



GoTriangle
Planning & Legislative Committee
September 22, 2021 10:45 am - 11:45 am
Eastern Time

Based on NC Safer At Home executive orders in response to COVID-19, the GoTriangle Planning & Legislative Committee will meet remotely on Wednesday, September 22, 2021.

*Click here to: Join Webex Meeting
Meeting Number / Access code: 171 485 3127 #
Password: 1234
Or dial: +1 415-655-0003*

I. Call to Order and Adoption of Agenda

(1 minute Will Allen III)

ACTION REQUESTED: Adopt agenda.

II. Draft Minutes | August 25, 2021

(1 minute Michelle Dawson)

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve minutes.

III. GTCR Travel Market Study

(30 minutes Jay Heikes)

*John Hodges-Copple, Metropolitan Planning Director, Triangle J
Council of Governments*

Executive Summary

IV. Adjournment

(Will Allen III)



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PLANNING & LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

4600 Emperor Boulevard
Suite 100
Durham, NC 27703

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Virtual | Webex

Committee members present | Will Allen III, Sig Hutchinson, Renée Price, Charlie Reece

Excused absences | Michael Fox, Brenda Howerton

Other board members present | Michael Parker

Committee Chair Will Allen III called the meeting to order at 2:41 p.m. A quorum was present.

I. Adoption of Agenda

Action: On motion by Hutchinson and second by Price the agenda was adopted. Upon vote by roll call, the motion was carried unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Action: On motion by Hutchinson and second by Reece the minutes of the May 26th and June 23rd meetings were approved. Upon vote by roll call, the motion was carried unanimously.

III. GTCR Affordable Housing Study

Jay Heikes introduced John Hodges-Copple, Metropolitan Planning Director of the Triangle J Council of Governments, to present the first report assessing the non-monetary or indirect costs and benefits of a potential rail project. The presentation and executive summary of the Affordable Housing Analysis of the Triangle's Passenger Rail Corridor are attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. The full report is available on the ReadyforRailNC website.

The analysis focuses on the 4-county region: Durham, Johnston, Orange and Wake and the area within one-mile of the tracks for the planned initial investment. The station study areas are the half-mile radius at 15 locations looked at for station feasibility.

Key Takeaways

- 6,000+ units of LBAR housing along the rail corridor, especially in Wake and Durham counties
- 22,000 units of multi-family NOAH along the rail corridor, including a large percentage in Johnston County
- Potential to double LBAR housing units within station study areas
- Existing affordable housing would earn "medium-high" score for federal funding, additional planned affordable housing could raise this score
- Opportunities for more affordable housing using public and anchor institution land along the corridor
- First-mile/last-mile connections are important to serve affordable housing

Parker commented if commuter rail is built, particularly in stations areas, there would likely be a positive effect on real estate values and the loss of NOAH units. John Hodges-Copple responded yes it is a very real risk if things are not being done to seek to preserve what is there now.

Hutchinson commented that he feels the commuter rail corridor is ripe with affordable housing opportunities and potentially be the last available land of affordability in the Triangle.

Reece asked that this information be shared with the City of Durham Community Development folks in charge of administering the \$95 million affordable housing bond. He also commented that commuter rail has the potential to provide much needed transit services to folks living in affordable housing, but also the great loss of affordable housing. He shared the difficulties Durham is experiencing trying to partner with private land owners to develop affordable housing. He added that low income tenants living in this corridor need to be protected.

Parker added that North Carolina has a prohibition against involuntary rent control, and shared similar difficulties in Chapel Hill working with the private sector on affordable housing projects.

Hutchinson asked how much private land is available and not currently being developed or is being underutilized.

Hodges-Copple stated that encouraging and subsidizing smaller lots and smaller units with greater supply will make a difference. He also pointed out opportunities to use public land for multiples uses (i.e. affordable housing above a fire station or library). He acknowledged the restrictions placed on local government by the State Legislature that eliminate tools used successfully in other parts of the country.

Eggleston thanked the committee for its feedback and stated the additional analyses on the travel market and land use would be scheduled for future meetings in addition to reports on the Durham and Orange Transit Plan updates. She added that the three opportunity analysis pieces along with other project metrics and updated project costs and risk assessment would be shared with the Board and partner boards to assist in the decision on whether and how to move forward with the project.

