

MAY 2025

THE CHARLOTTE, NC-SC URBAN AREA

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ES-1
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SECTION 1 Study Introduction and Background

Study Area	1
FTA Section 5310 Funding	4
Coordinated Public Transit Planning Requirements	5
Prior Plan Update	5

SECTION 2 Study Process

Study Process and General Timeline	6
Stakeholder Engagement	8
Public Engagement	10
Short Form Public Survey Results	10

SECTION 3 Review of Unmet Needs and Gaps

Population and Employment within Reach of Transit	13
Population and Employment within Reach of Transit, with Changes Expected by 2055	13
Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities within Reach of Fixed Route and Deviated Fixed Route Transit	15
Housing Affordability	18
Limited Footprint of Regional Transit Network	20
Expanding Existing Services and Capacity Limitations	22
COVID-19 Impacts for Public Transit Agencies	22

SECTION 4

Recommendations

Recommendation Key Themes **23**

 Information Sharing and Customer Service 23

 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination 26

 Connectivity and Safety 27

 Service Expansion 28

 Microtransit 29

Table of Recommendations **30**

 Charlotte Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services
 Transportation Plan Recommendations 30

Appendices

Appendix A: Technical Memo

Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Summaries

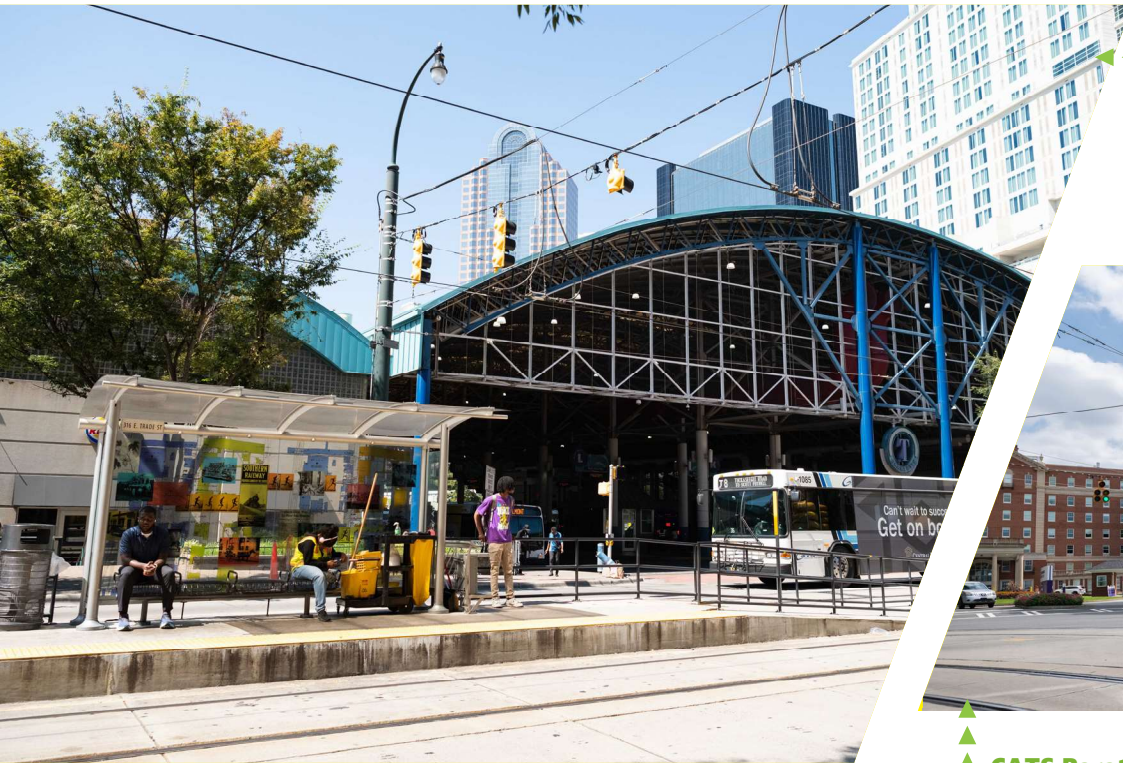
Appendix C: Private Transportation Providers by County

List of Tables

TABLE 1.	Short Form Postcard Survey Responses.....	12
TABLE 2.	Population and Employment within ¾ Mile Access of Fixed Route and Deviated Fixed Route	13
TABLE 3.	Seniors 65+ within a ¾-mile of fixed route and deviated fixed route services.....	15
TABLE 4.	Households with an individual with disability within ¾-mile access of fixed route and deviated fixed route services in the region.....	15
TABLE 5.	Public Transportation Providers serving Charlotte Urban Area.....	21
TABLE 6.	Near-Term Recommendations	30
TABLE 7.	Mid-Term Recommendations	33
TABLE 8.	Long-Term Recommendations.....	39

