

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FY2020-2029 DCHC MPO TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

December 4, 2019

Dear Aaron,

I am writing to comment on public transportation in the Triangle. Focusing primarily on Orange County. I live just outside Hillsborough in Orange County. We have live here for 12 years now. During this time I have taken public transportation, car pooled for about 1.5 years, and now back to taking public transportation. I have grown up taking public transportation in Pittsburgh, PA from a small child to past graduate school. We lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for many years, I took Caltrain to work, and other public transportation to activities and events.

I have several suggestions based on my past experience.

The transit agencies need to promote public transit at multiple venues. Large employers, colleges/universities - GoTriangle already does this. They need promote transit to the general public at street fairs and other public events. These public events should include appropriate multiple agencies that service that area. (This was something I experienced in the SF Bay Area. Street fairs in the upper peninsula would have a transit booth with representatives for Caltrain, SamTrams, and BART, mid-peninsula would have Caltrain, SamTrams, and VTA, San Jose would have VTA and Caltrain. The appropriate agencies would have representatives based on the community. The transit reps would work together to assist a person to create a transit plan for their commute.) Have schedules for routes that would be of interest to the majority of that population. As an example transit agencies should have a booth at Hillsborough Last Friday's. GoTriangle and Orange County Transit should both be present to address transportation options. GoTriangle should have schedules for the 420, ODX, and CRX. Orange Co Transit have information about the circulator and their other transit options. Hog Day would also be a good opportunity for a transit booth for Hillsborough. This sort of promotion should be going on all over the Triangle, at as many events as possible. Go where there are people. You need to make the public aware transit is a viable option.

Transit agencies should plan transportation to special events to reduce traffic congestion and work with media for coverage to promote public transportation as an alternative. Some past examples could have been the teachers march in downtown Raleigh and the Dreamville concert in Dix Park. Make transit an alternative option, maybe have special runs or run buses later to accommodate the events. Think of events as an opportunity to get someone out of their car and then give them the idea of possibly thinking of public transportation for other events or perhaps their daily commute.

I had heard there are plans to get rid of the regular vs express fares. I highly agree that should be done. Since I ride the CRX, an express bus, the fare is higher than a regular route bus such as 100 or 105. There have been times when riders have a regular fare card and wonder why they are still being charged more money to ride the bus. I also think that discount cards should be promoted more widely as an option. The idea that weekly cards or monthly cards are the only option can be a turn-off if a person would only be able to ride transit a few days a week. I have heard this comment on several occasions.

Promote the cost savings and stress reducing parts of public transportation. I am much less stressed riding the bus. I read a book on my Kindle app, read the news, or review emails /answer emails during the ride. I see many riders with WiFi connectors and they work the entire ride. I track my commute on Share the ride NC. Depending on the month and whether I ride the CRX, or drive to RTC and take the 105/100, according to Share the ride NC I save between \$250-\$350 a month. I'm on track to saving about \$3,000 this year. The monthly bus pass is much less than the monthly garage parking fee. The \$102 for the express monthly bus pass is an immediate savings just with that. If I only drive to Eubanks p&r I can get 3 weeks on a tank of gas. Less wear and tear on the car, less oil changes, tire rotations, too.

I have some specific route ideas.

For the CRX, adding a mid-day run for part-time students/ students with only morning classes/ students with afternoon classes, or workers that need to leave early for a medical appointment, parent-teacher conference, or other commitments. Now all workers have the luxury of being able to work from home if they need to work a shorter day. This could be another opportunity to give people an option to get out of their car, who would otherwise drive. It could also be an option so that workers who usually rider the bus who don't have remote option to work a partial day rather than taking a day off.

I strongly suggest that a new bus route should be started to give commuters in Orange County an option to get to RTC using I-40. I would suggest the route have stops at Cone Health p&r in Mebane, Orange Co Durham Tech p&r, Eubanks p&r, to RTC. Then riders can use the Lyft/Uber option to get to their office in RTP. Traffic on I-40 continues to get worse. It has been especially bad this Fall. I take the 7am CRX and the drivers have been consistently driving on the shoulder because traffic is backed up. The bus has been getting to Raleigh much later recently.

Starting in January 2020 the CRX will have a stop at MLK and Perkins. This will enable connecting with the 420 at the north end of Chapel Hill in addition to the current connection point at Franklin Street. (It will also be an option for riders living at the north end of Chapel Hill another stop, which might allow them to ditch the car and not have to drive to Eubanks park & ride lot. I already know of a rider who is looking forward to that new stop.) It would be nice if the Part 4 route would also have a stop at MLK and Perkins so there could be a north Chapel Hill connection stop. That would enable a rider to take the CRX from Raleigh and connect with the Part 4 route to Greensboro. I have been on several CRX buses with riders wanting to do just that, and I have heard from other riders who have seen similar situations. As it is right now the

connection at Franklin Street is very tight and if traffic is bad on I-40 the connection could be missed. If a connection was possible at MLK and Perkins, the rider could have a better chance making the connection to Greensboro.

Thank you for your attention to these suggestions.

Sincerely

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