

PART of the Heart

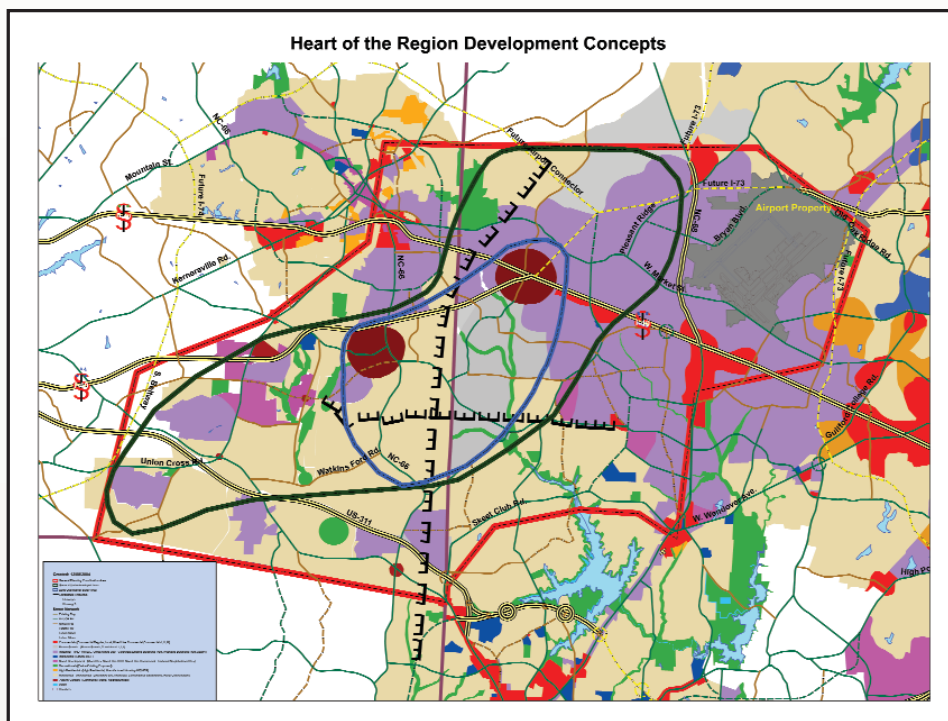
The Heart of the Triad is getting a closer examination.

A new six-month study beginning in December will look at how the Triad can prepare now to spur continued economic growth by thoughtfully developing the land that lies at the center of the region.

This centrally-located area is key to what we will become in the Triad. The surrounding communities have recognized that, and are now looking at how best to develop this limited and unique resource.

In April 2004, elected officials, administrators, and local planning directors gathered in Kernersville to talk about the future of the Triad. Representatives from Kernersville, High Point, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem gathered with Guilford and Forsyth officials to explore how best to capitalize on the undeveloped area that lies in between these several jurisdictions - the Heart of the Triad. Committed to the success of the region, these communities are cooperating in a comprehensive study.

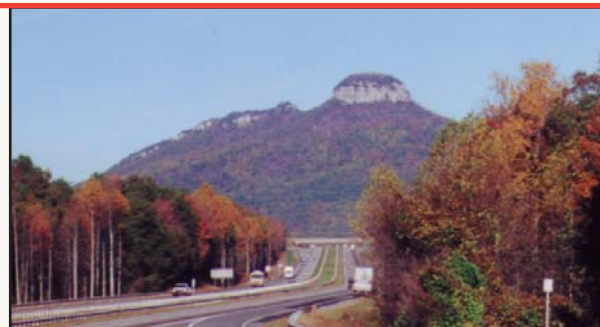
"The Heart of the Triad project gives us the greatest potential for job creation of any part of the state for the next three decades," said Tom Dayvalt, President, High Point



Undeveloped land at the "Heart of the Triad" gives our region a unique opportunity to shape our economic future and quality of life for years to come.

Thrifty 52

The ride along US 52 will soon be a little easier with help from PART.



Many commuters in the Triad use US 52.

With the help of funds provided through a new tax on cars rented in Surry County, PART Express will expand its service to the US 52 corridor. On November 7, the county commissioners voted unanimously to empower

2005 PART Board of Trustees

Chairperson

Sandy Carmany
Greensboro TAC

Vice-Chairperson

Gloria Whisenhunt
Forsyth County

Treasurer

Larry Williams
Winston-Salem TAC

Secretary

Becky Smothers
High Point

Dan Ingle

Alamance County

Fred Terry

Winston-Salem

Steve Ross

Burlington

Keith Holliday

Greensboro

Don Truell

Davidson County

Nancy Dunn

Doug Galyon

Andrew Perking

NCDOT Board Members

Bill Whiteheart

Airport Commission of FC

Carolyn Coleman

Guilford County

Larry Warlick

High Point TAC

Leonard Williams

Burlington-Graham TAC

Dr. Otis Tillman

Piedmont Triad Airport

Darrell Frye

Randolph County

David Isley

Rockingham County

Paul Johnson

Surry County

US 52 -

PART to levee and collect a 5% tax on cars and motorcycles rented in Surry County. With these funds, estimated to be about \$50,000 annually, PART will secure matching federal funds to operate a new route for PART Express from Mt. Airy to Winston-Salem with stops in Pilot Mountain.

