November 20, 2018

Mayor Steve Schewel
City of Durham

Commissioner Wendy Jacobs
Chair, Board of County Commissioners
Durham County

Dear Steve and Wendy,

Thank you for meeting with me and my Duke colleagues today to review the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project. I appreciate your willingness to address the issues that were raised in my letter of November 19, and the work that GoTriangle put into preparing a response on such short notice.

Let me restate a fundamental principle that undergirds this ongoing conversation: Duke is vitally interested in the success of Durham and the region, and we want to be partners with the public and private sectors in solving the urgent matter of transit for the entire community.

While we still have concerns about several aspects of the planned route, particularly the impact of road closings on downtown and the portion of the line that will run along Erwin Road adjacent to, and in some cases through, the Duke campus, we commit to continuing the good-faith efforts on the part of Duke, GoTriangle, and public officials to seek solutions that will ensure the health, safety and economic vitality of the community, and Duke University.

To reiterate, these specific concerns include:

--The closing of Blackwell Street and access to the American Tobacco Campus, DPAC and neighboring locations;

--Making certain that access to the Duke Hospital Level I Trauma Center remains unimpeded for all emergency vehicles at all times;

--Minimizing disruptions during the construction process and maintaining complete access to Trent Drive and other essential patient transit and access points;

--Ensuring the continuity and safety of research and clinical activities that take place in buildings adjacent to the planned rail line;
--Guaranteeing the electric power supply for Duke University and its medical facilities.

In addition, we appreciate your willingness to reconsider our request that the planned line be elevated over State Road 751 to facilitate safety and avoid additional congestion during peak periods and special events, and we look forward to the results of the traffic study to be conducted in the next few weeks.

To facilitate the necessary review and coordination, I have designated Executive Vice President Tallman Trask III as our principal liaison for the GoTriangle-Duke relationship. Dr. Trask will have the sole authority to provide information and make decisions on all operational issues regarding Duke’s participation in the DOLRT.

I hope that these outstanding issues can be definitively resolved in a straightforward and mutually agreeable way. At that point, I will be in a position to recommend that the Board of Trustees act favorably on your request for a voluntary contribution of land and rights of way at the appropriate time.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on bringing much needed public transit to our region.

Sincerely,

Vincent E. Price
President

cc: City Manager Tom Bonfield
    County Manager Wendell Davis
    Commissioner Ellen Reckhow, Chair, GoTriangle Board of Directors
    Jeff Mann, GoTriangle