle Transit complies with mitigation commitments.

Triangle Transit is the lead local agency and project sponsor for the proposed D-O LRT project. The primary responsibilities of Triangle Transit will be to conduct environmental analysis and prepare the environmental documents that evaluate the project alternatives and simultaneously conduct the public involvement and agency coordination activities that will continue throughout this process.

**Key contacts** for the project are the following:

Mr. Brian C. Smart  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Transit Administration  
404 865-5607

Mr. Greg Northcutt  
Director of Capital Development  
Triangle Transit  
919 485 7522

Cooperating Agencies are federal agencies with jurisdiction, by law or special expertise, with respect to any environmental impact involved in the proposed project. Cooperating Agencies may also have a federal action or approval relative to the proposed project. A state or local agency of similar qualifications may, by agreement with the lead agencies, also become a Cooperating Agency. Cooperating Agencies have a slightly greater degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than the Participating Agencies.

In response to a request from FTA, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have agreed to participate in the D-O LRT EIS as Cooperating Agencies. These three agencies' responses are found in Appendix F.

## 2.5. Schedule

In accordance with NEPA, a Project Coordination Plan must be developed to define the basic process and timeline for coordination between the FTA, Triangle Transit, interested agencies, and the public. While a detailed and specific schedule for completing the environmental review process has not yet been established, the Draft Project Coordination Plan will be finalized and posted on the project website at the conclusion of the project scoping process.

Project planning, design, and construction result in a lengthy process. Figure 2.1 summarizes the most recent project milestones and timeline, which may change based on funding and advancement of the FTA Project Planning and Development process. The schedule shown below supersedes those found in the Appendices. Figure 2.1 identifies approximately when public involvement activities and interagency coordination will occur. Timeframes for coordination are subject to change based on development of a detailed project schedule.

The scoping process was completed in September 2012. Subject to FTA approval, the DEIS for the D-O LRT Project is anticipated to be published by FTA in 2015. Subsequent to completion of the official public comment process, feedback and comments will be addressed to formulate the NEPA Preferred Alternative that will be evaluated during the Final EIS (FEIS). When all the documentation is complete, FTA is anticipated to publish the FEIS and subsequently issue a ROD, concluding the NEPA process in early 2017. With funding secured and FTA's authorization to proceed, Final Design and Engineering, which is anticipated to take about 3½ years, will be undertaken. Construction and testing are estimated to take 4 to 5 years allowing LRT Service in the D-O Corridor to begin in 2025/2026.

**Station Planning and Development:** Coordination will be conducted with project stakeholders including local planning agencies and citizens regarding the development of station locations and plans. Station planning and development workshops will be held concurrently with the NEPA process.

**Draft EIS:** A Federal Register notice will announce the availability for comment on the DEIS and establish the public review and comment period. Public hearings will be held during the public review period for the DEIS. Cooperating Agencies will be invited to review and submit comments on the Administrative Draft of the DEIS and to attend the public hearings. Participating Agencies will be invited to review and submit comments on the DEIS and to attend the public hearings.

**Public Hearings:** Public hearings will be held during the public review period for the DEIS. A notice of the public hearings will be published in local newspapers of general circulation and posted on the project website.

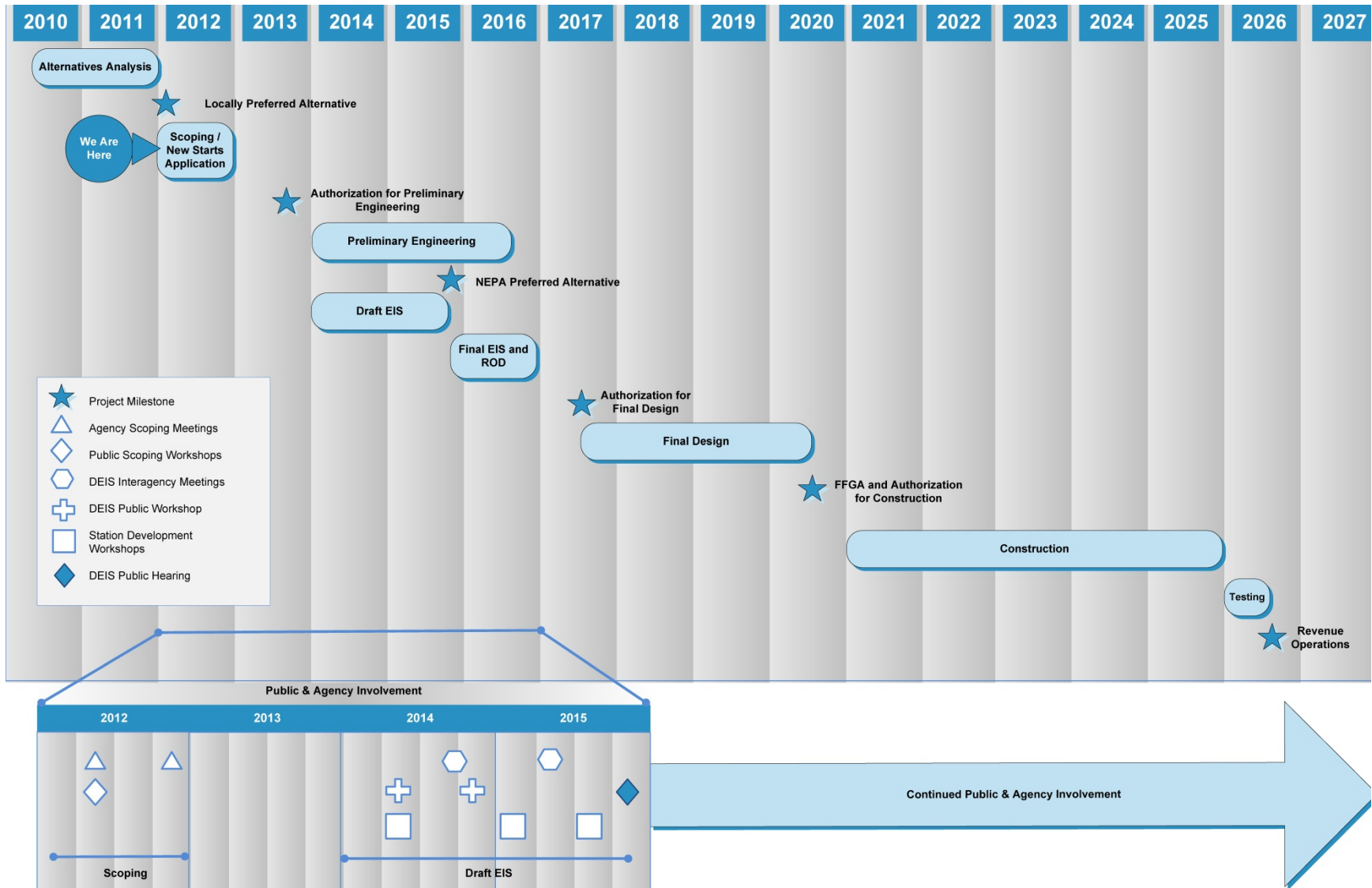
**Final EIS:** Coordination of the FEIS will be similar to coordination prior to circulation of the DEIS. A Notice of Availability for the FEIS will be published in the Federal Register to announce the availability of the FEIS and establish the public review and comment period. The announcement will also be published in a local newspaper of general circulation and posted on the project website. Cooperating Agencies will be invited to review and submit comments on the Administrative Draft of the FEIS, and Participating Agencies will be invited to review and submit comments on the FEIS. All Cooperating and Participating Agencies will receive notification of the issuance of the Record of Decision by FTA.

**Coordination Subsequent to the Record of Decision:** Agencies with permitting authority will continue to be consulted throughout the permit application development process. Permit applications will be submitted and data developed to support needs identified by the permitting agencies.

**Issue Resolution Process** - The following process shall be used to identify and resolve issues in a timely manner that may arise during the environmental review process.

- The Lead Agencies, Cooperating Agencies, and Participating Agencies shall work cooperatively to identify and resolve issues that could delay completion of the environmental review process or could result in denial of any approvals required under applicable laws.
- Lead Agencies, along with Cooperating and Participating Agencies, will identify as early as practicable any issues of concern regarding the project's potential human or environmental impacts. Issues of concern include any issues that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project.

Figure 2.1 Project Schedule



### 3. Purpose and Need for Action

#### 3.1. Purpose and Need

Triangle community residents and their elected officials have identified four core issues that a transportation project should address to support and advance a sustainable economy and the region's quality of life. Therefore, the purpose of the proposed premium high-capacity transit investment in the D-O Corridor is to provide a transit solution that addresses the following mobility and development needs:

- **Need to enhance mobility:** The D-O Corridor is forecast to absorb a significant share of the region's population and employment growth, thereby creating increased travel demand. By 2035, the corridor is projected to add about 56,000 people and 81,000 jobs which are expected to generate 255,000 additional daily trips, many of which will be made on local roadways. These trips will increase congestion during the peak morning and afternoon travel periods. Alternatives to the automobile are needed to address the limited capacity of the roadway system to accommodate increased travel demand.
- **Need to expand transit options between Durham and Chapel Hill:** Most bus service in the D-O Corridor is concentrated in downtown Durham and downtown Chapel Hill. Transit connecting these urban centers and serving the residential areas and retail developments between them is currently limited to two Triangle Transit routes and the Duke University Robertson Scholars Express bus. These buses operate in mixed traffic along increasingly congested roadways, have limited capacity, and are not competitive with the auto for most trips. Furthermore, the Study Area does not currently offer the type of high quality premium transit service that is an attractive alternative to driving, particularly under congested conditions.
- **Need to serve populations with high propensity for transit use:** University students and employees, as well as transit-dependent populations, are a significant percentage of the population in the D-O Corridor. Expanding transit services and increasing access between each of the university campuses and medical centers, which offer pedestrian-friendly environments, limited parking, and free transit passes, will support increased mobility options for university students, employees and other patrons. Also, expanding reliable mobility options for lower income populations and transit users who may not be able to drive will enhance economic opportunities through improved access to major jobs centers along the corridor. Providing a transit option that supports the mobility of these groups satisfies an important need within the corridor serving these communities.
- **Need to foster compact development:** Local governments recognize the need to manage growth and focus development within the Study Area. Durham City/County, Chapel Hill and Orange County have developed plans and implementation strategies that call for more compact, walkable, higher density, mixed-use development within the D-O Corridor. However, the existing transit infrastructure throughout the corridor is not fully supportive of these land use plans and implementation strategies and does not facilitate long-term economic development. A fixed-guideway transit investment can encourage and channel future growth, provide a superior transit option appropriate for high density development, and help local communities realize their goals and objectives for the future.