The new PART Express service will focus primarily on commuter traffic for employees heading to downtown Winston-Salem, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, and Forsyth Medical Center. It will also provide direct access to Hanes Mall.

"The need for assisting commuters into Winston-Salem is significant along the US 52 corridor," said Brent McKinney, Executive Director of PART. "People are coming south from Virginia to work in Winston-Salem. In addition, about one out of three people in Surry County who have a job, leave the county to work. A large percentage of those flow into Winston-Salem."

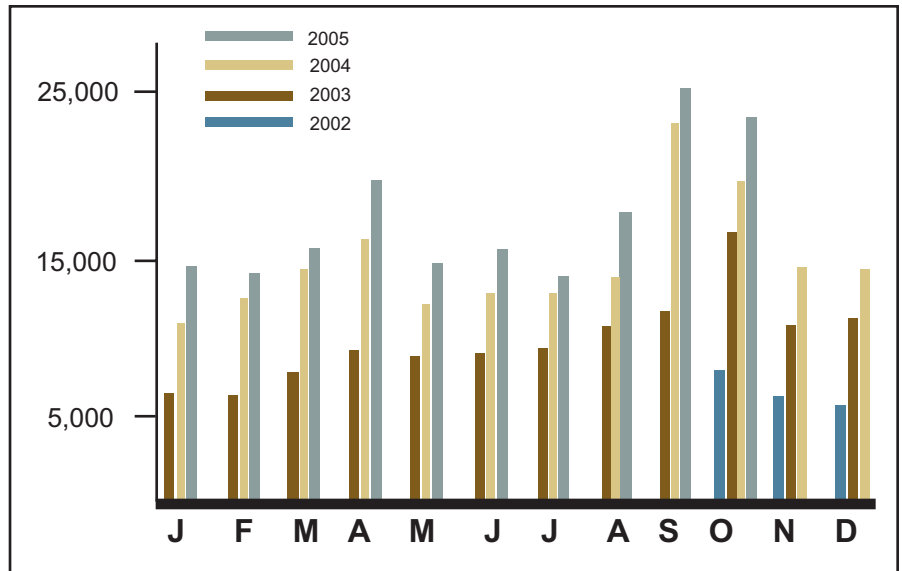
Service may provide eight round-trips daily. Eventually service could be extended on US 52 south of Winston-Salem to Lexington and Thomasville. Besides serving commuters, this service would replace some of the routes previously served by Greyhound Bus Lines, which recently discontinued service to small towns in this area.

The cost of service for the northern stretch of US 52 is estimated at \$300,000 per year. Service could start summer 2006.

Riding the Tide

Ridership on PART Express continues to increase. Since the service began in September 2002, same-month ridership has increased each year.

Triad residents are beginning to learn firsthand the benefits of public transportation and are experiencing how they personally benefit. "When gas prices spiked in August," said Scott Rhine, Programs Manager for PART, "we were getting dozens of calls each day for route and schedule information. In fact, as a partial result of the increased cost of fuel, PART carried 7,300 more riders in September than the prior month." PART is a solution



Same-month ridership has increased annually.

for achieving energy conservation, reduced fuel emissions on highways, and less traffic on major thoroughfares.

Ridership has increased on principal commuter routes such as Greensboro to the PART Hub. During peak hours, PART sometimes runs two buses "bumper-to-bumper" to accommodate all passengers. Other times, PART reschedules larger over-the-road motor coaches. "We run on a thirty-minute schedule at peak times," said Rhine, "so we have to provide the capacity to meet the demand."

A Lot Is Riding on This

Park-and-Ride lots continue to be developed throughout the Triad area as an essential element of improving regional transportation.

"We see some real benefits to the park-and-ride lot program," said Scott Rhine, "not just for potential bus service, but also to relieve congestion in the major traffic corridors with carpooling. With the rising cost of operating a vehicle, people are becoming more comfortable with carpooling." PART will expend its original funds granted for park-and-ride lots by the end of fiscal 2006. It intends to apply for additional funds for more lots.

Five lots are currently under construction and will be opened by the end of winter. These are in addition to leased spaces in existing parking garages in Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point.

