



Triad Transportation Alternatives Analysis

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Professionals Tour Charlotte's Transit-Oriented Developments



CONTACT INFORMATION:

PART
Brent McKinney, P.E.,
Piedmont Area Regional Transit
7800 Airport Center Drive
Suite 102
Greensboro, NC 27409
336.662.0002

Wilbur Smith Associates
Consultant Team
Cheryl King, AICP
7015 H-Albert Pick Road
Greensboro, NC 27409
770.936.8650, x228

Tax day was never so much fun to a group of planning directors, planners, developers, transportation agency representatives, chamber members and builder/realtor association representatives from the Piedmont Triad Region who took a tour of Charlotte on April 15 to see how transit-oriented developments are working in the area. "After learning that more than \$350 million of new development has occurred along the South Corridor in Charlotte

since the announcement of passenger rail service, PART wants to take this opportunity to show the Piedmont group the significant connection between land use and transportation, as well as talk to developers and planning agencies on how to create a successful transit system and enhance the quality of life," says Brent McKinney, PART Executive Director. These elements have been the focus of study as the Transportation

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PART Conducts Land Use Workshop

As the first event in a three-part series emphasizing station and land use planning, PART conducted a Land Use Workshop on February 16. The purpose of the workshop was to educate participants on the importance of coordinating land use plans and encouraging Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) needed to support a future rail or bus transit system in the Piedmont Triad region.

The workshop provided opportunities to listen to and discuss information presented by local and national planning experts. Participants were encouraged to interact with the presenters during the workshop and talk to staff about specific concerns. Local presenters included Paul Norby – Winston-Salem/Forsyth County; Dick Hails – City of Greensboro; Lee Burnette – City of High Point; Mark Kirstner – Guilford County; Nancy Dunn and David King – NCDOT. From a local and State perspective, headway has been made in land use planning for a new and/or enhanced transit system. Here's what some of the presenters had to say:

Regional and State Perspective

– Many people who live in North Carolina's rural and small town areas travel to the urban areas to work or to recreate. We need to show people that investments made in transit in the Triad region benefit counties like Surry, Yadkin and surrounding counties due to improvements in their commute patterns.

– The Triad is similar to many other regions with residential

areas being developed outside the urban core. By 2025, residential areas will be scattered, whereas, our work areas will be more concentrated. We need to provide a more efficient and seamless transportation system that must include transit. In addition, we

National Expert

Jack Wierzenski, Dallas Area Regional Transit, gave us this advice:

– Establish relationships with the development community

– If the Triad's intention is continued and planned growth, you must make the investment now and structure your land uses to realize these types of results. There is more to transit than moving people; it includes good rider ship, economics, environmental preservation and public support. The Triad folks seem to have a great jumpstart on coordinating land use and transportation, and understand the benefits associated with good planning. Continue the pace and you'll be well ahead in the coming years.

– You must believe that each station is unique, development is specific to site, any unsolicited interaction with developers is critical and encouraged and to "Think outside the Box"!

– Consider establishing Overlay Districts or Planning Improvement Districts (PIDs) to assist with TOD.

– Create a central point of contact to talk with developers and provide them with as much information as possible. It will help both parties determine the best types of compatible development. ■

need to examine our land uses and incorporate TODs to enhance the proposed transit system, provide an acceptable level of transportation and enhance our quality of life.

Winston-Salem

– Several plans have been prepared for areas along regional transit corridors, including the Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Winston-Salem Plan and Kernersville Downtown Plan, among others.

– The Legacy Plan encourages more pedestrian facilities, neighborhood connections to transit stops and retail/office buildings near the street.

– Current accomplishments by Winston-Salem/Forsyth County include agency coordination, development of a downtown plan that includes restaurants, arts, housing, streetscape, research park and streetcar system, approval of several mixed-use developments and more greenways, sidewalks and bikeways.

Greensboro

– By the year 2030, the transportation needs for Greensboro are approximately \$2 billion for capital improvements and \$1.8 billion for operations and maintenance for road, bus transit and bike/pedestrian projects.

– The Statewide Plan should adequately address roadway, transit, sidewalk and bicycle needs. The top issues are:

- ✓ More state funding needed to meet needs;
- ✓ Greater focus on multi-modal investments and;
- ✓ Finding ways to reduce project development time.

High Point

– High Point has prepared a "Policies for Regional Growth Plan" (1998), which include the following goals:

- ✓ Coordinate land use and transportation planning at regional and local levels;
- ✓ Integrate land use planning with infrastructure planning and development;
- ✓ Encourage redevelopment, mostly infill and under-invested areas and;
- ✓ Direct a portion of future development to targeted nodes and transit corridors to support transit.