List of Figures

FIGURE ES- 1.	CATS CPT-HSTP Charlotte Primary Study Area	ES-2
FIGURE ES- 2.	Transportation Disadvantaged Population Categories and Access to Transit	ES-4
FIGURE ES- 3.	Total Population and Employment	ES-4
FIGURE 1.	CATS CPT-HSTP Charlotte Primary Study Area	2
FIGURE 2.	CATS CPT-HSTP Nine-County Study Region	3
FIGURE 3.	CRTPO Project Schedule	6
FIGURE 4.	Total Population and Employment	14
FIGURE 5.	Population Growth and Transit Access	14
FIGURE 6.	Employment Growth and Transit Access	14
FIGURE 7.	Transportation Disadvantaged Population Categories and Access to Transit	15
FIGURE 8.	Concentration of Youth Population (Aged 0-17)	16
FIGURE 9.	Concentration of Senior (Aged 65+) Population	16
FIGURE 10.	Concentration of Individuals with a Disability Population	16
FIGURE 11.	Concentration of Veteran Population	16
FIGURE 12.	Concentration of Zero Vehicle Households Population	17
FIGURE 13.	Concentration of Low-Income Individuals (Up to 150% of Poverty) Population	17
FIGURE 14.	Concentration of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Population	17
FIGURE 15.	Housing Affordability Issues	18
FIGURE 16.	Charlotte Region Effective Rent for Apartments 2000 to 2024 (source: 2024 State of Housing in Charlotte Report)	19



◀◀◀ The Charlotte Transportation Center and CityLYNX Gold Line stop in Uptown Charlotte.



▲ CATS Paratransit vehicle providing supplemental service along the CityLYNX Gold Line in Charlotte.

Executive Summary

The Charlotte, NC-SC Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) is a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing transportation services across a nine-county region spanning North Carolina and South Carolina. This plan addresses the transportation needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations, while also considering the broader community's transit requirements. The plan is structured around several key themes: Information Sharing and Customer Service, Mobility Management and Agency Coordination, Connectivity and Safety, Service Expansion, and Microtransit.

Study Area and Background

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plans are expected to be updated every four to five years. The most recent plan update has been completed in the 2021-2022 timeframe. An update was necessary due to the recent changes in the federal definition of urban areas and the geography included as part of the Charlotte Urban Area. Under the new Urban Area (UA) definition, all of Mecklenburg County and portions of Iredell, Union, and Gaston counties in North Carolina and parts of York County in South Carolina overlap with the revised UA (**Figure ES-1**) on the next page. The plan included an expanded nine-county study region to include Anson, Cabarrus, and Lincoln counties in North Carolina and Lancaster County in South Carolina to account for regional trips that may serve the urban area.

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310 funding) seeks to provide funding “for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs” (FTA Circular 9070.1H). According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), all CPT-HSTPs must be developed and approved by participation of senior individuals, those with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public and stakeholders within the community that utilize transportation services. The City of Charlotte is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds apportioned for the Charlotte Urban Area, with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) administering the program in accordance with federal law and regulations.