The new lots average one acre each and offer parking for 47 to 60 vehicles. Two lots are in Davidson County (Lexington, and Thomasville), and another is being constructed in northeast Guilford County. Additionally, two new lots are under construction in Pilot Mountain.

The lots will be attractive. They will

have planting, decorative fencing and lighting. "We want the lots to give people a sense of security and to welcome them to leave their cars there," said Rhine. "It is easier to do that if we give people something that is visually appealing rather than just a blacktop with stripes."



Inviting park-and-ride lots are an essential element of improving regional transportation. Thomasville site nearing construction completion.

The 52 corridor is one of the most heavily congested corridors in the region. New park and ride lots should help provide parking for commuters and encourage others to carpool and vanpool. Mt. Airy is already the source for five vanpools with many additional daily commuters coming from Virginia. One new lot in Pilot Mountain will be for future bus service. Another will be for overflow parking, but also for

carpooling and vanpooling. At the other end of US 52 in the region, two lots in Davidson County will serve car/vanpooling immediately, but could serve bus service in the future.

PART will continue locating new park-and-ride lots in 2006 that will include sites in Rockingham, Alamance, and Randolph counties.

Adding to PART's regional RideShaaring and Vanpooling of the Piedmont (RSVP) program, PART is hosting a new carpool matching program in partnership with the NC Department of Transportation. PART manages the local database of people looking for potential matches for carpooling. Interested carpoolers link to the system through www.sharetheridenc.org or www.partnc.org.

Heart-

Chamber of Commerce. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

"The project is all about jobs," added David Jameson, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce President. "We want to maximize the creation of high-quality jobs in this region, and the Heart of the Triad project is the key."

"Our biggest challenge is also our greatest opportunity," said Brent McKinney, Executive Director of PART. He noted that lying among the several local jurisdictions that

comprise the Triad is an area that will eventually be developed, one way or another. "If we develop it thoughtfully, it can support employment-dense businesses that will help the Triad further capitalize on the new Fed Ex hub and the new Dell facility. The Triad already has biotech research parks under development as well as other enterprises that will enable the Triad to distinguish itself as an attractive community with a vibrant growing economy. The Heart of the Triad is critical to our ability to develop the quality of life and economy that we want for ourselves and future

continued on page 4 - **Triad**



PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Greensboro, NC
27409
Permit No. 478

COMMUNICATIONS FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Fall 2005

Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation
7800 Airport Center Drive, Suite 102
Greensboro, NC 27409
www.partnc.org

Triad - generations. To succeed in the economic arena, we need to understand the potentials and the costs for developing this geographic area."

"For us, the Heart of the Triad project represents a golden opportunity," said Gayle Anderson, President of the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce. "We have about seven thousand acres there with the potential to develop it with high-paying jobs and to create an excellent quality of life. We can develop it with sensitivity to the environment and also have a transportation system that moves traffic efficiently in that area. We think the Heart of the Triad project is the most important, future-looking event that we will be addressing in the next decade."

The Heart of the Triad Study will address several key points that must precede development. The detailed scope of study challenges the consultants to investigate: what is the cost of providing water and sewer connections to this area as well as suitable transportation routes for connection and distribution of traffic in the area? Who will benefit from these improvements and who will

invest to create them? Moreover, the study will look at the unique economic market position in which the Triad can position itself most successfully. "We want to know," said McKinney, "what is the economic niche the Triad can best serve now and into the foreseeable future? It used to be furniture, textiles, and tobacco. What will it be now and tomorrow?"

With the help of UNC-Greensboro and Patterson-Webb, a North Carolina public involvement consulting firm, the firm of HDR Consulting will study the region and evaluate potential development schemes. An international architectural, engineering, and consulting firm, HDR has North Carolina offices in Raleigh and Charlotte. Their proposal succeeded over two other highly-qualified consulting firms.

"We'll be kicking off the public phase of the Heart of the Triad study on December 8 at the State of the Triad meeting in Winston-Salem," said Anderson. "It will be the first step in educating the region about the area that will be studied, the process that will be used, and how

they can get involved."

The six-month study is being funded in part by a \$200,000 matching grant from the NC Department of Transportation for studies to enhance air quality through land use and transportation improvements. The four chambers of commerce (Greensboro, Highpoint, Kernersville, and Winston-Salem,) are providing the base \$200,000. A steering committee with representatives from the four chambers of commerce, the six governments, and NC Department of Transportation will oversee the planning effort and consider what recommendations to make.

Noting the regional cooperation that will be needed in pursuing this opportunity, Jameson concluded, "This project will require a strong public-private partnership to ensure that everyone benefits by the Heart of the Triad concept." Dayvalt added, "I think all of us have to begin to think as a region. We can no longer think as individuals and look at each other as competition. We are now each other's greatest asset. Together we can build something that will provide a wonderful future for the Triad."