

December 19, 2013

Ms. Lucy Garliauskas  
FTA, Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment  
United States Department of Transportation – East Building  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Re: Triangle Transit's Request to Enter the New Starts Program Project Development Phase for the Proposed Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project**

Dear Ms. Garliauskas:

Triangle Transit, with the support of its many regional partners, is pleased to submit to the United States Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) our request to enter the New Starts Program Project Development (PD) phase for the proposed Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project (D-O LRT or Project), pursuant to the Moving Ahead for Progress for the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation. This letter describes the significant amount of work already completed by Triangle Transit, as well as our ability to meet the MAP-21 requirements, thereby demonstrating Triangle Transit's readiness to enter and timely complete PD within the required two-year period. We also want to thank the FTA staff for participating in monthly conference calls with Triangle Transit to discuss the Project. The FTA's commitment and continued insight has been invaluable in helping us make significant strides forward.

Based on our extensive discussions since the previous September 2012 New Starts submission and our review of MAP-21, we understand that the two most important functions of PD are to demonstrate the environmental compliance and financial feasibility of the Project. Triangle Transit will complete all environmental compliance work within 24 months of the FTA's approval to enter PD. In recognition of this requirement, over the past two years Triangle Transit completed Project Scoping in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), presented Scoping findings to the public, and is completing the existing conditions environmental data collection. Triangle Transit continues to work closely with our local, regional, and state partners, cooperating agencies, project stakeholders, the public, and the FTA staff to advance the D-O LRT and secure its financing. Key accomplishments include:

- Approval by voters in Durham and Orange Counties of a ½ cent transit sales tax to fund the local share of the D-O LRT and the expansion of bus service (effective April 2013), and the formation of the Western Triangle Tax District;
- Preparation of a financial plan demonstrating Triangle Transit's financial capacity to undertake the Project;
- Completion of the *Alternatives Analysis Final Report: Durham-Orange County Corridor* (AA) in April 2012 and related technical studies which resulted in the identification of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the proposed Durham-Orange Corridor (D-O Corridor);

- » Adoption of the LPA by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) into the financially-constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP);
- » Notice of Intent published by the FTA in the *Federal Register* on April 3, 2012, followed by regulatory agency and public meetings which led to completion of the *Scoping Report: Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project* (Scoping Report) in September 2012; and,
- » Development of enhancements to the LPA in response to stakeholder and environmental concerns.

In accordance with the FTA's MAP-21 guidance, the following sections of this letter (supplemented by five attachments and a DVD containing completed reports and other key Project materials) provide the information needed by the FTA to approve Triangle Transit's request to enter PD. Based on our progress, we are confident that Triangle Transit is ready to move forward into PD with the D-O LRT and will complete all PD activities within 24 months.

#### Study Sponsor and Partners' Roles and Responsibilities

Triangle Transit is the study sponsor for the D-O LRT and has led the planning work accomplished to date. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Project is being led by the FTA, with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the designated cooperating agencies. Local and state funding partners in this effort include: Durham County, Orange County, the DCHC MPO, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). (For additional information about Project funding, see the section below titled "Project Development Funding.")

The roles and responsibilities of Triangle Transit's partners in the development of the Project are listed below:

- » FTA – Lead Agency
- » FHWA – Cooperating Agency and Property Owner
- » USACE – Cooperating Agency and Property Owner
- » EPA – Cooperating Agency
- » Durham County – Local Funding Partner
- » Orange County – Local Funding Partner
- » NCDOT – State Funding Partner and Property Owner
- » North Carolina Railroad Corporation (NCR) – Property Owner
- » DCHC MPO – Regional Planning Body/MPO (developer of socio-economic forecasts)
- » Triangle Regional Model Service Bureau (developer of regional travel demand model)
- » City of Durham (land use planning and local transportation coordinator)
- » Town of Chapel Hill (land use planning and local transportation coordinator)

In addition, there is strong support for the Project from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), Duke University, North Carolina Central University (NCCU), Durham Technical Community College (DTCC), and a wide range of institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders in the D-O Corridor. (Letters of support from stakeholders are contained on the enclosed DVD at Tab 7.)



