

Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project

Scoping Information Booklet



Public and Agency Scoping Begins on the Durham-Orange LRT Project

Travel between Chapel Hill and Durham is becoming increasingly difficult as more and more people move to the Triangle Region. High growth rates in the Region are expected to continue over the next twenty years, adding to the existing strain on our transportation system. When traffic congestion increases, the reliability of the transportation system decreases. For some time, local leaders and transportation planners have recognized the need for predictable and dependable alternatives to driving in the congested corridor between Durham and Chapel Hill, two of the Triangle's most prominent municipalities. Therefore, the purpose of the proposed premium high-capacity transit investment in the Durham-Orange County (D-O) Corridor is to provide a transit solution that addresses the following mobility and development needs:

- Need to enhance mobility
- Need to expand transit options between Durham and Chapel Hill
- Need to serve populations with high propensity for transit use
- Need to foster compact development

Additional detail summarizing these needs is provided on page 5. Through an Alternative Analysis (AA) recently completed for the D-O Corridor, alternative transit technologies and alignments that met the identified transit needs of the corridor were evaluated. The AA concluded with project stakeholders selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) which defined the locally preferred transit vehicle technology, the general route, and termini of the proposed transit project. Potential station locations were also identified during the AA process.

WHAT'S INSIDE

What is Scoping?	p. 3
How was the LPA determined?	p. 3
Project development process	p. 4
Project Purpose & Need	p. 5
Alternatives to be studied	p. 6
Environmental Impacts	p. 9
Draft Project Coordination Plan	p.11
How do I get involved?	p. 15

PUBLIC SCOPING WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Two Public Workshops
Wed., May 2, 2012 ♦ 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.
Extraordinary Ventures
 200 S. Elliott Rd., Chapel Hill
Thu., May 3, 2012 ♦ 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.
The Durham Armory
 212 Foster St., Durham

HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND SUBMIT COMMENTS

In Person: Attend the Workshops
Online: www.ourtransitfuture.com
 For materials and comments
By email: info@ourtransitfuture.com
By mail: TRTP
 P.O. Box 530
 Morrisville, NC 27560
By phone: 1-800-816-7817

Deadline for Comments
June 18, 2012

LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY
is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), whose point of contact is:

Mr. Brian C. Smart
Environmental Protection Specialist,
Federal Transit Administration
230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 800
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-865-5607

On February 8, 2012, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) adopted Light Rail Transit (LRT) on an alignment between the University of North Carolina (UNC) Hospitals in Chapel Hill and Alston Avenue in east Durham as the LPA for inclusion in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and subsequent environmental studies in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal environmental review process.

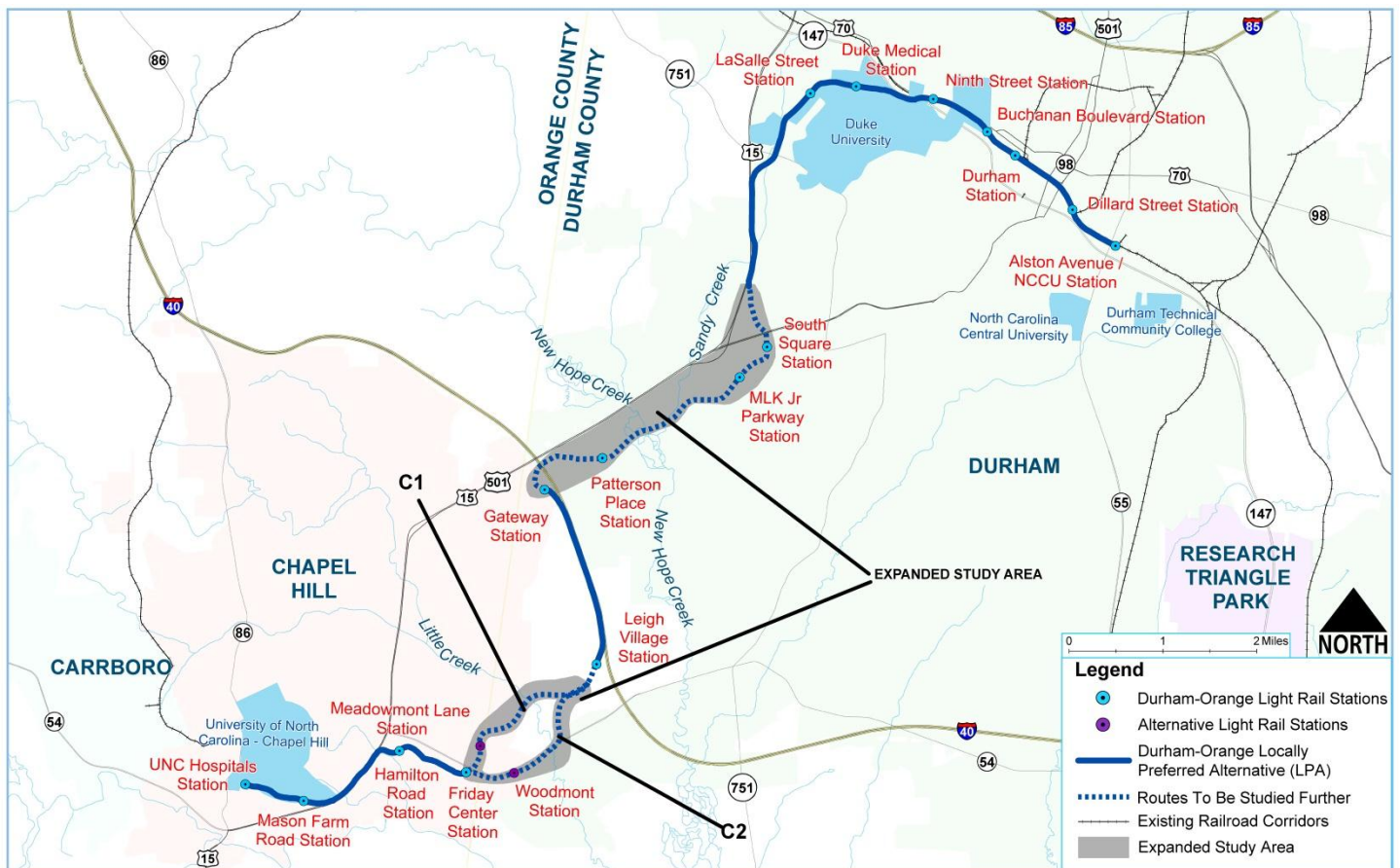
The next step in the implementation process for projects that may be considered for Federal funding is Environmental Scoping. Through the scoping process, the public, elected and appointed officials and interested government agencies comment on the proposed project's draft Purpose and Need, the alternatives to be evaluated, and the impacts of the alternatives. The scoping process is intended to define a range of issues that will be studied during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. In accordance with NEPA and FTA, the EIS will include the development and analysis of three primary

