

September 6, 2022

Chuck Lattuca
President and CEO
GoTriangle

Carl Warren
President and CEO
NC Railroad Company

Eric Boyette
Secretary
NC Department of Transportation

Dear transportation colleagues and partners,

We are writing to express our continued support for regional/commuter rail and its accelerated expansion, and to request a coordinated identification of scalable options for regional/commuter rail implementation, in concert with a Freeway And Street-based Transit (FAST) development plan. These complementary actions will advance an optimal “both/and” transit solution for our growing region.

We respectfully request that each of your respective entities identify and evaluate additional scalable implementation possibilities for regional/commuter rail.

- We believe that the future of enhanced regional/commuter rail can and should occur sooner than 10+ years from now, on both the NCRR and S-line corridors.
- These dedicated, higher speed rail corridors that directly serve multiple downtown areas are unique, durable assets and vital mobility opportunities for our metropolitan region and state.
- Given the costs and opportunity costs associated with passenger rail investments, we believe a **scalable, flexible, and regional approach** to commuter rail development will serve us well.

We are also requesting – and will help fund – a complementary Freeway And Street-based Transit (FAST) implementation framework for our metropolitan area.

- This effort should identify FAST solutions along freeways and arterials, including potential use or linkages with proposed BRT corridors, “RED” transit lanes, and regional/commuter rail stations.
- The study should examine areas where commuter rail is being actively contemplated, e.g., Raleigh to Durham; and where it is not practical, e.g., Chapel Hill to Research Triangle Park.
- RTA is willing to commit a minimum of \$100,000 in funding to support and accelerate this FAST implementation plan. We will also seek funding support from other area transit partners.

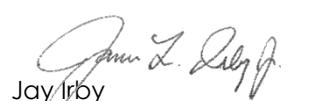
The purpose of these initiatives would be to determine the best way to implement accelerated and expanded regional/commuter rail across our market, and how complementary BRT, bus and vanpool solutions can be deployed along our freeways and streets to optimize our current and future regional transit network. These would be activated by enhanced bicycle and pedestrian linkages with transit.

Taking the time to develop and commit to a scalable, regional multimodal plan will maximize mobility and accessibility, expand transit capacity, and promote equity while reducing risk. Implementation of a plan that addresses opportunity costs now will accelerate results and avoid future costs of inaction.

Thank you for your leadership in advancing transportation options for our growing region and state.

Sincerely,


Harold Hicks
2022 RTA chair


Jay Irby
RTA regional transit chair


Joe Milazzo
RTA executive director

Enclosure

RTA observations on regional/commuter rail and Freeway And Street-based Transit (FAST):

- We support the continued development of an east-west regional/commuter rail spine along the [NCRR corridor](#) serving Raleigh and Durham, extending west to Orange and Alamance counties and east to Johnston and Wayne counties
- We also support a southwest to northeast [S-line regional/commuter rail spine](#)
- We appreciate the work of the [GoTriangle commuter rail study](#) along the NCRR corridor, and we recognize that significant implementation cost increases are due to a variety of factors
- We are grateful for the [multiple daily passenger trains per direction](#) between Raleigh, Cary, and Durham today by NCDOT, and for an expected additional train frequency next year, and we believe that we can and must leverage those existing services and infrastructure
- We also understand that several portions of our metropolitan area, including Chapel Hill and Carrboro, cannot be successfully or reasonably served directly by regional/commuter rail
- We look forward to the scalable development of 5+ BRT corridors in [Wake](#) and [Orange](#) counties, along with multiple proposed [extensions](#) this decade in our region
- We applaud the ongoing construction of I-40 and 540, and believe that these and other projects create [Bus On Shoulder System \(BOSS\)](#) and transit priority shoulder opportunities
- We also believe that the recent [Freeway And Street-based Transit \(FAST\) vision initiative](#) provides a sound basis for a practical and complementary FAST implementation plan
- We understand that work-from-anywhere has fundamentally changed travel patterns and assumptions, which creates increased risk for major infrastructure investments
- We highlight the importance of considering opportunity costs and conducting a thoughtful comparison with other potential implementation approaches in order to better manage risk and uncertainty while optimizing performance
- We believe that a “both/and” scalable, multimodal approach involving regional/commuter rail and a freeway and street-based transit (FAST) framework including BRT will accelerate results for transit in our area while reducing overall risk