– Action taken thus far includes coordination of land use and transportation planning, land use and infrastructure planning integration,



redevelopment and infill and future development of targeted nodes.

Guilford County

– Because of the layout of the county, we must consider rural/agricultural concerns, as well as open space and natural areas preservation, when developing land use plans.

– Guilford County's land use plans are not parcel or site specific; rather, they are very broad in scope.

– The challenge becomes, "How do we sell transit to a rural resident that might not ever use it"? The Heart of the Region

Plan is in its early stages. Development of the area should give the region an identity and include mixed-use development, with emphasis on employment.

National View

Jack Wierzenski, a national expert in economic development and Transit-Oriented Development from Dallas Area Regional Transit (DART), spoke on TODs. Jack indicated that DART was established in 1983 with the passage of a one-cent sales tax, which produced \$333.3 million and the start of their rail system. At that time, the perceptions were that nobody would use it, stations were too far to walk, transit would only be used by "those people" and no developments would occur at a station. However, once people realized that they could save money and time, development began occurring and the transit system became highly used. Now, DART has a very effective economic development program that partners with surrounding cities and the development community to work cooperatively to encourage TOD near rail and

Roll Up Your Sleeves!



Now that the local and regional professionals were well informed about good land use planning and the amount of cooperation it takes to get development on the ground, a Land Use Planning Charrette was held on April 29. This activity was a continuation of the planning work that began with the February 16 workshop and TOD tour of Charlotte on April 15. The purpose of the charrette was to engage participants to "draw" their vision(s) of future land use and TODs that could be built in the urban core and along the potential transit corridor in the Piedmont Triad Region in support of a new or enhanced transit system.

And what fun they had! Participants were put into groups, rolled up their sleeves and drew their visions around the proposed station sites. Each group was provided an aerial photograph of a



station and asked to discuss and draw future land uses, greenways, access and potential developments on overlay paper around the station. Project data and local transportation plans were used as design guidelines to assist each group. Participants were encouraged to be creative, think "out of the box" and have fun! The results of this exercise were very enlightening and creative, prompting a variety of feasible land uses and development opportunities near the proposed stations.

The overlay drawings will be provided to each jurisdiction to use as a basis for future planning efforts as they begin thinking about the need to modify local land use ordinances and development codes. For a copy of the charrette summary report and a look at the aerial station overlays, please contact PART at 336-662-0002. ■

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-Oriented Development focuses on the pedestrian and transit rider, using the transit station as its core. TOD creates mixed-use developments around stations to take advantage of transit and enhance the importance of the pedestrian. One goal of TOD is to provide a variety of uses at a central location and along a transit corridor that will reduce the number of automobile trips, as well as provide jobs, retail services, housing and complimentary public uses in a concentrated area.

Pedestrian activity is a key factor behind creating TODs. Walkable environments allow popular and highly-frequented places to be located within the development by encouraging people to walk or bike to places such as daycare facilities, parks, retail shops and civic uses, among others. Transit is at the center of the TOD, reinforcing the opportunity to walk or bike for errands and/or combine travel modes. The immediate area around the transit core generally consists of residential neighborhoods of appropriate density, while the surrounding areas include large, single-family lots, schools, businesses, parks, etc.

Good land use planning provides many benefits in creating a successful TOD, including:

- Reduces the cost of travel
- Improves access
- Provides for non-auto neighborhood connections
- Creates a sense of community and security
- Improves air quality and reduces traffic congestion
- Supports economic development and investment ■

**Check out
PART's Website**

Learn more about the project by
visiting our website at
www.partnc.org.

(Professionals tour Charlotte's Transit-Oriented Developments, continued from page 1)

Alternatives Analysis continues to look at the need to make changes in land uses and development patterns to support a new transit system in the future.

The tour was coordinated by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission. Participants were welcomed by Charlotte Mayor Pro-Tem Patrick Cannon and Assistant City Manager Curt Walton. Tours stops included 3030 South, South End, Gateway Village, 1st and 4th Wards and Elizabeth Avenue. Luncheon speakers included Tony Pressley of MECA Properties and Debra Campbell, Director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission. Tour participants had an eye-opening view of the many residential, commercial and retail developments that comprise the City of Charlotte, as well as an appreciation of the public-private partnerships that made it all happen. ■



What's Next??

The Triad Transportation Alternatives Analysis will be completed this Fall with a recommended "locally preferred alternative" (LPA) and type of technology. At this time, a public workshop will be held to present the findings. Once completed and approved, the project will advance to the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis phase.



PART
7800 Airport Center Drive, Suite 102
Greensboro, NC 27409

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RICHARD ATKINS
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR
WILBUR SMITH ASSOC.
7015 ALBERT PICK RD., SUITE H
GREENSBORO NC 27409-9542