alternatives between the UNC Hospitals and east Durham:

1. The No-Build Alternative.
2. 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 (see pages 6-7).
3. LRT alternative consisting of a new fixed-guideway rail alignment and support facilities. This alternative represents the LPA as currently proposed (**Figure 1**).

Public Scoping Workshops will be held on May 2, 2012, in Chapel Hill at the Extraordinary Venture facility, and on May 3, 2012 in Durham at the Durham Armory. Both meetings will take place from 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. in an open house, drop-in format. Public input is critical to making decisions for this project and our region. This is the time to get involved and provide us with your comments.

Figure 1: The Durham-Orange Corridor Alternatives



What is Scoping?

Environmental scoping is a process through which the public, their elected officials, and interested government agencies are provided 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. Scoping is the juncture at which open coordination with Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, project partners, and the public is conducted to identify and define the issues to be studied in detail through the NEPA environment review process.

The purpose of the scoping process is 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.

During the scoping process, the goals and objectives of the project established during the Alternatives Analysis (AA) will be reviewed and refined based on comments received from the public, their elected officials, and interested government agencies. Similarly, the alternatives to be studied in the EIS may be expanded and refined based on input received at scoping meetings, through written comments and other outreach mechanisms.

Scoping is an important element of the environmental review process, and involves active consultation and participation of the public, their elected officials, and interested government agencies from whom input on the alternatives under consideration and the potential impacts is being requested.

Based on the current schedule, the **Comment Period on scoping for the D-O LRT Project will conclude on June 18, 2012.** The comments and input received throughout the scoping process will be assembled in a Scoping Summary Document which will be submitted to the FTA and available on the project website: www.ourtransitfuture.com in August, 2012.

The public involvement process and public input into the analysis will continue throughout the EIS phase.

How was the Locally Preferred Alternative determined?

Evaluation of fixed guideway alternatives such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and LRT in this corridor began more than 15 years ago. The 1998-2001 US 15-501 Major Investment Study (MIS) resulted in the establishment of an adopted transit corridor between Chapel Hill and Durham which continues to be protected and preserved for transit use by these local governments. In recent years, important advancements have been made to bring the implementation of a major transit investment in the Durham-Orange Corridor closer to reality.

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 Durham-Orange 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 MPOs as the transit element of the Triangle Region's 2035 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 and Wake counties are still in the planning phases; County

Acronym Glossary

AA	Alternatives Analysis
CRT	Commuter Rail Transit
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FRN	Federal Register Notice
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LPA	Locally Preferred Alternative
LRT	Light Rail Transit
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PE	Preliminary Engineering
TSM	Transportation Systems Management

Commissioners will determine when and if to move forward with referenda.

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 AA, the first step in the FTA Project Planning and Development process. The AA defined the alternatives that will be evaluated in an EIS 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.

The D-O Corridor AA documents and additional project information are available on the project website at www.ourtransitfuture.com.

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, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

The AA concluded by identifying the LPA, the most promising alternative for further analysis (Figure 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 a proven 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 (MPO's policy board) unanimously adopted the LRT Alternative as the LPA for further study through Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the NEPA process.

The general alignment of the LPA as illustrated in Figure 1 is a light rail connection between UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and Alston Avenue in east Durham.

What is the project development process?

Transit projects that may be considered for Federal funding must follow the FTA Planning and Project Development process which is illustrated in Figure 2. As with the AA and DCHC MPO's adoption of the LPA, scoping for the D-O LRT project will be undertaken in accordance with FTA requirements and as specified under NEPA.

Upon completion of the D-O LRT project scoping process and related FTA and NEPA requirements, authorization to begin PE and preparation of the Draft EIS (DEIS) will be sought from FTA.

The FTA Planning and Project Development process, through which Federal, state, regional and local officials plan and make decisions regarding major transit capital investment, consists of five phases which are represented by the rectangular boxes in the flow chart in Figure 2.

FTA authorization is required to proceed with each phase of the planning and development process. As projects are developed and advanced through the first three phases, design, costs, benefits, and potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures are more clearly defined.

Alignment options and/or alternative(s) may be eliminated after environmental impacts are documented. After completion of the DEIS, the NEPA Preferred Alternative will be selected from the set of DEIS alternatives based on the evaluation of environmental considerations, determinations by regulatory agencies and comments received from the

public and project participants. The NEPA preferred alternative will then be carried forward for evaluation in the Final EIS (FEIS) phase.

Once the FEIS is complete and all NEPA and FTA requirements have been satisfied, FTA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) on the selected alternative, thereby establishing completion of the environmental review process. Advancement to subsequent phases will depend on available Federal, state and local funding and implementation priorities.

