

DCHC MPO

2045 MTP *Final Plan* Comments

Introduction

This document compiles the public comments that the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) received during the Preferred Option and final plan and report phases of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The final plan and report comments start on page 1 and those for the Preferred Option start on page 9.

For comments, questions and additional information:

- Andy Henry, andrew.henry@durhamnc.gov, 919-560-4366, ext. 36419.
- DCHC MPO Web site: www.dchcmpo.org
- MTP Web page: www.bit.ly/DCHC-MTP

Final Plan and Report Comment Period

The MPO released the final plan and full report of the 2045 MTP on January 10, 2018 for a public comment that lasts through March 2, 2018.

Comments by Email

01/10/18

In general, the proposed plan makes senses except for a couple of key components.

The light rail system for Orange and Durham counties should really be called the UNC-Duke light rail system because it seems that these two institutions are the primary beneficiaries of this system. That said, the taxpayers of Orange and Durham counties are paying for a sizable portion of the bill, yet UNC and Duke, being tax-exempt organizations are paying nothing. What is even more upsetting it that taxpayers in most of Orange County and perhaps even in most of Durham County, i.e., rural residents, especially to the west and north of Chapel Hill, will most likely never use this system. I personally don't think light-rail is feasible considering the population displacement of Orange County commuters. An improved bus service that is adaptable to changes and is not as UNC focused is a smarter public transporation solution. If the planners are so sure of the success of the light rail system, then maybe they should consider making this system a fare-supported rather than a taxpayer supported system. This way, the actual users of the system will be paying the service that is benefiting them.

The other issue I have is with the delay in widening I-85 across Orange County. Besides current congestion issues, I think a primary reason for so many accidents along this stretch of roadway is because of the aggressive driving due to tractor-trailer trucks using the passing lane on those hills which gets drivers frustrated enough to start cutting people off to avoid getting stuck behind these trucks or trying to pass these same trucks on their blind side, i.e., the slower-speed lane. A third lane is much needed, however, while we are waiting for that third lane to be built, tractor-trailers should be restricted from driving in the passing lane if they are going slower than 65mph (the speed limit) and speeds for all vehicles should be enforced. Many cars are moving at speeds well over 75-mph while tailgating and weaving through lanes.

I-40 between 15/501 and New Hope Church Road should be widened asap. Merging three lanes of traffic to two at the same location as a very busy on-ramp and the beginning of a 2-mile long incline was a terrible design decision.

Thanks for the opportunity to send in comments.

A Leonard
Chapel Hill, NC

01/13/18

Hello Mr. Henry,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public input. I live in the Northeast section of Chatham County and would like to provide the following comments for the 2015 Metropolitan Transportation Plan currently under public review:

Chatham County continues to experience significant growth in both tourism and residential development. I would like to see a high prioritization for a multi-use bicycle and pedestrian path running parallel to US 64 over the Haw River. Such a multi-use path would provide safer network connections to pedestrian trails within the Lower Haw River State Natural Area along both sides of the Haw River and could also connect the Lower Haw River State Natural Area trail network to the East Coast Greenway network and the American Tobacco Trail. A Lower Haw Trails Master Plan is currently being developed for pedestrian and paddle trails within the Lower Haw River State Natural Area owned by State Parks, which consists of over 1,025 acres along both sides of the Haw River in Chatham County from above US 15-501 to below US 64. A significant residential and commercial development named Chatham Park is planned adjacent to this state natural area that will add 55,000+ residents to the nearby town of Pittsboro. There is the potential for miles of trails that could form a long loop if safe crossing of the Haw River along US 64 could be developed. The old Bynum Bridge closed to vehicular traffic by NC DOT provides a safe crossing of the Haw River at the Bynum location of the state natural area, but there is not a way to safely cross the river at the US 64 location which presents an obstacle to making a looped

hike along both sides of the river between Bynum and US 64. Both the 2016 Chatham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the 2011 Chatham County Bicycle Plan, and the 2011 US 64 Corridor Study – Wake and Chatham Counties Corridor Study Report include a multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path parallel to US 64 over the Haw River as a desirable feature for both alternative transportation and recreational use reasons. Therefore, I would like to see this multi-use path parallel to US 64 over the Haw River included as a priority in the regional and statewide routes for bicycle and pedestrian projects. If possible, rather than making it a long term project waiting for a US 64 bridge replacement, I would like to see alternative options explored, such as the Orange County project that adds a fenced extension on the side of the Orange Grove Road bridge over I-40/84 in Hillsborough.

