

A RESOLUTION OF THE DUKE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF COOPERATION FROM DUKE UNIVERSITY ON THE DURHAM-ORANGE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

WHEREAS it has been brought to the attention of the Duke Graduate and Professional Student Council that Duke University and the Duke University Medical Center have fallen into disagreement with state, local, and community stakeholders regarding the proposed Durham-Orange light rail transit (DOLRT) project and that action by Duke University is necessary for the progress of the project; and

WHEREAS the GPSC has previously heard a presentation by GoTriangle representatives presenting an outline of the Durham-Orange LRT project; and

WHEREAS the GPSC General Assembly then expressed positive sentiments regarding the future impact of the DOLRT upon graduate students and local Durham and Triangle communities; and

WHEREAS Duke University has an openly-stated commitment towards strengthening ties with the greater city and county of Durham as well as strong de-facto links with neighboring communities; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that Duke and the Duke University Hospital have expressed valid concerns regarding the potential implications of the DOLRT for hospital equipment, operations, and emergency access; and

RECOGNIZING that establishing a cooperative agreement between GoTriangle and Duke University would still leave ample room for additional negotiation between Duke and Go Triangle to resolve concerns raised by the university; and

WHEREAS Duke University stands to benefit greatly in terms of its community image by participating openly in dialogue with the Durham community regarding the DOLRT project; and

WHEREAS Durham-area citizens have expressed strong, broad support for the DOLRT project as evidenced by past referenda voting in favor for tax increases to fund improvements to regional transportation; and

CONCERNED that public perceptions that Duke University is the sole stakeholder impeding progress on the DOLRT and has participated in dialogue in poor faith damage the standing of the university, thereby impeding Duke's educational and societal mission; and

WHEREAS commitment on the part of the university to a cooperative agreement with GoTriangle represents an essential and time-sensitive step to permit the project to successfully secure federal funding, without which the project may be cancelled entirely; and

EMPHASIZING that greater development and investment in public transit is of substantial public interest throughout much of the country in light of the climate crisis as well as deteriorating public infrastructure nationwide; and

CONVINCED that the DOLRT would represent a major positive development for the Triangle region that would increase access to affordable housing, fuel local job growth, increase access to employment, reduce carbon emissions, improve community quality of life, increase the attractiveness of the area to business interests, and enhance the potential for productive educational, research, healthcare, and cultural exchange between Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

BELIEVING that the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project, once completed, will represent a positive development for graduate students in the Triangle area by enabling more flexible commuting arrangements in the face of rising rental and real estate prices, a shortage of parking supply on campus, and increasing automobile congestion on local highways and roads,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL that:

- 1) the GPSC expresses its deep concern that failure by Duke to sign a cooperative agreement with GoTriangle would jeopardize the future of the Durham-Orange LRT project and endanger years of effort and significant expense.
- 2) the GPSC further expresses its support for the Durham-Orange LRT project and urges President Price and university leaders to commit to signing the DOLRT project cooperation agreement by February 28, 2019, and focus on resolving the university's concerns with the project through open, constructive cooperation and dialogue with involved stakeholders.