### Description of the Study Corridor

The proposed D-O Corridor is located in central North Carolina within the Triangle region (Durham, Orange, and Wake Counties). The D-O Corridor extends roughly 17 miles from southwest Chapel Hill to east Durham, and includes several educational, medical, and other key activity centers which generate a large number of trips each day. These activity centers include: UNC, Duke University, the North Carolina School of Science and Math, NCCU, and DTCC; major medical facilities (UNC Hospitals, Durham Veterans Affairs [VA] Medical Center, and Duke University Medical Center); employment centers (area hospitals and universities, mixed-use office and retail, including Patterson Place, South Square, the American Tobacco Campus, and downtown Durham); and other destinations of interest, including athletic facilities (UNC [Dean E. Smith Center, Kenan Memorial Stadium, Carmichael Arena, Finley Golf Course], Duke [Cameron Indoor Stadium, Wallace Wade Stadium, Duke University Golf Club], Durham Bulls Athletic Park [AAA baseball], and NCCU [O'Kelly-Riddick Stadium, McDougald-McLendon Gymnasium]); major arts and cultural facilities (Ackland Art Museum, Morehead Planetarium, Memorial Hall, North Carolina Botanical Gardens, the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education (Friday Center), Nasher Museum of Art, Sarah P. Duke Memorial Gardens, Carolina Theatre, Durham Performing Arts Center, Hayti Heritage Center, and the NCCU Art Museum); and major transportation hubs like Durham Station (serving intercity, local, and regional bus service) and the Durham Amtrak Station.

### Transportation Problem and Purpose and Need

#### **Triangle Region**

The Triangle is a region in the Piedmont of North Carolina anchored by UNC, Duke University, and North Carolina State University, and the cities of Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh (the state capital). This three county area has grown 30 percent in each of the last three decades and is expected to grow another 80 percent by 2040. Despite recent economic downturns, dynamic growth continues due to the region's strong economic base. The Triangle's economy is driven by the presence of federal, state, and local government offices, renowned universities and colleges, nationally-ranked medical centers, and the research and development industries they foster. Additionally, the region is a thriving hub of innovation and is home to more than a dozen primary industries, including biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, clean technology, smart grid technology, and information technology, as well as global Fortune 100 companies and the Research Triangle Park (RTP). In fact, between 2001 and 2009, per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Triangle grew by 26 percent, as compared to the United States' economy, which only grew by 3.8 percent over the same period.

This area is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States and is consistently ranked among the best places to live and do business in the country. The Triangle's colleges and universities and the educated work force they provide have historically served as major attractions for businesses around the world. The culturally and economically diverse population of the Triangle includes a substantial number of people who have a high propensity for transit use. In addition to transit dependent populations, the region includes local and global entrepreneurs, a burgeoning creative class, tens of thousands of students, growing immigrant communities, and a booming number of active seniors. Triangle residents enjoy a quality of life that is further enriched by the region's abundant parks and recreational facilities, relatively low cost of living, and much-lauded cultural, culinary, arts, and historic resources.

Although this sustained economic track record has helped the Triangle grow and prosper, such fast-paced growth has burdened existing roadways and transit networks. This growth is outpacing the region's ability to repair, replace, and expand its highways and bridges. As a result, average travel speeds within the region are expected to decrease an additional 13 percent by 2035, further limiting the mobility of people living and working in the Triangle. Given these mobility constraints, the region is embracing alternative transportation options, as exemplified by a 145 percent increase in Triangle Transit's bus ridership over the past 10 years.

#### **Durham-Orange Corridor**

Within the D-O Corridor, population growth and cultural and economic diversity are even more profound than in the Triangle region. In fact, according to 2007-2011 United States Census American Community Survey estimates, census tracts located within a half mile of the proposed D-O LRT stations featured a median household income of \$41,696, which is 19 percent lower than the regional figure of \$51,490 for Durham and Orange Counties. In addition, over 13 percent of households in the D-O Corridor have no vehicle available and 42.6 percent have just one vehicle available, as respectively compared to 8.1 percent and 36.7 percent on the regional level. The prevalence of mobility challenged households along the D-O Corridor speaks to the need to provide more robust transportation options.

Furthermore, the population within the D-O Corridor is expected to double between 2010 and 2040, outpacing the growth of the Triangle as a whole. The Durham-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Statistical Area outperforms larger metropolitan areas like Washington D.C., Seattle, Boston, Houston, and Charlotte in per capita GDP. This growth is spurred by UNC, Duke University, their respective medical centers (both of which are Level I trauma centers), the Durham VA Medical Center, NCCU, DTCC, and the downtown Durham central business district. These economic engines create a culture of scientific advancement, entrepreneurship, competitive excellence, and collaboration that accelerates the need for enhanced mobility, which is the conduit for innovation between Chapel Hill and Durham.

