

Why light rail? Why now?



We're glad you asked.

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From Matthews to Huntersville, from Rock Hill to South End, people have been asking about the long-term transit plan for the Charlotte region.

We're glad you're interested. And we want you to know the vision behind the plan that will carry us into the future.

Over the next 25 years, our region will grow rapidly. To manage that growth, we need a balanced transportation solution that is integrated with smart land use.

By including light rail in a comprehensive transportation system that includes roads, buses, carpools, vanpools, bus rapid transit and commuter rail as well as bikeways and sidewalks, we can offer more choices. We can provide more alternatives to congestion, help improve air quality, ensure successful growth and protect our quality of life.

In short, we can make the Charlotte region a better, more livable place for all of us.



Who needs light rail? Why not build only roads?

JOHN AGRESTI // CHARLOTTE

Rapid transit provides an alternative to congestion. While we'll always need to widen and improve roads, we can't pave our way out of congestion with roads alone. There are limits to how much a given road can be widened without destroying neighborhoods.

- A light rail line can carry as many people as an eight-lane freeway, using one-tenth of the land.¹
- Running at 80% capacity, the South Corridor Light Rail Line will move twice as many people as one accident-free lane on I-77.²
- In city after city, including our own, we've seen that each new highway or highway lane draws more traffic until it, too, is crawling with vehicles.
- Increased street capacity encourages sprawl, puts more drivers on the road and ultimately lengthens travel times.
- Buses, carpools and vanpools can help. But they use the same roads as other commuters, and don't offer a congestion-free commute.
- Light rail and bus rapid transit travel in their own rights-of-way, providing reliable travel times, unlike roads.



A light rail line can carry as many people as an eight-lane freeway – using one-tenth of the land.

Is rapid transit more expensive than roads?

SHAWN BOWERS // CHARLOTTE



Sometimes. But remember, we are building a long-term solution, and there are no "inexpensive" answers to traffic congestion.

- Roads and rapid transit lines require the same basic construction elements like cement, steel, land and labor – none of which is inexpensive.
- The cost per mile is \$18.4 million for I-485 and \$43 million for Independence Blvd. The cost per rail mile for the South Corridor Light Rail Project is \$44.4 million.³
- Rapid transit is a crucial investment in the future of our region because increased auto travel has contributed to an air quality situation that could threaten federal funding for road and transit projects here.
- Without a balanced transportation system, our air quality and our funding could both be in jeopardy.

What will our transit and land use plan look like?

As you can see, the plan has five major rapid transit corridors converging in Center City Charlotte, with cross-town routes providing connections and serving areas between the corridors. Plans for each station area will guide the type and amount of development.

ALONG THE CORRIDORS

Convenient access to rapid transit will be provided. The environment will be pedestrian-friendly, with denser housing and mixed-use facilities.

BETWEEN THE CORRIDORS

The emphasis is on roads and bus travel. Development will maintain a more suburban feel, and people who enjoy larger yards and separate neighborhoods will feel right at home.

IN THE TOWNS/CENTERS

Rapid transit service will provide added mobility for the towns and key centers in Mecklenburg County.