Local and regional stakeholders place a high level of importance on economic development potential and focusing growth within the proposed transit corridor through transit-oriented development. LRT has consistently been proven to bolster economic development and focus growth. These potential development dollars are not insignificant. The LRT Alternative fully addresses the stated Purpose and



Need for a fixed-guideway investment in the D-O Corridor; it enhances mobility, expands transit options between Durham and Chapel Hill, serves populations with higher propensity for transit use, and fosters compact development.

### 3.2. Project Goals and Objectives

This section lists a set of goals that are directly linked to the Needs listed in Section 3.1. The goals are derived from the Needs and serve as targets for the proposed solutions. This section also provides specific objectives to fulfill the goals. Based on these stated Needs, a set of Goals and Objectives is used to develop and evaluate transit improvement alternatives, as listed in Table 3-1.

**Table 3.1 Durham-Orange Corridor Goals and Objectives**

Goals	Objectives
Goal 1: Improve mobility through and within the study corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimize future vehicular congestion.</li> <li>▪ Provide a competitive and reliable option to auto use.</li> <li>▪ Serve regional trips as well as trips between and within major activity centers.</li> </ul>
Goal 2: Increase transit efficiency and quality of service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain or improve travel times between existing and planned activity centers.</li> <li>▪ Provide convenient and accessible transit services for employment and non-employment trips.</li> <li>▪ Improve and expand transit access for transit-dependent persons.</li> </ul>
Goal 3: Improve transit connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complement existing and planned transportation systems, plans, and infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Develop a seamless interface with other local and regional transit systems.</li> </ul>
Goal 4: Support local and regional economic development and planned growth management initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop transit investments that help focus development near activity centers.</li> <li>▪ Maximize the potential for economic development consistent with regional and local plans and policies.</li> </ul>
Goal 5: Foster environmental stewardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimize adverse impacts to the natural and built environment.</li> <li>▪ Utilize and enhance existing and underutilized transportation rights-of-way.</li> <li>▪ Maintain or improve regional and corridor air quality.</li> </ul>
Goal 6: Provide a cost-effective transit investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximize capital and operating cost-effectiveness and efficiency.</li> <li>▪ Meet FTA cost-effectiveness standards.</li> </ul>

## 4. Alternatives

Beginning in March 2010, through a Transitional Analysis, the rail transit corridors in the 2035 LRT project were analyzed to determine the most appropriate initial major transit investments. As a result, the D-O Corridor was identified as a priority transit corridor to be evaluated in greater detail through an AA, the first step in the FTA Project Planning and Development process. The AA defined the alternatives that will be evaluated in a DEIS to be prepared in accordance with NEPA. Based on these regulations, the alternatives evaluated in the AA for the D-O Corridor included No-Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), and Build alternatives along with various alignments and transit technologies such as BRT and LRT.

These alternatives were evaluated based upon their ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and factors such as ridership and transportation operations, land use, expansion potential, economic development potential, public and agency support, environmental impacts, technical and financial feasibility and cost. Triangle Transit conducted the AA in coordination with the jurisdictions and agencies with interests in the corridor, including Durham and Orange Counties, the Town of Chapel Hill, City of Durham, DCHC MPO, and NCDOT.

The AA concluded by designating the LPA as the most promising alternative for further analysis (Figure 1.1). It identified LRT as the only technology that satisfies the Purpose and Need for premium transit service in the D-O Corridor by enhancing mobility, expanding transit options between Durham and Chapel Hill, serving populations with a high propensity for transit use, and fostering compact development and economic growth.

While an exclusive-running BRT Alternative has the potential to meet the project's Purpose and Need and is competitive in meeting most project goals, it does not perform as well as LRT in supporting local and regional economic development, planned growth management initiatives, travel time savings, and the cost effectiveness of expanding long-term transit capacity. Local and regional stakeholders place a high level of importance on economic development potential and focused growth within the proposed transit corridor through transit-oriented development.

The LRT Alternative has a high-level of demonstrated public support and this technology has a proven nation-wide record of producing local and regional economic development benefits by enhancing and focusing growth within LRT corridors.

On February 8, 2012, the DCHC MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), acting as the MPO's policy board, unanimously adopted the LRT Alternative as the LPA for further study through Preliminary Engineering (PE and the NEPA processes).

### 4.1. Alternatives Presented During Scoping

The general alignment of the LPA as illustrated in Figure 1.1 is a light rail connection between UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and Alston Avenue in east Durham.

#### 4.1.1. No Build

In the NEPA process, the No-Build Alternative is used as a starting point to provide a comparison of all Build Alternatives in terms of costs, benefits, and impacts. The No-Build Alternative includes all highway and transit facilities identified in the fiscally constrained 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), with the exception of the comprehensive system-wide rail transit network, which includes the D-O LRT project.

#### **4.1.2. Transportation System Management (TSM)**

The primary purpose of the TSM Alternative (Figure 4.1) is to develop an enhanced and robust bus network in the D-O Corridor that provides a level of transit service and capacity roughly equivalent to that of a fixed-guideway improvement. The TSM Alternative, also known as the “best bus” alternative, is required by FTA in the evaluation of alternatives if federal funds are sought through the New Starts program. The intention is to compare the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the LPA with the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of a significant bus network in the same corridor, evaluating the impact on transit ridership, travel time and other measures. The TSM alternative will be refined for comparison to the LRT Alternative and evaluation in the DEIS.

The TSM Alternative includes enhanced bus service within the corridor, along with improved local bus service feeding the express routes (see Figure 4.1) and transportation demand management strategies that encourage a reduction in total trips (in particular drive-alone trips) and trip delays compared to the No-Build Alternative. The highway network for the TSM Alternative is assumed to be the same as the No-Build Alternative, which is taken from the 2035 DCHC MPO LRTP. However, the TSM Alternative also includes minor, low-cost improvements to roadways in the bolstered bus transit system.

The backbone of the TSM Alternative would be enhanced bus service between UNC hospitals and east Durham, covering a distance of approximately 19 miles from Chapel Hill to Durham and including 17 stops. The high-frequency bus route would closely follow that of the other LRT Build Alternative, as described below.

#### **4.1.3. Build Alternative –LPA**

The LPA selected on February 8, 2012 by the DCHC MPO includes light rail transit service between UNC Hospitals and east Durham, covering a distance of approximately 17 miles. The LRT would operate at 10-minute frequencies during peak hours and 20-minute frequencies during off-peak hours. LRT travel time is estimated to be 35 minutes between the UNC Hospitals Station in Chapel Hill and the Alston Avenue/NCCU Station in east Durham.

The alignment, which would be double-tracked throughout (one track for each direction of travel), would operate primarily at-grade in a dedicated right-of-way parallel to existing roadways, with elevated sections as needed to mitigate potential traffic impacts or impacts to environmental features.