Within the D-O Corridor, transit use already rivals larger municipalities. For example, when Chapel Hill Transit, Durham Area Transit Authority, Duke University Transit, and Triangle Transit riders are counted together, approximately 70,000 transit trips occur every weekday within and between Chapel Hill and Durham. This level of ridership is comparable to the roughly 73,000 daily transit trips taken in Charlotte in 2006, the year before the LYNX Blue Line Light Rail Transit Line opened.

Like the Triangle region, the transportation network in the D-O Corridor is challenged by rapid growth, thereby limiting the mobility of its residents, workforce, and visitors. As a result, average travel speeds within the D-O Corridor are expected to decrease an additional 25 percent by 2035. Further, the ability to expand existing roadways and transit networks within the D-O Corridor to accommodate increased demand is limited by the physical constraints of the built environment, significant natural resources, jurisdictional wetlands, sensitive habitats, and topographical challenges.

For example, US 15-501 is the primary roadway between Durham and Chapel Hill. Substantial populations of students and employees live in the neighborhoods along the US 15-501 corridor and commute to UNC, Duke University, UNC Hospitals, Duke University and Durham VA Medical Centers, downtown Durham, NCCU, and DTCC. Presently, bus service within this corridor is slowed due to traffic congestion, resulting in longer travel times for transit passengers. However, US 15-501 is not programmed for future widening due to existing development and environmental constraints, and the

existing design limits the ability to retrofit the highway for improved bus transit service. Unlike nearby Interstate 40 (I-40), where a Bus On Shoulder System was recently implemented by Triangle Transit, US 15-501 lacks both the continuous shoulder of an interstate and long stretches of roadway uninterrupted by traffic lights and cross streets. Such limitations along the US 15-501 corridor make even modest bus transit improvements difficult to implement because highway capacity expansion that would benefit bus service is infeasible.

In addition, NC Highway 54 (NC 54), another major artery within the D-O Corridor, faces extreme pressure from UNC commuters. NC 54 is the only viable route to both the UNC campus and UNC Hospitals from the east, due to the natural barrier created by B. Everett Jordan Lake, a 31,300-acre USACE reservoir and recreational area. In August 2013, Triangle Transit was forced to relocate one of its most popular bus routes from NC 54 during the afternoon rush hour. The on-time performance and reliability of the route was affected as a result of the bus travelling in congested traffic. An alternative was developed to re-route the bus service along less-congested roadways. However, this temporary solution is not sustainable due to increasing congestion along NC 54 and throughout the D-O Corridor.

In order to preserve the high quality of life enjoyed by residents in the D-O Corridor and ensure sustainable patterns of growth in the future, the community needs a transit solution that will:

- Serve diverse populations with a high propensity for transit use by providing convenient and accessible transit service for the large and growing numbers of university students and employees, people seeking care at our renowned medical centers, a broad labor force of entrepreneurs, creative class members, moderate and low-income residents, thriving numbers of active seniors, vibrant minority and immigrant communities, limited English-speaking populations, transit dependent residents, and environmental justice-protected populations throughout the D-O Corridor;
- Enhance mobility within the Triangle region by providing a competitive and reliable alternative to congested roadways;
- Expand transit options for residents and visitors between Durham and Chapel Hill to seamlessly serve the many popular destinations and major activity centers; and,
- Foster compact development along a high-capacity transportation network to sustainably support local land use plans and long-term economic development through planned growth management initiatives and continued environmental stewardship.

#### Identification of the Proposed Project

Through the AA process, which included extensive public outreach, a LPA was selected to address the purpose and need of the D-O Corridor. The proposed Project is a 17.1 mile LRT line with 17 proposed stations that will greatly expand transit service in Durham and Orange Counties. The Project extends on a double track alignment from UNC (UNC Hospitals Station) to east Durham (Alston Avenue/NCCU Station). The LRT alignment connects a range of educational, medical, employment, and other important activity centers, including: UNC, UNC Hospitals, the Friday Center, Duke University, Durham VA and Duke University Medical Centers, downtown and east Durham, NCCU, and DTCC. Multimodal connections at the light rail stations will seamlessly connect transit passengers.

