



Connecting all points of the Triangle

MEMORANDUM

TO: GoTriangle Board of Trustees, All Durham-Orange Elected Officials
FROM: Communications and Public Affairs
DATE: August 19, 2015
SUBJECT: **Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project**
Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Comment Period

Background

On Friday, August 28, 2015, GoTriangle anticipates that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation (DEIS) for the proposed Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT) Project will be made available for public review and comment. The DEIS documents the environmental, transportation, social, and economic impacts associated with the transportation improvements in the Durham-Orange (D-O) Corridor, and marks an important milestone in the proposed 17-mile light rail project between Chapel Hill and Durham.

DEIS Review and Comment

The release of the DEIS begins a 45-day public review and comment period. The public, project partners, government agencies, and stakeholders can review the document in several ways:

- Review a copy of the DEIS on the D-O LRT Project web site at www.ourtransitfuture.com
- Review a copy of the DEIS at www.gotriangle.org
- Review a copy of the DEIS at public libraries in Durham and Orange counties
- Review a copy of the DEIS at GoTriangle's Administrative Offices

There are several ways to comment on the information in the DEIS:

- By email to info@ourtransitfuture.com
- By postal mail to: D-O LRT Project – DEIS, c/o Triangle Transit, P.O. Box 530, Morrisville, NC 27560
- By comment card at two public information sessions in September
- Through the D-O LRT Project's website at www.ourtransitfuture.com
- In person during public hearings in Chapel Hill and Durham

(more)

Public Information Sessions

GoTriangle will hold two public information sessions on the DEIS in advance of public hearings on the document.

- **Tuesday, September 15, from 4-7 P.M.** at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill, NC
- **Saturday, September 19, from 2-5 P.M.** at the Durham Station Transportation Center at 515 W. Pettigrew Street, Durham, NC

Public Hearings

Two formal public hearings on the DEIS will be held. Each speaker will be allowed two (2) minutes to comment. The dates for the public hearings are:

- **Tuesday, September 29, from 4-7 P.M.** at Grumman Auditorium in the Friday Center, Chapel Hill, NC
- **Thursday, October 1, from 4-7 P.M.** at the Durham County Commission Chamber, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

All speakers who have signed up to comment at a public hearing by 7 P.M. will have the opportunity to be heard during the official proceeding. (The hearing will be extended as necessary to accommodate all speakers signed up before 7 P.M.).

Protocol during the 45 Day Public Review and Comment Period

With significant community interest in the proposed light rail project, you will likely hear from constituents during the 45 day review and comment period.

Rather than attempting to address or provide a response to any public comment about the DEIS you might receive, please encourage the commenter to direct his/her comments on the DEIS to GoTriangle through the official channels mentioned (e-mail, mail, comment card, project website or the public hearings).

The use of these channels is important in maintaining the official project file for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and allows the project team to accurately compile the comments so that responses to all substantive comments can be tracked and responded to in the combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD). The combined FEIS/ROD is expected to be published in February 2016. (A suggested “script” to help direct members of the public to the official DEIS comment channels is provided below).

Non GoTriangle-Related Meetings during the 45 Day Period

Your board may want to hear from the public about the proposed light rail project during the DEIS review and comment period. If your board chooses to solicit public input at a meeting, FTA recommends that any such public input process not be called a “hearing” so as to avoid any possible confusion with the two official DEIS public hearings.

(more)

Note that any remarks from the public you may receive or any statement to a local governing body will NOT become part of the official DEIS project record. Rather, those comments are for the consideration of the elected body, as all official DEIS comments must follow the procedure set out in the Notice of Availability, as published in the Federal Register. Any comments received by a local jurisdiction or elected official should not be forwarded to GoTriangle (per FTA guidance). The only comments that will be officially accepted will be at the two public hearings or by e-mail, mail, the project website, or comment card.

Following the comment procedure described in the Notice of Availability protects the legal rights of the commenter, limits the responsibility of local jurisdictions for transmission and accuracy of comments, and ensures that all commenters are treated equally.

(Suggested “Script” Response to Direct Constituent to Official Comment Channels)

“Your thoughts and comments on the proposed Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit Project are important. In order to ensure that your comment is received, and so as to be a part of the official project record, please either: email your comment to project staff: info@ourtransitfuture.com; mail it to D-O LRT Project – DEIS, c/o Triangle Transit at P.O. Box 530, Morrisville, NC 27560; leave a comment card at one of the information sessions next month; or speak during one of the two public hearings in September and October. You only need to provide your comment to GoTriangle by one of these methods. No matter how you choose to provide your comment, all comments are treated and considered equally.”

Questions

If you have questions during the 45-day review and comment period, please contact Natalie Murdock, Interim Manager of Communications and Public Affairs at GoTriangle, at 919-485-7569 or nmurdock@gotriangle.org or Tammy Bouchelle, Assistant General Counsel, at 919-485-7562 or tbouchelle@gotriangle.org.