What is the purpose of and need for the project?

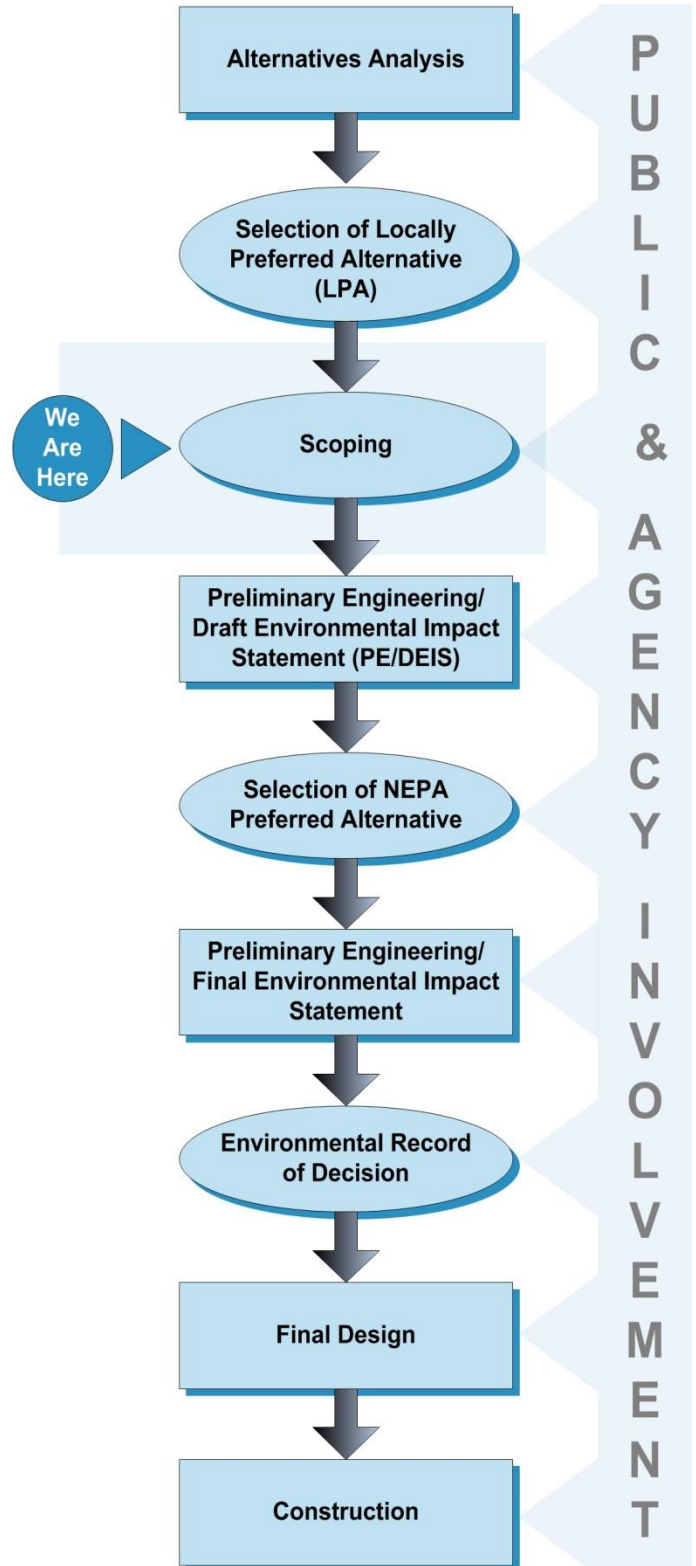
Triangle community residents and their elected officials have identified four core issues that a transportation project should address to support and advance a sustainable economy and the region’s quality of life. The D-O LRT Project will provide a transportation solution that addresses these core issues including 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, which will translate into increased travel demand. By 2035, the corridor is projected to add about 56,000 people and 81,000 jobs, which is expected to generate 255,000 additional daily trips, many of which will be made on local roadways. These trips will increase congestion during the highest AM and PM 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 limited to two Triangle Transit routes and the Duke University Robertson Scholars Express bus. Currently, 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

Figure 2: The FTA Project Planning and Development Process





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 to 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 cannot facilitate long-term economic development. A proposed fixed guideway transit investment can 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.

The Purpose and Need statement will remain draft throughout the DEIS. Comments on the draft Purpose and Need are welcome during the scoping process.

What alternatives will be studied for environmental impacts?

No-Build Alternative

In the EIS 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.

Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

The primary purpose of the TSM Alternative (**Figure 3**) 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 a significant bus network in the corridor with fixed-guideway improvements, to determine 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 3**) 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.

Build Alternative: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

As selected by the DCHC MPO on February 8, 2012, the LPA (**Figure 1**) 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 throughout to mitigate potential traffic impacts or impacts to environmental features as needed.

A total of 17 stations are proposed for the LRT

Alternative. Station location refinements for stations such as Hamilton and Duke Medical Center will occur during the PE/EIS phase of the project. During this phase, station layouts and designs will also be prepared.

The specific location of the D-O LRT LPA alignment is uncertain in two areas where alignment options will be further evaluated in the DEIS: 1. Crossing of Little Creek between the Friday Center/Meadowmont Village area and the proposed Leigh Village development; 2. Crossing of New Hope Creek and Sandy Creek between Patterson Place and South Square.

Two alternative alignment options for crossing Little Creek were developed during the AA (see **Figure 4**). Alternative C1 crosses NC 54 on aerial structure 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.

