

## NCCU light-rail stop considered

The Herald-Sun By Ray Gronberg September 19, 2016

DURHAM – Local officials say GoTriangle is looking into the possibility of extending the proposed Durham-to-Chapel Hill light-rail line to include a stop at N.C. Central University.

The 0.6-mile extension would run south from the line's planned terminus at Alston Avenue, using a bridge to cross over the Durham Freeway on its way to the intersection of N.C. 55 and Lawson Street.

A station there would share a "major gateway to campus," some 1,200 to 1,500 feet from N.C. Central's bookstore, said Mike Charbonneau, GoTriangle's director of communications.

The intersection's also a short walk from Chidley North dorm, O'Kelly-Riddick Stadium and NCCU's nursing and law schools. A somewhat longer walk – steeply uphill at first – would reach the rest of campus.

GoTriangle officials announced their interest in the idea Monday, with Charbonneau saying the group's acting on comments it received in the run-up to filing the light-rail project's environmental impact statement.

Subsequent discussions with federal and local officials "found it's something that could be feasible to add to the project," and that could "become one of the most active, most boarded stations" on the line, Charbonneau said.

But engineers and analysts are treating the extension as an add-on, so the necessary planning, environmental studies and public outreach don't slow work on the previously sketched portions of the Durham-to-Chapel Hill line.

That 17-mile stretch has an estimated cost of \$1.4 billion to \$1.6 billion.

It's too early yet to have an estimate on what the NCCU extension would cost. But the need for a bridge over the Durham Freeway means it won't come cheap.

The line's downtown Durham portion runs north of the freeway, near existing railroad tracks. Plans call for it to cross the freeway in the Ninth Street area, as it approaches Duke University.

A GoTriangle spokesman, Brad Schulz, said the agency needed "a day or so" to come up with a figure for the Ninth Street crossing.

Still, city and NCCU officials welcome the agency's move to study the idea.

Having "a stop directly on campus will bridge our programs and students with the vibrant city of Durham and our region, while enabling additional constituencies to access our campus and experience our top-ranked academic programs and other cultural offerings," said NCCU's acting chancellor, Johnson Akinleye.

"It's very positive," added Bill Bell, Durham's mayor and the chairman of GoTriangle's trustee board. "There's still a lot of engineering that has to be done. What I'm pleased with is that we've taken a second look in detail."

As planned, the Durham-to-Chapel Hill line essentially links Duke and UNC. It's always rankled some officials in Durham that it lacked a direct connection to NCCU.

Akinleye's school is the UNC system's only campus in Durham. It's much smaller in every measurable sense than Duke or UNC Chapel Hill, operating on about \$181 million a year with some 1,800 employees and 8,000 students.

But the project does offer a chance to triple the number of UNC system campuses with light-rail links. The only campus certain to have one, UNC Charlotte, is on an extension of that city's rail system that's under construction and scheduled to open next year.

Though the environmental study for the bulk of the Durham-to-Chapel Hill project is complete, it remains far from certain the project will get a green light. (CONTINUED...)

Initial planning assumed the federal government would underwrite half the project's cost, with local taxpayers and the state picking up the rest, as they did for Charlotte's rail system.

But Republicans who now control the N.C. General Assembly have balked at offering anything like a 25-percent subsidy to a Triangle rail project. Their most recent lawmaking would cap the state's contribution at 10 percent.

"Institutions are all working together in the region to look at ways to move the project forward and make it happen," Charbonneau said.

## **State officials hope new interstate would kickstart economic development in eastern N.C.**

Triangle Business Journal by Lauren K. Ohnesorge, Staff Writer Sep 9, 2016, 9:38am EDT

The state is seeking yet another federal approval to designate an eastern North Carolina highway as an interstate – a move a top transportation exec says could kickstart economic development in the region.

Specifically, the state is trying to designate U.S. 264 as a future interstate, from the U.S. 264/64 split in Zebulon all the way to Greenville.

State Traffic Engineer Kevin Lacy says it's an economic development move, and one requested by officials in Greenville.

"From an economic standpoint, there's a lot of companies who, when they're looking at relocating their business... they always look at how close it is to an interstate," he says in a Thursday interview. "If it's a certain distance away, they'll automatically rule that out."

