Regional Transit Planning: The Charlotte Story

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Charlotte Area Transit System
Presentation Overview

• Charlotte Region
• Adopted Multimodal Corridor System Plan
• Pursuit of a dedicated local funding source
• Governance Structure
• System Plan Development
Four MPO’s in Region

Metrolina Modeling Area with Regional MPOs
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Region

- 7 county region
- 20+ mile ring
- 1.5 million people
- 34th largest metro area
Population Growth
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>2035</td>
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Community Profile

MSA Population

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<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Nashville</th>
<th>Jacksonville</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>699</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>872</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>907</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>1,100</td>
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Thousands

Census Year

Community Profile

Population Density
(Based on 1990 MSA Land Area)

Persons Per Square Mile

Census Year

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Nashville</th>
<th>Jacksonville</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>238</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>354</td>
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How well we understand national and regional change, and anticipate and plan for growth, along with revitalization, will have a significant impact on life in the region for years to come.

The seven county metropolitan area will grow from 1.5 million people in 2000 to 3 million residents by 2050.

85% of the metropolitan area’s growth can be expected to occur outside of Charlotte.

The pressure for continued outward, auto dependant development will intensify within the metropolitan area and wider region.

Trend growth v. sustainable growth will be a choice with significant consequences now and more so in the future.
Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan & System Plan

- Light Rail Transit
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Streetcar
- Commuter Rail: DMU
- Local Buses
Transit Planning – The Early Years

- **1977** Long Range Transit Plan – “transitways” in corridors
- **1988** Independence Blvd HOV Lane Plan
- **1989** Transit Corridor Study – high capacity transit in eight corridors
- **1994** Transitional Analysis
Committee of 100 (1994)

Composition
• 100+ members from Mecklenburg County and 5 adjacent counties
• Included elected officials and business community reps

Charge
• Develop Community Consensus on Vision for Land Use and Transportation
• Define Major Revenue Sources
• Determine Organizations Structure
Committee of 100 Recommendations
Land Use and Quality of Life

- Long-term growth management strategies for Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Five primary transportation and development corridors
- Transform unfocused development patterns in corridors and wedges to compact mixed-use development along corridors and in station areas
Committee of 100 Recommendations
Transit Alternatives

• Improve Express, Local and Regional Bus Service over next 3-5 years
• Improve and Expand Bus Service as Primary Short-Range and Long-Range Solutions
• Plan and Execute High Capacity Transit to Meet Long-Range Needs
Committee of 100 Recommendations
Organization Structure

Create Regional Planning/Coordination Office at Centralina Council of Governments (funded on per capita basis)

- Office plans/coordinates regional transit/high capacity transit
- State DOTs constructs roads
- Local governments implement local and express bus service improvements
Committee of 100 Recommendations
Revenue Sources

• Seek Enabling Legislation for up to 1% Sales Tax Authorized Locally
• Revenues Generated by Each County Must be Spent in that County
• Local Autonomy in Project Selection

Other Funding Options Considered
  – Vehicle Transfer Fee
  – Rental Car Tax
  – Local Gas Tax
  – Sin Taxes
  – Land Transfer Fee
Sales Tax Advantages

• Least Objectionable form of Tax/Fee
• Ease of Collection
• Generates Significant Amount of Revenue
• Applies to All
• Generates Revenue from adjacent Counties
• Grows with inflation
Committee of 100 Final Report

• Adopted by all Ring Cities
• Sales Tax implemented by South Carolina
• York County funding Highway Projects and Transit Studies with new Tax
• So What Happened on the North Carolina Side?
Good luck!

- Kevin Siers
Committee of 10 (1996/1997)

Composition
• Chair of Committee of 100
• 2 Charlotte City Council members
• Area representatives on NCBOT
• Several key business leaders

Charge
• Review and Reaffirm/Revise Recommendations of “Committee of 100”
• Determine Which Recommendations are Most Feasible and Develop Strategy for Implementation
• Collaborate with State’s Transit 2001 Commission to Address Charlotte’s Needs Through Their Proposals
Committee of 10
Results

• 5 Year Transportation Plan

• Support for “Local Option” Revenue Sources for Transit Improvements

• Led to Enabling Legislation for ½ Cent Local Option Sales Tax
2025 Integrated Transit/ Land Use Plan

Goals

• Support Centers and Corridors Land Use Vision
• Provide Choices in Mode of Travel
• Develop a Regional Transit System
• Support Economic Growth and Sustainable Development
Success in 1998!

- Voter referendum on ½ percent sales use tax for public transportation on November 1998 ballot
- Promoted by Chamber and paired with $100 million Road Bond
- Sales tax approved 58% to 42%
Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement (1999)

**Governance Structure Characteristics**

- 8 equal votes amongst 8 Mecklenburg County jurisdictions
  - 1 vote each on the MTC
- Ex officio involvement of surrounding jurisdictions and State DOT’s
- Chair rotation between Charlotte Mayor and Mecklenburg County Board of Commission Chair
- City Administration of transit system:
  - CATS is a City department
  - CEO reports to the City Manager
  - Administration under City policies
  - City Council approves contracting actions
- City Council and Board of County Commissioners must approve annual transit program/budget
- Towns can withdraw/dropout
Metropolitan Transit Commission

• Public Transit System Governing Board
  ✓ Provides policy direction for system development and operation
  ✓ Oversees management activities

• MTC Composition – 23 members
  ✓ 16 from Mecklenburg County
  ✓ 5 ex-officio from 5 surrounding counties
  ✓ 1 NCDOT (ex-officio)
  ✓ 1 SCDOT (ex-officio)

• Citizen Advisory Committees
  ✓ CTAG (planning and finances)
  ✓ TSAC (service delivery)

• Governance Structure Review in 2004
Mandatory Governance Review

Following is the paragraph from the Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement explaining the requirements for the Citizens Transit Advisory Group’s (CTAG) study.