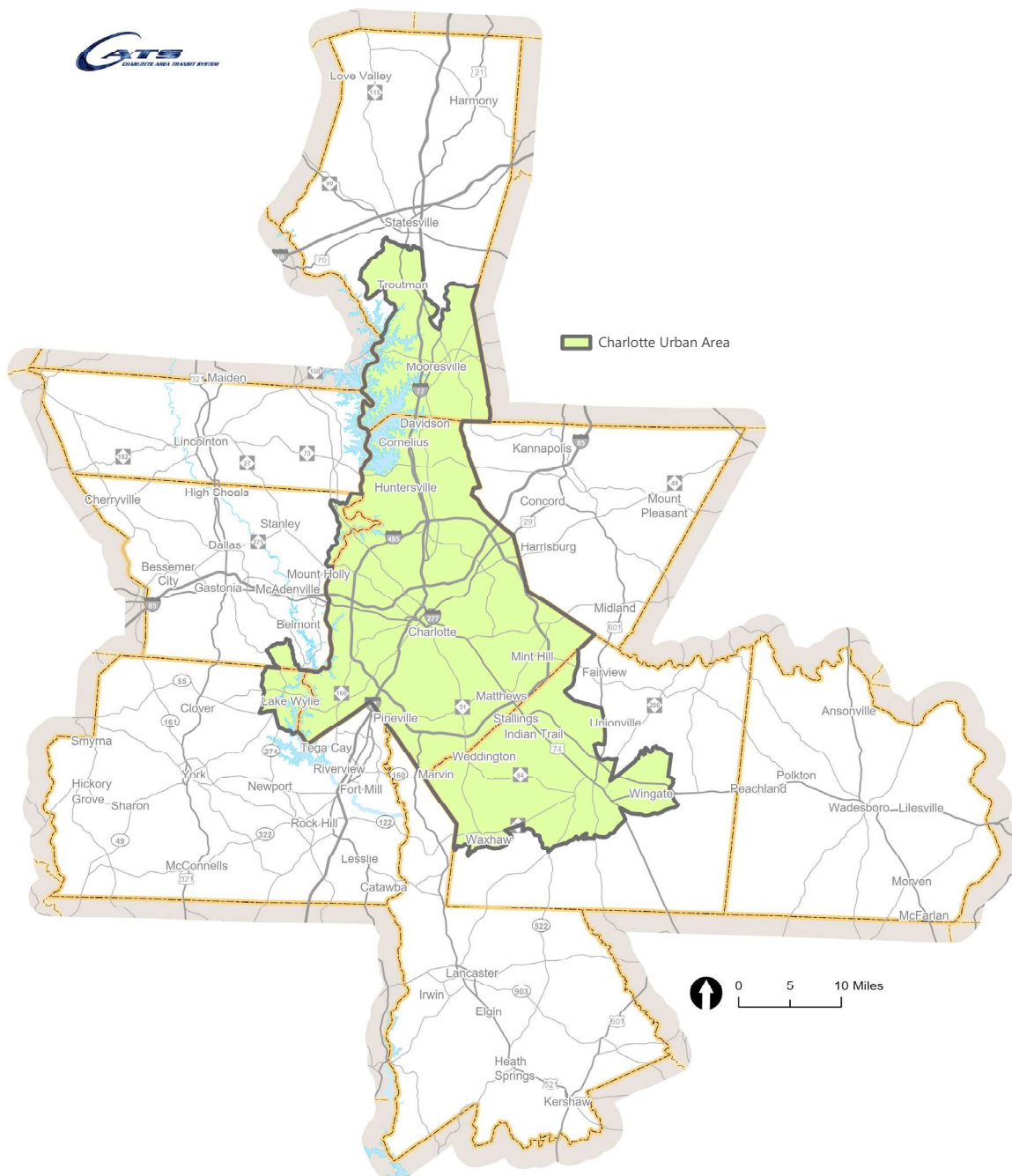


Figure ES-1. CATS CPT-HSTP Charlotte Primary Study Area

Study Process

The plan update was initiated in July 2024 with study oversight and management provided by CATS staff. Three Study Review Committee (SRC) meetings were held throughout the study period with local and regional transit agencies, planning agencies, NCDOT, and INLIVIAN participating. A series of stakeholder interviews were conducted between October 2024 through January 2025 to better understand the existing challenges and trends that public transportation agencies and human services providers are facing. Two rounds of public engagement were also held throughout the process, including virtual and in-person options.

Public and Stakeholder Feedback

The project team held virtual stakeholder engagement interviews with a variety of key stakeholders including regional planning organizations, fixed-route transit agencies, on-demand transit service providers, and transit advocates. The most common cited concern among all stakeholders was the first and last mile of the transit trip, noting that residents using transit often had a difficult time either reaching a transit pick-up location from their home or accessing a destination from the transit stop. Additional concerns included difficulties of users scheduling trips, transit providers scheduling trips between providers, and providing access to nonessential destinations due to funding issues. Stakeholders were optimistic about the possibility of microtransit becoming more popular in the region and the need to develop a regional transit concept to enhance partnership between transit agencies.

Public feedback was similar to stakeholder feedback with respect to the need to improve trip planning and transfers between agencies. Those interviewed during the public engagement sessions also desired improved transit stop access for first and last mile mobility and the addition of microtransit to support their needs where current fixed route services do not.

Unmet Needs and Gaps

A review of various socio-economic variables such as senior populations, individuals with disabilities, existing and future population and employment distributions, coupled with an analysis of where these populations overlap with existing transportation services including fixed route, deviated fixed route, and on-demand paratransit services found large service gaps between vulnerable populations and public transportation services in the region. As seen in **Figure ES-2** there is a significant gap between transportation disadvantaged population groups and access to existing paratransit services. Based on current population and employment growth trends, transit access to the region's growing population by 2045 should increase by 0.4%, while employment access is expected to fall by 1.1% due to expected growth on the periphery of the region (**Figure ES-3**). Rising housing costs in the Charlotte urban area have forced households to look further out to find affordable housing, which is expected to worsen traffic congestion without improvements or expansion of the existing transit system as these individuals rely on single-occupancy vehicles to travel to work and access other vital services.