But the plan does not come without cost to taxpayers. Lacy says that, in order to bring the stretch of highway up to "interstate standards," crews will need to make multiple improvements over the next two decades, including widening the shoulders and raising bridges. Some of the improvements can happen in conjunction with regular maintenance, such as repaving projects "we'd do anyway," he says.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation couldn't immediately provide an estimate on how much those improvements would cost taxpayers.

Pitt County, which contains Greenville, counts industrial manufacturer NACCO Materials, contract research organization Patheon and tobacco distributor Alliance One International as three of its biggest employers. The county reported a 5.7 percent unemployment rate in July, compared to 4.1 percent in Wake County, which is just an hour and a half away. The statewide unemployment average was 5 percent, according to the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

The state plans to submit an interstate application by September 16 to the Federal Highway Administration and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, according to an announcement released by Governor Pat McCrory's office Wednesday. The groups are expected to make a decision on issuing that designation by the end of the year.

If it's approved, it would be one of three future interstate designations granted this year: I-42 for the U.S. 70 Corridor between I-40 and Morehead City and I-87 for U.S. 64/17 between Raleigh and the Virginia state line.

## Making the most of the line for gas



Lines backed up in the early morning at this station in Western Boulevard. N&O File Photo

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY TERESA LEONARD SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

*If you're old enough, the line you find yourself in as you wait your turn at the gas pump might remind you of the oil crisis that began in late 1973 and flowed into the early months of 1974. Cars lined up to fill up. Odd-even rationing meant your license plate number determined whether you could even buy gas that day. Neighborhood kids on their bikes passed the time watching the cars in line. And with no smartphone apps to occupy their time in line, Raleigh residents had to get creative. Staff writer Susan Phillips talked with a few folks waiting in that 1974 line.*

There's a new folklore being spun in America today – yarns about waiting in gas lines. Already it's hard to determine between fact and fiction.

No one waiting in a gas line has heard of anyone falling in love and marrying after meeting at a gas pump, but there's the tale circulating of the man who saw a slow moving line, got in line, and didn't realized he wasn't queued up for gas until the funeral procession reached the cemetery gates.

And over the weekend four gas seekers – all strangers to one another – formed a foursome for cards right on the ground outside their cars and got up a spirited game with the help of a sixpack of beer.

One Raleigh man parked his car in a service station overnight, intending to leap out of bed and be there the next morning before the 7 a.m. opening. Only problem was, he overslept, creating a mammoth traffic snarl as gas hungry drivers tried to pull around him.

One morning a long line of cars began to inch forward when the pumps are turned on. But one car doesn't budge. Thinking it's been abandoned, a few irate people stalk up to see if they can push it out of line, waking up the woman in pajamas and robe snuggled up sound asleep on the front seat. (CONTINUED...)

By visiting Penney's Auto Center this week before its 4 p.m. opening we discovered how people really spend time waiting for gas.

An hour before opening time there were close to 75 cars parked in irregular lines in the North Hills Mall parking lot edging up to the pumps.

There are those who sit idly in line staring out the window, but as lines wear on, more and more veterans are finding ways to entertain themselves.

Two sisters drove their cars over together, bringing coffee, knitting and magazines. "And we're talking about family," added Mrs. Brooks Liles. Her sister, Mrs. Roger Cockrell, is wife of the manager of North Hills Mall.

For constructive activity Mrs. John Adams Jr. led the list. Mrs. Adams spent her stint in line "stringing pole beans."

One way to pass the time is to meet other people, and according to Mrs. Louise Clinkscale, her talk with Col. Charles Lucas started when they debated "who was in line first...."

Richard Rivers was taking turns with a co-worker at Ivey's sitting in the gas line, but to relieve his boredom he directed traffic, helping shoppers maneuver around gas lines to get out of the center.

Billy White and Helen Jamison of Wilmington looked like they could have sat in line for eternity without caring a bit. Engaged to marry, they sat close together holding hands. Helen was trying to get gas so she could drive back to Wilmington, obviously not caring if she ever left Raleigh.

Mrs. Irving Varon was thumbing through the Sears catalogue and had already run an errand at the post office when interviewed. She fumed about people "bucking lines" and those "insincere about their reasons for needing gas" and in particular, those in line with the wrong day's license tags.

Miss Anna Vassilion was one of many reading books, but she curled up in the back of her green VW for extra comfort. She had just bought her novel in the drugstore nearby. "There's nothing else to do," she noted. "I'm floating on empty."

