Historic Resources – Area of Potential Effects (APE)

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

November 2014
The NEPA Preferred Alternative for the D-O LRT Project would generally follow NC 54, I-40, US 15-501, and the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) Corridor in downtown Durham and east Durham. The alignment would begin at UNC Hospitals, parallel Fordham Boulevard, proceed east on NC 54, travel north on I-40, parallel US 15-501 before it turns east toward the Duke University campus along Erwin Road, and then follow the NCRR Corridor parallel to NC 147 through downtown Durham, before reaching its eastern terminus near Alston Avenue. The alignment would consist of at-grade alignment, fill and cut sections, and elevated structures. In two sections of the alignment, Little Creek and New Hope Creek, multiple Light Rail Alternatives are evaluated in the DEIS.

This technical report contains information for all alternatives analyzed in the DEIS. However, pursuant to MAP 21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), a NEPA Preferred Alternative has been developed, which recommends C2A in the Little Creek section of the alignment, NHC 2 in the New Hope Creek section of the alignment, the Trent/Flowers Drive station, and the Farrington Road Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Description of the Proposed D-O LRT .............................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 Proposed Project Alternatives ......................................................................................................................... 1

2. Area of Potential Effect Description .............................................................................................................. 3

List of Tables

Table 1: Reason for widening of APE beyond general 1,000 ft. width ........................................................................... 4

List of Figures

Figure 1: Historic Resources APE Overview ........................................................................................................... 6
Figure 2: Historic Resources APE ............................................................................................................................ 7
Figure 3: Historic Resources APE ............................................................................................................................ 8
Figure 4: Historic Resources APE ............................................................................................................................ 9
Figure 5: Historic Resources APE ............................................................................................................................ 10
Figure 6: Historic Resources APE ........................................................................................................................... 11
Figure 7: Historic Resources APE ........................................................................................................................... 12
Figure 8: Historic Resources APE ........................................................................................................................... 13
Figure 9: Historic Resources APE ........................................................................................................................... 14
Figure 10: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 15
Figure 11: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 16
Figure 12: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 17
Figure 13: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 18
Figure 14: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 19
Figure 15: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 20
Figure 16: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 21
Figure 17: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 22
Figure 18: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 23
Figure 19: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 24
Figure 20: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 25
Figure 21: Historic Resources APE .......................................................................................................................... 26
1. Introduction

Through the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process, which included extensive public outreach, a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was selected to address the purpose and need of the Durham-Orange (D-O) Corridor. The proposed project is a 17.1 mile double-track light rail transit (LRT) line with 17 proposed stations that will greatly expand transit service in Durham and Orange Counties. The Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT) project extends from western terminus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) at the UNC Hospitals Station to the eastern terminus in Durham at the Alston Avenue/North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Station. The proposed D-O LRT alignment connects a range of educational, medical, employment, and other important activity centers, including: UNC; UNC Hospitals; the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education; Duke University; Durham Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center and Duke University Medical Center (DUMC); downtown and east Durham; NCCU; and Durham Technical Community College (DTCC).

1.1 Description of the Proposed D-O LRT

The proposed D-O LRT alignment generally follows North Carolina (NC) Highway 54 (NC 54), Interstate 40 (I-40), United States (US) 15-501, and the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) Corridor in downtown Durham and east Durham. The proposed alignment begins in Chapel Hill at UNC Hospitals, parallels Fordham Boulevard, proceeds eastward adjacent to NC 54, travels north along I-40, parallels US 15-501 before it turns east towards Duke University and runs within Erwin Road, and then follows the NCRR Corridor that parallels NC Highway 147 (NC 147) through downtown Durham, before reaching its eastern terminus in Durham near Alston Avenue. A total of 17 stations are planned, and up to 3,900 parking spaces along the D-O LRT alignment will be provided. In addition, a rail operations maintenance facility (ROMF) will be constructed to accommodate the D-O LRT fleet (12 cars, including spares). The construction of the ROMF facility will require additional non-revenue track to move cars between the track and facility.

Bus routes will be modified to feed into the D-O LRT stations, and headways will be adjusted to provide more frequent service and minimize transfer waiting times. These services will also connect LRT passengers with other area transportation hubs, including park-and-ride lots and transfer centers.