The regions' existing footprint of fixed route and deviated fixed route services cover a small portion of the total nine-county study area, with services offered by Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS), Rider Transit, and Rock Hill MyRide. Microtransit options are available with GoGastonia and CATS. While several counties in the metro area are adding microtransit and improving or expanding paratransit services, there is still a current shortage of vehicles and drivers that lead to overflow trips. The impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic are still evident, with ridership only at 90% of pre-pandemic levels according to CATS for the 2024 fiscal year, despite the decrease in revenue hours.

Transit agencies may be facing a “fiscal cliff” due to increased operating costs and lower fare returns from ridership without new dedicated funding sources as emergency federal funding from the pandemic expires.

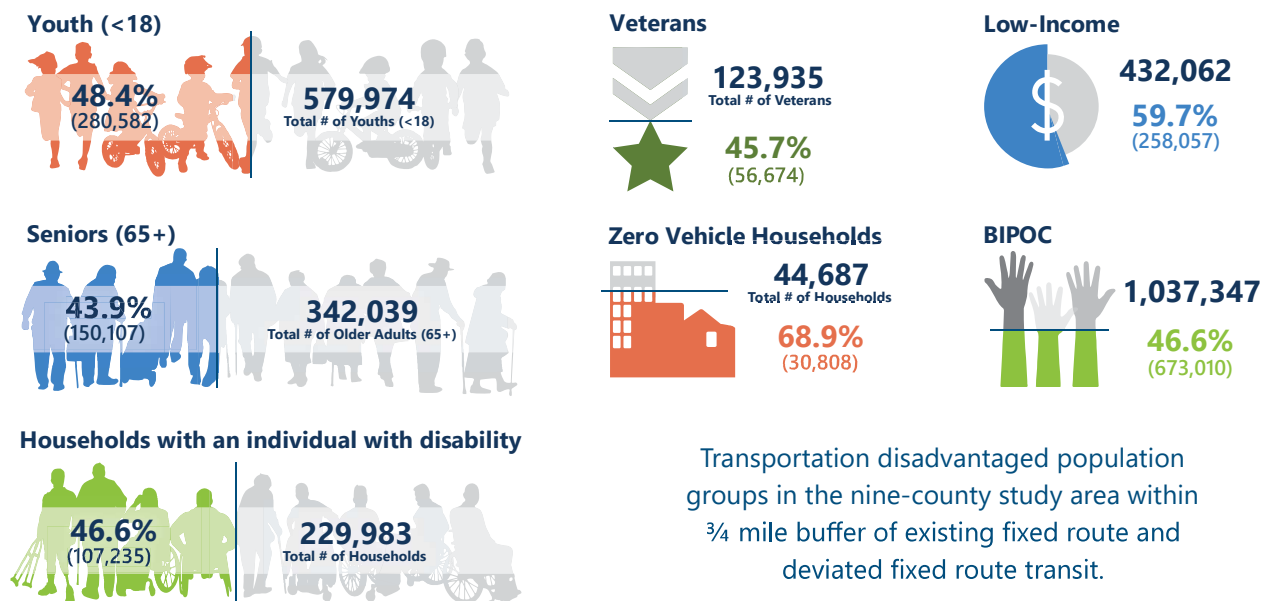


Figure ES-2. Transportation Disadvantaged Population Categories and Access to Transit

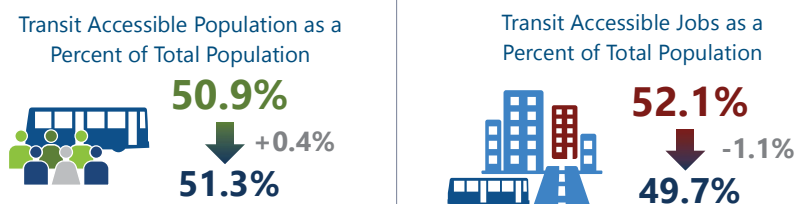


Figure ES-3. Total Population and Employment

Recommendations

A list of recommendations for the Charlotte urban area were organized around the following five key themes: information sharing and customer service, mobility management and agency coordination, connectivity and safety, service expansion, and microtransit. Recommendations are divided up into near-term (less than 5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), and long-term (greater than 10 year) horizons. Under information sharing and customer service, recommendations include the development of a comprehensive public transportation services portal, expanded ticketing options, and travel training. Creating a regional mobility manager position is the primary recommendation for mobility management and agency coordination, alongside a formalized transit committee inclusive of on-demand and human services transportation providers. The development of a regional fare interoperability agreement for STS/ADA paratransit trips and a cross-agency utilization of vehicles agreement would enhance agency coordination and customer satisfaction. Recommendations under the connectivity and safety theme focus on enhancing first-mile last-mile access to transit stop and expanding mobility and transfer hubs throughout the region. Expansion of employment and general-purpose trips, increasing frequency and length of service, expanding client eligibility for on-demand trips, and reducing wait times for on-demand trips are key recommendations for service expansion.

