

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING REVISIONS TO THE CHAPEL HILL AND
CARRBORO 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSIT PLAN
Resolution No. 93/2009-10

WHEREAS, the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina have worked together to provide public transit service to the local community for over thirty years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Carrboro has set annual goals to extend and improve transportation to all areas of Carrboro; and

WHEREAS, an objective of the *Carrboro Vision 2020* plan is for the Town of Carrboro to “expand its participation in organization and planning for the community bus system”; and

WHEREAS, the Final Draft of the Chapel Hill and Carrboro 2035 Long Range Transit Plan (the “Plan”) was completed in July 2009 and subsequently made available for public review; and

WHEREAS, on October 6, 2009, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen passed a resolution referring the Plan for advisory board and public review; and

WHEREAS, there have been two advisory board review sessions in November 2009 that focused on the Plan, including a public meeting on November 19; and

WHEREAS, on November 24, 2009, the Board of Aldermen held a public hearing on the Plan and subsequently directed staff to review the Plan and recommend revisions;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen that the Board approves the recommended revisions to the Chapel Hill and Carrboro 2035 Long Range Transit Plan contained in the attached staff report (Attachment B) and the following additional revisions, if any:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The revisions shall be presented to the Transit Study Policy Committee and any other persons responsible for revising the Plan.

This is the 19th day of January in the year 2010.

Planning Board comments on the Chapel Hill and Carrboro 2035 Long Range Transit Plan – Final, 1/7/2010**Summary Review:**

The Planning Board does not find that the Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP) supports Carrboro's vision and long-term interests. The LRTP projects and accepts that Carrboro will be excluded from direct access to both a regional rail system and bus rapid transit and thus the town faces a substantially auto dependent future with the environmental and quality-of-life challenges that brings. The plan contradicts the Carrboro BoA's desire for rail service penetrating into downtown Carrboro and continuing to Carolina North along the existing rail corridor, support dating from 1998 and re-affirmed as part of Carrboro's comments on the Long Range Transportation Plan in 2004 & 2008.

The LRTP emphasizes MLK Blvd as the nearest line for bus rapid transit serving Carolina North, leaving Carrboro to access regional service only via minor feeder bus service. Thus we would get none of the economic benefits that come with direct, regional transit access. The local bus corridors seem aimed primarily at congestion relief on Carrboro's roads, and the Plan features large, costly park-and-ride lots to accommodate projected Carolina North/UNC employees who are assumed to be commuting by car. This situation would encourage and subsidize sprawl to the north and west of town that would likely impose service and infrastructure costs on Carrboro while bringing little revenue to offset them.

The premise of significant parking facilities at gateway nodes having future transit-oriented high-density mixed residential and commercial development is not supported by any timely active political conversation or public planning within Carrboro that would produce such an outcome. Furthermore, The emphasis on long-distance commuter busing from/to Chatham and Alamance Counties embodies acceptance of an assumption that future low and moderate income employees of Carolina North and a growing UNC will not be given sufficient housing choices within Chapel Hill/Carrboro to allow them more sustainable and convenient lives. The environmental and social segregation effects of this purposeful course of action are undesirable and frustrating, particularly because they could be mitigated by a more sustainable housing program at Carolina North. The urgent need for reasonably priced housing within our town affects our own children as well as people we have personally never met, and should be planned for as an important town goal.

As a whole, the LRTP reflects the absence of participatory master planning by and for the community that would have informed the Transit Partners policy process and guided it toward an outcome that would sustain us and those who will follow us here in the face of epochal global challenges.

Questions for use by BOA as they discuss long-range transit issues:

1. In 2035 and beyond, will UNC and UNC Hospital still be using coal for a co-generation facility? Is this the University's stated vision for power generation over the longer term? Is this the primary justification for not considering use of the existing Norfolk Southern rail corridor for passenger service? If so, is it reasonable and consistent with the stated sustainability goals of all parties?