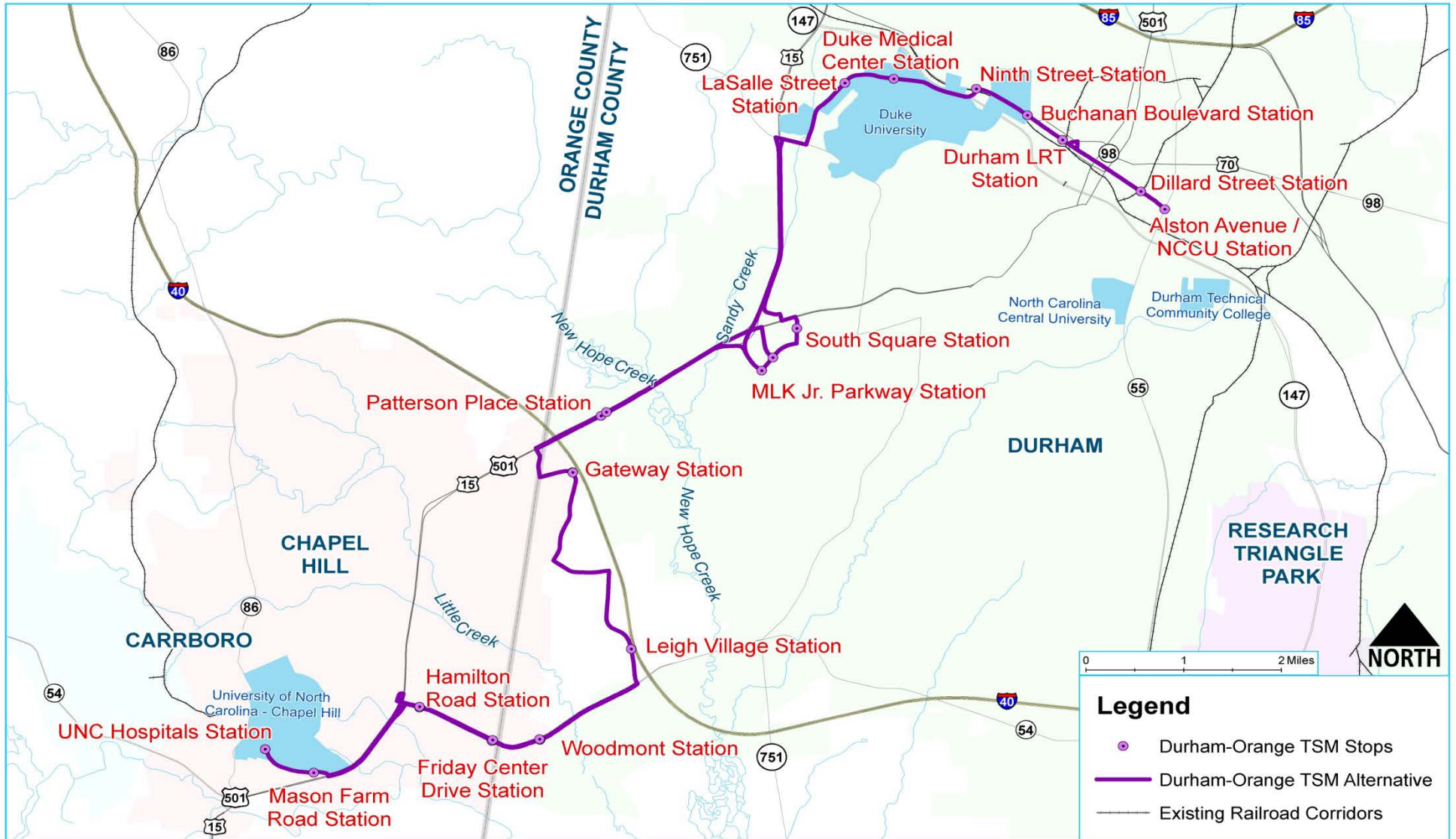
The proposed transit technology for the Build Alternative is modern 70% low-floor light rail vehicles, with a seating capacity of 228 (3-car train with 76 seats per car), operating on dedicated tracks with power supplied from an overhead catenary system. These vehicles are suitable for medium-distance trips in suburbs and between central business districts and major activity centers. Furthermore, the vehicles may operate in mixed traffic or in an exclusive right-of-way, and in a variety of transit envelopes, including at-grade, elevated, or in a tunnel.

A total of 17 stations are proposed for the LRT Alternative. Refinements to station locations, layouts and designs will occur during the PE/DEIS phase of the project.

The specific location of the D-O LPA alignment is uncertain in two segments where alignment options will be further evaluated in the DEIS. They are:

- Crossing of Little Creek between the Friday Center/Meadowmont Village area and the proposed Leigh Village development (Alignment Options C1 and C2)
- Crossing of New Hope Creek and Sandy Creek between I-40 and South Square (I-40 to South Square Study Area)

Figure 4.1 TSM Alternative



#### **4.1.3.1. Alignment Option C1**

Alignment Option C1 crosses NC 54 on an aerial structure (bridge) from Friday Center to Meadowmont Village and follows Meadowmont Lane northward to Green Cedar Lane, where the alternative turns eastward, following a transit easement, then crosses Little Creek to the proposed Leigh Village development.

#### **4.1.3.2. Alignment Option C2**

Alternative C2 follows along the NC 54 right-of-way eastward from Friday Center and crosses Little Creek within the NC 54 right-of-way then turns northward, following the right-of-way of George King Road, then eastward to the proposed Leigh Village development.

#### **4.1.3.3. Alignment: US 15-501 Corridor (I-40 to South Square Study Area)**

Due to the presence of ecologically sensitive wetlands associated with New Hope and Sandy Creeks, potential impacts to existing nature trails, undeveloped forested tracts and publically owned lands, reasonable alternative design options will be studied for this alignment. This could include, but is not limited to, an LRT alignment in the New Hope Creek area that is adjacent to or within the existing US 15-501 right-of-way in order to minimize or avoid impacts to sensitive environmental resources.

#### **4.1.3.4. Hamilton Road Station Locations**

The Hamilton Road Station, which would be primarily a walk-up station, has two at-grade configuration options.

- The Hamilton Road Station – Option A would be located southwest of the Hamilton Road and Prestwick Road intersections, at the northwest corner of the UNC Finley Golf Course.
- The Hamilton Road Station – Option B would be located along Prestwick Road, southeast of the East 54 development.

#### **4.1.3.5. Duke Medical Center Station Locations**

The Duke Medical Center Station, which would be primarily a walk-up station, has two configuration options. A key issue at this station is the need to accommodate the large volume of through and turning traffic movements for smooth traffic operations.

- The Duke Medical Center – Option A would have a single platform on the west side of Fulton Street with access from the Fulton Street intersection.
- The Duke Medical Center – Option B would have a single platform east of Trent Drive and west of Flowers Drive with access from these two intersections with Erwin Road.

#### **4.1.3.6. Rail Operations & Maintenance Facility Locations**

For the Build LRT Alternative, potential LRT storage yard and maintenance facility sites were assessed. Four sites were chosen for evaluation; Leigh Village, Farrington, Patterson, and Cornwallis. These sites were chosen because they have sufficient acreage and length to accommodate the required functions, grading that could accommodate a rail yard, and adjacent land uses and access that could be compatible with an LRT yard and maintenance facility operation.

Conceptual layouts developed for each site are provided in Volume 2: Detailed Definition of Alternatives, Conceptual Plan and Profile Drawings. The conceptual layouts have only been prepared to the level sufficient to identify the basic ability of the site to accommodate the required functions.



Evaluation of the four sites is based on size, access (rail and roadway), land use compatibility, and potential for adverse environmental effects. All of the LRT storage yard and maintenance facility alternatives are recommended to be carried forward for more rigorous study in the PE/DEIS phase of the project.

## 4.2. Alternatives Proposed During Scoping

### 4.2.1. UNC Hospitals Station Location

Three locations for the UNC Hospitals Station were evaluated in the AA. Option D, which was selected as the preferred alternative would be the westerly end-of-line station located at street level, south of the Genetic Medicine Research facility on a proposed realigned segment of Mason Farm Road between Daniels Road and East Drive. This location could permit the corridor to be extended into downtown Chapel Hill and beyond as a future phase of the project.

Through the scoping process, stakeholders requested consideration in the NEPA process of a newly identified alternative location for the UNC Hospitals Station. As with the current location, the alignment of this alternative would support extension of LRT Service towards downtown Chapel Hill and beyond as a future phase of the project. The proposed station platform would be located southwest of the existing intersection of Mason Farm Road and East Street.

### 4.2.2. Others

Many of the current station locations in the D-O Corridor were initially identified through previous studies, including the Phase 1 Regional Rail FEIS (2002) and the US 15-501 MIS (1998-2001), as well as changes, additions, or deletions made by local governments subsequent to those studies or in the early phases of the AA prior to the initiation of station workshops.

The current station locations in the LPA were developed and/or refined through additional stakeholder involvement and parallel engineering and planning studies. Intensive workshops were held in October and December 2010 and January 2011. Participants included staff from the state, and municipal and county governments within the study area, as well as representatives from the MPOs and other organizations with an interest in or responsibility for planning in those areas. The public also provided input on station locations during the AA at the March 2011 public workshops.

Sections 6 and 7 of this Scoping Report include additional input regarding station alternatives and locations which was received during the scoping process.



## 5. Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts

In compliance with NEPA, during the PE/EIS phase of the FTA Project Planning and Development process, the EIS study will include a rigorous evaluation of environmental impacts that may result from the construction and/or operation of each of the project alternatives. Through this process, ways to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to the human, natural, and physical environments will be studied and documented.

One of the primary purposes of the project scoping process was to identify additional environmental areas and specific resources (in addition to what is already known) that may be affected by the project. The following resources and environmental subjects have already been identified for further study.

**Land Use Plans, Zoning and Economic Development:** Several activity centers were identified during early screening including: Meadowmont and East 54 in Orange County; the Leigh Village planned development in Durham County; and existing developments including New Hope Commons, Patterson Place, South Square, Duke University Medical Center, Ninth Street, and downtown Durham. Other land uses will be identified in the DEIS study and alternatives will be evaluated for consistency with state, county and local land use and zoning plans. Economic and joint development opportunities surrounding station locations will be identified. The study will also identify properties that would be impacted by construction and/or operation of the LRT Service.

**Transportation:** The alternatives will be evaluated with respect to effects on traffic, parking and existing bus services. A traffic impact analysis will be prepared at critical intersections where traffic conflicts may occur. The DEIS study will also focus on projected ridership, transit operating plans (rail, bus), travel speeds, travel times, service coordination, transit vehicles, and level of service for each of the alternatives.

**Neighborhoods and Communities:** Neighborhoods and communities along the alignments have been identified through the initial screening process. Most notably, the Meadowmont and Downing Creek communities and neighborhoods in the vicinity of the project terminus at Alston Avenue in east Durham are communities that may be affected by the LPA alignment. The DEIS will assess project benefits and impacts on study area neighborhoods and communities, with specific attention paid to minority and low-income communities.

**Air Quality:** The potential impact on air quality, compliance with the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, and an evaluation of conformity with the North Carolina State Implementation Plan will be documented.

**Visual and Aesthetic Impacts:** The build alternatives will be evaluated based on views from surrounding communities of the alignment and views of the communities from the alignment.