Gretchen Smith
Chatham County

01/19/18

I agree with the comments by Dr. Johnson that the plan way over-emphasizes automobiles over bicycles and pedestrians. The report is overwhelming, but of particular interest to me was p. 74 where it lists the amounts of money being spent on the different proposals. The only way to truly encourage bicycles and pedestrians over automobiles is to spend more money on bicycle and pedestrian paths. For me personally the ability to walk to town was a major factor in my decision to move from Durham to Hillsborough. I do often walk to town while my car sits in the driveway for days at a time. However, even more gas could be saved and less pollution created if there were a safe way to bike downtown from my home in West Hillsborough. The report deals with the issue of bicycle and pedestrian safety at several points. To give Old NC 10 as the way to bike between Hillsborough and Durham is to ignore the safety of bicyclists.

Jackie Stonehuerner

01/24/18

Hello Andrew,

After reviewing the 2045 MTP, I did not see major safety improvements to Mount Carmel Church Road in Chapel Hill. There appear to be modernization improvements from 15-501 to Bennett Rd, but nothing planned for the stretch from Bennett Rd to the Chatham County line. This stretch of road has no shoulders and is extremely hazardous for bikers and pedestrians. In the last two weeks alone there were two near-misses between joggers and cars. This road is a major connector between large neighborhoods in Chatham County (Governor's Club, Governor's Village, etc.) and UNC, and will only increase in traffic as Chatham Park is built. It is also part of the Mountains to the Sea trail and provides a direct connection to Jordan Lake for recreational bikers. The community has been asking for improvements for years (shoulders, bike lanes, sidewalks). Please consider adding this section to the improvements list of the plan.

Thank you,
Kirsten Rieth

01/27/18

Dear Andrew,

My name is Andy Bailey from Pittsboro, NC. I would like to offer my support for the US 15-501 moderation within Chatham County. As development has picked up in the past few years along this corridor, it's imperative that the integrity of traffic flow be maintained and enhanced. Access control, superstreet designs, among other innovative solutions must be implemented along this section for growing both the economy and quality of life in Northern Chatham County. My only comment beyond support is the desire to have this enhancement moved up in the MTP to at least the 2035 horizon year.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Andy Bailey

02/02/18

Dear Andy et al,

Thank you for giving the public an opportunity to see and comment on the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. I was hoping to read and respond to the plan before leaving the country a few weeks ago, so I wouldn't have to navigate the screen and the maps on my phone.

Unfortunately, that did not happen. As a result, I may have overlooked or not known where to look for some of the items I have mentioned.

I would like to start with the survey that was taken before this report was done. The public participants were asked how they would spend their money on infrastructure. The two highest scoring items were fixed commuter rail and bicycle projects. The two lowest scoring items were new roads and road widenings.

However, in looking at the plans, there are plenty of places where new roads and road widenings are included. It seems these have been justified by including in the goals quick movement of traffic.

On the other hand, in the measures of success, there does not seem to be a spot for the efficiency of transit compared to the efficiency of automobiles.

On page 17 of the report, it talks about enhancing and improving transit and bike, but it does not mention making either of these more efficient and more affordable than traveling by car. I know

that the members of the MPO are familiar with the term induced demand, and are aware that adding lanes will not take care of congestion except in a temporary way. Thus, I am confused why this seems to be such a large part of this plan. Is the goal of the plan to move cars or are we trying to move people? If the latter, wouldn't dedicated bus lanes (or even HOV lanes) make more sense?

Unless it is the wish of residents of the Triangle region to sit in traffic forever, it seems accommodating more cars should not be the largest part of this plan.

This was the first time I looked at all of the reports that were considered when this final report was compiled, and I noticed that a bicycle plan referred to as the CORE plan does not include Orange County. I don't know who paid for this plan, but to exclude Orange County, which draws thousands of cyclists every week to its roadways seems to have been an oversight in that report.