1.2 Proposed Project Alternatives

Consistent with the September 2012 Scoping Report, and as described herein, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will examine the potential environmental impacts of the LRT alternative as well as a small number of alignment, station, and ROMF siting alternatives, including the following:

- Crossing of Little Creek between the Friday Center and the proposed Leigh Village Development (i.e., Alternatives C1, C1A, C2, C2A and associated station locations)
- Crossing of New Hope Creek (NHC) and Sandy Creek between Patterson Place and South Square (i.e., NHC LPA, 1, and 2 and associated station locations)
- Station alternatives at Duke and Durham VA Medical Centers
- Five proposed locations for the ROMF

In addition to the LRT, the DEIS will consider both a Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative and a No-Build alternative, as follows:
Historic Resources – Area of Potential Effects

- TSM – an enhanced bus service to the same stops as the proposed D-O LRT with roughly equivalent levels of transit service
- No-Build Alternative – the existing and programmed transportation network improvements
2. **Area of Potential Effect Description**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has preliminarily determined and documented an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Corridor project (Undertaking) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(a)(1) and 800.16(d). The APE for historical resources was determined by the scale and nature of the Undertaking, the topography and urban density of the area through which the Undertaking passes, research, and field study. As part of the research and field study effort, the GIS maps of historic resources maintained by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO), HPO survey files, previous studies in the vicinity of the Undertaking, Orange and Durham County tax maps, and current and historical aerial photography of the area around the Undertaking were reviewed. Various narrative and pictorial resources were consulted, including M. Ruth Little’s *The Town and Gown Architecture of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1795-1975* (Preservation Society of Chapel Hill, 2006) and the websites/archives of North Carolina Modernist Houses ([ncmodernist.org/](ncmodernist.org/)), Open Durham ([opendurham.org/](opendurham.org/)), Chapel Hill Memories ([chapelhillmemories.com/](chapelhillmemories.com/)), Endangered Durham ([endangereddurham.wordpress.com/](endangereddurham.wordpress.com/)), and the Durham Public Library ([durhamcountylibrary.org/exhibits/postcards/](durhamcountylibrary.org/exhibits/postcards/)). Additionally, the area around the Undertaking was driven and/or walked. An architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for architectural history conducted this effort to assist the FTA in its preliminarily determination of the APE.

The entire APE is depicted on Figure 1. It is shown at a smaller scale on 20 detailed maps (Figure 2-20) that extend from the Undertaking’s southwestern terminus in the Town of Chapel Hill in Orange County to its northeastern terminus in the City of Durham in Durham County. In addition, the smaller scale maps show the existing National Register (NR), Study Listed (SL), and Determined Eligible (DOE) sites as provided by the HPO.

From its terminus in Chapel Hill (Figure 2) until it reaches dense urban development in downtown Durham at South Gregson Street (Figure 19), the APE generally follows property boundaries extending 500 ft. to either side of the center line of the Undertaking’s alignment and alternative alignments, so is generally 1000 ft. wide. However, due to the presence of several large parcels (e.g. UNC, Duke University, US Army Corps of Engineers land, and Durham County property) the APE was not expanded to include full parcel if the parcel size was 10 acres or larger, instead the APE generally follows the 500 ft. taking into account buildings and other barriers. This extent was based upon the scale and nature of the Undertaking and the gently rolling nature of the terrain. The APE does, however, expand and contract outside of downtown Durham depending on the presence of I-40, proposed Rail Operations and Maintenance Facilities (ROMFs), park-and-ride facilities, and the elevation of sections of the Undertaking. Additionally, the APE was expanded to include the entire boundary of any National Register-listed or –eligible properties/districts that are partially located within the area identified APE. The resulting Historic Resources APE is presented in Figures 1-21.

The APE is drawn tighter where it encounters I-40 in Durham County. The interstate and its rights-of-way here are about 200 ft. wide, which constitutes a significant modern visual intrusion and barrier. From just north of I-40’s interchange with NC 54 to just south of its...
interchange with Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard (US 15 / 501), the APE terminates at the right-
of-way on the east side of the interstate, short of 500 ft. from the centerline of the proposed
Light Rail Transit alignment (Figures 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10).

Within the urban core of the City of Durham, the APE is tighter than 500 ft. from the centerline
of the LPA and the proposed ROMF at the Undertaking’s eastern terminus on East Pettigrew
Street. From Buchanan Boulevard (Figure 19) east to Briggs Avenue (Figure 21), it includes the
resources that directly overlook the corridor and the ROMF. It does not include the resources
beyond, because their view is obscured by the resources fronting on the Undertaking. Further,
the Undertaking in this heavily built-up area parallels a nineteenth-century rail line, which
notably limits the Undertaking’s ability to cause alterations to the character or use of any
historic properties located near it.

