

Q. How can we accomplish a commuter rail project that connects the region? Will commuter rail consist of all new rail or use some existing rail?

A. GoTriangle has [proposed a phased implementation approach](#) given the cost of constructing the entire corridor from West Durham to Clayton. That will also give the agency time to work with our federal partners. The region has the benefit of an existing corridor and existing infrastructure carrying freight and passengers; we are not starting from scratch. However, we will need to add “double track” to create the additional capacity needed for more passenger trains.

Q. Has there been any economic study of how commuter rail will benefit the Triangle economy?

A. Yes. You can view the [economic study of commuter rail](#) on the [GoTriangle ReadyForRailNC website](#).

Q. Will there be a high-quality transit connection to the airport (e.g., commuter rail or BRT)?

A. The RDU Airport Authority supports the accelerated introduction of BRT corridors that would connect directly to RDU Airport. The proposed commuter rail corridor does not directly serve the airport, as the closest proposed station would be in Morrisville which is around 3 miles away.

Q. What is the Airport’s consideration of a balance between modes; e.g., parking, commuter rail, BRT.

A. Given that RDU’s service area is half of the state of North Carolina, and that travelers come from all areas of this regional community, the Airport pursues a multimodal approach. The Authority will develop a ground transportation center in the center core near the two terminals that will aggregate various forms of commercial transportation, which will give public transit vehicles better access to the terminal curbs. In addition, proposed roadway improvements including a new interchange at Aviation Parkway and National Guard Drive will benefit all vehicles including future BRT to the Airport.

Q. How will the Authority mitigate environmental impacts associated with the expansion of Park Economy 3?

A. The expansion of PE3 will help accommodate the ongoing growth in regional air travel in a scalable manner, as well as support upcoming infrastructure improvements due to a reduction in current parking as a result of construction in the terminal area. The use of surface parking will reduce construction costs and therefore the costs to future users of the facility. From the beginning of the design process for the expansion Authority staff have worked to avoid and minimize impacts to the environment. The Authority is currently undergoing an in-depth environmental evaluation process for the final concept design. In addition, the Airport will continue to support travel alternatives including BRT connections to RDU.

Q. There are equity issues by continuing to have the gas tax apply only to those who don't have EVs. What are the equity considerations and plans for Access User Fees for low income residents?

A. [An access user fee](#) is designed to be as fair to everyone as possible, by ensuring that everyone pays the same rate. For lower income residents a payment plan of quarterly, monthly, or even weekly could be set up instead of paying it as a large lump sum. In addition, many rural residents, who often need to travel further for work and other activities, would pay less in access fees than they do today in gas taxes or under a possible mileage-based fee system. RTA and the NC Chamber have written an [Op-Ed on the access user fee concept](#).

Q. Could a flat fee lessen effectiveness of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) efforts?

A. State gas taxes represent less than 15% of the total price of gasoline today. In addition to the simplicity of a constant monthly price for motorists, the revenue stability and resiliency of an access user fee from the broadest base of users will enable NCDOT to be able to better plan and deliver an effective multimodal system which benefits all North Carolinians.

Q. NCDOT’s presentation mentioned new grants. Are those associated with recent federal infrastructure legislation?

A. Yes. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), passed by Congress and signed by the president in 2021, contains a series of new or enhanced discretionary grants. Those grants represent potential new money, and NCDOT is aggressively pursuing those grants to supplement the Department’s current program of work. There are a number of past and future grant opportunities including “RAISE” grants that support multimodal activities and INFRA grants for corridors including I-95.