IV. Adjournment

Action: Chair Allen adjourned the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

Prepared by:

Michelle C. Dawson, CMC
Clerk to the Board of Trustees

MEMORANDUM

TO: GoTriangle Planning and Legislative Committee
FROM: Planning and Capital Development
DATE: September 15, 2021
SUBJECT: **Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Travel Market Study**

Strategic Objective or Initiative Supported

3.4 Encourage/promote location of affordable housing, job opportunities and public facilities accessible by transit

Action Requested

Staff requests that the Committee receive a presentation on the travel market report.

Background and Purpose

Staff from Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) will deliver a presentation of the report's findings, including the proximity of jobs and communities with a significant presence of non-white residents, households with lower incomes and low vehicle ownership, and concentrations of legally binding affordable housing to the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail project.

As part of the second phase of the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, staff and consultants are assessing the non-monetary costs and benefits of the project to help support informed decision-making regarding the project. TJCOG is analyzing Affordable Housing, travel markets, and development patterns and plans along the rail corridor to better understand the opportunities the project creates and provide insight into the communities that the project would affect. Each topic will include a detailed report, executive summary, in addition to easy-to-read materials intended for the general public. All materials will be available on the website, www.readyforrailnc.com. The travel market report is the second of these reports.

Key take-aways from the travel market report include the following:

- Eight of the top ten job hubs in the region are located within the corridor. In total, the corridor contains 30% of the region's jobs while representing only 4% of the region's land area, defined as Wake, Durham, Johnston, and Orange counties.
- Today, more than 96,000 workers commute between Durham and Wake counties, the largest cross-county commuter flow in North Carolina. More than 35,000 commute from Johnston County to Wake County.

- Almost 70,000 people live in communities – defined as census blocks – along the corridor that have a significant presence of non-white residents, households with lower incomes and low vehicle ownership, and/or concentrations of legally binding affordable housing.
- First and last mile connections, including bus, micro-transit, and bike and pedestrian networks provide an important opportunity to better connect underserved communities along the corridor to job and educational opportunities within the corridor.

Financial Impact

None

Attachments

- Executive Summary

Staff Contacts

- Jay Heikes, Senior Transportation Planner, 919-314-8741, jheikes@gotriangle.org
- Katharine Eggleston, CDO, 919-485-7564, keggleston@gotriangle.org



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Getting There

A Travel Markets Analysis of the Triangle's Passenger Rail Corridor Executive Summary



The Triangle Region is considering a passenger rail investment that initially could connect West Durham, Central Durham, East Durham, the Research Triangle Park, Morrisville, Cary, NC State University, West Raleigh, Central Raleigh, Southeast Raleigh, Garner and Clayton in Johnston County. Later investments might extend service to Orange County on the west and farther into Johnston County on the east. Part of this effort is analyzing opportunities along the corridor: for affordable housing, for guiding land use, for serving travel markets and for influencing economic development.

This Executive Summary highlights findings from an analysis of rail corridor travel markets. The full report:

- Defines travel markets and looks at them at both the regional scale and the rail corridor scale.
- Examines travel to or from the corridor, and especially trips that both begin and end in the corridor.
- Focuses on two critically important elements of travel markets:
 - Key job hubs within the region and along the rail corridor
 - Existing neighborhoods viewed through an equity lens – places with relatively high levels and concentrations of households with lower incomes, households that lack vehicles, and households with Black, Indigenous & People of Color (BIPOC) residents
- Looks at both total jobs and jobs with low or moderate earnings.
- Indicates performance measures we can track and steps we can take to work together in the Triangle Region to best serve our most important travel markets.

Understanding how a commuter rail investment serves existing travel markets in the region, and how those markets might change over time, is an important foundation for determining appropriate types and amounts of service to provide and the best number and locations of stations.

This travel market analysis focused on two types of places:

- The “rail corridor,” defined as one mile on either side of the railroad tracks, and
- “Station study areas,” circles with a half-mile radius that represents likely locations for rail stops

The Context

A travel market is just like any other market: it is where an exchange can take place – where supply and demand can meet. Successful transit investments **supply** services that address the things that influence **demand**: it goes where users want, when they want, in ways that are good uses of their time and money, are fast and reliable, give them freedom to change their plans, and respect their safety and comfort.

Rail Corridor Jobs

The four counties in the study region – Johnston, Wake, Durham and Orange were home to 930,000 jobs, pre-COVID. The rail corridor is 4% of the region’s area, but contains 280,000 jobs: 30% of the total. Importantly, about 56,000 workers both live and have their primary job in block groups completely or partly in the corridor, the main market for rail service. Looking only at primary jobs with low and moderate earnings - less than \$40,000 per year – 23% of these jobs in the 4-county region are located in the rail corridor. With major education and training, medical, and entertainment facilities, corridor travel markets are more than just commute trips.

