

Regional Transit Infrastructure Blueprint

Analyzing land use, travel markets and costs

SEPTEMBER 7, 2006

Purpose

Provide the technical basis for a Regional Transit Blueprint that describes future transit corridors and planned or potential transit infrastructure investments in the corridors.

Desired Result

Citizens and decision-makers understand the character of current and projected development and travel in potential transit corridors, how the corridors relate to one another, and important considerations for different types of transit investments in the corridors.

The focus of the project is to provide clear, consistent information for decision-makers to engage the public and set priorities through the established Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

Why this is Important

1. There has been no comprehensive, consistent regionwide blueprint for major transit investments since the development of TTA's 1995 Transit Plan. Major transit investment planning since then has focused on individual projects and grouping selected projects into a transit component when Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) are updated.
2. This project-specific approach has resulted in cost and revenue assumptions for major transit investments in our long range plans that may no longer be realistic, since they rely on new federal funding to pay 50% and NCDOT to pay 25%, a new regional revenue source and out-dated costs for some projects.



Bus Rapid Transit is one example of potential regional transit infrastructure

3. To secure federal funds, state funds and new regional revenue sources to support major transit investments will require a high level of cooperation among MPOs, the NCDOT, the TTA and other partners. Absent such cooperation, individual MPOs and communities may need to fund major transit investments from their existing individual revenue streams.

Goals

The goals are designed to help decision-makers and the public understand transit corridors and investments and set realistic priorities:

1. show the location of transit corridors and type of potential transit investments, including assumed alignment, technology, stations and services;
2. clearly articulate the mobility and community purposes served by transit investments in each corridor (purpose and need of transit investments);
3. track the status of transit investments in the planning and funding process;



Regional Rail is one example of potential regional transit infrastructure

PROJECT SPONSORS

Triangle Transit Authority

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO

Capital Area MPO

North Carolina DOT
Public Transportation Division

Triangle J Council of
Governments

PROJECT PARTNERS

A partners team will be created of technical experts invited from:

The Regional Transportation Alliance and its partners

local governments

MPO and RPO staff

NCDOT

Institute for Transportation Research and Education

transit service providers

universities

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4. show how current and future land use relates to transit infrastructure investments;
5. provide clear, consistent information related to the cost of investments, the components of these costs, and the assumptions used in developing the costs;
6. analyze travel markets in the transit corridors (trip types, origins and destinations, characteristics, etc.);
7. document how travel results and infrastructure costs relate to eligibility for specific funding sources, particularly federal funding, and what can be paid for with current revenue streams vs. what would require new or increased revenues.

Analyses & Guiding Principles

The project is built on three technical analyses and the development of guiding principles:

1. A *land use analysis* that examines current and projected development in corridors.
2. A *travel market analysis* that examines travel based on the land use and transportation infrastructure.
3. A *cost analysis* that examines infrastructure costs and implications for funding sources based on the federal *New Starts* and *Small Starts* programs.

The project team will also engage the partners in developing principles for major transit investments based on land use, travel market and cost characteristics. The team will work with the partners on a cooperative decision making framework for transit investments.

The Blueprint project is *not* designed to have direct public engagement on investment priorities or to establish these priorities, but to be aligned with the public involvement efforts of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) updates and any other public involvement efforts of the leadership partners. These partners, especially the Joint MPO Committee, are crucial to building consensus.

Study Area & Corridors

The study area consists of the Triangle Transit Authority's defined service area: Durham, Orange and Wake Counties, plus a 10-mile distance beyond these counties — all or a portion of 14 counties are included.

The corridors are drawn from previous and ongoing plans, studies and reports and include the land use within each corridor. Investments consist of specific alignments, technology, stations and service characteristics.

Important Transit Decision-Making Considerations

1. Ultimately, it is the MPOs and their Long Range Transportation Plans that establish major transit investment priorities.
2. Several transportation and land use leadership partners are crucial to building consensus on investment priorities, including the two MPOs, the NCDOT, the Triangle Transit Authority, the Regional Transportation Alliance and its partners and the Triangle J Council of Governments.

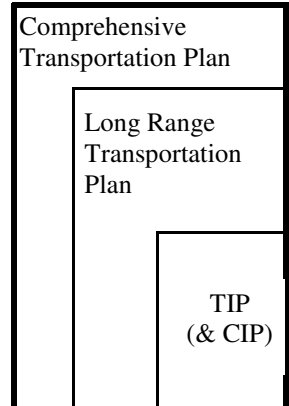
Where Do We Stand?

The sponsors have secured funding for the project and staff from the sponsors team have developed a detailed workplan and task list to guide the project and spell out responsibilities.

The next steps are to establish the broader Partners Team, begin identifying and mapping the corridors, and working with the leadership partners on transit guiding principles.



Light Rail Transit is one example of potential regional transit infrastructure



How Transit Infrastructure Moves from Desire to Reality

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) shows every major transportation project — including transit — that is desired to serve eventual growth in an area.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) shows projects from the CTP that are expected to be built by a certain *horizon year* (currently 2030) and that can be built with anticipated revenues, called *fiscal constraint*.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) shows projects that will be funded over a seven-year period, along with their funding sources. Localities have similar Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs).

The Capital Area MPO and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO prepare each of these documents for their respective metropolitan areas; federal approval is required for LRTPs and TIPs while state approval is required for CTPs and TIPs.