

## **RESEARCH TRIANGLE REGION – TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW**

*Revised Sept. 28, 2017*

### **SUMMARY**

Transportation is an increasingly competitive advantage for the high-growth Research Triangle region, thanks to ongoing, funded investments in multimodal infrastructure and sustained focus by the regional business community to ensure our market's continued success.

The Triangle region is consistently ranked as having some of the lowest traffic congestion of any major metropolitan area in America. The INRIX Traffic Scorecard released Feb. 2017 measured the level of congestion in cities across the U.S. and the number of peak hours an auto commuter spends in traffic per year. This selected data from the report demonstrates the significant amount of time Triangle commuters save in comparison to peer cities:

- San Francisco – 83 hours
- Atlanta – 71 hours
- Boston – 58 hours
- Austin – 47 hours
- Nashville – 34 hours
- **Raleigh – 18 hours**
- **Durham – 10 hours**

### **REGIONAL FREEWAY NETWORK**

Our region has enjoyed a sustained mobility advantage due to strategic transportation investments through a statewide data-driven allocation formula, geographically 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, 87, 95, 440, and 540, and a variety of additional regional freeway connectors. This includes the NC 540/Triangle Expressway turnpike, the most advanced toll road in America which is technologically capable of reading every transponder in the U.S., and a designated USDOT automated vehicle proving ground. The region also has approval for a new Interstate designation, I-42 (US 70 east), and the extension of the recently signed I-87 (I-440 / US 64) to coastal Virginia via US 17.

The region is continuing to make significant improvements in our freeway network as our market grows through local and state funding. [This map](#) shows key projects that are currently funded and will be under construction within the next five years including:

- Extension of the 540/Triangle Expressway turnpike to I-40
- New I-885 connection between I-40 and I-85
- Widening of I-40 and I-440
- Conversion to freeway for segments of US 70, US 64, and US 1

Our region will also implement express shoulder lanes on the northern portion of our existing 540 beltway—a lower-cost, scalable solution that will create a mobility option for travelers and transit.

## **REGIONAL TRANSIT**

The citizens of all three of our core urban counties—Durham, Orange, and Wake—have passed transit referenda providing locally-controlled, dedicated sales taxes for new transit service. Our region now has more than \$100 million in local funds—annually, in perpetuity—to develop a robust suite of flexible, scalable enhanced transit options in just ten years.

In the western Triangle, Durham and Orange Counties have expanded bus service and are advancing a 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.

Our region's largest county, Wake, will dedicate more than \$1 billion in new local funds alone to triple bus service, greatly expand our frequent transit network including four bus rapid transit corridors, and initiate a commuter rail line along an existing rail corridor between Raleigh and Durham, all within the next decade. Solutions like bus rapid transit and commuter rail are inherently scalable, and can be deployed and expanded quickly as the market changes and evolves.

Unlike a number of cities, the Triangle has no legacy rail systems to repair, and is leveraging billions of local, state, and federal dollars to create new multimodal mobility options.

## **AIR SERVICE**

Raleigh-Durham International Airport has been ranked the most connected medium-sized airport in the U.S. with 50 nonstop destinations and more than 400 daily departures through 10 airlines. RDU also has two daily nonstop transatlantic flights to Paris and London gateways providing travelers with connections to more than 75 destinations in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The regional business community is committed to growing our international presence in cooperation with RDU Airport, and has hundreds of thousands of dollars in marketing support for expanded service.

RDU Airport has been named one of the country's top-10 airports by Condé Nast Traveler. A new international terminal and a renewal project for the terminal serving Southwest Airlines have elevated the travel experience for patrons of RDU. The airport has also begun implementing a \$2 billion master plan for its future and that of our region, and has an annual investment by the state of North Carolina of more than \$30 million for infrastructure improvements at RDU.

## **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. 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 in 10 counties to create a powerful, collaborative voice to advance strategic transportation priorities.

Since 2001, the RTA and partners have advanced critical initiatives including:

- Innovative traffic relief such as express shoulder lanes and a statewide low-cost project fund
- The new all-electronic 540/Triangle Expressway turnpike and future extension
- Successful Wake County transit referendum for a bus rapid transit-based approach
- Relief of region's top bottleneck via I-40 widening between Cary and Raleigh
- Launch of a private sector marketing initiative for new nonstop RDU-Paris transatlantic flight

The results of our region's cooperative efforts speak for themselves—low traffic congestion for a high growth region, funding for new flexible and scalable transit options, enhanced domestic and international air service, and an ongoing game plan for the future.