Key Job Hubs

Eight of the region’s top 10 job hubs lie along the rail corridor, including the city centers of Raleigh and Durham, NC State and Duke Universities, and several census block groups in and around the RTP. Most of the key hubs for total jobs are also the top hubs for primary jobs with low and moderate earnings – of the top 10 for total jobs, only two hubs associated with the RTP and one at WakeMed are not also in the top 10 for low and moderate earnings jobs.

Cross-County Travel

Regional transit connections may be especially important in the Triangle. 45% of the workers who live in Wake, Durham, Orange and Johnston Counties are employed by firms outside of the county where they live. The Wake-Durham County flow is especially prominent, with over 96,000 workers living in one county and employed by firms, agencies or institutions in the other.

The Travel Market Opportunity Analysis was conducted by Jenna Kolling of the Triangle J Council of Governments and is the second of three evaluations accompanying the commuter rail service analysis of the NC Railroad Corridor between West Durham and Clayton. The other two evaluations address affordable housing and land use.

REINVEST Neighborhoods

REINVEST Neighborhoods are places with the most significant presence of BIPOC residents, lower income households, households without vehicles and legally-binding, affordability restricted (LBAR) housing. The letters in RE-IN-VE-ST represent these four important characteristics: **RE** (race/ethnicity), **IN** (income), **VE** (vehicle availability) and **ST** (status of affordable housing). About 100 of the region’s 767 block groups score high on three or more of the REINVEST metrics. Taken together, all of the REINVEST neighborhoods have about twice the percentage of BIPOC residents, twice the proportion of people living below the poverty line, three times the percentage of households without vehicles and four times the percentage of LBAR housing units as the region as a whole. The most populous REINVEST neighborhoods – about one-third of all REINVEST neighborhoods – are shown in yellow and purple on the map. The full report goes into detail on the location and characteristics of these important neighborhoods; many of them are located within or adjacent to the rail corridor, especially near central and southeast Durham, central and southeast Raleigh, and Garner. Almost 70,000 people live in REINVEST Neighborhoods that are completely or partly in the rail corridor.

The Future Travel Market

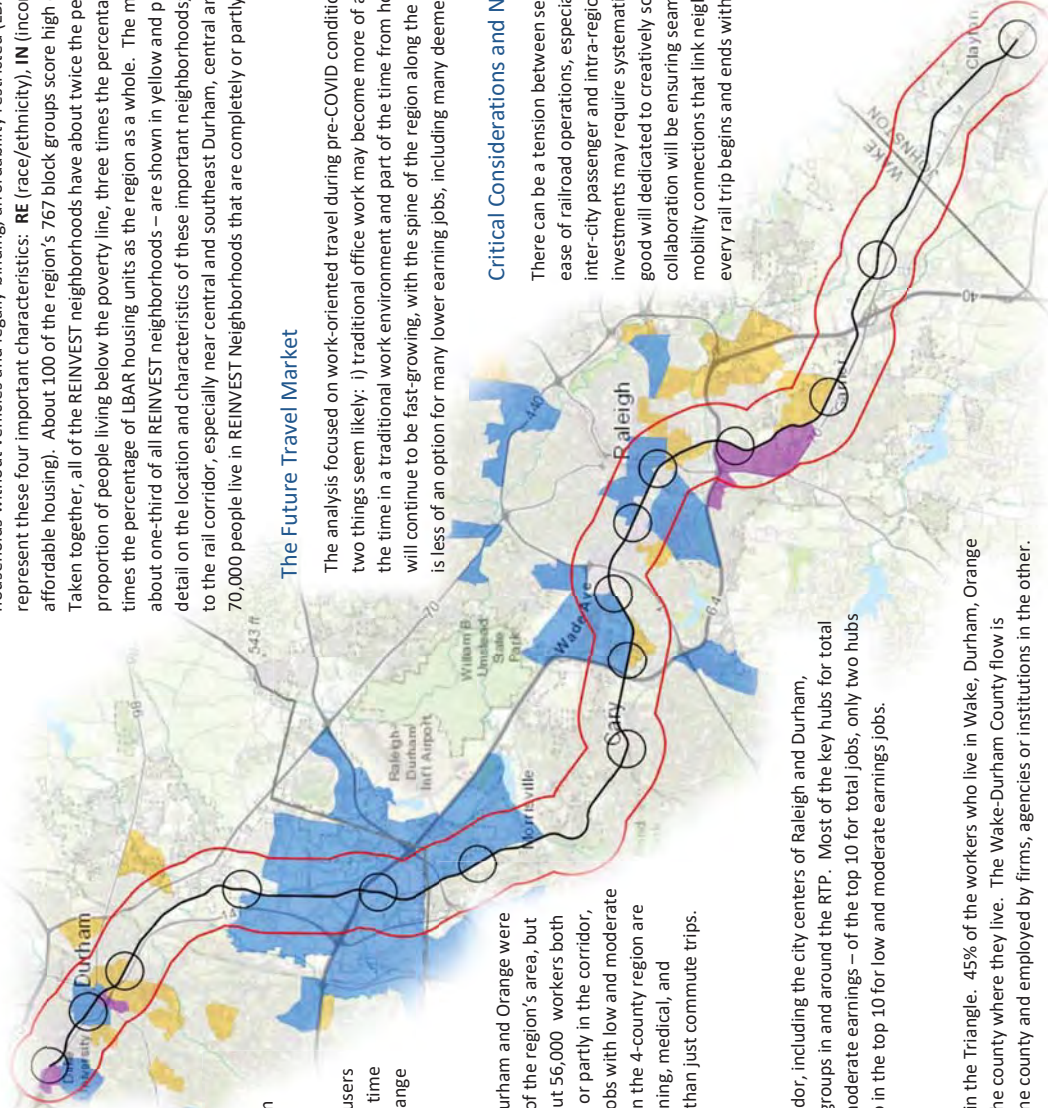
The analysis focused on work-oriented travel during pre-COVID conditions. Although the future is always uncertain, two things seem likely: i) traditional office work may become more of a “hybrid” model – with people working part of the time in a traditional work environment and part of the time from home or other remote locations; and ii) the region will continue to be fast-growing, with the spine of the region along the rail corridor a magnet for growth. Remote work is less of an option for many lower earning jobs, including many deemed “essential workers” during COVID.

