

Board Chairwoman Wendy Jacobs said she has told Durham Mayor Steve Schewel that municipalities where trains would stop would become more involved in the next phase of development.

GoTriangle abandoned plans to develop an 18-mile light-rail project between Chapel Hill and Durham last March, in part because Duke University and the NCRR balked at providing needed right-of-way.

"That's why you have this extensive (memorandum of understanding)," Reckhow said. "We didn't have this at the start of the light-rail project. We're being much more deliberate."

PROJECT OPPONENTS SPEAK

Several members of the public spoke against the project Monday.

"You're going to try to provide a mode of transportation at the expense of the taxpayers of Durham that benefits non-taxpayers that work in Durham but live other places," said Jackie Wagstaff, a former Durham City Council member.

Antonio Jones, a former candidate for the Durham school board, wondered why the project didn't include an airport stop.

Victoria Peterson, a former candidate for City Council, said the project would hurt the black community as it travels noisily through predominantly African-American neighborhoods. She also urged backers to schedule community meetings before continuing.

"I heard the questions," Commissioner Brenda Howerton said. "I understand the uneasiness around this because of the lack of information."

Reckhow also said she was glad to hear from the community.

"What we're still doing is determining if this project will benefit Durham," she said. "I appreciate the concerns. I have concerns. But I think this next step will answer that."

Staff writer Richard Stradling contributed to this story.