1

Study Introduction and Background

This section provides an overview of the study area, FTA Section 5310 funding and coordinated public transit planning requirements.





◀◀◀ A CATS Paratransit vehicle and CATS CityLYNX Gold Line Streetcar in the City of Charlotte.



▲
▲ CATS Gold Line Streetcar in Uptown Charlotte with pedestrian crossing facilities.

Study Area

The Charlotte NC-SC Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan incorporates the entire Charlotte-NC-SC Urban Area (UA), which encompasses all or portions of a five-county region spanning across two states (**Figure 1**). In North Carolina, all of Mecklenburg County and portions of Iredell, Union, and Gaston counties overlap with the Charlotte Urban Area and are included within the primary study area (labeled as “study area” on the maps throughout this Plan). In South Carolina, parts of York County overlap with the Charlotte Urban area. The plan included both a primary study area made up of generalized Charlotte Urban Area, and an expanded nine-county study region. The expanded nine-county study region included Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, and Union counties in North Carolina and Lancaster and York Counties in South Carolina. This report will focus on both the expanded nine-county study region and the more focused study area (Charlotte Urban Area), when describing current conditions based on the block groups encompassed by both areas (see **Figure 2** for expanded nine-county study region).

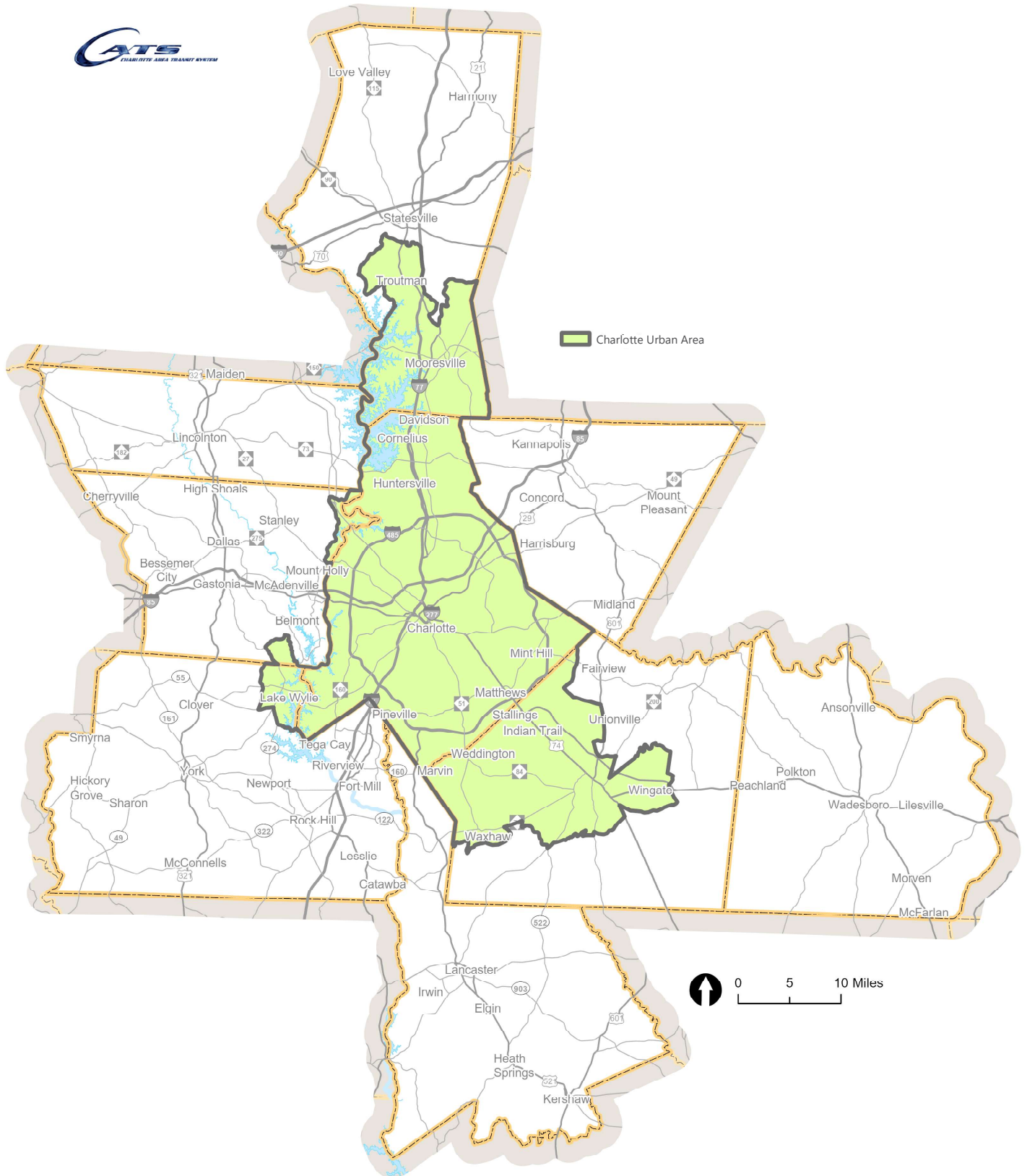


Figure 1. CATS CPT-HSTP Charlotte Primary Study Area

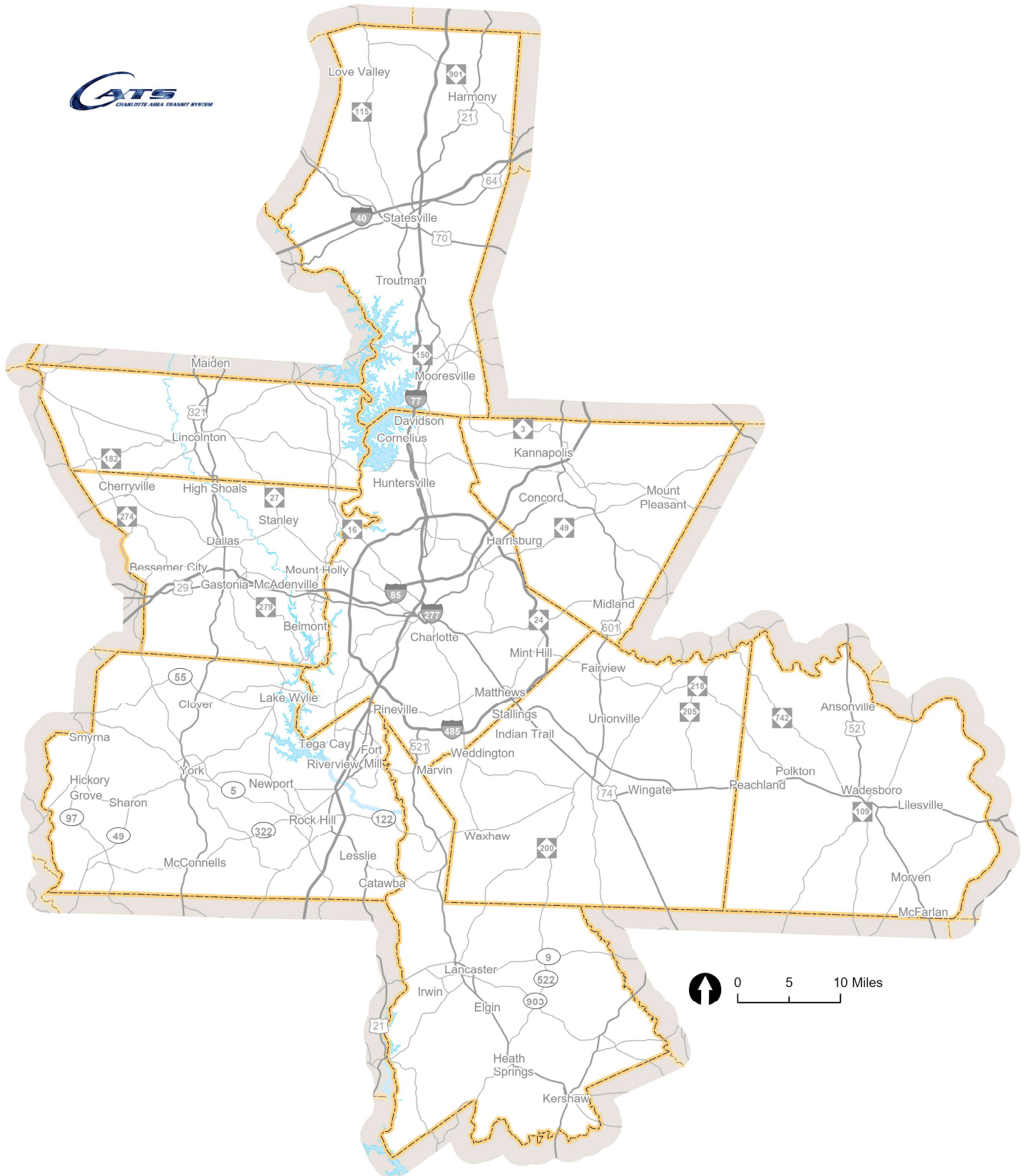


Figure 2. CATS CPT-HSTP Nine-County Study Region

FTA Section 5310 Funding

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Funding (hereafter referred to as “Section 5310 funding”) seeks to provide funding, “for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs.” (FTA Circular 9070.1G) The goal is to remove barriers to transportation and expand transportation options across the region. As part of MAP-21, the program was modified to include projects previously eligible under the former Section 5317 New Freedom program. The transit grant funding program for seniors and individuals with disabilities was carried forward under the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (or FAST Act, signed into law in December 2015), and as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, signed into law November 15, 2021). Eligible projects under Section 5310 funding are divided into “traditional” category and “nontraditional” or “other” category.