Figure 3: Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative for Durham-Orange Corridor

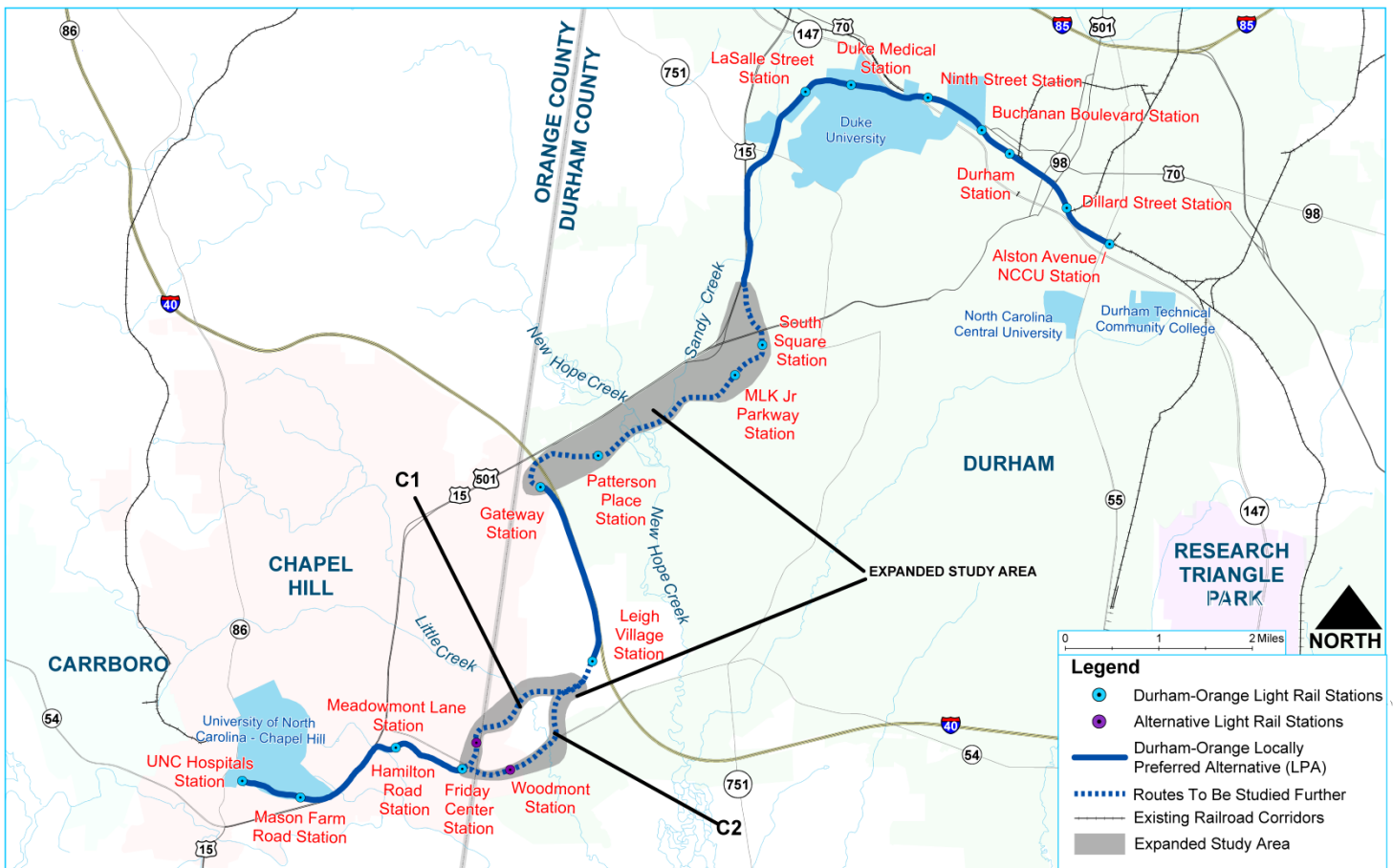
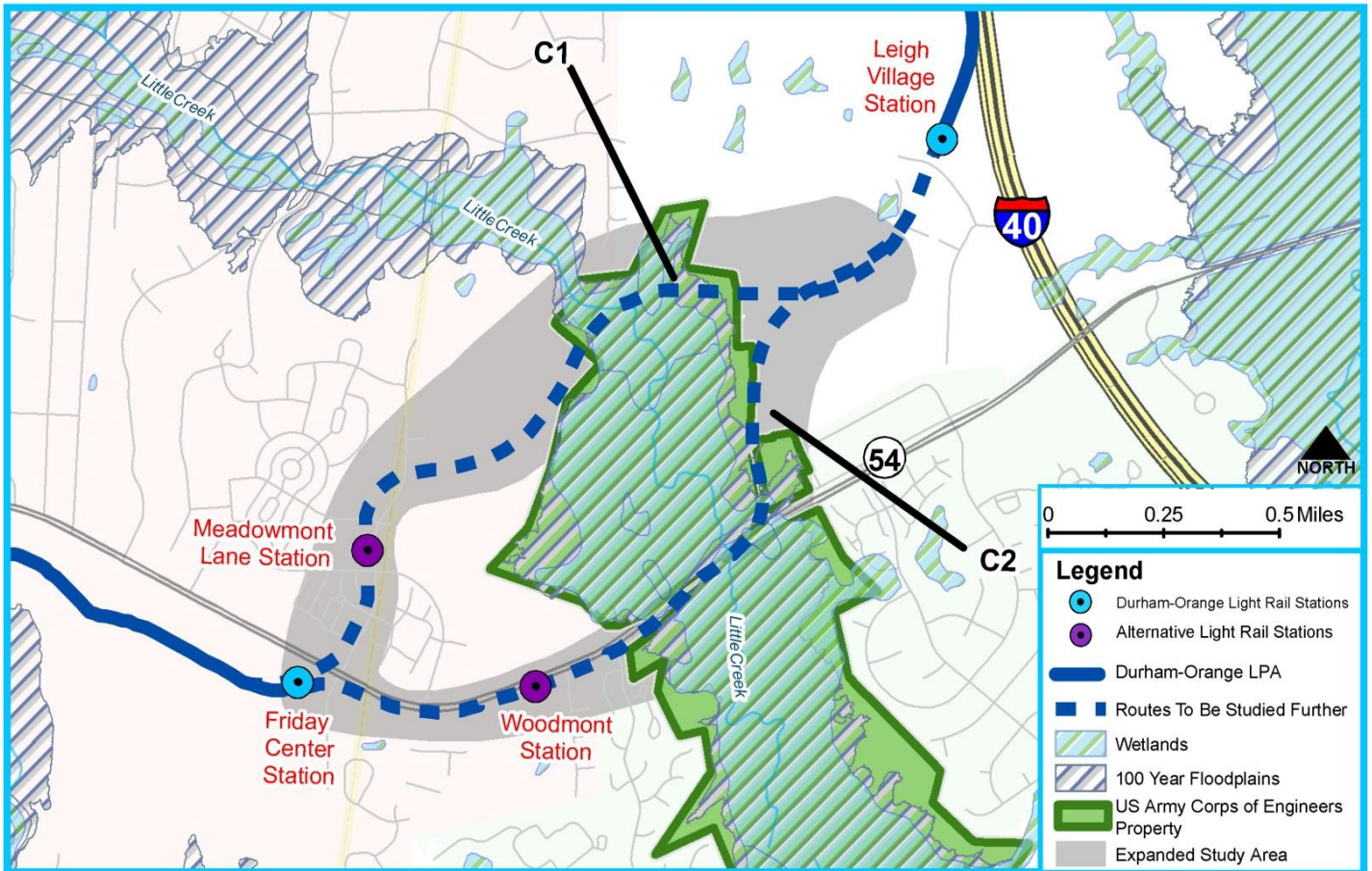


