

September 12, 2025

1:00 – 4:00 PM

CAMPO & Triangle West TPO Joint Rail Subcommittee



TRIANGLE WEST
Transportation Planning Organization

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Strategic Rail Study Review
3. Break
4. Group Discussion
5. Next Steps

Strategic Regional Rail Infrastructure Investment Study

Background



Acknowledging the history of various attempts to expand rail in the Triangle region, CAMPO and Triangle West TPO came together to develop a new strategic approach.

In FY 2025, HDR was commissioned to develop this plan for the incremental expansion of Intercity Passenger Rail.

Rail Terminology Review

Acronyms

- FRA – Federal Railroad Administration
- FTA – Federal Transit Administration
- SPOT – Strategic Prioritization Of Transportation (NCDOT Process)
- CRISI – Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements program
- BIL – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- NEC – Northeast Corridor (Amtrak Acela/Northeast Regional/Carolinian)

Rail Terminology Review: Service Concepts



Light Rail

High-frequency urban service
Runs on street or in its own ROW
Incompatible with Freight Trains
Built under **FTA Oversight**

Not appropriate for this study



Commuter Rail

Downtown-focused peak service
Stations every 2 to 5 miles
Compatible with Freight Trains
Built under **FTA Oversight**

Not appropriate for this study



Passenger Rail

Intercity service
Stations every 7 to 20 miles
Compatible with Shared Use
Built under **FRA Oversight (Title 49)**