The following capital improvements and activities are classified as part of traditional Section 5310 projects:

- » transit vehicles: buses and vans;
- » wheelchair lifts, ramps, and implements needed to secure a wheelchair;
- » transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems
- » mobility management programs; and
- » acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement

Nontraditional or “other” Section 5310 projects could include, but are not limited, to the following:

- » travel training;
- » volunteer driver programs;
- » providing accessible paths to bus stops, including sidewalks, curb cuts, accessible pedestrian signals (APS) or other features;
- » wayfinding and signage;
- » incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service;
- » purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing and/or vanpooling programs; and
- » mobility management programs

These funds can be passed through either the state department of transportation or through other designated recipients. The funds can then be allocated to subrecipients which can include private nonprofit organizations, state or local government authority, or operators of public transportation. Funds are available for a total of three years and the amount is based on the state or the urban area proportion of seniors and those with disabilities.

The City of Charlotte is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds apportioned for the Charlotte Urban Area. The City’s public transit department, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), administers the program in accordance with federal law and regulations. For fiscal year 2024, the Charlotte Urban Area apportionment of Section 5310 funds was \$1,324,815.¹

¹ FTA. FY 2024 Apportionments Table 8. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/apportionments/table-8-fy-2024-section-5310-enhanced-mobility-seniors-and-individuals-0>

Coordinated Public Transit Planning Requirements