Figure 4: Alternative Alignment Options C1 and C2 crossing Little Creek



Alignment 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.

Optional alignments for crossing between Patterson Place and South Square will be developed within the expanded study area (Figure 5), which includes the US 15-501 right-of-way, and evaluated in the DEIS.

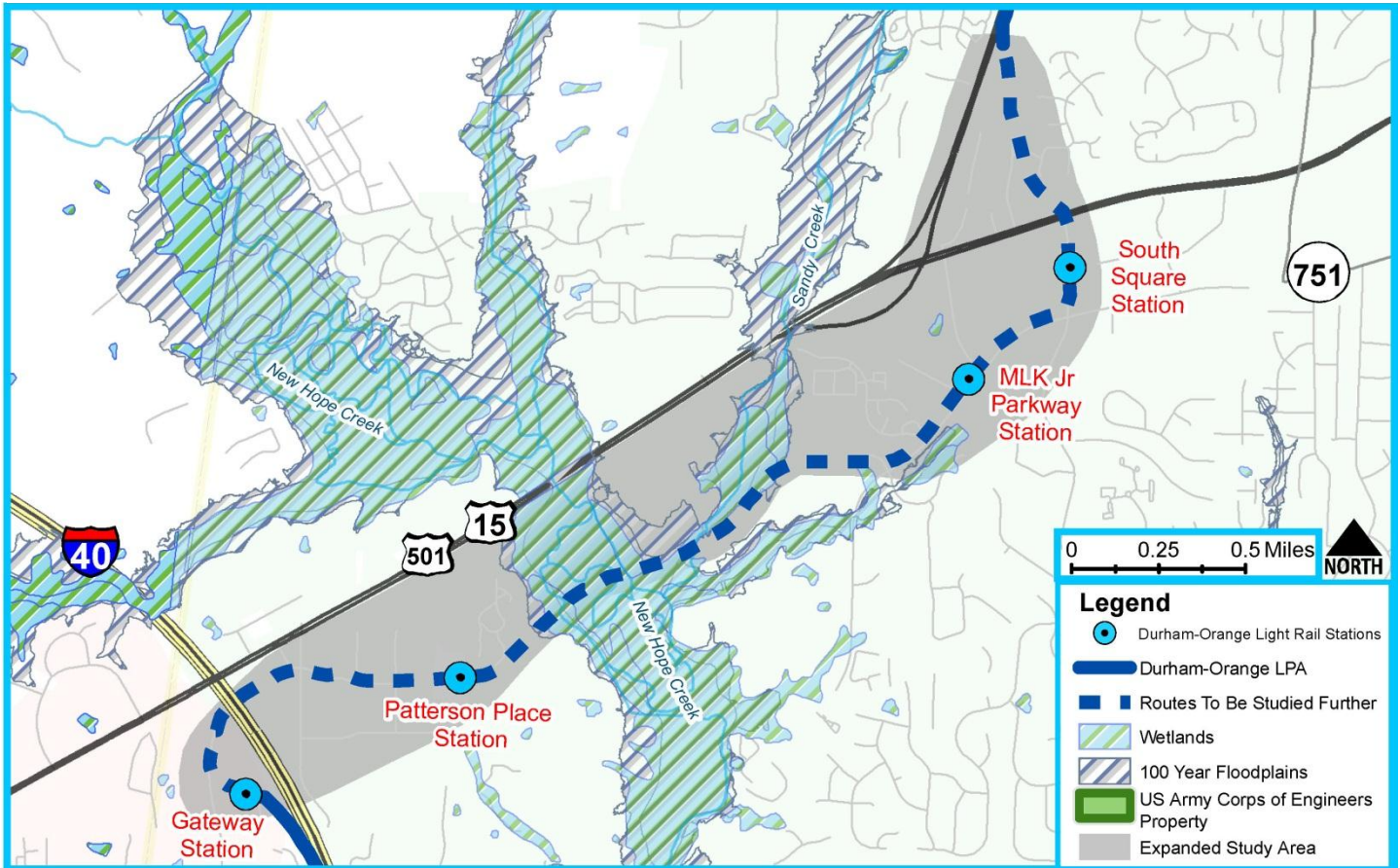
For the purposes of avoiding and minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental resources in these locations, practicable and reasonable alignment options in these locations will be studied in the DEIS. The results of the detailed environmental evaluation required by NEPA in the DEIS will provide a scientific and factual basis upon which to evaluate the suitability of these alternatives. Both locations include ecologically sensitive stream and wetland areas important to the conservation of natural resources:

1. **Little Creek** (Alignment options C1 and C2): Because of potential environmental and

community impacts, and comments received during the AA process, both alignment options C1 and C2 will be studied in the DEIS. The crossing of ecologically sensitive wetlands associated with Little Creek and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) owned property to the east of Meadowmont Village, as well as potential impacts to neighborhoods in Meadowmont and along NC 54, warrant additional study, coordination with the regulatory agencies, and continued dialogue with community stakeholders to fully evaluate the issues before an alignment option can be selected.

2. **New Hope Creek:** Because of the ecologically sensitive wetlands associated with New Hope and Sandy Creeks and potential impacts to nature trails and publically owned lands, reasonable alternative design options including, but not limited to a LRT alignment in the New Hope Creek area that is adjacent to, or within the existing US 15-501 right-of-way, will also be studied in the

Figure 5: Expanded Study Area at New Hope Creek and Sandy Creek



DEIS to investigate ways to minimize or avoid impacts to environmental resources.

How will environmental impacts be studied?

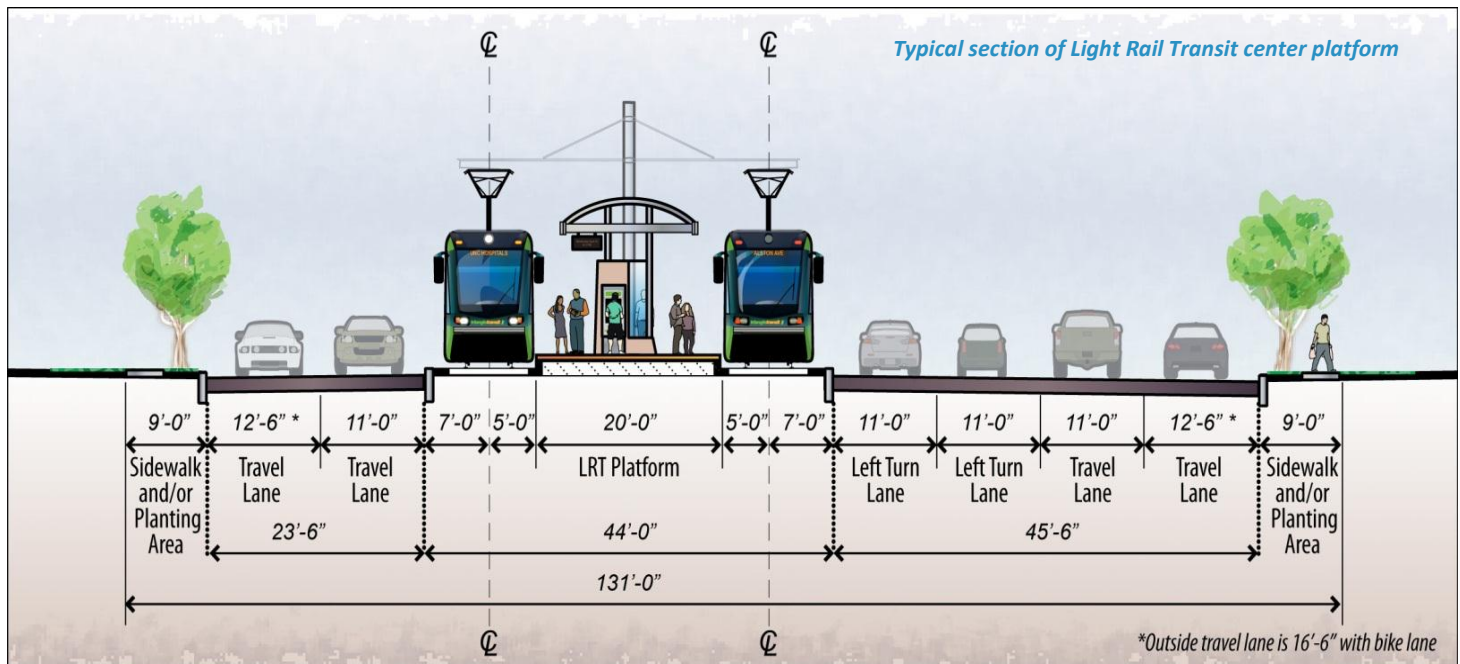
The AA process provided a planning-level environmental analysis of the LPA alignment. In compliance with NEPA, during the PE/DEIS phase of the FTA Project Planning and Development process, the DEIS study will include a rigorous evaluation of environmental impacts that may result from the construction 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 is 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, East 54 in Orange County and the Leigh Village planned development in Durham County, as well as 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, 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, and historic structures associated with the build alternatives.

Wetlands: This study will indicate the location, delineation, classification and type of wetlands that may be impacted by the alternatives. Both state and Federal wetlands associated with the alternatives will

be delineated. 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 as 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 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 State Historic Preservation Office data several sites were identified as having possible or known historic significance.