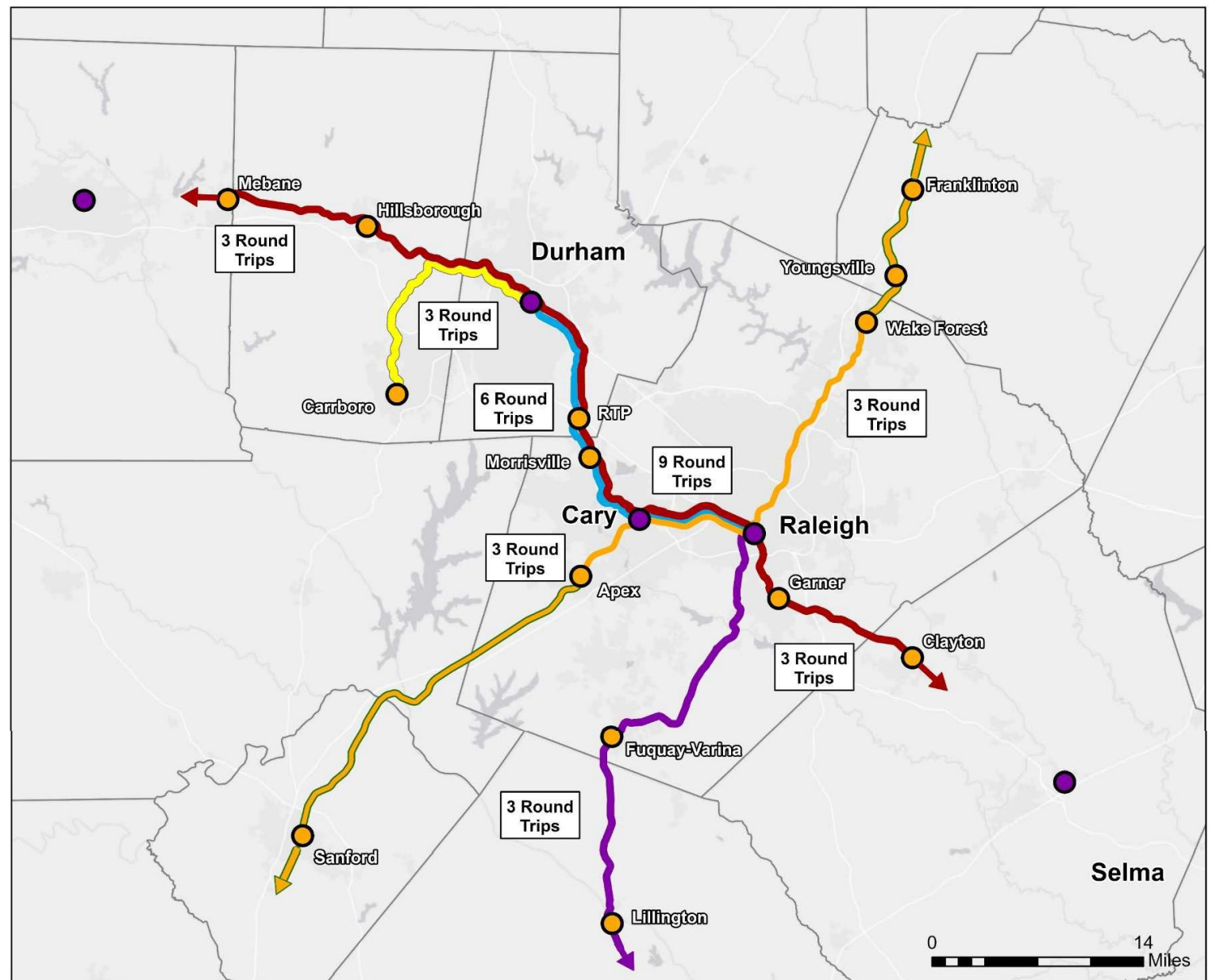
The focus of this study

Project Tasks

- Service Concepts
- Project Universe
- Federal/State Project Funding Screening
- Local Decision-making Framework
- Future Study Recommendations

Service Concepts

1. Mebane to Clayton
2. Apex to Wake Forest
3. Sanford to Franklinton
(Extend Concept #2)
4. Durham to Raleigh
5. Lillington to Raleigh
6. Carrboro to Raleigh
(Extend Concept #4)



Service Concepts

● Existing Stations
● Proposed Stations

— Mebane to Clayton
— Apex to Wake Forest

— Sanford to Franklinton
— Durham to Raleigh

— Lillington to Raleigh
— Carrboro to Durham



Project Universe

Triangle Rail Study Service Concepts & Project Matrix										
29-Jun-25			Milepost Reference Database Weblink		Service Concepts Supported					
		ROM Estimate (\$2024) [SCC 10-100 except 70]	Start MP	End MP	Mebane to Clayton	Apex to Wake Forest	Sanford to Franklinton	Durham to Raleigh	Lillington to Raleigh	Carrboro to Durham
Primary Service Concept	Potential Project - Description									
Mebane to Clayton	Station - Mebane (New)	\$25 M	H 31.5		Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Station - Hillsborough (New)	\$25 M	H 40.6		Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Track - Siding between Hillsborough/Wye	\$70 M	H 40.6	H 46.5	Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Yard - Heavy Maintenance Facility (Regional)	\$220 M	H 47.1		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Station - Durham Second Platform	\$260 M	H 54.6		Y			Y		Y
Mebane to Clayton	Track - Second Track at Durham Station									
Mebane to Clayton	Track & Systems - Bypass Track and Interlocking modifications at D&S junction	\$170 M	H 56.0	H 56.8	Y			Y		
Mebane to Clayton	Station - RTP (New)	\$20 M	H 64.2		Y			Y		
	Station - Cary Third Platform	\$80 M	H 72.7		Y	Y	Y	Y		
Mebane to Clayton	Track - Second H-Line Track at Cary Station									
	Track - Two sidings between Cary/Raleigh	\$140 M	H 72.7	H 80.8	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Mebane to Clayton				S 157.3						
Mebane to Clayton	Track -Siding between Raleigh/Garner	\$160 M	H 80.8	H 86.3	Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Station - Garner (New)	\$25 M	H 86.3		Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Station - Clayton (New)	\$25 M	H 96.3		Y					
Mebane to Clayton	Track -Layover Track south of Clayton Station	\$60 M	H 96.3		Y					
Apex to Wake Forest	Station - Apex (New)	\$20 M	S 171.6			Y	Y			
Apex to Wake Forest	Track - Layover Track south of Apex Station	\$60 M	S 171.6			Y	Y			
Apex to Wake Forest	Track & Systems - Cary to Raleigh Third Track (Convert sidings to Third Main), Control Point modifications	\$340 M	H 72.7 S 165.3	H 80.8 S 157.3		Y	Y			
Apex to Wake Forest	Known Project FSP FY '23 - Raleigh to Wake Forest - Station - Raleigh (Second Platform) - Yard - Modifications - Track & Systems - Sidings, Realignments, Signalization	\$1.3 B	S 157.3	S 140.0		Y	Y		Y	
Apex to Wake Forest	Known Project RAISE FY '25 - Wake Forest Mobility Hub - Station - Wake Forest (New)	\$ 16.4 M	S 140.5			Y	Y			

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Local Decision-Making Framework

Framework for how to prioritize and invest in rail-related projects in the Triangle Area.