### **Project Description**

The proposed D-O LRT alignment generally follows NC 54, I-40, US 15-501, and the NCRR Corridor in downtown Durham and east Durham. (See Attachment 1, Figure 1.) The alignment begins 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 through downtown Durham, before reaching its eastern terminus near Alston Avenue. A total of 17 stations are planned. Station features include: a public address system; variable message signs; closed circuit television cameras; ticket vending and validation machines; canopies with seating and wind screens; lighting; and signage, wayfinding, and informational kiosks. (A conceptual rendering of the Durham LRT Station is provided in Attachment 1, Figure 2.) Up to 3,900 parking spaces along the D-O LRT alignment will be provided. Additionally, a rail operations maintenance facility (ROMF) will be constructed to accommodate the D-O LRT fleet. (A video "fly-through" of the Project showing the proposed D-O LRT alignment, stations, and multi-modal connections is included on the enclosed DVD at Tab 6).

Bus routes will be modified to feed into the light rail stations and headways will be adjusted to provide more frequent service and minimize transfer waiting times. These services will also connect light rail passengers with other area transportation hubs, including six existing and one planned park and ride lot in Orange County, and two existing and three new park and ride lots in Durham County. These hubs will serve as direct links to light rail stations. Convenient intercity, local and regional bus service, and passenger rail connections will be afforded at major transfer centers, like the existing Durham Amtrak Station and the Durham Station in downtown Durham.

### **Description of Service**

The proposed D-O LRT service is intended to operate 7 days a week, with 10-minute headways on weekdays in peak periods, and 20-minutes during off-peak periods and weekends. Travel time between the UNC Hospitals Station and the Alston Avenue/NCCU Station will be approximately 39 minutes. The service is envisioned to be operated with modern, 70 percent low-floor LRT vehicles, powered by an overhead catenary system, with a seating capacity of 68 to 76 seats per car. The planned D-O LRT fleet size is 12 cars (including spares). Fare collection is anticipated to be proof of payment. Service is anticipated to begin in 2026.

### **Estimated Ridership**

Triangle Transit forecasts the D-O LRT average weekday trips will be 23,000 by 2035.

### **Estimated Project Costs**

Project capital costs, including financing costs, are estimated to be \$1.3 billion in 2012 dollars: \$1.248B (Base) + \$87M (Finance Costs) = \$1.335B (Total). In Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars, the estimated cost is \$1.8B: \$1.688B (Base) + \$132M (Finance Costs) = \$1.820B (Total). The annual operating and maintenance costs of the D-O LRT are estimated to be \$16.2 million (2012 dollars). (See the enclosed DVD at Tab 4 for more information regarding estimated Project costs.) As demonstrated by Triangle Transit's financial plan (DVD at Tab 4), we are confident that we have adequate local funding to carry out our operating commitments.



### Proposed Project Alternatives

Consistent with the Scoping Report and as described herein, the DEIS will examine the potential environmental impacts of the LPA, as well as a small number of alignment, station, and ROMF siting options (as illustrated in Attachment 1, Figure 3), including:

- UNC Northern Option 1 (Note: the proposed station location differs from its location in the LPA; it has moved 200 feet closer to UNC Hospitals and the heart of UNC's campus, resulting in an alignment shift northward. This location does not preclude future LRT expansion.)
- 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 Options 1 and 2 and associated station locations)
- Station options at Duke/Durham VA Medical Centers
- Five proposed locations for the ROMF

In addition to the LPA, the DEIS will consider a Transportation System Management (TSM) and a No-Build alternative, as follows:

- TSM – an enhanced bus route serving 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, with the exception of planned rail improvements and associated bus network modifications

### Current Levels of Service in the Corridor

Given the limitations of the existing transportation network, it is not feasible to increase transit service to key employment centers with bus service alone. Currently, local and regional transit providers offer a high level of service within the D-O Corridor, including express, limited-stop, and local bus service in an attempt to accommodate the growing demand for transit. There are currently 17 fixed routes operating within the D-O Corridor, providing combined peak hour headways ranging from 1.7 minutes to 10 minutes. (See Attachment 1, Figure 4 for an illustration of these routes.) Riders on Triangle Transit routes within the D-O Corridor are a diverse mix of populations with a high propensity for transit use. According to the most recent Triangle Transit on-board survey, over half of the riders on routes within the D-O Corridor report an annual income under \$35,000 and are non-Caucasian. Additionally, on Triangle Transit bus routes 400 and 405, women account for 53 percent of the ridership on both routes. Throughout the day, travel crosses county and municipal lines in both directions for work, school, shopping, entertainment, medical appointments, and daily living activities.