That oversight seems to have carried over into the 2045 MTP plan. I do not see any improvements for bicycles or even Road modernization along old 86 between Hillsborough and Carrboro. Nor do I see any improvements indicated for Orange Grove Road. Orange County is very deficient in separated facilities for bikes (or any sort of bike infrastructure) and it would be good to at least see that they were being planned for in the future. There is growing interest in trying to get a facility between Carrboro and Hillsborough, and also ideas to run some sort of a greenway along the RR tracks in CH and continuing into OC. Perhaps these are in the plan and I am just looking in the wrong places.

While I understand that some of the County roadways may not be part of the DCHCMPO, that brings another question to mind. I know that TARPO also has a bicycle plan, and it would be good to have some connectivity between the two plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice some of my concerns.

Best,

Heidi Perry
Carrboro, NC

02/02/18

For more than 40 years I've lived on Justice St. close to Horace Williams Airport and have used my bike for grocery shopping, Post Office and many other things. The following would make my bicycling much easier and safer:

1. Bike lanes along Estes Extension are fairly good now except for the last quarter mile. For many years, Estes was terrible for bicycling. It's better now, until one gets close to N.

Greensboro in Carrboro where the street is very narrow. That needs to be fixed.

2. Bolin Creek Greenway needs to be completed all the way to Homestead Rd. and beyond. The connection under MLK should be completed ASAP. This route has enormous potential for safe and efficient non-motorized transportation.

3. MLK north of Estes is pretty good except for a few places. Just south of Homestead, bike lanes disappear for 100 yards or so on each side of the road and cyclists are forced into the motor lane. A few years ago, a bus stop was installed on the west side of MLK opposite Harris Teeter and a perfectly good bike lane there was ruined for a short distance. MLK has bike lanes that cost the tax payer a lot of money, but they aren't continuous. That needs to be fixed.

4. The road just south of Calvander leading to Carrboro (don't know if it's called Old 86, Hillsborough, or Fayetteville) is very heavily used by recreational cyclists, and by motor vehicles. It needs to be widened.

Paul Killough

02/03/18

Dear Mr. Henry,

I'm a lifelong Triangle resident, born on the Chapel Hill/Durham border, school in Durham, college in Chapel Hill, now in Carrboro. I've seen the area change a lot and the car congestion increase disturbingly, particularly notable in coming back after 2 years away from 2010-2012. I am an avid cyclist and transport rider, and have lived in this area without a car for a few years in addition to enjoying the perks of a car. I want what we all want: for moving from place to place to be safer, less full of traffic, and more convenient. I've also been in two significant bike crashes, neither of which was my fault, and am chastened to reflect that I and other cyclists take our lives into our hands every time we choose to share the roads with vehicles.

My thoughts on what I have explored of the DCHC MPO are:

1. It's too bad bicycle projects are separated out. My understanding is that many of the obstacles to bicycle infrastructure improvement lie in the mixed jurisdiction of many of our local roads.

I'm glad to know jurisdictions are coordinating through the DCHC MPO, but would hope cycling were viewed as important enough to include in long-term regional goals. This area is growing so fast that cycling and foot traffic should be viewed as viable ways to link people together without overwhelming our roads. It will be easier to build the infrastructure while the area is expanding.

2. Reading Appendix 6. Complete Streets, I hope you will consider including in your mission statement an acknowledgement of the safety of dedicated bicycle lanes. This study and others have shown that dedicated bicycle lanes and—even better—protected cycling tracks have been shown to reduce the risk of injury to cyclists by about 50% and 90%, respectively.