**Noise and Vibration:** The study will include an analysis of potential noise and vibration impacts on noise and vibration sensitive resources such as schools, hospitals, residences, hotels/motels, wildlife/natural areas, and historic structures associated with the build alternatives.

**Wetlands:** This study will indicate the location, classification, and type of wetlands that may be impacted by the alternatives. Both state and federal wetlands associated with the alternatives will be delineated and mapped. Measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts will be identified.

**Biological Resources and Endangered Species:** The study will assess the impact of the project on biological resources including wildlife and habitat within the project study area with a focus on ecologically sensitive areas such wetlands and contiguous expanses of undisturbed lands. The DEIS will identify and document threatened and endangered species (both fauna and flora) and habitats critical to

their survival. Specific areas include, but are not limited to, the Little Creek and New Hope Creek Significant Natural Heritage Areas.

**Floodplains and Flooding:** A determination will be made regarding the extent to which properties in the study area are located within a 100-year floodplain. A detailed analysis of potential changes in existing run-off patterns will be developed. Design elements will be recommended to mitigate potential impacts. Specific floodplain/flood storage areas include, but are not limited to, those associated with the Jordan Lake watershed in the vicinities of Little Creek and New Hope Creek.

**Historic and Archeological Resources and Parklands:** Historic properties, archeological sites, parklands, and other cultural resources will be identified and best efforts will be made to minimize or avoid potential impacts. Any areas of potential effect (APE) will be determined in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and extensive field reconnaissance will be conducted to identify resources within the APE. During the GIS review, using SHPO data, several sites were identified as having possible or known historic significance.

**Parks and Recreational Sites:** The DEIS will identify parks and recreational resources (sports fields, gymnasiums, public parks and green areas, gamelands) with the potential to be impacted by project alternatives. The facilities and services will be recorded, and the nature of the project's effects will be described. During the AA several sites were identified within 50 feet of the proposed alignment including the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) property in the Meadowmont area. Several Durham-owned parcels which have been zoned as Open Space/Recreational may also be impacted in the New Hope Creek area.

**Contamination/Hazardous Waste:** The DEIS will document any known hazardous waste or contamination within the study area. Sites requiring further analysis will be identified.

**Energy:** A determination of the energy consumption associated with the build alternatives will be estimated as part of the study process. Energy consumption measures the net impact on energy savings as a result of changes in automobile travel in the region, offset in part by the energy requirements for operation of the proposed service.

**Soils:** An assessment of the existing geological resources, soil types, and topography of the study area will be conducted and a description of the potential consequences of the build alternatives on soils will be prepared.

**Construction Impacts:** A description of how project construction may create potential impacts on the socioeconomic, physical and natural environments will be prepared.

**Impact on Railroad Operations:** The study will identify potential operational issues associated with constructing and operating a segment (generally between Ninth Street and the Alston Avenue area in Durham) of the proposed D-O LRT Service on newly constructed exclusive tracks in the North Carolina Railroad (NCR) right-of-way. NCR requirements to operate service within the railroad right-of-way will also be defined.

**Secondary/Indirect and Cumulative Impacts:** In addition to the direct effects of the project, the DEIS will also document secondary/indirect and cumulative impacts of the project. **Secondary effects** are caused by the project, but occur later in time or farther removed in distance than direct impacts. These include changes in land use attributable to the project (induced growth) and impacts on environmental resources that occur as a result of the project's influence on land use. **Cumulative impacts** include the total of all impacts to a particular resource that have occurred, are occurring, and will likely occur as a result of any action or influence, including the direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts of a federal project.

**Climate Change Adaptation Planning:** The EIS will also address the effects of climate change and the question of how the FTA capital investment in the proposed high-capacity transit system would be protected against extreme weather events, such as flooding and heat waves, that may affect transit infrastructure and passenger comfort.

## 6. Public Involvement

### 6.1. Process Overview

Public involvement represents a critical piece of any transportation project, and is required by federal law to assist in identifying and bringing to light any issues or concerns previously unidentified. One of the main purposes of the scoping process is to solicit and encourage public and agency participation early and often throughout the decision-making process. Public involvement aims to serve two purposes: (1) to provide the public with information on the study, and (2) to allow the public to assist in setting the direction of the project.

Triangle Transit has implemented a broad-reaching Public Involvement Plan (PIP) which outlines all public involvement efforts, incorporates the reliance upon continued collaboration with the region's stakeholders, identifies specific tools and techniques that will be used to engage impacted communities, and designates opportunities for education and feedback. The overarching goal of the PIP is twofold: 1) to create a living document that outlines specific public involvement techniques crafted to engage and educate stakeholders and set a foundation for future referenda; and 2) to provide a background of the cooperative regional process that has resulted in the formulation of the transit program.

Through implementation of the PIP, the project team will involve and engage the public during every step of the planning process. Public involvement strategies are specifically coordinated in conjunction with key project development milestones, including the scoping process for the D-O LRT EIS. In this regard, a 16-page Scoping Information Booklet (SIB) was prepared to provide information to the public and agencies on the D-O LRT EIS process, issues, alternatives and methodologies. This document was made available and distributed at meetings, by regular mail, by email and on a public website to the public and pertinent federal, state, and local agencies, and also provided upon request to any interested party. The SIB contained sections on Scoping, How the LPA Was Determined, Project Planning and Development Process and proposed schedule, Project Purpose & Need, Alternatives to be Studied, Environmental Impacts, Draft Project Coordination Plan, and How to Get Involved. A similar document was prepared to brief Elected and Appointed Officials. This booklet, which can be found in Appendix B, invited the general public and interest groups to comment and to attend the public scoping meetings. A concise briefing document which was given to Elected and Appointed Officials can be found in Appendix C.

Following scoping and beginning the subsequent EIS, FTA, Triangle Transit and its project partners will continue a policy and practice of actively encouraging members of the public, elected officials and project partners and staff from interested local, state, and federal agencies to participate in the project planning and development process. Through public workshops and open house events, meetings with neighborhood groups, business, community and environmental interest organizations and major employers, the project website and social media, ongoing information regarding the D-O LRT project will remain available.

### **6.1.1. Notification Methods**

Notification methods of the scoping process are listed below:

#### Federal Register/Notice of Intent (NOI)

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on April 3, 2012, indicating that the Federal Transit Administration and Triangle Transit will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the D-O LRT Project. A copy of the NOI can be found in Appendix A: Scoping Phase Notification, Part 1: Federal Register Notice of Intent.

#### Media Notifications

Media releases and advisories for Public Scoping Meetings were sent to various print and broadcast media within the Triangle region. Copies of the news release and Legal Notices in local newspapers can be found in Appendix A, Part 2.

#### Project Website

The project website: [www.OurTransitFuture.com](http://www.OurTransitFuture.com) (web pages about scoping) maintained an announcement of the Scoping Meetings on the homepage. Social media including the programs Facebook and Twitter page were also updated to reflect the meetings. Appendix A: Part 4: Project Website contains information from the web pages about scoping, and other social media used to inform the public of the scoping process.

#### Scoping Information Booklet PDF, 16 pages, 2.9 MB

Appendix B contains the Scoping Information Booklet.

#### Officials Briefing Packet

Appendix C contains the Officials Briefing Packet.

#### Scoping Meetings

Appendix D contains the Scoping Meeting Materials as follows:

Part 1 contains sign-in sheets, handouts, and agency presentation for the Agency Meeting.

Part 2 contains sign-in sheets, handouts, Elected Officials & Partners Presentation, and exhibits.

Part 3 contains sign-in sheets, handouts, boards, video presentation, and U-Pointer graphics and exhibits of the two public meetings held during the scoping process.

### **6.1.2. Opportunities for Participation - Website, Scoping Meeting**

Several methods of contact had been previously established as part of the public involvement process for the Alternatives Analysis, and these methods were used throughout the scoping process as follows:

- Project Hotline (1-800-816-7817)
- Email ([info@ourtransitfuture.com](mailto:info@ourtransitfuture.com))
- Website ([www.ourtransitfuture.com](http://www.ourtransitfuture.com))
- Mailing Address (P.O. Box 530, Morrisville, NC 27560)
- Facebook ([www.facebook.com/ourtransitfuture](http://www.facebook.com/ourtransitfuture))
- Twitter ([www.twitter.com/thetrtp](http://www.twitter.com/thetrtp))

## 6.2. Scoping Meeting Summaries

### 6.2.1. Regulatory Agency Meeting

A Regulatory Agencies Scoping Meeting was held on May 2, 2012 between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm at Extraordinary Ventures, 200 S. Elliott Rd, in Chapel Hill. There were 23 attendees. The meeting purpose was to provide project stakeholders with information and to receive input on the scope of the federal environmental review process in accordance with NEPA. A collection of federal, state, and local environmental resource agencies and environmental groups were invited to an interagency scoping meeting to discuss the AA, LPA, PE/DEIS process, future schedule, and public involvement opportunities to discuss the D-O Corridor. The meeting provided information including through a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the scoping process, identified the Draft Purpose and Need, and presented a brief history of the D-O LRT Project to date. After the presentation concluded, meeting attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide input on the environmental scope of the project. Appendix D contains the sign-in sheets, handouts, and Agency Presentation.

After the Regulatory Presentation concluded, the participants raised several questions regarding environmental issues including station planning, wetland impacts, indirect and cumulative effects, and stormwater drainage areas. The participants were informed that potential growth impacts as indirect and cumulative effects of the project will be considered in the EIS, and all options will be explored to avoid and minimize environmental impacts to the extent practicable. Project impacts and mitigation measures will be identified through the EIS phase of the project. Other questions concerned the alignment and expanded study area. Participants were informed that the alignment, stations, and study area could be expanded or adjusted to accommodate evaluation of reasonable alternative alignment options. Appendix D contains the Agency Meeting minutes.