Parks and Recreational Sites: The DEIS will identify parks and recreational resources 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 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 documented. 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) 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 and Cumulative Impacts: In addition to the direct effects of the project, the DEIS will also document secondary, or indirect, and cumulative effects 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: 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 DEIS 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.

Draft Project Coordination Plan

Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), requires that the Lead Agency establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in the environmental review process. The Draft Coordination Plan summarized here accomplishes this task by identifying agencies that may be interested in the D-O LRT Project and steps in the coordination process. The Project Coordination Plan also defines a basic process and timeline for coordination between the FTA, Triangle Transit, interested agencies and the public; however, a detailed and specific schedule for completing the environmental review process has not yet been established. At the completion of project scoping, the Draft Project Coordination Plan will be finalized and posted on the project website.

Project planning, design and construction is a lengthy process. **Figure 6** summarizes project milestones and timeline, which may change based on funding and advancement of the FTA Project Planning and Development process. **Figure 6** also identifies approximately when public involvement activities and interagency coordination will occur. Timeframes for coordination are subject to changed based on development of a detailed project schedule.

The AA process began in March 2010 and was completed in February 2012 with the selection of the LPA. During 2012 and 2013, project scoping will be

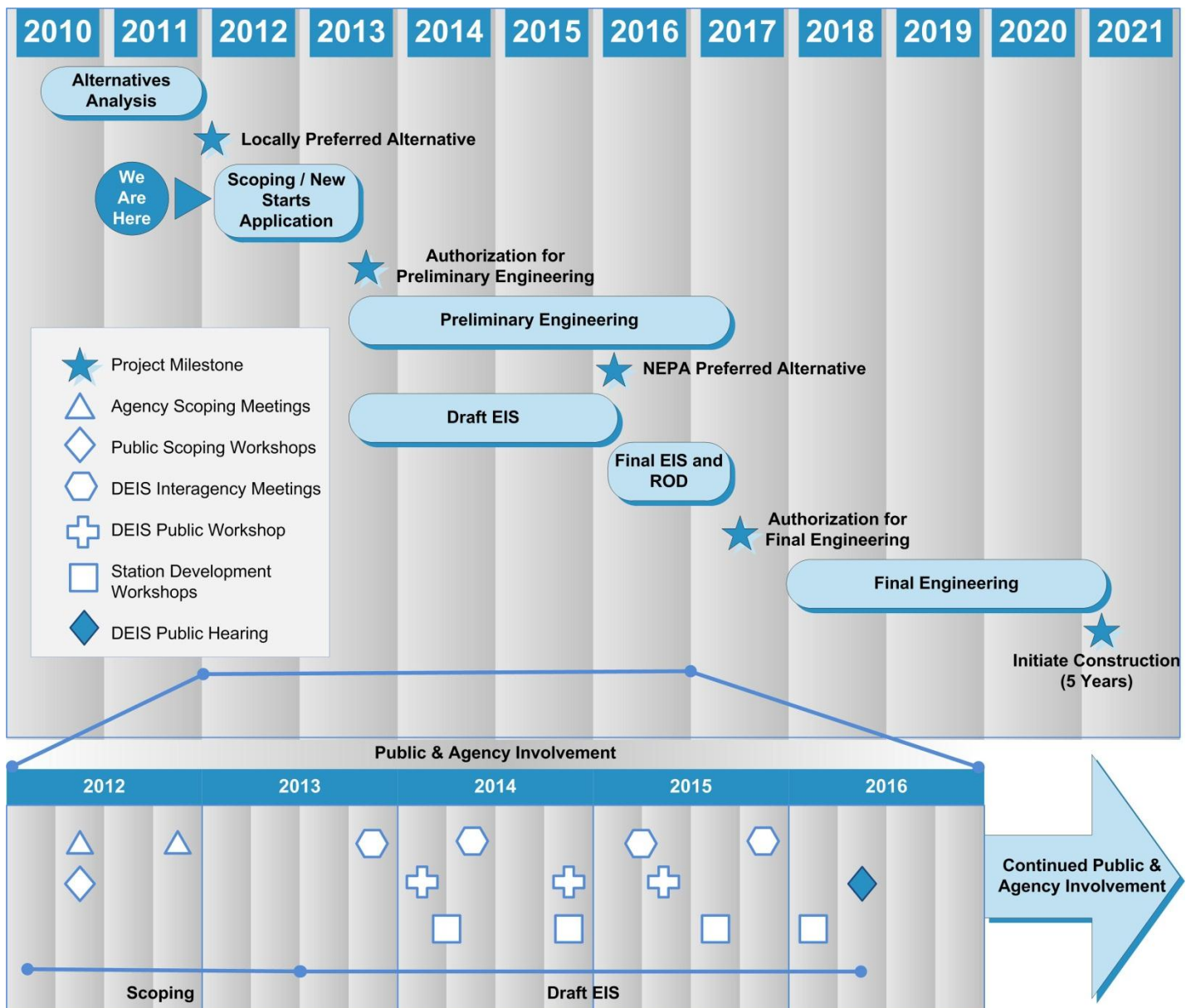
completed and Triangle Transit will submit the Federal New Starts application. Also during that time, FTA will consider advancing the proposed D-O LRT project to PE and the NEPA (EIS) process will be initiated. PE and preparation of the EIS are expected to be conducted simultaneously and public involvement and agency coordination will continue throughout this process. A DEIS is anticipated to be conducted simultaneously and public involvement and agency coordination will continue throughout this process. A DEIS 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 FEIS.

When all the documentation is complete, FTA is anticipated to publish the FEIS and subsequently issue a Record of Decision or "ROD," concluding the NEPA process in early 2017. With funding 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.