- **Principle 1**: Understand the FRA Worldview
- **Principle 2**: Understand Freight Rail Operator Worldview
- **Principle 3**: Understand NCDOT Rail Objectives
- **Principle 4**: Understand How the NCDOT SPOT Process Scores Rail Projects
- **Principle 5**: Understand Relative Federal Funding Viability

Strategic Investment Decision Tree

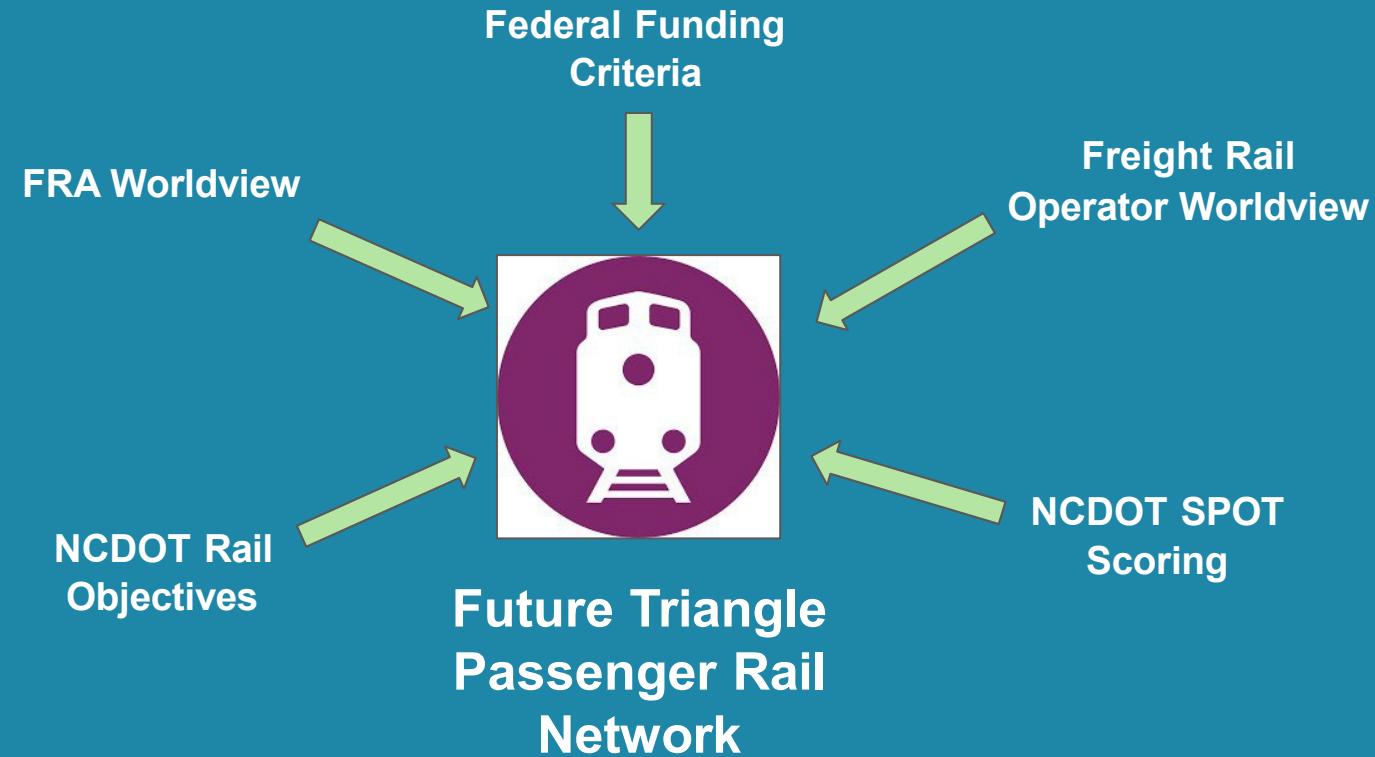
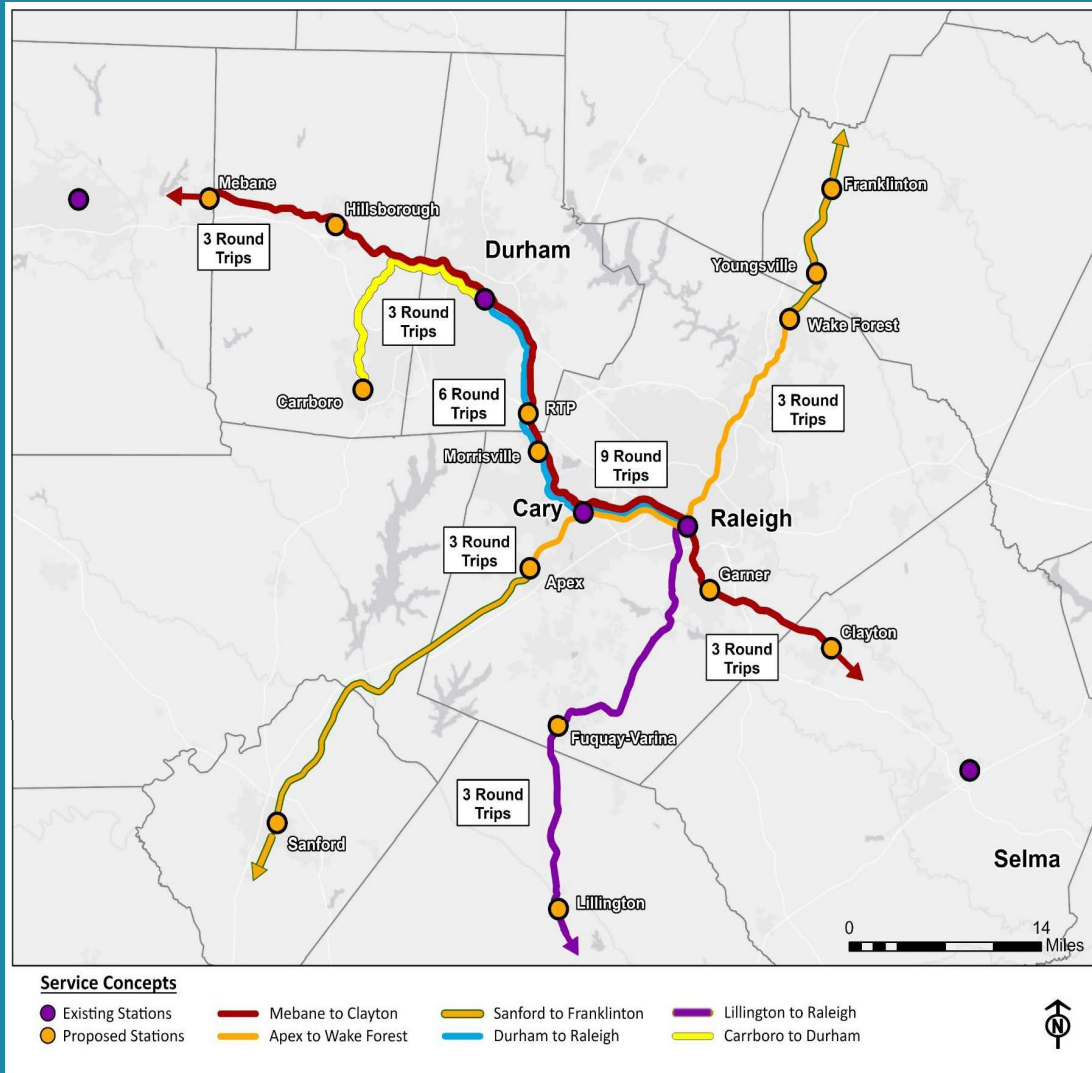
Priority order for investments allows for incremental progress while larger programmatic investments are pursued

1. Grade Crossing Eliminations
2. Advancing Station Work (including NEPA and Engineering Studies)
3. Protective Land Purchases for a Regional Maintenance Facility and layover yards
4. Interlockings and Sidings
5. Ridership Studies
6. Investments in the NC-Line from Burlington to Selma