### 6.2.2. Public Meeting 1: Chapel Hill

A Public Scoping Meeting was held on May 2, 2012 between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm at Extraordinary Ventures, 200 S. Elliott Rd, in Chapel Hill. There were 31 attendees. The meeting purpose was to provide the public with information and to receive input on the scope of the federal environmental review process in accordance with NEPA. The general public was invited to an Open House Format scoping meeting to discuss the AA, LPA, PE/DEIS process, future schedule, and public involvement opportunities to discuss the D-O Corridor. The meeting provided information including handouts, exhibits, boards, and descriptions of video presentation and link for viewing the video, and a description of U-Pointer graphics. Appendix D contains the sign-in sheets, handouts, and exhibits of the Public Meeting.

### 6.2.3. Elected Officials and Partners Meeting

An Elected Officials, Partners, and Universities Scoping Meeting was held on May 3, 2012 between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon at the Durham Armory, 212 Foster Street, in Durham. There were 27 attendees. The meeting purpose was to provide project stakeholders with information and to receive input on the scope of the federal environmental review process in accordance with NEPA. A collection of local government elected officials, local government staff, and university stakeholders were invited to the Elected Officials and Partners Scoping Meeting to discuss the AA, LPA, PE/DEIS process, future schedule, and public involvement opportunities to discuss the D-O Corridor. The meeting provided information including a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the scoping process, identified the Draft Purpose and Need, and presented a brief history of the D-O LRT Project to date. After the presentation concluded, meeting attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide input on the environmental scope of the project. Appendix D contains the sign-in sheets, handouts, and Elected Officials and Partners Presentation. The participants of the Elected Officials and Partners Meeting raised



several questions which are found with the responses in Appendix D, Elected Officials Meeting minutes. A summary of the comments and responses follow below:

- Regarding the timing of the Orange County tax referendum and the availability of federal funding, FTA funding is anticipated during final design, and although a referendum for Orange County is not scheduled, it does not have to be in place prior to the New Starts application. If passed, it would demonstrate the region's solidarity, increasing chances of project approval by the FTA.
- Regarding environmental impact issues including wetlands, other resources, noise, and human impacts including businesses and property, the effects of the project will be considered in the EIS, and all options will be explored to avoid and minimize environmental impacts to the extent practicable. Property acquisition will not occur until after the EIS process is complete and will comply with the Uniform Relocation Act.
- Regarding keeping public officials informed of the scoping process, and of recording comments and methodology, the comments are tracked, recorded, and will include the commentator, date, category, and will be cross referenced. This Scoping Report summarizes the comments at the end of the comment period, June 18, 2012, and will be shared with the elected officials and posted on the project website. The project record includes all comments, and is available upon request.
- Regarding the MPO vote and selection of the C2 alternative, on February 8, 2012, the DCHC MPO passed a resolution adopting the LPA, which identified both C1 and C2 options, with a preference for C2, to be advanced for further study in the environmental review phase.
- Regarding the challenges of the project and what is experienced on similar projects, the balancing of project effects between the human and natural environment and obtaining local consensus are at a similar level as other projects and are not foreseen as insurmountable.
- Regarding station locations, relocating a proposed station location, and economic features of Alston Avenue station location as a link to North Carolina Central University (NCCU), the development around stations will be focused to connect neighborhoods, and to universities including NCCU and will be integrated with city plans. Ongoing public workshops will be held throughout the PE/DEIS phase to receive input on station locations and design. Currently identified station locations can move, as can the location of maintenance facilities and these will be finalized in the PE/DEIS process.

#### **6.2.4. Public Meeting 2: Durham**

A Public Scoping Meeting was held on May 3, 2012 between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm at Durham Armory, 212 Foster St., in Durham, NC. There were 25 attendees. The meeting purpose was to provide the public with information and to receive input on the scope of the federal environmental review process in accordance with NEPA. The general public was invited to an Open House Format scoping meeting to discuss the AA, LPA, PE/DEIS process, future schedule, and public involvement opportunities of the D-O Corridor. The meeting provided information including handouts, exhibits, boards, and descriptions of video presentation and link for viewing the video, and a description of U-Pointer graphics. Appendix D contains the sign-in sheets, handouts, and Exhibits of the Public Meeting.

#### **6.2.5. Regulatory Agency Scoping Summary Meeting**

A Regulatory Agencies Scoping Follow-Up Meeting was held on August 21, 2012 between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm at the Friday Center, in Chapel Hill. There were 22 attendees. The meeting purpose was to

review the project scoping input and comments to date, collectively process them and formally develop the final scope of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as well as discuss and provide input on the; Scoping Report, Draft Coordination Plan, and the annotated outline for the DEIS. Appendix G contains the meeting minutes, sign-in sheets, presentation materials, and the draft Annotated Outline for the DEIS.

After the Presentation concluded, the participants raised several questions regarding how the Environmental Impact Statement would address such issues as wetland impacts, indirect and cumulative effects, and encroachments onto Rights-of-Way. Other questions concerned the alignment and expanded study area. Participants were informed that the alignment, stations, and study area has already been expanded or adjusted to accommodate the evaluation of reasonable alternative alignment options. Appendix G contains the Agency Scoping FollowUp Meeting minutes.

## 7. Summary of Scoping Comments

### 7.1. Comment Collection and Process Methodology

Public comments for the Triangle Regional Transit Program (TRTP) were received through a variety of methods, including the following:

- Written comments submitted via email, postal mail, fax, or the project website
- Voice messages submitted through the project hotline
- Comments received during the public workshop series on May 2 and 3, 2012 in multiple formats:
  - Written comment forms
  - Verbal comments transcribed by a court reporter
  - Visual comments captured using U-Pointer software

All comments received were recorded in the TRTP Comments Database, categorized into one or more of the 15 topic areas, and analyzed for key trends. Details of the methodology and TRTP Database are found in Appendix E. Sections 7.2 through 7.4 below provide summaries of Regulatory Agency Comments, Elected Official and Partner Comments, and Public Comments. The verbatim comments and original comment transcripts are found in Appendix E.

### 7.2. Agency Comments Summary

Scoping comments were submitted from several federal, state, and local agencies. The comments received from each agency are summarized in Table 7.1. The table provides a summary of the agencies' comments, while the actual correspondence received from each agency is included in Appendix E.

The US Department of the Interior suggested that the project area should include alternatives that do not impact game lands, citing impacts to the ecological integrity of the natural heritage area and public use of the land. Habitat connections should not be impacted. The significance of the Piedmont swamp forest as an ecological corridor that connects Duke Forest and Jordan Game Land was also pointed out. Similar statements were made by the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The US Army Corps of Engineers stated that routes that do not impact public lands must be included.

Table 7.1 Agency Comments Summary

Agency Type		Agency /Organization Name	Preliminary Issue(s)	Date
Fed	1	Federal Aviation Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project is within five miles of Horace Williams Airport in Chapel Hill.</li> <li>2. NEPA analysis should ensure that all elements of the project design and construction, including any proposed mitigation measures, consider and incorporate the guidance found in FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33B .</li> <li>3. If project will affect airspace, file a <i>Notice of Proposed Alteration or Construction</i> (Form 7460-1).</li> </ol>	5-12-12
Fed	2	US Army Corps of Engineers  Wilmington District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project alternatives as shown at the Scoping Meeting held on May 12, 2012 cross government property located along Little Creek at B. Everett Jordan Lake. The lake is under the stewardship of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and this crossing would require an easement from the federal government. NEPA documentation completed by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for this project can meet our land review request necessary for the permit processing. However, in order to meet our land use request review process, alternative(s) must be included that do not impact public lands. Route(s) crossing public lands must be avoided if possible, and impacts minimized if public lands cannot be avoided. Mitigation would be required for any unavoidable adverse impacts on public lands. Alternative routes to the north and east of those currently depicted should be added to the study area.</li> <li>2. The congressional authorized purposes of B. Everett Jordan Lake are flood control, water supply, water quality, recreation, and fish and wildlife conservation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Flood control – the project alternatives shown at the Scoping Meeting are located within the lake’s flood storage pool, which is subject to inundation to elevation 245 feet mean sea level (MSL).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	5-18-12