For more information, visit charlottefuture.com

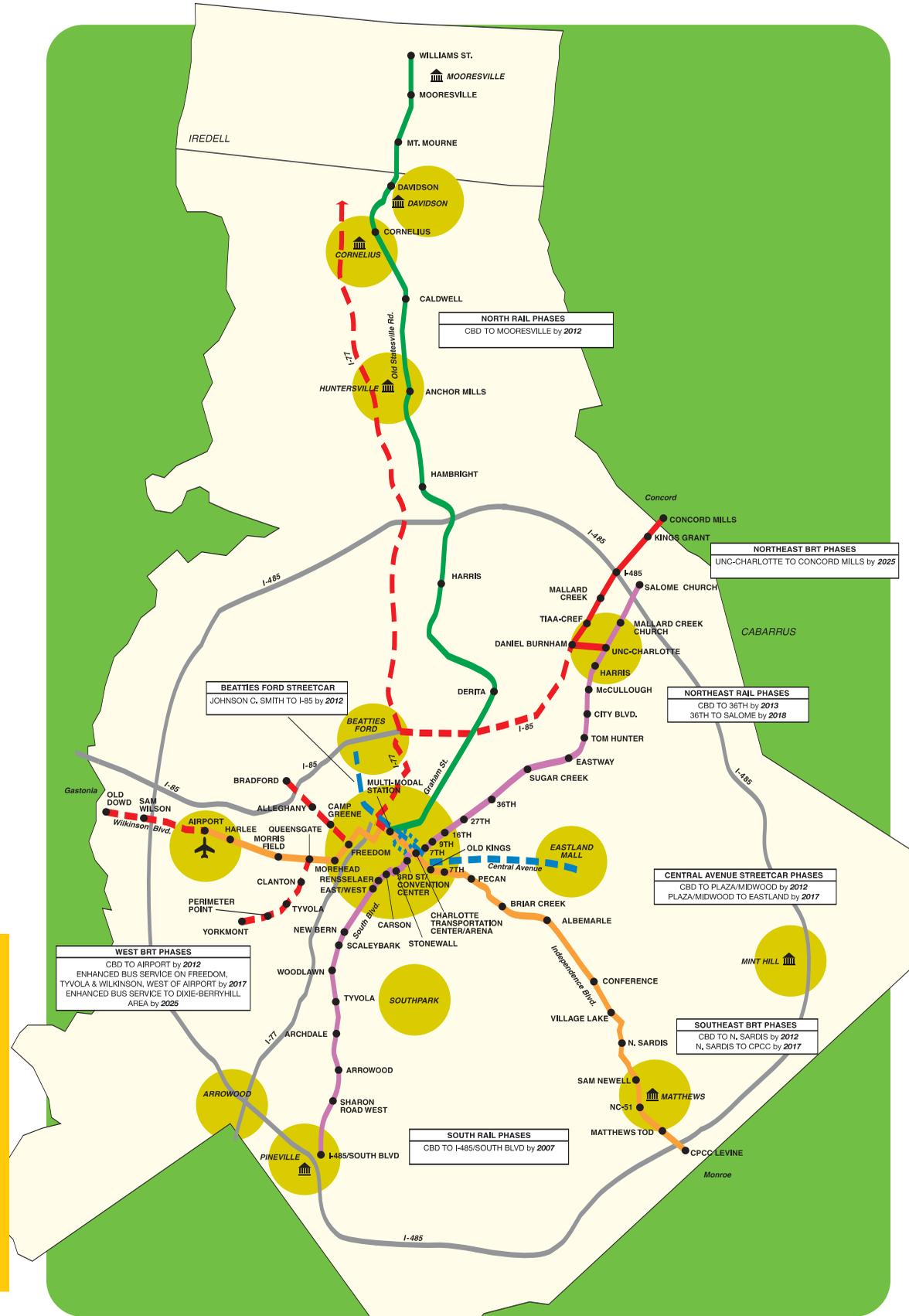
- LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT)
Light trains powered by overhead electrical lines. Ideal for trips of 2-5 miles.
- COMMUTER RAIL
Diesel-powered trains that run on railroad tracks that link the center city with distant suburbs.
- STREETCAR
Modern electrically powered street-wheeled vehicles that operate in mixed traffic. Ideal for short trips.
- BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)
Buses operating on exclusive busways or special lanes for congestion-free commutes.
- - ENHANCED BUS SERVICE
- BRT WITH LRT OPTIONS
- STATIONS
- COMMUNITY TRANSIT CENTERS
- 🏛️ MUNICIPALITIES



SCALEYBARK ROAD STATION

What's the timing?

Although the entire system will take years to complete, the plan calls for all corridors to receive transit investments and improvements by 2012. Construction is already underway on the South Corridor Light Rail line, which is scheduled to begin operation in spring 2007.