Congestion is a particular problem near the major employment centers of UNC Hospitals, the Durham VA Medical Center, and Duke University Medical Center, where the majority of transit services in Durham and Orange Counties are focused. At these locations, the level of bus service is approaching maximum capacity, with 84 buses an hour at UNC Hospitals and 46 buses per hour at Duke University and Durham VA Medical Centers. (See Attachment 1, Figure 5.)

### Copies of Prior Studies Completed in the Corridor

Numerous studies and technical reports support the identification of the D-O Corridor as a priority corridor for the Triangle region and the selection of the D-O LRT as the LPA. Key among these documents listed below are the AA and the Scoping Report:

- ***US 15-501 Major Investment Study (1998 - 2001)*** – 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
- ***Special Transit Advisory Commission Final Report (May 2008)*** – The Regional Transit Vision that provided a framework for the MPOs on future transit investments and funding options in the Triangle region
- ***2035 Joint L RTP (Adopted by DCHC MPO - April 2009)*** – Identified transportation corridors for major investments in fixed guideway transit in the Triangle region over the next 30 years
- ***Transitional Analysis Report (March 2010)*** – A system-level study that analyzed and prioritized fixed guideway transit corridors from the adopted 2035 Joint L RTP to be studied in the AA. The D-O Corridor was identified in this analysis for further consideration
- ***Alternatives Analysis (April 2012)*** – Evaluated and screened alternative alignments, modes, and station locations within the D-O Corridor and selected the D-O LRT as the LPA
- ***Scoping Report (September 2012)*** – Summarized public and agency comments received on the draft Purpose and Need statement and the alternatives to be evaluated. The scoping process also defined a range of issues that will be studied through the NEPA process. The Scoping Report recommended the analysis of the following three primary alternatives in the D-O Corridor, between UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and east Durham: the No-Build Alternative, the TSM Alternative, and the proposed LRT Build Alternative

These documents and other relevant papers are provided on the enclosed DVD at Tabs 1 and 2.

### **Risk Assessment**

Given the importance and magnitude (over \$1 billion capital costs) of the proposed Project, Triangle Transit conducted a formal risk assessment in the summer of 2012. The risk assessment identified items with the potential to add cost, require a change in the scope, and/or adversely impact the schedule of the Project. The risk assessment documented six major critical path items, including: the alignment and station locations on the UNC campus; the alignment and station location in the vicinity of UNC's Finley Golf Course; the use of FHWA and NCDOT rights-of-way; the alignment crossing New Hope Creek; the station location near Duke University and Durham VA Medical Centers; and the alignment within the NCRR Corridor. Over the past year, Triangle Transit has worked with its local partners to develop a plan to minimize each of these critical path items and reduce their associated risks to the Project. (See Attachment 2 for the Status of Six Major Critical Path Items to be Resolved and see the enclosed DVD at Tab 2 for the Project Risk Register.)

### Project Development Funding

Funding is available and committed to conduct the PD phase, complete all NEPA work within 24 months, and to pay for the local share of the implementation and operation of the D-O LRT. Voters in Durham and Orange Counties passed referenda providing substantial new revenues to finance the D-O LRT and



expand bus services, including a ½ cent sales tax increase (beginning in April 2013) and the collection of a new vehicle registration fee (Orange County, July 2013; Durham County, September 2013). Approximately 25 percent of the total Project capital costs will be covered by this committed funding source; \$327 million is forecasted by the time the D-O LRT is constructed, with the remainder to be bonded with future revenues.

With respect to state funding, in early 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the most significant change in how transportation projects are funded in over two decades. The new process, referred to as the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) program, creates a data-driven process for scoring of transportation projects of all modes: highway, transit, aviation, bicycle, pedestrian, rail (freight/Amtrak) and ferry. Projects will be scored by NCDOT for the first time in 2014. As of November 2013, Triangle Transit has submitted all materials required by NCDOT to ensure that the D-O LRT is eligible for all appropriate funding categories in the STI program. According to the STI schedule proposed by NCDOT, more information about which individual projects will receive funding in FY16 and FY17 will be available in summer 2014. Triangle Transit is also actively pursuing additional financing methods to support the remaining state and local funding shares, while working to secure the remaining 50 percent through the FTA's Major Capital Investment grant program.