Section IX.C
Mandatory Governance Review

During FY04, the CTAG shall undertake a comprehensive governance review which shall consider the effectiveness of this Agreement and the governance structure established hereunder as well as other possible governance structures including, but not limited to, various forms of a transit authority. The governance review shall be conducted in a manner that ensures public and transit stakeholder input and participation. No later than June 30, 2004, the CTAG shall provide the governing boards of the parties to this Agreement with its report and recommendations.
Evolution of Transit Department

Pre - 1999
•  Bus system operated by City DOT

1999
•  Signing of Interlocal Agreement
•  Creation of Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC)
•  Transit Department created within City (November)
•  Ron Tober hired as Public Transit Director

2000
•  Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) created
System Plan Development

1999
- South Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS) begins

2000
- Completion of South Corridor MIS and final selection of Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- Major Investment Studies begin in four remaining corridors
- Preliminary Engineering of South Corridor LRT (November)
2002

- South Corridor LRT receives “highly recommended” rating from FTA
- Corridor Major Investment Studies completed
  - Staff recommends 2025 System Plan
  - MTC adopts System Plan with amendments
- South Corridor Preliminary Engineering completed and DEIS issued
Recommended System Plan

• Serve 205,000 – 215,000 daily transit riders by 2025
• 28 miles of BRT guideway
• 21 miles of LRT
• 11 miles of streetcar
• 29 miles of commuter rail
• Extensive network of bus and other types of transit services throughout the region
# Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>First 10 yrs. (to 2012)</th>
<th>First 15 yrs. (to 2017)</th>
<th>By 2025</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>• LRT to I-485</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>• Commuter rail to Mooresville</td>
<td>• LRT to I-485</td>
<td>• BRT / enhanced bus to University Research Park Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhanced bus services on I-77 HOV lanes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>• LRT to 36th St. (NoDa)</td>
<td>• LRT to I-485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Streetcar to Eastland Mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>• BRT to N. Sardis station</td>
<td>• BRT to I-485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Central Ave. streetcar to Plaza / Midwood</td>
<td>• Streetcar to Eastland Mall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>• BRT to Charlotte Douglas Int’l Airport</td>
<td>• Enhanced bus on Tyvola Rd.</td>
<td>• Enhanced bus on Wilkinson Blvd. west of airport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Beginning of enhanced bus along Freedom Dr. and Tyvola Rd.</td>
<td>• Enhanced bus on Freedom Dr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center City</td>
<td>• Trade Street facilities and streetscape</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Center City streetcar loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trade Street Streetcar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• West Trade Multi-Modal Station</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transportation Center improvements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Beatties Ford Road Streetcar</td>
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### By 2025:
- First 15 yrs. (to 2017)
2025 CORRIDOR SYSTEM PLAN
COSTS AND FUNDING

• Capital Investment
  – Costs estimated at $2.9 billion (inflated $)
  – Funding: Federal 56%
    State 26%
    Local/Sales Tax 18%

• Operating Costs
  – Net Cost estimated at $3.1 billion (inflated $)
  – Funding: Local/Sales Tax 64%
    Local/Other 21%
    State 15%
South Corridor LRT Characteristics

- Uptown Charlotte to I-485
  - 9.6 miles
- Trolley – South End to Uptown
- 15 stations (7 park-n-rides)
- Operate seven days a week
- Operate from 5:00 am to 1:00 am daily
- Service frequency
  - Rush hour: 7.5 minutes
  - Non-rush hour: 15 minutes
- Project Budget – $398.7 M
South Corridor Project Milestones

- LPA Adopted: February 2000
- FTA Approval to Enter PE: September 2000
- ROD Received: May 2003
- FTA Approval to Enter FD: August 2003
- 65% Engineering Plans: February 2004
- Request LONP for Vehicles: February 2004
- Award Vehicle Contract: March 2004
- Submit FFGA Application: August 2004
- Congressional review of FFGA: Oct.-Nov. 2004
- Receive FFGA: December 2004
- Start of Service: October 2006
South Corridor Overall Status

- Demolition contract awarded by City Council 7/26
- LRV’s in final design by Siemens with CATS staff & consultant.
- Upcoming Contracting activities under Letters of No Prejudice:
  - Vehicle Maintenance Facility ($20m) Sept. 27th
  - Roadbed, Trackway and Structures ($75m) Nov. 8th
  - Signals and Communication ($33m) Nov. 23rd
- Land acquisition status:
  - Acquired 82% of property needed including Norfolk-Southern
  - 35 of 36 ”full takes”
  - 6 of 100 “partial takes”
  - $32.76m expended to date (vs. $39.83m budget)
Goals of Next Phase of Work

• Continue to progress all corridors
• Refine the Locally Preferred Alternatives from adopted Corridor System Plan
  – Alignment
  – Station Locations
  – Technology (Southeast / West Corridors)
• Evaluate potential environmental impacts and define mitigation measures
• Prepare engineering plans and cost estimates
• Refine implementation schedules
Innovative Approach to Advance Corridor System Plan

- Begin NEPA process (i.e. prepare DEIS) in all corridors
- After DEIS, submit New Start Package for near-term elements to be rated for funding
- Complete PE and Final Design and negotiate FFGA on near-term elements approved by FTA
- Complete NEPA process for mid and long-term elements to establish stations and preserve alignments
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with FTA on June 22, 2004
Keys to Success

- Land use connection
- Thinking and acting regionally
- Demonstrating progress
- Funding: Local, State and Federal
- Controlling costs of transportation system
- Safe, user-friendly design