How do we know rapid transit will work here?

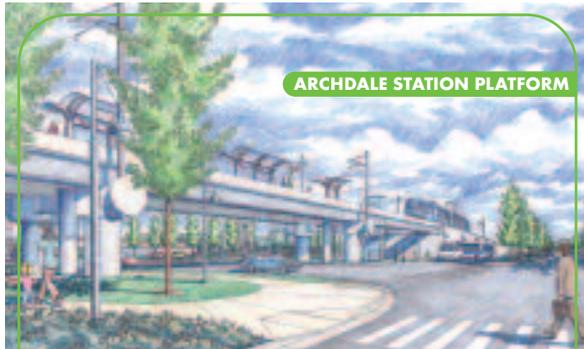
REV. JOHN THOMAS // CHARLOTTE

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We know it can be successful because we've done our homework.

- We've studied successful transit systems in cities like Dallas, Denver, Portland and San Diego.
- We've also listened to your input at hundreds of public meetings held throughout the region since 1998.
- Through this process, we've learned that a successful plan must:
 - Offer choices that appeal to all lifestyles.
 - Incorporate smart land development as part of the long-term vision.
 - Include a balanced mix of transportation options, including rapid transit.

Our unique approach to land development is one that will create pedestrian-friendly, livable communities in the station areas – places where people can get from home to work, grocery stores, restaurants, day care, dry cleaning and libraries without a car. And people have told us they want that choice.



ARCHDALE STATION PLATFORM

More than half of our area residents not currently using transit said they would be "likely" to "extremely likely" to start using a light rail system.⁴

How will transit development affect property values?

JANELLE TRAVIS // CHARLOTTE



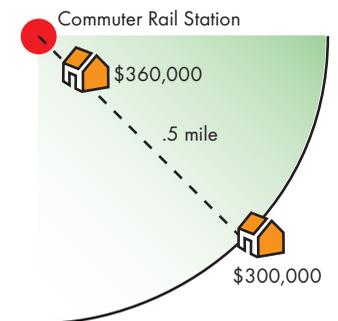
Properties with access to rapid transit have experienced dramatic increases in value.

That's because many people consider transit a welcome alternative to gas pumps, parking lots and crowded freeways.

- In Massachusetts, the median price of single-family homes nearly doubled in 19 communities after they gained commuter rail service.⁵
- In Chicago, properties next to transit stations had a 20% higher increase in value compared to those located a half-mile away.⁶
- Here in the Charlotte region, more than 30% of seniors and 43% of young professionals say they'd like to live at or near a rapid transit station.⁷
- Rapid transit has played a key role in the revitalization of South End, where property values have increased 89% since 2001, partially in anticipation of the light rail line.⁸

PROPERTY VALUE

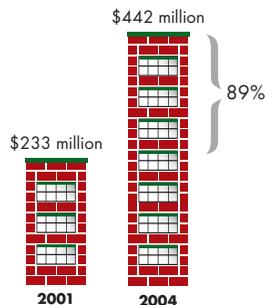
CHICAGO, IL



Is rapid transit good for business?

EMMA ALLEN // CORNELIUS

South End Property Value CHARLOTTE, NC



SOURCE: City of Charlotte Real Estate Division; 2005.

- A** **Absolutely. For the economy to grow, transportation options must grow.** While construction will cause temporary disruption along the main transit corridors, the long-term benefits far outweigh the short-term inconvenience.
- Our region is a major distribution center, which attracts new companies and jobs to the area.
 - In order for companies to transport goods quickly, we must manage congestion on our roads.
 - A comprehensive transit system is also vital to companies looking to recruit the best and brightest talent to the region.
 - Many of these prospects come from major cities with light rail and other forms of rapid transit – and they expect no less here.
 - Housing and lifestyle choices also help attract and retain younger employees.



Will there be cleaner air when I grow up?