3. Light Rail:

1. I am very glad the Light Rail plan now connects to NCCU. It would be great to see it connect from Carrboro to Hillsborough if the cargo track can ever be converted for passengers.
2. I would encourage you to explore including pedestrian bridges any time there needs to be a light rail bridge. For the University of North Carolina, one important connection would be to develop a safe crossing of Fordham Blvd at S. Columbia Street or thereabouts, hopefully similar to the American Tobacco Bridge near Southpoint.
3. Appendix 4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects: From my experience cycling, some of the bicycling projects I consider worth prioritizing are:
 1. Connection from Chapel Hill to Durham with as many protected bike lanes as possible. There are roadways where it should still be reasonable to take right-of-way for bicycle expansion. I am in favor of creating along Erwin Rd a protected bicycle lane (for instance raised, two-way), with connections to Cornwallis and Cameron Blvd.
 2. Old Chapel Hill Rd to University Drive is another important place protected bicycle lanes have been talked about for connecting Chapel Hill and Durham, but it strikes me as slightly more difficult to follow the whole length with reasonable bicycle protection.
 3. NC 54 / Barbee Chapel Road / Farrington Road / Stage Coach Road / NC 751 / Massey Chapel Road / Barbee Road / NC 54 is also a very good thoroughfare with bicycle potential, given the developments along Farrington Road and 751, the room for expansion along these roads, and the ability to link good bicycle paths on the Chapel Hill side of NC 54 with the American Tobacco Trail.
 4. Missing from the project list: A safe connection for bikes between Chapel Hill/Carrboro and the Chapel Hill public library. Better bike infrastructure along Estes Dr. would help this, or else a way to link from the Bolin Creek Greenway to the public library near Burlage Circle or Meadowbrook Drive. It's great that there are almost connections between the Northside District and the Chapel Hill Community Center.
 5. Missing from the project list: Safe bicycle lanes on Hillsborough Rd between Old Fayetteville Rd and the intersection with Dairyland Rd/Homestead Rd. So many cyclists use this area for recreation and this is such an incredibly dangerous passage (including precipitous drop-offs from the pavement with the last paving) in a place where the state should be able to take right of way. Improving this small section would make a huge difference.
 6. This is now outdated, but here is a crowd-sourced map showing different cyclists' commute routes to work/school at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Thank you for coordinating the feedback! Please let me know (or forward on) if there are other planners to whom it would be reasonable to offer these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Saunders

02/09/18

(hope this is comment site for Feb 9 deadline)

The planned commuter rail w/ bus connectors is the more important, useful goal for effective mass transportation for Triangle area. Period. Charles Gibbs, Durham

Charlie Gibbs,

02/09/18

Hello!

When looking over the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan, I noticed that it did not include very many off road connections. It focused mostly on bike lanes and sidewalks. What I believe is that greenways are just as important as on road solutions. Many people I know are unwilling to take their kids biking on roads, even if bike lanes are present. A system of greenways could encourage people to get outside and be active. What our area really needs is to build a system of greenways, like what Raleigh is so successfully doing.

The link below goes to a Google "My Map" of the trails that I believe would help people in Chapel Hill and Durham be most connected.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fGiV0LTB07SGhcTEPkqarinTgl8MM5lh&usp=sharing>

Please let me know if there is any way that I can improve the Google My Map.

Thank you,

Leif Rasmussen

DCHC MPO

2045 MTP *Preferred Option* Comments

Preferred Option

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) released the Preferred Option of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for public comment on November 1, 2017. The public comment period closed on December 12, 2017. The section below compiles the public comments that the MPO received.

Comments by Email

11/01/17

I have the following comments on the 2045 MTP:

- * I would like to see the project to widen US 15-501 Bypass between MLK and I-85 advanced from the 2045 MTP to an earlier date, or at least have interim safety improvements added at the Cameron Blvd and Cornwallis Rd interchanges to extend the merge lanes for safety. I see regular and growing congestion on this route on my daily commute.
 - * I would like to see improvements to the Durham Freeway (NC 147) through downtown advanced to address current and growing congestion.
 - * I would like to see widening of I-85 from Sparger Rd to I-40 advanced from the 2045 MTP to an earlier date.
 - * I would like to see the Wake-Durham CRT (2035 version) extended to LaSalle St. or Neal Rd rather than ending at Fulton St. to better serve west Durham.
- Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Todd Patton

11/04/17

Hi, please provide rail access directly to RDU airport and RTP work areas from Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Durham. Other sprawling cities do this, we can to!
Thanks

Matthew Barton

11/07/17

To whom it may concern.

Thank you for your willingness to hear from the public. I applaud much of your aims and goals. It seems you are working to do what is best for Durham and surrounding areas. I have only a few comments, which I hope will be received in the best possible light.