According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), all Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans must be developed and approved by participation of senior individuals, those with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and other members of the public and stakeholders within the community that utilize transportation services. The FTA states, "These coordinated plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation." (FTA Circular 9070.1H). Projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310) are required to be "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." (FTA Circular 9070.1H).

▼ **CATS Paratransit vehicles offer riders of all abilities convenient ways to travel.**



Prior Plan Update

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans are expected to be updated every four to five years. The most recent plan update has been completed in 2021-2022 timeframe. An update was necessary due to the recent changes in the federal definition of urban areas and the geography included as part of the Charlotte Urban Area. In addition, many public transportation trip patterns have shifted in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, and it took several years for the public transit agencies in the region to identify and adjust to these new transit travel patterns and update the schedules and service levels accordingly. The current plan update (2024-2025) considered the post-COVID reality as well as the new urban area, while still carrying through some of the themes that were observed during the previous CPT-HSTP update.

2

Study Process

This section reviews the study process, timeline and key elements including public and stakeholder involvement.



Study Process and General Timeline

The plan update was initiated in July 2024. Study oversight and management was provided by CATS staff.

Three Steering Committee meetings were held during the study duration (in August 2024, January 2025, and April 2025), with the following organizations represented on the Steering Committee:

- » Cabarrus-Rowan MPO (CRMPO)
- » Centralina Regional Council
- » Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)
- » Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO)
- » Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO (GCLMPO)
- » INLIVIAN (Charlotte Housing Authority)
- » Iredell County Area Transportation Services (ICATS)
- » NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (NCDOT IMD)
- » Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS)
- » Union County Transportation