			<p>b. Water supply and water quality – the project alternatives as shown appear to impact jurisdictional waters of Little Creek and New Hope Creek of the Cape Fear Watershed. The USACE and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) establishing procedures for permit authorization in compliance with the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. These permits are available only for work dependent upon being located within jurisdictional waters that are the least environmentally damaging practical alternative (LEDPA). Once the LEDPA is determined, permit authorization requires the project design avoids and minimizes impacts to the jurisdictional waters. Finally for those impacts that cannot be avoided and minimized, appropriate and practical mitigation will be required.</p> <p>Two large jurisdictional water systems (Little Creek and New Hope Creek) were identified during scoping. However no other jurisdictional stream channels and/or adjacent wetlands were shown. We recommend that jurisdictional delineation and mapping occur for the entire corridor.</p> <p>We also recommend aerial crossings (i.e. bridging) of the proposed project’s unavoidable crossings of jurisdictional waters.</p> <p>c. Fish &amp; wildlife conservation – permanent wildlife lands in the study area include Little Creek Waterfowl Impoundment which serves as mitigation for impacts from the construction of Jordan Lake and is managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). Portions of a Significant Natural Heritage Area as designated by the NC Natural Heritage Program are also located in the study area.</p> <p>3. Widening of an existing transportation corridor through jurisdictional water systems is most often preferred over a new alignment or re-alignment of the existing linear transportation system. Scoping documents includes such a crossing for the Little Creek system along the NC 54 corridor; however, crossing of New Hope Creek system does not. We recommend that an alternative be included that widens an existing corridor (US 15/501).</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<p>4. Linear transportation projects often result in unavoidable crossings of jurisdictional water systems with the need to connect logical termini associated with the project purpose. However, these crossings should be made perpendicular and at the narrowest point of the jurisdictional wetland system. We believe these opportunities exist north of the C1 alternative for the Little Creek crossing and adjacent to US 15/501 for the New Hope Creek crossing. We recommend that such alternatives be included in the scoping review.</p> <p>5. The construction of permanent access roads, maintenance yards and boarding stations should be included in scoping review including the possibility for impacts to jurisdictional features.</p> <p>Your scoping review should also include discussion of plans for compensatory mitigation of unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional waters.</p>	
Fed	3	US DOI - Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	<p>1. Expand project study area to include areas that may not impact game lands - Alignment options C1 and C2 cross Little Creek at the Orange/Durham County line. This portion of the corridor crosses Jordan Game Land which is owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRA). Area is designated by the NC Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) as Little Creek Bottomlands and Slopes Significant Natural Heritage Area (SNHA). Service is concerned about impacts to ecological integrity of the SNHA and public use of the area as game lands, and potential impacts to the Upper Little Creek waterfowl impoundment which serves as mitigation for adverse impacts for the construction of Jordan Lake.</p> <p>2. A rail crossing in the New Hope Creek Study Area should not impact habitat connections that have been established – 1,500 acres of the New Hope Creek corridor is designated as regionally important wetland that warrant protection because of resource value and vulnerability. The significance of the piedmont swamp forest is as an ecological corridor that connects Duke Forest and Jordan Game Land.</p> <p>3. Nine general conservation measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts to fish and wildlife resources are included in the correspondence in Appendix E.</p>	6-15-12



			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. A biological/assessment /evaluation may be prepared to fulfill the Section 7(a)(2)of the Endangered Species Act requirements.</li> <li>5. Field surveys should be conducted to determine the presence or absence of federally listed species if suitable habitat is present.</li> <li>6. If it is determined that the proposed action may affect a listed species, the USFWS office should be notified of the determination, results of the surveys, survey methodologies, and analysis of direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed action prior to implementation of the action.</li> <li>7. USFWS reserve the right to review any federal permits that may be required for the proposed action.</li> <li>8. USFWS provided eight subject areas to be included in the environmental document in sufficient detail to facilitate thorough review of the propose action. These items are outlined in the correspondence in Appendix E.</li> </ol>	
Fed	4	US DOI – National Park Service	The National Parks service has no comments.	6-18-12
Fed	5	US DOT – Federal Highway Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FHWA will not support any route that would run along interstate routes and hinder the widening of any interstate. Concerns included encroachment on Interstate-40, proposed use of the I-40 right of way, direct access from I-40 to lightrail stations, particularly at Gateway and Leigh Village, and proposed modifications of any existing interstate interchanges.</li> <li>2. FHWA asked if project sponsors would acquire property under corridor preservation or protective acquisition regulations prior to the selection and public hearing disclosure of the preferred alternatives in the NEPA process.</li> <li>3. FHWA will rely on its partner agency FTA on New Starts and transit projects.</li> <li>4. FHWA also had questions about which agency would handle any inverse condemnation claims filed by property owners and business who feel that their property values and opportunities to sell, rent or develop have been adversely impacted.</li> </ol>	6-20-12
Fed	6	US EPA – Environmental Protection Agency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EPA, Region 4, reviewed materials that in information on the proposed project, and accepted the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) request to act as a cooperating and participating agency on the proposed project.</li> </ol>	7-27-12

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. EPA notes that a few alternative alignments within the corridor (e.g. Alternative C1 and 2) that will require further study. These alternatives also involve environmental resource consideration. The DEIS should indicate and discuss the rationale for rejecting any proposed alternative.</li> <li>3. The Draft EIS should contain a discussion of the regulatory transportation air quality requirements, air quality concerns in the project study area, and a carbon monoxide (CO) analysis. EPA recommends that the project implement overall diesel emission reduction activities such as: switching to cleaner fuels, retrofitting current equipment with emission reduction technologies, replacing older vehicles, and reducing idling through operator training and/or contracting policies.</li> <li>4. Project evaluation should consider the impacts of air toxic emissions from trains, buses and vehicular traffic on nearby population centers and sensitive populations. The screening level evaluation could be conducted using the approach described in the EPA’s Air Toxics Risk Assessment Reference Library (ATRA Library). See the ATRA Library, Volume 1 Section 3.3.3 for further detail.</li> <li>5. To reduce erosion during and after construction, Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be used. The document should include an erosion control plan or reference North Carolina’s Erosion and Sediment Control Planning and Design Manual or document FTA’s and Triangle Transit’s commitment to compliance.</li> <li>6. Requirements of the Section 404 (b) (1) Guidelines must be fully and completely considered if this project is to move forward. The least environmentally damaging alternative is determined by using the project’s “basic project purpose.”</li> <li>7. Noise impacts should be predicted for the no-build and each build alternative. State-of-the-art noise modeling should be provided and consistent methods used by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. EPA looks to FTA to provide federal oversight and consistent approach, methodology, and mitigation.</li> </ol>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. EPA encourages the use of the NEPA process as a mechanism for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</li> <li>9. EPA principally defers to and encourages continued coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding assessments of federally-protected threatened or endangered species.</li> <li>10. Pursuant to Executive Order 12898, the Draft EIS should examine the effect of the transportation facilities on minority and low-income populations. Based on the coordination documents, the public involvement process has been robust and should continue to provide opportunities for communities to help identify potential effects, and minimization / mitigation measures.</li> <li>11. The Draft EIS should evaluate potential environmental and human effects of the proposed project on children (under age 18) in the surrounding area and on schools in proximity to the transportation corridors and stations.</li> <li>12. Transit projects have both direct and indirect effects on the environment. NEPA requires the assessment and disclosure of reasonably foreseeable effects of transportation projects or the indirect effects of the project. Such consideration should include other transit projects in the Durham and Orange County area and other private, local, state or federal projects in general – particularly those with similar impacts- that are existing, proposed or are expected to occur within the reasonably foreseeable future (10-20 year horizon).</li> </ol>	
State	1	NCDOT - Aviation	Provides Rick Barkes as NCDOT Aviation contact	6-8-12
State	2	NCDENR – Division of Parks and Recreation	The project does not appear to be in the vicinity of DPR property - no comments.	6-13-12
State	3	NCDENR – Division of Water Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of the project scoping information indicates potential for impacts to streams, buffers, and jurisdictional wetlands in the project study area.</li> <li>2. Seven streams and/or tributaries are identified, four of which are as 303(d)</li> </ol>	6-18-12

		(NCDWQ)	<p>listed (impaired).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. NCDWQ is concerned about potential sediment and erosion impacts. Project designs and construction methods should include highly protective sediment and erosion control best management practices (BMP); reference <i>NCDWQ's Stormwater Best Management Practices</i>.</li> <li>4. For 303d listed streams (Morgan Creek, Little Creek, New Hope Creek and Ellerbe Creek, NCDWQ recommends that the most protective BMPs be used in accordance with and <i>Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds</i> (15A NCAC 04B.0124) to reduce risk of further impairment.</li> <li>5. The project is within the Jordan Lake and Neuse River Basin. Riparian buffer impacts shall be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent possible pursuant to 15A NCAC 2B.0267 and 15A NCAC 2B.0233 respectively. Buffer mitigation may be required for buffer impacts. A buffer mitigations plan must be provided to NCDWQ prior to approval of the Water Quality Certification.</li> <li>6. Twenty general comments are included. These items are outlined in the correspondence in Appendix E.</li> </ol>	
State	4	DENR – Conservation, Planning and Community Affairs (Linda Pearsall)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We can expect the possibility of three types of impacts to occur with respect to the Significant Natural Heritage Areas (SNHAs) on Little Creek and New Hope Creek located along the alternative alignments. These impacts could be direct, indirect, and/or cumulative.</li> <li>2. Direct impacts – Alternatives C1 and C2 both cross the Little Creek Bottomlands and Slopes SNHA. C1 also crosses the Little Creek floodplain along a proposed new alignment through currently undeveloped forest. The SNHA was acquired specifically to mitigate for wildlife habitat lost during the construction of Jordan Reservoir project. Only one alignment across the New Hope Creek floodplain was considered in the Locally Preferred Alternatives Study which transecting a wide tract of bottomland hardwood located on a private owned property just north (0.1 miles) of the Game Land boundary.</li> </ol> <p>Construction of this project along either of these alignments may cause the loss of high quality habitats classified by the NHP as Piedmont Bottomland</p>	6-18-12

			<p>Forest (on both New Hope and Little Creeks), Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (on Little Creek), and Piedmont Levee Forest (on New Hope Creek). Of particular concern are potential impacts to the population of <i>Carya laciniosa</i> (Big Shellbark Hickory) in the New Hope Creek Bottomland Forest SNHA south of US 15/501.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Indirect impacts – all of the proposed alternatives are likely to have significant secondary impacts, particularly the alternatives along new location. Effects could include loss of habitats, disruption of animal movements, and growth of invasive species. Impacts to the New Hope Creek floodplain are especially important as this area provides connection between the Jordan Game Land, Duke Forest, Boulevard Lands, and New Hope Preserve. Similarly, the Little Creek floodplain connects Jordan Lake Game Lands to undeveloped tracts extending west to US 15/501 and located in the 100-year floodplain for Jordan Lake.</li> <li>4. Cumulative impacts – impacts of this project will take place in the context of large amount of development around the margins of New Hope Creek and Little Creek floodplain that is already happening or in the planning and review stage. A significant portion of the development can be expected to result from this project itself. For the area covered by this study, selection of alignments is strongly tied with development that will impinge upon the SNHA and public lands. For many species of wildlife, close proximity to human development and other activities is very disruptive.</li> <li>5. Field surveys should be conducted to determine the significance of direct impacts as well as the indirect impacts on adjoining areas of habitat.</li> <li>6. For the analysis of indirect impacts, we suggest the study area be extended from the USACE owned lands to US 15/501 along Little Creek and to both the Korstian and Durham Division of Duke Forest along New Hope and Mud Creeks.</li> <li>7. Cumulative impacts should be considered both in terms of the development of</li> </ol>	
--	--	--	---	--