Critical Considerations and Next Steps

There can be a tension between service that is best for the travel markets and the ease of railroad operations, especially where tracks are shared among freight, inter-city passenger and intra-regional passenger rail. Mutually beneficial investments may require systematic, sustained partnerships involving people of good will dedicated to creatively solving problems as they arise. A critical part of collaboration will be ensuring seamless “first mile-last mile” bus and micro-mobility connections that link neighborhoods and business districts to rail stops – every rail trip begins and ends with someone walking from and to a building.

The Symbols on This Map

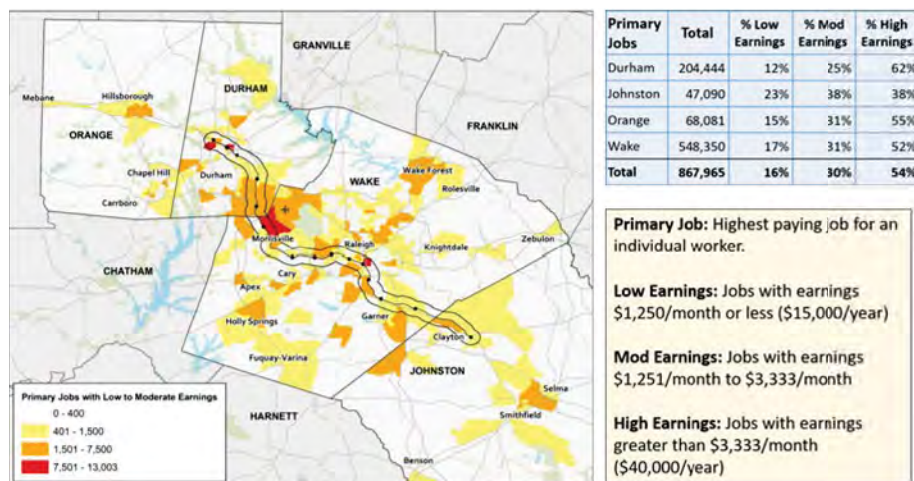
- The railroad corridor – 1 mile on each side of the tracks where service is planned
- Initial Station Study Areas: ½ mile radius circles around stops being analyzed
- Places that measure as key job hubs
- Places that measure as REINVEST Neighborhoods
- Places that measure as both key job hubs and REINVEST Neighborhoods