Other constructive activities included a woman putting in a zipper by hand, Robbie Denney studying a correspondence life insurance course and Miss Deryle Askew doing her math homework from Sanderson High.

Possibly the most dejected person in the whole long line was Wayne Paul of Leesville, La. who said he was "just waiting. I've been trying to get out of Raleigh for two days." *THE N&O FEB. 27, 1974*

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## C-Tran rebranded to GoCary starting Oct. 1

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY KATHRYN TROGDON SEPTEMBER 27, 2016



CARY -- Cary's transportation service, also known as C-Tran, will be rebranded to GoCary starting on Oct. 1, joining other transit systems in the Triangle that were renamed last year.

[New, higher capacity buses](#) will hit the streets of Cary on [Routes 3, 4, 5 and 6](#), which are the most used routes. Other buses will feature technological improvements, including more video surveillance cameras and automated ramps instead of lifts.

Triangle Transit already is known as GoTriangle while Raleigh's Capital Area Transit became GoRaleigh and the Durham Area Transit Authority was renamed GoDurham last year.

Enhancements will be made on Cary's door-to-door service buses to improve efficiency, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities. These improvements include new online services, offering multiple ways for trip reservations, scheduling and online payment, as well as Interactive Voice Response capabilities that will notify riders of their upcoming trips.

There will be GoCary "unveiling events" before Oct. 1:

- Cary Senior Center, 120 Maury O'Dell Place, Sept. 29, 9-11 a.m.
- Highland Village, 600 Malcolm Valley Place, Sept. 29, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. (CONTINUED...)

- Cary Train Depot, 211 N. Academy St., Sept. 30, 7-10:30 a.m.

GoCary also will offer free services on fixed routes Oct. 1 through 8 to celebrate 10 years of fixed route service. Search “CTRAN” at townofcary.org.

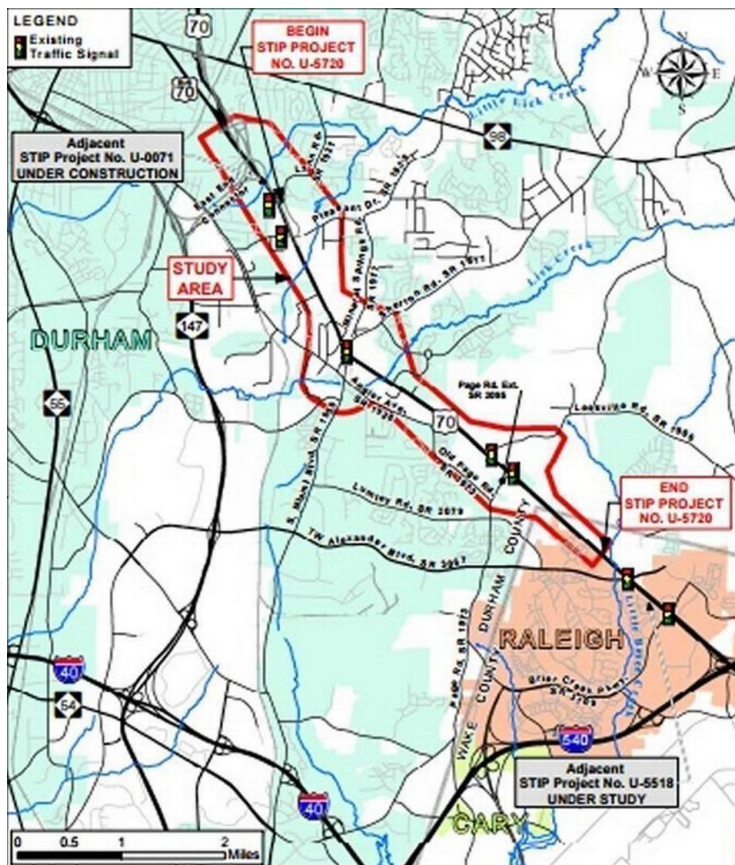
In October 2015, the Cary Town Council unanimously approved awarding a contract to MV Transportation Inc. for bus service operations to begin Oct. 1. The town already had a contract with the Dallas-based company for C-Tran’s fixed route and door-to-door services through Sept. 30, 2016.

The new five-year contract will cost the town about \$3.4 million. There is an option to renew up to 10 years.