As shown in our financial plan, Triangle Transit has the financial capacity to construct, maintain, and operate the D-O LRT; meet the capital and operating demands of the existing bus system to maintain a State of Good Repair; provide for future regional bus expansion beyond the D-O Corridor; and maintain a cash reserve for future programs. (A copy of Triangle Transit's financial plan is provided on the enclosed DVD at Tab 4.)

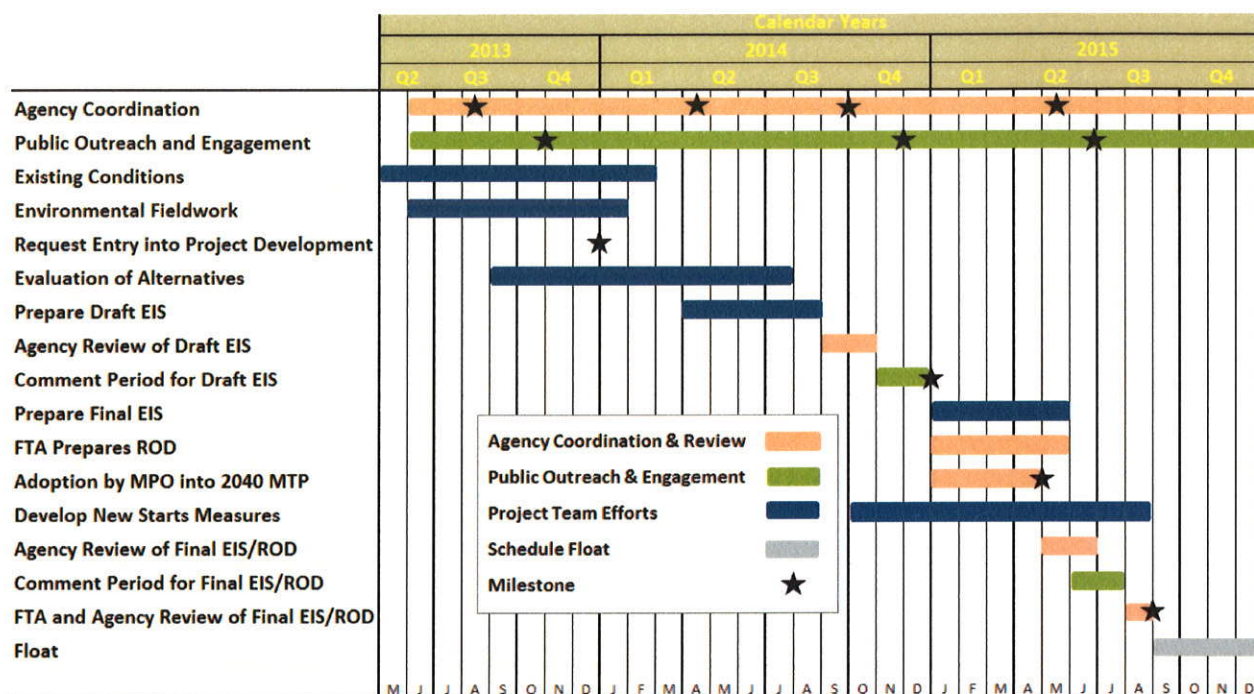
Triangle Transit is committed to advancing and completing the D-O LRT. On June 26, 2013, Triangle Transit's Board of Trustees committed \$29 million for NEPA studies and the preliminary engineering work required for the completion of PD. (See Attachment 3.) In October 2013, Triangle Transit hired an Environmental Planner and an Assistant General Counsel with expertise in NEPA, whose efforts are focused on completing the environmental work for the Project within 24 months. Once the Project enters the PD phase, Triangle Transit anticipates hiring up to 26 staff members to expand Project oversight. (See Triangle Transit's Organization Chart on the enclosed DVD at Tab 5.)

#### Anticipated Timeline for Completing Project Development

Triangle Transit is committed to completing all PD activities within 24 months, including: NEPA studies and documentation, updating the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (fiscally-constrained LRTP), preliminary Project engineering, and submission of all required information so that the FTA can issue a Record of Decision and rate the Project. Following the FTA's issuance of a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS on April 3, 2012, Triangle Transit initiated Scoping and completed it in September 2012. Thereafter, Triangle Transit refined the Purpose and Need statement, identified the range of alternatives that will be evaluated in the DEIS, and documented methods for conducting environmental and other technical analyses. (See the enclosed DVD at Tab 3.) Currently, Triangle Transit is collecting data and developing the existing conditions reports.