2. How might regional rail service to Carolina North (as a major employment destination) enhance the value and strengthen the performance of the regional rail system while also enhancing access for Carrboro and Chapel Hill residents and spurring economic development and greater vitality around several downtown stations?
3. If excellent regional transit access to Chapel Hill and Carrboro is desirable and worth fighting for, can it be provided by other means that would be less costly than adaptive re-use of the current rail line?
4. If the opportunity for moderate income housing development at Carolina North is not seized, how and where will it be possible within Chapel Hill and Carrboro to increase the workforce housing stock in order to accommodate future employees living within our borders, reduce the pressure of commuter traffic, increase access to employment, reduce economic segregation and realize our common vision for a sustainable future?
5. In 2035, how will the transit corridors currently under consideration help economic growth, improve quality of life, and relieve congestion for Carrboro residents? Without stations or direct regional transit access, how will these corridors support and encourage more sustainable urban development patterns in and around Carrboro for the next generations?
6. What does it mean that the LRTP defines success under its most aggressive assumptions as overwhelming auto dependency (especially for commuting and non-local trips) in 2035 and beyond? *(For example, transit mode share would increase 1.7% under the High Investment Scenario and the corresponding decrease in auto trips would still leave us taking more than 13 auto trips for every transit trip. See LRTP text pp 5-8 thru 5-11.)* Is this assumption reasonable considering that we all face rising fuel and environmental costs in an era of peak oil and climate change?
7. Where is the participatory community visioning that would guide our thinking and decisions about where and how to situate future transit systems and the development that would support them?

Recommendations:

- 1) The PB wants the BOA to support high-quality regional transit access and push aggressively for rail into downtown Carrboro as the strongest possible skeleton on which to flesh out a sustainable urban fabric. The Aldermen should then argue forcefully for a rethinking of other current positions and assumptions that appear to undermine such a goal. *(e.g. UNC energy production and future use of rail line, Carolina North development concentrated away from the rail line, current zoning downtown and along transit corridors, limited commitment to workforce housing at Carolina North, and limited housing capacity within Chapel Hill and Carrboro, financial assumptions embedded in comparison of costs of BRT/LRT/regional rail etc.)*
- 2) However Carrboro's BoA chooses to remain engaged in the LRTP, the transit-supportive development assumptions for Carrboro's part of the plan (20 units/acre in some areas, according to staff) should become a serious and public commitment for the BoA and the town. Only with a reliable, consistent and integrated land use plan will projected local investments in transit corridor studies and capital be meaningful. This planning effort would also require a careful and broader examination of development and design policies to ensure consistency with quality transit-oriented development as well as other sustainability goals of the town.

- 3) We appreciate that the Board of Aldermen is working on an update of Vision2020, and hope that will include master planning to guide future development outcomes in a way that will address global challenges and sustain future generations of residents.
- 4) Advocate for a more sustainable housing program at Carolina North.
- 5) Request that the Transit Study Policy Committee incorporate into its analysis modified assumptions regarding auto dependence in 2035 and beyond.
- 6) Request that the Transit Study Policy Committee address an option for direct access to regional fixed guideway transit service in Carrboro, including an analysis comparing the costs of adaptive reuse of the existing rail line with other types of access.

CARRBORO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECOMMENDATION

December 3, 2009

SUBJECT: Light rail transit in Carrboro

MOTION: The Transportation Advisory Board recommends that the Chapel Hill and Carrboro 2035 Long Range Transit Plan include language to evaluate the use of the existing rail corridor (North Rail Corridor – 5A) for light rail transit in:


1. Any future Alternatives Analysis for enhanced transit service in the MLK corridor and
2. The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Ayes (5): Hileman, Brown, Perry, Amoni, Michler. Nays (0). Absent (2): LaJeunesse, Krasnov.

Moved: Amoni

Second: Perry

VOTE: Ayes (5): Hileman, Brown, Perry, Amoni, Michler. Nays (0). Absent (2): LaJeunesse, Krasnov.



TAB Chair

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CARRBORO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECOMMENDATION

December 3, 2009

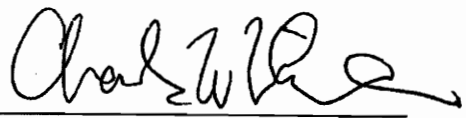
SUBJECT: Road diet on Martin Luther King Blvd.

MOTION: The Transportation Advisory Board recommends that a road diet be implemented on MLK Blvd., to convert the two outer lanes to bus- and bike-only lanes. This would give buses more capacity without additional roadway construction costs and make it clear that cars will not be accommodated at the expense of alternative forms of transportation.

Moved: Michler

Second: Brown

VOTE: Ayes (5): Hileman, Brown, Perry, Amoni, Michler. Nays (0). Absent (2): LaJeunesse, Krasnov.



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CARRBORO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECOMMENDATION

December 3, 2009


SUBJECT: Campus-to-campus bicycle route

MOTION: The Transportation Advisory Board recommends that the Board of Aldermen support a lighted bicycle and pedestrian commuter route from the UNC main campus, through Carrboro, and along the existing Norfolk Southern rail corridor to Estes Dr. and on to Carolina North.

Moved: Perry

Second: Brown

VOTE: Ayes (5): Hileman, Brown, Perry, Amoni, Michler. Nays (0). Absent (2): LaJeunesse, Krasnov.


TAB Chair

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