Future Studies

- Triangle Rail Project Matrix and Decision Tree:
When to Update
- Service Development Plans & Corridor ID Merger
Studies
- Passenger Station Ridership Analyses
- Regional Maintenance Facility Site Search
- Network Rail Operations Study
- Station Site Pre-NEPA Planning Studies
- “Slow Service” Benefit: Cost Analysis Study

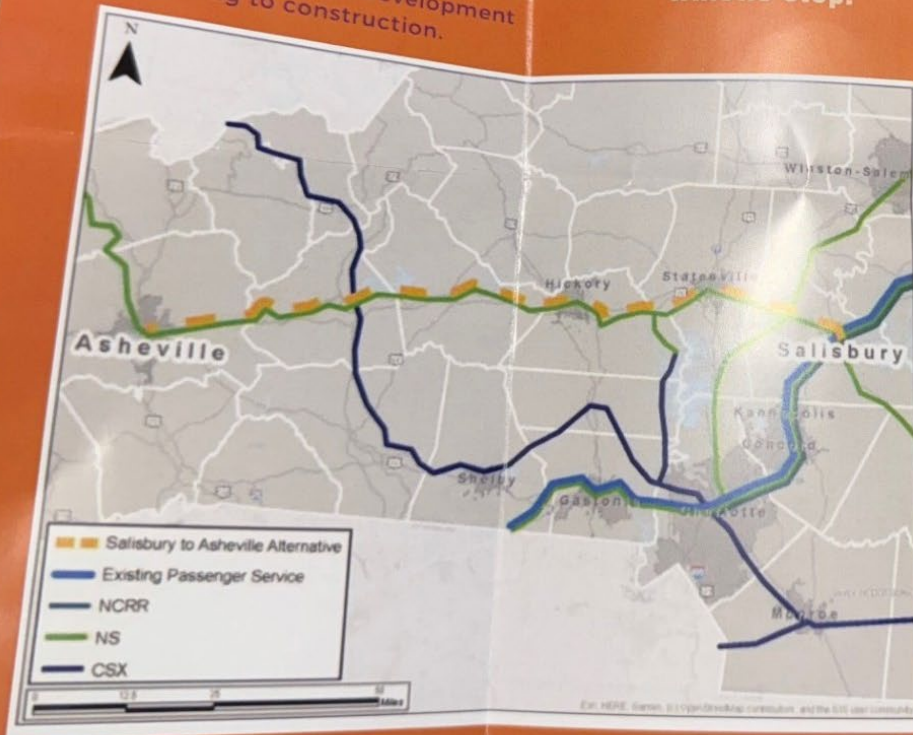
Break



THE ROUTE

In December 2023, the Federal Railroad Administration selected the **Salisbury to Asheville** rail route as part of the Corridor Identification and Development Program. The route is one of seven NC corridors receiving a \$500,000 grant from the Department of Transportation to develop a scope, schedule and cost estimate for a Service Development Plan, leading to construction.

All Burke County towns on the corridor have future potential to become a full stop or a whistle stop.



STEPS

I. Corridor ID

Mark this as completed!
Scoping underway. Expected completion end of 2024.

II. Service Development Plan

SDP will identify projects/needs for constructing the line (crossings, stations, stops along the route, modeling, etc) Timeframe 2025-2026. Feds pay 90% and locals pay 10%, which could be \$250-\$300k. We need to find these funds now.

III. Engineering

Environmental Clearance and Preliminary Engineering. Fed 80% and Local 20%. Cost estimate and timeline TBD.

IV. CONSTRUCTION

Once the studies in II and III are complete, then we are ready for construction! 80/20 funding split. Estimated total cost \$660million.



Get Involved

Send an email to our elected state legislators to say you want Passenger Rail Service In Burke County.