The schedule for Triangle Transit's completion of PD activities is as follows:

### Schedule for Completion of Project Development Activities



Triangle Transit has accomplished meaningful coordination during 2013 with the FTA, FHWA, USACE, NCDOT, UNC, Duke University, NCRR, City of Durham, and Town of Chapel Hill. Our coordination included discussions about the status of the Project, the schedule of the NEPA studies, detailed alignment alternatives, and proposed station locations. These activities have provided Triangle Transit with a high level of confidence in schedule adherence.

During the same time, Triangle Transit also engaged in an extensive public outreach campaign focused on educating the community about the Project, the proposed alternatives, and the environmental process. Hundreds of people attended our November 2013 informational workshops and over 3,850 individuals viewed the Project information online, including the "fly-through" video designed to show the proposed D-O LRT alignment. (The video is on the enclosed DVD at Tab 6.)

Major upcoming milestones and their anticipated dates of completion include:

- **Compliance with NEPA**
  - DEIS (December 2014)
  - FEIS (August 2015)
  - ROD from FTA (December 2015)
- **Selection/Adoption of LPA in Fiscally Constrained LRTP (2040 MTP) (May 2015)**
- **Completion of Activities Required to Obtain a Project Rating from FTA (December 2015)**

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- **Request to Enter Engineering Phase** (December 2015)
- **Begin Engineering** (April 2016)

### **Real Estate Use and Disposition**

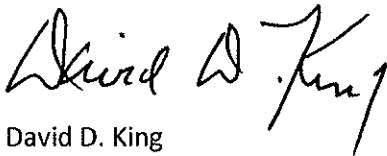
Triangle Transit recognizes the importance of the outstanding issue regarding the use or disposition of properties acquired for our prior project. As a result, we are actively working with the FTA to identify a plan for the use or disposition of each property as recently communicated to the FTA on December 17, 2013. (A copy of Triangle Transit's proposed plan is included on the DVD at Tab 8.)

### Conclusion

Triangle Transit is committed to improving transit services for current and future residents, employers, and visitors to the Triangle as our dynamic region continues to prosper, develop, and diversify. This region is poised to grow at a rate greater than most of the country and has a history of embracing transit as not only a necessary mode of transportation, but as a preferred option. The PD phase is the critical next step for our agency and our region. Please accept this letter, including the attachments hereto and the enclosed DVD, as Triangle Transit's request to enter the New Starts Program PD phase pursuant to MAP-21, 49 U.S.C. § 5309(d)(1)(A)(i).

If you have any questions or would like to speak with me, please do not hesitate to contact me at 919.485.7424 or [dking@triangletransit.org](mailto:dking@triangletransit.org). Triangle Transit looks forward to your positive review of our request to enter PD, and we are excited to continue working with you and your staff as the Project successfully advances.

Sincerely,



David D. King  
General Manager  
Triangle Transit

cc: Yvette G. Taylor, PhD, FTA Regional Administrator, Region 4  
Elizabeth Day, Director, FTA Office of Project Planning  
Gail McFadden-Roberts, FTA Community Planner  
Jennifer Hibbert, FTA Director Office of Planning and Program Development  
Myra Immings, FTA Community Planner  
Stanley Mitchell, FTA Environmental Specialist  
Anthony J. Tata, Secretary, NCDOT  
Barry M. Jacobs, Chair, Orange County Board of Commissioners  
Michael D. Page, Chairman, Durham Board of County Commissioners  
Mark Kleinschmidt, Mayor, Town of Chapel Hill  
William V. "Bill" Bell, Mayor, City of Durham  
Ellen Reckhow, Chairperson, DCHC MPO Transportation Advisory Committee  
Fred N. Day, IV, Chairman, Triangle Transit Board of Trustees



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**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Figures

Attachment 2: Status of Six Major Critical Path Items to be Resolved

Attachment 3: Triangle Transit's Project Development Funding Sources

Attachment 4: Bibliography

Attachment 5: DVD Table of Contents

Enclosure: DVD

CIN: 130268