SALLY // CHARLOTTE

- R** **Riding rapid transit is one way we can help make our air cleaner and conserve natural resources.**
- Traffic and off-road vehicles account for 63% of our region's ozone pollution.⁹
 - Transit emits 92% less VOC (volatile organic compounds) and 50% less NOx (nitrogen oxides) per passenger mile than a car.¹⁰
 - Americans spend an average of 62 hours a year sitting in rush hour traffic with engines idling.¹¹
 - If Americans used public transportation at the same rate as Europeans – for roughly 10% of our daily travel needs – the U.S. would reduce dependence on imported oil by more than 40%.¹²
- Many other things contribute to our high levels of ozone pollution, from lawn mowers to solvent-based paints. To learn ways you can help conserve energy and clear the air, visit charlottefuture.com.

What will transit do to my backyard?

CAMILLE // CHARLOTTE

- B** **Big yard, small yard, no yard – whatever type of neighborhood you like, our transportation and land use plan provides many options.**
- If you love quiet streets and large suburban lawns, you'll have that choice.
 - If you prefer higher-density development with convenient access to rapid transit, you'll have that choice, too.
 - Our plan accommodates everyone, from young urban professionals to suburban families to those who use public transit as a primary means of transportation.

I-485 STATION

Smart land use:
The Sterling
Elementary School
playground will
cover a parking
deck adjacent to a
rapid transit station.



- Transit ridership to and from Center City Charlotte doubled from 1998 to 2004 and now accounts **for 9% of commuter trips** to the area.¹³
- Once rapid transit is in place on all five corridors, transit's share of trips to Center City Charlotte is expected to reach **25% to 40%**.¹⁴
- **54% of area residents** who currently do not ride transit say they would be "likely" or "extremely likely" to use a light rail system.¹⁵
- Denver, Salt Lake City and St. Louis experienced **45% to 60% increases** in public transit ridership once light rail projects were completed.¹⁶
- Studies have shown that in large cities with rail transit in major corridors, congestion increases at a **42% lower rate**.¹⁷
- A light rail line can accommodate as many people as an eight-lane freeway — **using one-tenth of the land**.¹⁸
- Increased auto travel in our region contributes to an **air quality situation** that could limit federal funding for future road and transit projects.
- Transit emits **90% less carbon monoxide** and **50% less carbon dioxide** per passenger mile than a car. These are prime components of ozone pollution.¹⁹

KEY FACTS

SOURCES

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- 5 "Rail Lines Boosting Home Values," by Thomas Grillo, The Boston Globe, January 12, 2003, p. H4.
- 6 "Gentrification and Transit in Northwest Chicago," by Jeffrey Lin, Journal of the Transportation Research Forum, published in Transportation Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 4, Fall 2002 (Eno Transportation Foundation, Inc., Washington, D.C.), p. 175.
- 8 City of Charlotte Real Estate Division; 2005.
- 9 Charlotte Area Commuter, Vol. 3, No. 6, June 2003. (<http://charlotte.commuter.com>)
- 10, 12, 19 "Conserving Energy and Preserving the Environment: The Role of Public Transportation," by Robert J. Shapiro, Kevin A. Hassett and Frank S. Arnold.
- 11 Texas Transportation Institute 2002, published in SmartCommute. (www.smartcommute.org)
- 13 CATS daily express ridership and workers commuting to the center city of Charlotte.
- 14 Ridership modeling for the five rapid transit corridors in year 2025.
- 16 Survey on TRAX service in Salt Lake City in Feb. 2000; 1997 survey of MetroLink riders in St. Louis; Dec. 2000 survey of Denver RTD light rail customers.
- 17 "Projected Ridership for New Light Rail Starts: Issues of Accuracy and Impact on Congestion," by Lyndon Henry and Samuel J. Archer, Proceedings of the 2001 APTA Rail Transit Conference, p. 6.



For more information,
visit charlottefuture.com
704.336.RIDE