			<p>the project will contribute to – including transit stations and associated facilities, shopping centers and planned developments – as well as additional development that is projected to occur within the overall study area of this project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. In assessing potential impacts to the SHNAs, we request that the analysis include greater range of alternative alignments that were considered in the Locally Preferred Alternative Study; specifically, modifying the C1 alternative so it avoids direct impact to Jordan Game Lands and the SNHAs.</li> <li>9. We recommend that an alternative that follows existing transportation corridors, including the NC 54 right-of-way (ROW) from the Friday Center to I-40, and then following the 1-40 ROW north to the proposed Leigh Farms transit hub be studied.</li> <li>10. We also recommend a full assessment be given to an alignment following US 15/501 ROW across New Hope Creek.</li> <li>11. For purposes of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impacts we would like to see:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Selection of alignments that avoid or minimize impacts as much as possible to SNHAs, slowing already disrupted transportation corridors as much as possible;</li> <li>o Design of floodplains crossings that maintain or enhance wildlife movements; and</li> <li>o Establishment of buffers between the identified natural areas and any development that results form or is otherwise associated with the creation of this project and related transportation improvements.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Protection of local natural areas and the species and ecosystems they support results from the efforts of Orange and Durham counties with the strong support of their citizens and various state agencies. Protection of the wildlife movement corridor along New Hope Creek in particular has received a great deal of attention, with private conservation organizations, county government agencies, and state agencies all contributing to the protection of natural areas within this area, For example, the new</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

			bridge on US 15/501 was designed explicitly to accommodate the movement of animals between the USACE lands at the upper end of Jordan Lake and Duke Forest and other conservation lands located north of US 15/501. We would like to see this example followed in the development of this project and related transportation plans.	
State	5	NC State Historic Preservation Office	Review under Section 106 and Section 4 (f) will be necessary.	6-19-12
State	6	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Broaden study area to develop an avoidance alternative to the Jordan Game Land - the corridor crosses Jordan Game Land which is owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRA). Area is designated by the NC Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) as Little Creek Bottomlands and Slopes Significant Natural Heritage Area (SNHA). Due to urbanizations, loss of habitat and fragmentation would be difficult to mitigate.</li> <li>2. Any light rail crossing in the New Hope Creek vicinity should not undermine the efforts and funding that provide a much improved ecological linkage - New Hope Creek is traversed by the project and although the project does not directly impact conservation property, the New Hope Creek corridor provides important ecological connection between Duke Forest and Jordan Game Land. Extensive conservation effort in this area has resulted in in preservation of multiple properties by NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program and NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund.</li> <li>3. NCWRC provided nine general information needs to facilitate document preparation and review. These items are outlined in the correspondence in Appendix E.</li> </ol>	6-18-12
Local	1	Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG)	Carefully study New Hope Creek, consider LRT south of 15-501. Find alternatives for maintenance facility perhaps not on the alignment	6-18-12
Local	2	Durham Bike and Pedestrian Commission	In the adopted Durham Bicycle Transportation Plan (2006), as well as the adopted NC54-Interstate 40 corridor study, a multi-use trail is recommended along the transit corridor.	6-13-12



Local	3	Will Wilson, Durham Open Space and Trails Commission	DOST passed a resolution asking project sponsors to revise the light rail transit plan to place the transit corridor through the existing right-of-way for Highway 15-501 (or other existing road corridor) as it crosses the New Hope Creek Corridor/Floodplain and the Sandy Creek Corridor/Floodplain.	5-17-12
Local	4	Town of Chapel Hill – Roger Stancil	Great careful evaluation of C1 and C2 alternatives	6-15-12
Local	5	Town of Chapel Hill – Mayor ProTem Ed Harrison	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vulnerable natural community within C1 corridor</li> <li>2. Pedestrian access for Hamilton Rd. station</li> <li>3. Future fixed guideway to west/north of UNC Hospitals station</li> </ol>	6-19-12
Local	6	Town of Carrboro – Mayor Mark Chilton	<p>Regional rail segment to UNC Hospitals should not preclude extensions to Downtown Chapel Hill, Downtown Carrboro, and Carolina North.</p> <p>UNC Hospital station should not preclude extensions to Downtown C.H. and Carrboro.</p>	6-12-12
Other	1	Triangle Land Conservancy	Consider alternative along US 15/501 in the New Hope Creek watershed	6-18-12

### 7.3. Elected Officials and Partners Comments Summary

Most of the scoping comments from elected official and partners were received during the Elected Officials and Partners Meeting held on May 3, 2012 as summarized in Section 6.3.2 above. Comment correspondences received from Project Partners include letters from the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill regarding the location of the terminal station. UNC wishes to revise the location of the station from its current location (known as UNC D) south of the Genetic Medicine Facility to a location slightly to the south of the UNC hospitals parking garage.

### 7.4. Public Comments Summary

Public comments on the D-O LRT project were received as part of the scoping outreach effort. Conducted between May 2, 2012 and June 18, 2012, this effort included two public workshops, as well as multiple print and online announcements indicating that comments would be accepted via email, phone, postal mail, and the project website.

A total of 268 comments were received from the public. The public comments were summarized and categorized into one or more of 15 topic areas. A statistical analysis of the public comments and the verbatim comments are located in Appendix E.

This summary includes the following elements:

- Overview of major trends in feedback on key project topic areas
- Detailed feedback on the most commonly cited topic areas (Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility (ROMF), Corridor Location, Stations, Land Use, and Service)
- Summarized feedback on the remaining topic areas

Public comments on the D-O Corridor were categorized into one or more of the following topic areas, which reflect various components of the environmental review phase of the project development process:

- |                      |                               |                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Corridor Location  | ▪ Natural Resources           | ▪ Service            |
| ▪ Cultural Resources | ▪ Noise and Air Quality       | ▪ Social Aspects     |
| ▪ Funding            | ▪ Other                       | ▪ Stations           |
| ▪ Growth Management  | ▪ Purpose and Need            | ▪ Visual             |
| ▪ Land Use           | ▪ Rail Operations and         | Resources/Aesthetics |
| ▪ Local Economy      | Maintenance Facilities (ROMF) |                      |

The most frequently addressed topic areas are Social Aspects (188 comments), the ROMF (153), Cultural Resources (143), Natural Resources (114), and Corridor Location (104). However, it is important to note that 97 percent of the comments addressing Social Aspects were primarily related to either ROMF (144 comments) or Corridor Location (43 comments), or both topics, with concerns including safety, community cohesion, gathering places, and access to basic services. Similarly, 96 percent of comments attributed to Cultural Resources were primarily related to the ROMF (138 comments); these comments focused on the presence of religious institutions, particularly the Levin Jewish Community Center and Judea Reform Synagogue near the proposed ROMF site on Cornwallis Road. Relatively few comments were received that did not address corridor location (most commonly C1 vs. C2) or the proposed ROMF location. When considered separately from corridor location and the ROMF, stations, land use, and service are the most common additional topic areas.

While the majority of comments focused on the individual components and/or effects of the project, some commenters expressed their support for or opposition to the DO-LRT Project as a whole. Forty-five comments (17 percent) stated support for the project. Only three comments (1 percent) noted opposition to the project, with stated reasons including environmental impacts and the light rail project costs relative to improving bus service.

Across all topic areas, the most commonly stated positions are as follows:

- Opposition to the proposed location for the ROMF on Cornwallis Road due to the site's proximity to the Levin Jewish Community Center (JCC) campus
- Opposition to the C1 alignment alternative due to cost, safety concerns, and perceived negative impacts on economic development, environmental conservation, and community livability

Comment summaries of the major topic areas follow below:

### **Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility**

With a total of 153 public comments, the most cited topic area was the proposed location of the ROMF. Nearly all of these commenters opposed the Cornwallis Road site in Durham for the ROMF, with only one commenter expressing support for this location. However, even commenters opposed to specific potential ROMF sites, including those opposed to the Cornwallis Road ROMF site, expressed support for the D-O LRT project in general, with 26 explicitly stating their support for the project as a whole and only one noting opposition. Opponents of the proposed ROMF site expressed concern with its proximity to the Levin JCC, the Lerner Jewish Day School, the Maureen Joy Charter School, and the Judah Reform Synagogue. The JCC is a new facility that also houses Jewish Family Services, together serving many members of the Durham community.

Organizations writing in opposition to the Cornwallis Road ROMF site included the Levin Jewish Community Center, the Lerner Jewish Day School, the Judea Reform Synagogue, and the Durham Chapel Hill Jewish Federation. Two comments, including one submitted by a representative of the New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee, opposed the potential ROMF site near New Hope Creek due to runoff and pollution. One of these comments instead recommended locating the ROMF on the west side of Witherspoon Boulevard.

City of Durham's transportation manager suggested the possibility of merging the two rail maintenance facility locations in Chapel Hill along Farrington Road.