Throughout scoping and the subsequent EIS, Triangle Transit and its transit partners will continue its policy

Figure 6: Project Schedule including Public & Agency Involvement



and practice of actively encouraging members of the public to participate in the project through the scoping process, public meetings, and meetings with neighborhood groups, community organizations and major employers, as well through the project website. In addition to the public, other project participants include elected and appointed officials and staff from local, state and Federal government

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

- General Public / Stakeholders
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Local Governments
- State Agencies
- Transportation Providers
- Institutions
- Regional Entities
- Interest Groups
- Regulatory & Review Agencies
- Consultant Team

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

Two lead agencies for the proposed D-O LRT project are the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Triangle Transit. Their responsibilities follow.

FTA is the lead federal agency and project sponsor for the environmental documents prepared in association with the D-O LRT project. As such, FTA is responsible for supervising the preparation of the EIS. In general, FTA will:

- 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:

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
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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 Participating Agencies. Cooperating and Participating Agencies will be identified through the scoping process.

To date, two agencies, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), have been identified by Triangle Transit as potential Cooperating Agencies.

The responsibilities of Cooperating Agencies are as follows:

- Participate in the Scoping Process.
- Participate in meetings and field reviews.
- Make support staff available at the request of the Lead Agency.
- Use agency resources and funds to fulfill their responsibilities.
- If requested by the Lead Agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the NEPA review where the Cooperating Agency has a special expertise.
- Review preliminary drafts of environmental documents.
- Provide written comments within ten (10) business days of the receipt of information and request for comment at each of the NEPA milestones.
- If the agency has not commented within ten (10) business days, the lack of comment will signify that the agency has no comment on the information received.
- Fulfill the responsibilities of participating agencies.

Participating Agencies may be Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local government agencies that may have an interest in the project. Cooperating Agencies described above are, by definition, Participating Agencies, but not all Participating Agencies are Cooperating Agencies.

Agencies identified as potential Participating Agencies:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of Interior
- Federal Highway Administration
- NCDOT
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
- North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- DCHC MPO
- Triangle J Council of Governments
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
- Duke University
- North Carolina Central University
- Durham County
- Orange County
- City of Durham
- Town of Chapel Hill
- Chapel Hill Transit
- Durham Area Transit Authority
- North Carolina Railroad

The responsibilities of Participating Agencies include, but are not limited, to:

- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concerns regarding the potential human or environmental impacts of the project.
- Participate in the scoping process.
- Provide meaningful and early input on defining the project purpose and need, determining the range of alternatives to be considered, and the methodologies and level of detail required in the alternatives analysis.
- Participate in coordination meetings and joint field reviews as appropriate.
- Participate in meetings to resolve issues that could delay completion of the environmental review process or result in denial of approvals required for project under applicable laws.

- Participate in the issue resolution process, described in Section 4 of this plan.

Accepting designation as a Participating Agency does not indicate project support and does not provide the Participating Agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond its statutory limits, if applicable.

Coordination Structure – Public and interagency meetings will be held at key junctures throughout the EIS process and will occur during the DEIS as indicated on **Figure 6**. Sequential opportunities for Participating Agency and Public Involvement throughout the NEPA process are as follows:

Notice of Intent: On April 3, 2012, a Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register indicating that FTA and Triangle Transit will be preparing and EIS for the D-O LRT Project.

Scoping Meetings: An interagency scoping meeting, two public scoping workshops and an elected officials and partners scoping meeting will be during the first week of May, 2012. The scoping comment period ends June 18, 2012. The purpose of the public scoping meetings will be to present the scope of the NEPA review and to invite input on the draft Purpose and Need, the alternatives to be studied, the impacts to be evaluated, and the evaluation methods to be used.

Station Planning and Development: Coordination will be conducted with project stakeholders including local planning agencies and citizens regarding of 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 Draft EIS 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.

Public input is critical to making decisions for the Project and our region. This is the time to get involved. Please provide us with your comments no later than June 18, 2012.

Final EIS: Coordination of the Final EIS 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. 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.

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.

How do I get involved?

Public involvement serves two important purposes: (1) to provide the public with information about the options and results identified through the project

planning and analysis process, and (2) to allow the public to assist in setting the direction of the project.

Over the past 24 months, during the AA process, residents, employees, students, organizations, government agencies, and elected officials in Durham and Orange counties have examined options and provided input on vehicle technologies, rail alignments, and station locations. Public input was received through the www.ourtransitfuture.com project website, via mail and email, and 19 public workshops plus meetings and a public hearing held by the DCHC MPO. These methods of involvement will continue to be available to the public.

The scoping process will drive the overall focus of the development of the D-O Light Rail Transit project. Your comments are therefore important to ensure that the scope of the project reflects the needs, concerns, and desires of our community. Public input is essential to making prudent decisions for this project and our region's future. This is especially true during the scoping process.

Comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, and/or environmental impacts to be evaluated and suggest alternatives that may result in less impact but still achieve the desired transportation objectives. Comments should also focus on the issues and not indicate a preference for a particular resolution at this time.

Thank you for your interest and continued participation in the D-O LRT Project. Your involvement throughout the project planning and development process is critical to the successful implementation of a high capacity transit system in the D-O corridor.

Stay in touch with social media.



Facebook.com/OurTransitFuture



Twitter.com/TheTRTP



Coordinating Bus and Rail Service



Quality bus and rail systems depend on each other. Expanded bus service -- improved scheduling, additional service and longer hours -- will be the first phase to be rolled out in the Triangle. The increase in bus service will be implemented by Triangle Transit and transit service provider partners to ensure this network connects to the rail lines as well.

As the region's transit and ridesharing agency, Triangle Transit is working closely with elected and appointed officials, as well as staff from DATA, Chapel Hill Transit, Duke University Transit, the City of Durham, Durham County, Orange County and the towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough, and the DCHC MPO to coordinate future service improvements and enhancements.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