How to Learn More and Engage in the Project

This Executive Summary includes highlights from a more detailed travel market analysis of the proposed commuter rail service between West Durham and Clayton in Johnston County. Each of the topics addressed in the highlights on the previous page is described in more detail in the full report. The report, along with resources like those shown below in thumbnail images, and opportunities to give your thoughts about the project, are available at ReadyForRailNC.com

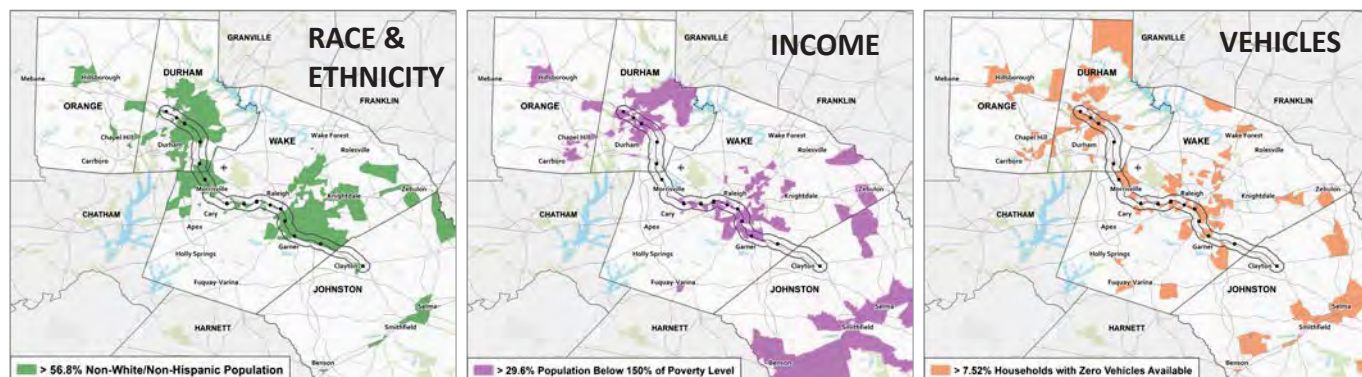
Key Job Hubs



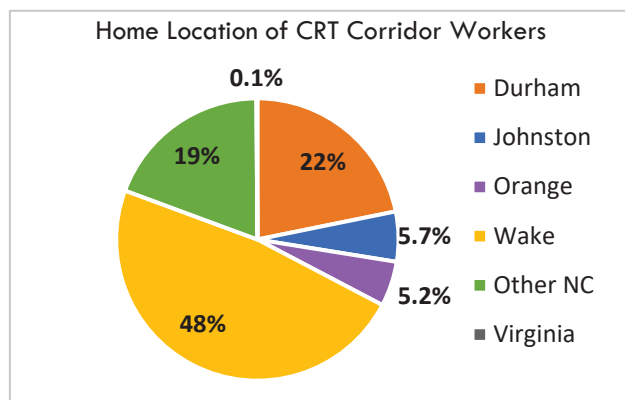
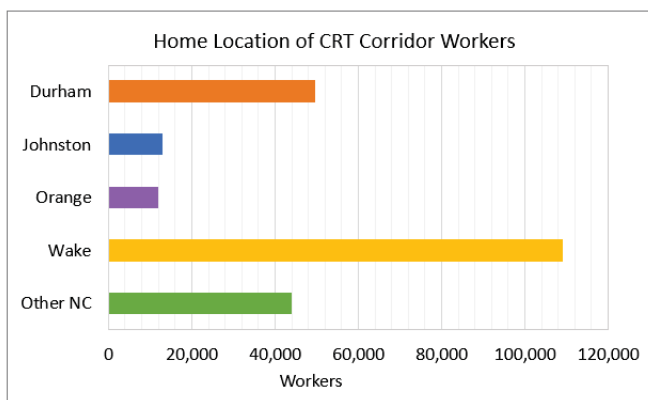
A Word About the Data

The main geographic unit of data analysis is the Census Block Group – the smallest unit for which the Census Bureau provides detailed information on demographic characteristics. There are 767 block groups in the four county-region. The Census Bureau updates its data each year, enabling the analysis to be revised annually to reflect changing conditions.

REINVEST Neighborhoods



Connecting Jobs and Workers in the Rail Corridor



This report was prepared by the Triangle J Council of Governments as part of its work to align transportation investments with land use and housing affordability decisions. Contact John Hodges-Copple at johnhc@tjcoq.org with comments and questions.