

RESEARCH TRIANGLE REGION – TRANSPORTATION

Revised May 28, 2016

OVERVIEW

The high-growth Research Triangle region is consistently ranked as having some of the lowest traffic congestion of major metropolitan areas in America. The public and private sectors in our market are committed to collaboration for the preservation and expansion of that advantage as well as the provision of effective travel options for businesses, citizens, and visitors.

The Texas Transportation Institute's most recent Urban Mobility Scorecard notes the number of hours lost per year by an auto commuter due to delay. The average of 101 cities studied was 52 hours; larger cities like New York and Washington D.C. come in at 74 and 82, respectively. Comparably sized Austin and Atlanta each fall at 52. With Raleigh at 34 hours of annual delay and Durham at 26, Triangle commuters save a significant amount of time every day compared to peer cities.

REGIONAL FREEWAY NETWORK

Our region has enjoyed a sustained critical competitive mobility advantage due to strategic transportation investments, dispersed population and job centers, and the fortuitous location of north-south interstates that redirect through traffic away from our daily commuting routes.

The Triangle's [freeway system and road network](#) is anchored by Interstates 40, 85, 95, 440, 495, and 540, and a variety of additional regional freeway connectors. This includes the high speed NC 540/Triangle Expressway turnpike, which uses 100% electronic toll collection and is interoperable with other regional toll collection systems. In May 2016, the region received [approval for two new Interstate designations](#), I-42 (US 70 east) and I-87 (US 64/17 to coastal Virginia).

The region is continuing to make significant improvements in our freeway network as our market grows. Currently funded projects include:

- 21 miles of new freeway under construction within two years (I-885, NC 540)
- 11 miles of freeway to be widened within two years (I-40, I-440)
- 7 miles of roads to be converted to freeway within five years (US 70, US 64, US 1)

AIR SERVICE

A recently completed renewal project for the terminal serving Southwest Airlines and a new terminal for all other airlines have elevated the travel experience for patrons of Raleigh-Durham International Airport, one of the country's top ten airports as named by Condé Nast Traveler. With more than 40 domestic destinations and nearly 400 daily departures through eight major airlines, RDU Airport provides fast and convenient connections from the Triangle.

The regional business community is also committed to growing our international presence. Thanks to the efforts of local groups in cooperation with RDU Airport, we are the only non-hub US market with two daily nonstop transatlantic flights. RDU service to Paris and London gateways provides travelers with connections to more than 75 destinations in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, extending the international reach that exists through our world-class universities and global companies.

REGIONAL TRANSIT

The region has local and university transit agencies serving Raleigh, Cary, Durham, and Chapel Hill that work in concert with GoTriangle, our regional transit agency with an extensive express bus and vanpool program. Travelers can monitor in real time the location of every bus in the entire regional transit network via live.gotriangle.org.

Durham and Orange Counties have passed referenda earlier this decade to advance transit in the western Triangle. As a result, local, state, and federal resources are funding expanded bus service as well as a planned 17-mile light rail that will connect three major universities, three major medical centers, and numerous residential and commercial areas in Durham and Chapel Hill.

Wake County is also committed to advancing the transit future for Raleigh, Cary, and the eastern Triangle. The recommended Wake County Transit Plan is a network-based approach to enhancing regional connectivity that:

- Adds more than 60 miles of frequent transit, with service every 15 minutes or better
- Builds 20 miles of bus rapid transit infrastructure
- Increases overall bus service by three times current levels
- Expands regional connections with 27 miles of commuter rail and enhanced express bus

In May 2016, the recommended plan won unanimous approval from the executive board of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Wake County Board of Commissioners will likely place a half-cent sales tax referendum on the November 2016 ballot.

ONGOING BUSINESS LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE AND ACCELERATE SUCCESS

The regional business community takes an active approach to advancing transit, highway, higher speed rail, and air service priorities through the Regional Transportation Alliance business coalition (www.letsgetmoving.org). Created by the chambers of commerce in Cary, Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh, the RTA combines more than 100 companies and 23 member chambers of commerce to create a powerful, collaborative voice to advance strategic transportation priorities.

For nearly 15 years, the RTA and partners have advanced critical improvements including:

- The creation of the 540/Triangle Expressway, our state's first modern turnpike project
- The widening of I-40 between Cary and Raleigh
- The coordination of efforts to implement the Regional Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS)
- Increasing speed limits on our regional freeway system
- Approval of on-ramp metering signals to improve traffic
- Advocating for comprehensive bus rapid transit to accelerate regional travel

The results of our region's cooperative efforts speak for themselves—low traffic congestion for a high growth region, increasing transit options, and an ongoing game plan for the future.

For more information, contact:

Joe Milazzo II, PE
Executive Director
Regional Transportation Alliance
joe@letsgetmoving.org