At the eastern terminus of the Undertaking at the ROMF on East Pettigrew Street, the APE
terminates at the right-of-way on the south side of the Durham Freeway (NC 147), short of 500
ft. from the centerline of the LPA and the southern edge of the ROMF (Map 20). It is tightened
here for the same reason it was tightened alongside I-40. The freeway and its rights-of-way
here are about 200 ft. wide, which constitutes a significant modern visual intrusion and barrier.

Conversely, the APE extends farther than 500 ft. from the centerline of the various corridors in
the vicinity of the sites of five potential ROMFs in Durham County and at some sections where
the Undertaking is elevated. At the two ROMF sites located between I-40 and Farrington Road,
the APE extends 500 ft. west of the site (Maps 7 and 8). At the site near the junction of
Durham-Chapel Boulevard (US 15 / 501) and Watkins Road, the APE extends out 500 ft. from
the edges of the ROMF at all sides (Map 10). It also extends 500 ft. to the east of the ROMF
located near the junction of US 15 / 501 and West Cornwallis Road (Map 13).

Where sections of the Undertaking are elevated, the APE may have been widened beyond a
general 1000-ft. width, depending on the nature of the elevation and the terrain. Elevated
sections are marked in light blue on the 21 attached maps. Table 1 explains why and where the
APE was or was not widened at the elevated sections:

Table 1: Reason for widening of APE beyond general 1,000 ft. width

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map #</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description of section elevation/terrain</th>
<th>Justification for widening/not widening APE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>East of UNC Hospital Station</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade where ground falls off</td>
<td>Due to tree coverage and building heights, elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>East of Mason Farm Rd Station, south of Rocky Ridge Farm HD</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade over declivity; ground falls off to south</td>
<td>APE not widened to south due to tree coverage and slope; widened 200 ft. to north due to increased visibility from elevated terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Friday Center Drive Station</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade</td>
<td>APE already wider than general 1000-ft. width due to presence of other alignment alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East of Meadowmont and west of Leigh Village</td>
<td>Minimal elevation over floodplain</td>
<td>Elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map #</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description of section elevation/terrain</td>
<td>Justification for widening/not widening APE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>East of Woodmont Station</td>
<td>Elevated at crossing of NC 54; minimal elevation over floodplain to east of 54</td>
<td>Widened approximately 200 ft. at and near NC 54 crossing; to east of NC 54 elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>East of Gateway Station and west of Patterson Place Station</td>
<td>Elevated over I-40 and Mount Moriah Rd</td>
<td>APE widened approximately 200 ft. to south; not widened to north due to visual barrier of US 15-501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (at south)</td>
<td>East of Patterson Place Station A</td>
<td>Minimal elevation over floodplain</td>
<td>Elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (at north)</td>
<td>East of William N. Patterson House property</td>
<td>Minimal elevation over floodplain</td>
<td>Elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (at west)</td>
<td>Garrett Rd on south side of US 15-501</td>
<td>Elevated over Garrett Rd and, to east of road, minimal elevation over floodplain</td>
<td>APE widened approximately 200 ft. to south near Garrett Rd crossing, but not to north due to visual barrier of buildings along US 15-501; at floodplain, elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>West of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway Station B</td>
<td>Elevated over Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy</td>
<td>APE widened approximately 200 ft. near Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>South Square Station</td>
<td>Elevated over Durham-Chapel Hill Blvd and to maintain grade</td>
<td>APE widened approximately 200 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>North of Pickett Rd and south of ROMF</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade over creek</td>
<td>Elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>W Cornwallis Rd east of US 15-501</td>
<td>Elevated over US 15-501</td>
<td>APE widened approximately 200 ft. to east, but not to west due to visual barrier of US 15-501 interchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>East of US 15-501 and south of Cameron Blvd</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade over creek</td>
<td>Elevated section not visible beyond general 1000-ft. width, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>West of Ninth Street Station</td>
<td>Elevated over NC 147 (Durham Freeway) to maintain grade</td>
<td>NC 147 below grade and within dense urban development, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 (at west)</td>
<td>West of Buchanan Boulevard Station</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade</td>
<td>NC 147 below grade and within dense urban development, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 (at east)</td>
<td>West of Durham Station</td>
<td>Elevated to maintain grade</td>
<td>NC 147 below grade and within dense urban development, so APE not widened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The FTA is submitting this APE to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer for review and consultation, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(a).
Historic Resources – Area of Potential Effects

Figure 1: Historic Resources APE - Overview
Common sections of the light rail alignment are referred to as the “Proposed Light Rail Alignment.”
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