My main comment: stop prioritizing cars. For over half of a century, cars have dominated our landscape. So much of our local and state budget is spent on cars and infrastructure for cars -- hundreds of millions of dollars, if I am not mistaken. Yet car-culture never brings a good return on its investment. It contributes to pollution and hurts the environment, it allows people to sit in their cars and get sicker and fatter, it prevents people from being in public together by keeping us separated in our little tin boxes, and so many other terrible things. It is now time to turn things around, to make cities for people not cars. The reason why idealized cities like Paris, Amsterdam, NY, San Francisco, Barcelona, etc. are ideal is because they do not prioritize cars but people. But it all started with the will to put people first, machines last.

I am writing to encourage you to prioritize walking, biking, and public transit, especially trains. The highways in NC are packed. As more and more people come here, they are just going to be stuffed more and more. And they cannot get much bigger. How much space is wasted by roads and parking lots? Car-culture is far too expensive and unsustainable. The way to make cities sustainable, diverse, and democratic cities is to prioritize sustainable, diverse, and democratic forms of transit. Again, this means walking, biking, and public transit. Want to know why I never go to Raleigh? Because there is no reliable, easy transit running from early in the morning to late at night? The drive into Raleigh feels like a death trap. I avoid it at all costs. But I would love to see the NC Symphony, attend the Art museum (by the way, there is NO public transit to the state art museum; what an embarrassment!), and visit restaurants and shops. A solution: a commuter train.

I know much of this is in the long term plans for the area. But why is this long term? You have been spending billions on roads for cars for decades. How about other people get a chance for a while? How about we stuff funding entitled drivers and give hardworking people who cannot afford or do not want to use cars? How about a fair and equal transit system in 5 years, not 45 years. The will is there. We want trains, better buses, more walking and biking paths (and that means separated cycle-tracks, not deadly sharrows or painted lanes).

If you have any questions or responses, please let me know. The Triangle can be a beautiful place, but there is much that needs to happen. Let's not wait 45 years. Let's start this tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ryan J. Johnson

11/07/17

The Triangle Area RPO has the following comments on the draft DCHC MPO 2045 MTP, with regard to projects that touch the MPO/RPO boundary:

* In Orange County, TARPO staff supports the idea of improvements on NC 54 approaching the DCHC/TARPO boundary west of Carrboro, and we would expect these improvements to ultimately be based on the recommendations of the currently-ongoing NC 54 corridor study. The 2013 Orange County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (RPO portion) shows a need for future improvements in this corridor extending west from the MPO/RPO boundary to Orange Grove Road (outside the DCHC boundary). Our current CTP shows a recommended four-lane facility in this corridor, but there is a good possibility this could change based on the results of the corridor study analysis. Even though the recommendation in the draft MTP would not match the recommendation shown in TARPO's adopted CTP, this recommendation does appear to be consistent with more recent thinking about the NC 54 corridor if it primarily serves as a placeholder for the future recommendations that arise from the corridor study.

* In Chatham County, TARPO staff supports the idea of improvements on NC 751 approaching the DCHC/TARPO boundary. Please note that the 2016 Chatham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (RPO portion) recommends a future four-lane cross-section for NC 751 from the MPO/RPO boundary southward to US 64. This is in contrast to the three-lane modernization improvements recommended in the draft MTP. While TARPO staff recognizes the fiscal constraints of the MTP process and the impact this has on the ability to include desired projects in the current plan, we would request that you continue to consider a four-lane widening possibility on this road in future planning and project development decisions, in order to match up with the desired intentions on the RPO side of the boundary.

* In Chatham County, the recommended improvements on US 15-501 appear to be consistent with the improvements recommended on the RPO side of the boundary, and TARPO staff supports their inclusion in the MTP.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Matt Day, AICP CTP
Principal Planner
Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization
Triangle J Council of Governments

11/27/17

Hi. I'm 42, and a Raleigh native. Do I read this map correctly that there are NO plans to widen Hopson Rd between 54/Miami to Davis Dr from 2 to 4 lanes (with center turn lane) between now and 2045?? Or will this fall on Town of Morrisville and is out of scope for CAMPO? If there are no plans to widen

Hopson, I highly protest! This (I think less than 1/2 mile) stretch of road is a MAJOR bottleneck to traffic flow.

thank you,
David