Rep. Hugh Blackwell at
Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.gov

Sen. Warren Daniel at
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.gov

HISTORY

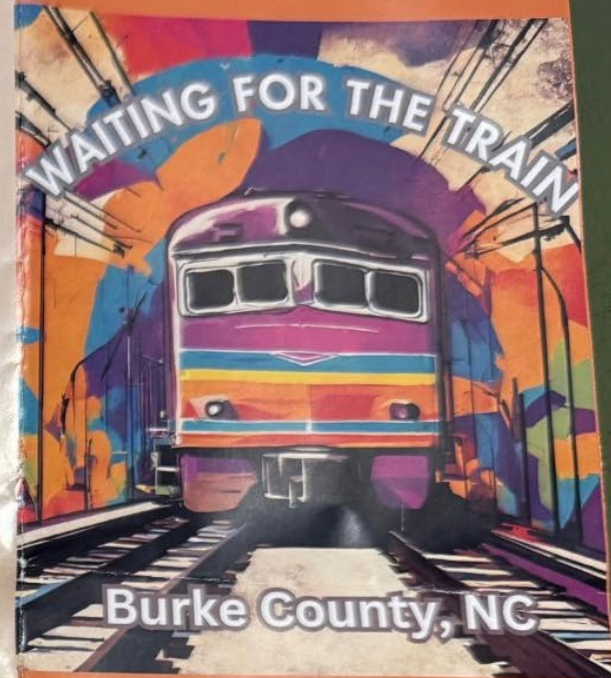
Passenger train service was discontinued to Burke County in the 1970s.

In 2023 two new neighbors, who moved into their homes in Morganton one week apart, started a conversation about the whistle of the freight train they could hear at night. Not a week later they read about the possibility of passenger rail returning to the region.

In speaking with other neighbors and the local mayor, they formed Waiting For The Train, a citizens' group dedicated to help make that a reality.

It is clear that passenger rail is an essential common good, for the health of our economy, for the preservation of our natural beauty and for human connection.

www.waitingforthetrain.org



**BRING
PASSENGER
TRAIN SERVICE
BACK TO
BURKE
COUNTY, NC**

Feedback and Discussion

This study aimed to create a baseline of what the Planning Organizations know and what we need to know to develop a regional passenger rail network.

The next step for this vision needs direction from Elected Officials to plot our tracks:

- Funding Implications
- Cost-Sharing Models
- Potential Prioritization Models
- Future Studies

Funding Implication

Any framework for regional decision-making needs to consider how capital cost contributions across various stakeholders could work.

- Projects in one MPO or County that benefit
 - More than one County or MPO
 - Counties of MPOs outside of the core Triangle Counties and other adjacent MPO member counties (Other MSAs such as Triad, Wilmington, Fayetteville, or even Charlotte)
- Projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries with the same potential combination of stakeholders as above

Cost-Sharing Models

Several ways of cost-sharing have been developed in this region's transit investment programs over the past few years such as:

- 50:50 cost splits for express bus services with origins and destinations in 2 counties
- Splitting the cost of proposed commuter rail improvements by track miles in each county
- Allocating costs to regional transit hubs by ratios of population among the 3 counties

Principle 1, understanding the FRA worldview, suggests that developing funding expectation that can be communicated to other cities, counties, and metro regions across NC helps create the **strongest case** for federal funding programs.

What are considerations needed when discussing cost-sharing for projects?

Prioritization Models

A departure from previous approaches, this decision-making framework recommends the Triangle region focusing less on total number of potential users and more on the number of factors that align with the likelihood of a project progressing to completion.

- ☐ Is this project a part of a Corridor ID grant received by NCDOT?
- ☐ Is this project on a rail line with an active operating passenger rail agreement with host railroad?
- ☐ Does this project connect two Metropolitan Statistical Areas, or at least one Micropolitan Statistical Area to the Triangle?
- ☐ Does this project connect to any other existing intercity passenger rail service?
- ☐ Are there “low-hanging fruit” projects that would be strong candidates for state funding?
- ☐ Is this a project for new service that is unlikely to receive standalone external funding but would accelerate a larger project with strategic local investment?

Are there other items that should be considered when prioritizing projects?

Future Studies

- Triangle Rail Project Matrix and Decision Tree:
When to Update
- Service Development Plans & Corridor ID
Merger Studies
- Passenger Station Ridership Analyses
- Regional Maintenance Facility Site Search
- Network Rail Operations Study
- Station Site Pre-NEPA Planning Studies
- “Slow Service” Benefit: Cost Analysis Study

This study recommended several projects that would help move towards the next steps in realizing passenger rail service in the Triangle Region.

- Are there studies missing from this list?
- Are there priorities within this list of studies?

Questions?



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Adjournment

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