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I have followed the progress of the Fayetteville to Raleigh Passenger Rail Study since its inception, mostly on line although I was able to participate in the Fayetteville Focus Group that met in March.

I have had a chance to review the most recent Draft Report (7.29). A lot of information but well organized and presented. The maps and other graphics are extremely well done and this lay person appreciates that. I was also able to watch and listen to the FAMPO Board presentation in July. This generated a few concerns/questions that I recently presented in writing to Scott lane. They are attached to this letter as an enclosure as well as his (and Ryan White's) replies and my subsequent responses.

Based on my experience in following this current study, as well as my active participation (with FAMPO) In the June 2002 SENC Passenger Rail Service Regional Plan Proposal and the the July 2005 SENC Passenger Study, I would like to submit the following recommendation for consideration in Phase Two design:

With the exception of the end points that both the Eastern and Western Routes serve - and will benefit from in terms of transportation, economy, land use, quality of life, etc. - each route consists of a completely separate set of communities, their dreams, potential and opportunities as they grow and expand within the shadow of the greater Raleigh/RTP (Mega) Region. Phase Two results need not be a winner take all scenario.

Suggested Phase Two Hybrid: Phase Two choices (Eastern or Western routes) to be expanded to include a Hybrid that does not eliminate one of the routes but rather determines which route is to be build first and include a corollary implementation plan, on a separate timeline, for the future build of the second.

("Make no little plans." DHB)

A possible scenario for the hybrid alternative would be to start with the Eastern Route as its already passenger compliant and can provide park and ride access for the Goldsboro area* and bus connections from the east and southeast. This will allow time to plan the Western Route in coordination with the future widening of US 401 to include possible routing of some of the rail within the median of dual lanes (see NM Railrunner Express within Interstate-25 vicinity of Sante Fe or I-195/VA 76 in Richmond), especially if the highway alignment should include bypasses of Fuquay-Varina and/or Lillington. As part of an integrated and balanced approach the Fuquay-Varina to Raleigh segment could be initially planned and built perhaps as far south as a temporary park and ride lot in the vicinity of NC 42 (Willow Springs). A subsequent phase would be built once the planning and ROW acquisition have been completed. [Although perhaps not current, I have attached a map of potential US 401 corridor alignments options for examples of what they could be.]

* The Selma station is a relatively easy drive from most of Goldsboro and basically directly west towards Raleigh and the RTP. I expect than many commuters in this country make similar drives each day as the issue is not the first 15 or so miles of the overall commute but rather the final 15 or so.

Long range implications. In addition to facilitating future Raleigh to Wilmington and Wilmington to Charlotte service either route has the potential to eventually become a de facto third leg of the SEHSR south of Raleigh and serving the A line cities of Florence (Myrtle Beach), Charleston, Savannah and eventually Florida. This potential should be kept in mind during design and engineering, especially in terms of track geometry to support speeds above the initially planned 60 mph in the Western Route.

Fayetteville to Winston-Salem Passenger Rail

For Information purposes I have attached a map that was part of a recently released (March 2020) FRA study (in which NCDOT staff were involved) of regional passenger rail corridors in the Southeast. Fayetteville and Winston-Salem, the two largest cities in NC without state passenger rail service are the endpoints of the route which passes thru the RTP and Raleigh. In addition to a short segment of active track between Winston-Salem and Greensboro the route follows the route of the Piedmonts to Raleigh and then from there to Fayetteville - obviously on one of the two routes we are now studying. Wilmington, of course, would be a natural extension of this route.