C-Tran began in August 2001 as a transportation service for Cary residents who were seniors or those with disabilities. It eventually transformed into a fixed route transit system in December 2005. Door-to-door services continued to be provided to seniors and people with disabilities, according to the town.

## U.S. 70 transformation into a freeway moving forward

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY VIRGINIA BRIDGES SEPTEMBER 27, 2016



The study area surrounding U.S. 70 is outlined in red on the map. The study area represents the area being surveyed for environmental resources, not property to be purchased to construct the project. The study area is much larger than the actual amount of land directly impacted by the project. Courtesy of the N.C. Department of Transportation (CONTINUED...)

DURHAM -- State officials plan to transform five miles of U.S. 70 into a freeway, which will likely result in uncertainty and headaches for residents, property and business owners along the route.

Officials will assess all driveways, bus stops, sidewalks and businesses on U.S. 70 from Lynn Road in Durham and west of T.W. Alexander Drive in Raleigh as they seek the best ways to convert the highway into a freeway, where access would be confined to limited interchanges or overpasses.

"We have a lot of access along U.S. 70 now in Durham County, and if we turn this into a freeway that is going to change," said engineer Joey Hopkins, of the N.C. Department of Transportation. "With change comes conflict."

An interchange is planned for the U.S. 70 intersection at South Miami Boulevard, which converts into South Mineral Springs Road and Sherron Road.

A key task is preserving access for properties along U.S. 70. The options include pedestrian pathways, service roads and the state buying property and not providing access, Hopkins said.

The stretch of new freeway will connect with two highway upgrades that will bookend the project. To the north is the under-construction East End Connector, which connects the Durham Freeway to U.S. 70. It is expected to be open to traffic by July 2019.

To the south the state is moving forward with converting U.S. 70 intersections at T.W. Alexander Drive and Brier Creek Parkway into interchanges. The change will convert the intersections with stoplights to interchanges that allow a continuous flow of traffic with bridges and ramps.

The environmental assessment for the intersections' conversion is set to be completed in early 2018. Environmental assessments analyze projects' community and environmental impact, which influences their design.

The state has allocated \$136 million to convert U.S. 70 from Lynn Road to South Miami Boulevard into a freeway. However, the pending environmental assessment set to be completed in early 2019, covers the entire stretch of the five-mile freeway. Additional construction funding could become available during the process.

"We have a gap in the middle that is currently unfunded," Hopkins said, "but that is still in our plan, and we still hope to get through it."

The first major milestone of the project is looking at the purpose and need for the freeway extension, said Kristina Miller, an engineer and a consultant for the state highway department.

"After we have that defined, we will coordinate with the businesses and local community as well as our resource agencies," Miller said. "We will be developing concepts that address the transportation needs and to try to avoid and minimize those impacts as much as possible. "

The U.S. 70 route includes two bus stops, existing school bus routes, churches, businesses, sidewalks and pedestrian activity, along with utility poles.

At this point is that state officials don't have a lot of answers, he said.

"We don't know what the impacts will be," Hopkins said. Before the environmental assessment begins, property owners will be notified via a letter. Over the next year, residents, businesses and property owners will be invited to small group meetings and larger public meetings.

Along the way state officials will be establish alternative access concepts, which will evolve depending on public feedback. Public hearings on proposed access solutions will be held before the final environmental decision document is adopted, which is scheduled for fall 2020.

## **Commissioners to receive rail project updates**

The Herald-Sun By Rachael Riley October 3, 2016

The Durham County Commissioners will have a 10 a.m. work session Tuesday to receive an update on the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project.

The meeting will be in the commissioners' chambers at 200 E. Main St.

According to documents for the commissioners' review, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization is requesting the project be amended to include a station adjacent to North Carolina Central University.

The organization's policy board is expected to hold a public comment period related to the amendment during its Nov. 9 meeting.

According to the agenda, GoTriangle completed a preliminary engineering and ridership forecast for the proposed future station during the spring and summer of this year, which will be part of the planning organization's 2040 metropolitan transportation plan.

GoTriangle is developing the overall Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project, which would include a 17-mile light rail and 17 stations extending from UNC hospitals in Chapel Hill to Alston Avenue in Durham.

In other business Tuesday, commissioners will receive a presentation relating to a land use analysis for lands potentially affected by construction of the East End Connector.

According to the agenda, seven areas of change are identified as part of the project, with 12 of 63 impacted properties in the county's jurisdiction.