Two people who opposed the proposed Cornwallis Road location for the ROMF suggested via the U-Pointer technology that the open space area south of the alignment in the vicinity of Patterson Place Station be evaluated as a potential rail maintenance facility.

Locating the maintenance site in the area surrounding the Patterson Place station would not be the best use of land considering the potential for station area development. West of Witherspoon and merging the two rail maintenance facilities along Farrington Road are worthy considerations and will be studied as part of the NEPA process.

### **Corridor Location**

104 public comments addressed the proposed location and alignment of the D-O LRT project. The D-O LRT Corridor contains two areas where specific alignment options will be further evaluated in the DEIS:

- Crossing of Little Creek between the Friday Center/Meadowmont Village area and the proposed Leigh Village development (C1 vs. C2 alignments)
- Crossing of New Hope Creek and Sandy Creek between Patterson Place and South Square (D alignments)

The majority of the Corridor Location comments (72) were related to the choice between the C1 alignment and the C2 alignment; of these, 68 were in support of C2 and four were in favor of C1. A variety of reasons were cited for opposing C1 and supporting C2. The most common reasons include:

- C1 would have greater impacts on the natural environment and surrounding community
- C1 would create a barrier separating the residents of The Cedars, a continuing care retirement community with 400 senior residents, from a medical facility and other amenities/services
- C1 would pose a potential safety issue, particularly for the aging population at The Cedars
- C1 costs more and has lower ridership potential
- C1 would negatively impact property values for the established Meadowmont community

Comment COMID 699, #93 cautioned that alignments C1 or C2 need to be coordinated with a potential park being proposed with the Leigh Village development.

There were also a few comments in opposition to D3 due to potential property impacts (e.g. noise, privacy) on surrounding homes, implementation time and costs, and limited evidence that D3 will result in higher ridership.

One member of the public [COMID 652/#58] graphically drew an alternative alignment that travels north of the existing alignment through Meadowmont, suggesting this as an alternative alignment as this will minimize impacts to the wetlands and cross at the narrowest point. Another comment (COMID 698, #92), suggested a new alignment alternative that follows south of the LPA alignment from Garrett Road to MLK Jr. Parkway around the southern side of the residential community west of University Dr. Comment COMID 658, #64, suggested the project team evaluate an alignment alternative that travels along US 15-501 and one along Old Chapel Hill Road/University Drive. This comment was also made by a representative of TJCOG.

These alternative alignments as stated above will be considered in the NEPA phase.

### **Land Use**

While the majority of Land Use comments were related to corridor location or the proposed ROMF site, six comments were received independent of these issues. These comments most commonly addressed current and future land development patterns and expressed support for transit-oriented development. However, concerns such as development pressures, increased impervious surface, and loss of green space were also cited.

### **Natural Resources**

The majority of Natural Resources comments addressed corridor location and the proposed ROMF site. Commenters opposing the C1 alignment were concerned that it would result in the loss of green space; impacts to wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitats; and an increase in traffic and thus reduction in air quality. With regard to the ROMF site, commenters expressed concern that the proposed Cornwallis Road site would increase air, water, and ground pollution.

## **Stations**

Following comments related to the ROMF and corridor location, comments addressing stations were the next most common. Seven comments were received about planned stations for the D-O LRT project, including general considerations and amenities as well as recommendations related to specific station locations. Commenters addressed the station study area to address bicycle and trail improvements and suggested providing bicycle storage at stations, locating stations in populated areas and close to businesses (especially Patterson Place), and ensuring adequate parking at stations.

Specific station comments made by the public include the following:

- Relocate the MLK Jr. Station further west to better capture office developments. In conjunction with this it was suggested that the South Square Station be moved closer to University Ave. along Shannon Street.
- Station Option A at the Medical Centers supports VA access. Others included the consideration of both stations (A and B) at Duke University
- Consider stops at Garrett Road and at Southpoint and Research Triangle Park (RTP). Note that Southpoint and RTP are outside of the study area and hence these station sites will not be considered.
- Provide service to the Alston Avenue/North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Station during the first phase of the project to serve low-income populations in this area.

These specific comments will be considered in the NEPA except as noted.

## **Service**

Six comments were received that addressed service. Service comments addressed routes, hours, and other issues including making stations easily accessible by bicycle, insuring after-operational hours are coordinated with events (e.g., Durham Performing Arts Center [DPAC], theatre), and providing services to additional destinations in the Triangle and beyond (e.g., Raleigh, Cary, Whispering Pines, Sanford, Apex, Burlington, Garner, Clayton, Selma, Goldsboro).

## **Social Aspects**

Commenters suggested increased participation of Latino and immigrant populations (suggested by representative of the Durham Inter-Neighborhood Council and D-O Transit), a focus on safety, provide service to Alston Avenue/NCCU Station from the outset to serve low-income populations, and move forward with light rail transit quickly to improve quality of life.

## **Noise and Air Quality**

Noise and air impact comments were all related to the ROMF. Noise impacts would affect school instruction, religious worship, and community building activities at the JCC from the ROMF facility. Air, light and ground pollution may result from the ROMF. No other noise or air comments were received.

## **Visual Resources / Aesthetics**

Visual and aesthetic impacts would result from the ROMF facility. No other visual or aesthetic comments were received.

## **Local Economy**

Comments addressed the project enhancing economic development for the region, cost savings for transit users vs. families using automobiles. Commenters asked that economic development

opportunities be considered in evaluating/weighting environmental impacts, and that the current alignment through Patterson Place will support residential development.

### **Cultural Resources**

Commenters suggested paying close attention to the location of marked and unmarked cemeteries, and to recognize and account for the historic Meadowmont Farm House on the Rizzo property.

### **Growth Management**

Commenters suggested light rail coordinate with planning efforts to guide future growth and to support transit-oriented neighborhoods. Also commenters suggested conducting an updated brownfields assessment of 15-501 vs. Highway 54 based on current land uses and properties.

### **Funding**

One commenter suggested consideration of tax increment financing and business improvement districts as potential funding sources; another suggested extending commuter rail to the Town of Hillsborough in order to increase support for the Orange County referendum.

### **Purpose and Need**

Commenters provided general agreement with the stated Purpose and Need. One commenter suggested that a statement is needed stating light rail is particularly needed to relieve traffic congestion.

### **Other**

Encourage developers to coordinate with the project team, especially near the proposed Leigh Village development and in conjunction with the I-40/NC-54 Corridor Study. Examine other developments in transportation technologies to mitigate environmental impacts. Emphasize the impacts of not building the light rail system in order to increase support.

## 8. Summary of Next Steps

The Environmental Scoping phase for this project accomplished three important steps. First the scoping process resulted in acceptance by USEPA, USACE and FHWA of the request from FTA to become Cooperating Agencies in the D-O LRT Project EIS. A concluding stakeholders meeting was held on August 21, 2012, where the Cooperating Agencies and interested Participating Agencies collectively processed all of the scoping input provided to date and made recommendations regarding any additional issues which should be include in the scope of the EIS. All of this information was used to formally develop the scope of the EIS.

Second, public involvement galvanized several community and environmental interest groups who identified issues and concerns for more detailed study of otherwise standard elements of the DEIS. The New Hope Creek Association expressed concerns regarding the protection of wildlife and water resources in the New Hope Creek; the residents of Cedar Hills indicated that they are opposed to the C1 alignment, and members of the Judea Reform Congregation, Lerner Day School families, and Levin Jewish Community Center identified potential cultural, visual, air quality, noise, and social impacts which one of the alternative ROMF sites, which is located at the old Pepsi Plant on Cornwallis Road, may create. The comments about the ROMF and the C1 vs. C2 alternatives were voluminous, and all underscore the importance of considering the natural and human environment, the analysis of which is central to the requirements of NEPA and the preparation of an EIS.

Third, the scoping process elicited several comments on expanding the scope of the EIS as described in Sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4. All of these comments will be considered in the NEPA EIS document.



## LIST OF APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Scoping Phase Notification

Part 1: Federal Register Notice: Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the D-O LRT Project

Part 2: Media Notifications

- News Release of Scoping Meetings
- Legal Notice in local Newspapers

Part 3: Sample Email Notifications

- Regulatory Agencies
- Elected Officials and Partners
- Members of the Public

Part 4: Project Website [www.ourtransitfuture.com](http://www.ourtransitfuture.com), webpages about Scoping

### Appendix B: Scoping Information Booklet

Part 1: English Version

Part 2: Spanish Version

### Appendix C: Officials Briefing Packet Booklet

### Appendix D: Scoping Meeting Materials

Part 1: Agency Meeting

- Sign-in Sheets
- Handouts
- Agency Presentation
- Agency Meeting Minutes

Part 2: Elected Officials and Partners Meeting

- Sign-in Sheets
- Handouts
- Elected Officials and Partners Presentation
- Elected Officials and Partners Meeting Minutes

Part 3: Public Workshops

- Sign-in Sheets
- Handouts
- Exhibits
  - Boards
  - Description of Video Presentation and Link for Viewing Video
  - Description of U-Pointer Graphics

## **Appendix E: Scoping Comments**

Part 1: Public Comment Summary and Statistical Analysis

Part 2: Comment Database Report

Part 3: Agency Comments Received

- Federal
- State
- Local

Part 4: Institution and Partner Comments Received

Part 5: Public Comments Received

## **Appendix F: Cooperating Agencies Correspondence**

## **Appendix G: Agency Scoping Follow-Up Meeting**

Note: Due to the size and length of the Appendices associated with the Scoping Report, only the List of Appendices has been included. The entire Scoping Report for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project, including all appendices, is available at: <http://ourtransitfuture.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/6-00681-Scoping-Report-and-appendices-Final.pdf>