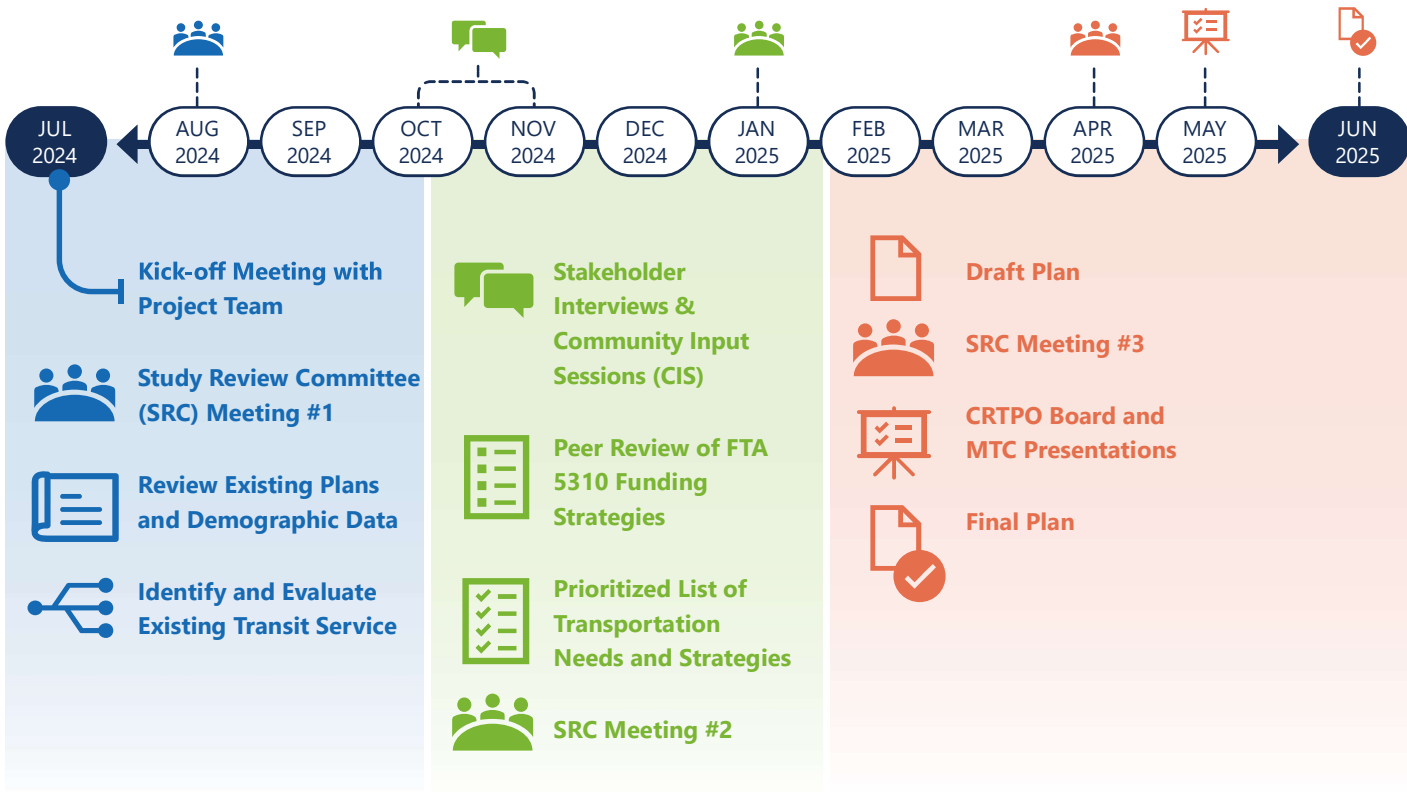


Figure 3. CRTPO Project Schedule

Seven stakeholder interviews were held between October 2024 and January 2025 to better understand the existing challenges and trends that public transportation agencies and human services providers are facing.

Development of the plan update included a virtual public engagement session on November 15, 2024, and an in-person pop up public engagement event held at the Scarborough Community Resource Center on November 22, 2024. Approximately 35 members of the public participated in conversations with the Study Team members and provided their feedback during the in-person event and 121 members of the public were able to view the virtual meeting recording on CATS YouTube channel. Hand-written postcard survey responses were collected, as well as general comments provided by participants at the meeting regarding public transportation needs and gaps in the area.

The plan update also included a variety of prior plans and data sources, for the nine-county study region and the transit agencies serving the Charlotte Urban Area, including National Transit Database reports and U.S. Census data. The study team developed a technical memorandum (see **Appendix A**) documenting the existing conditions including demographic data trends, expected population and employment growth distribution across the region, transit ridership and wheelchair-use trip trends, and key community destinations and their spatial overlap with existing fixed route and deviated fixed route transit services. Recommendations from relevant prior plans were summarized.

The update included a review of three peer regions for paratransit and human services transportation best practices, with the following peer regions identified:

Raleigh, North Carolina

Orlando, Florida

Maricopa Association of Governments, Arizona



Appendix A includes the peer agency review results.

As a result of prior plans review and sociodemographic and transit agency data review, and after taking into account public and stakeholder feedback, the study team developed a list of recommendations and a draft plan for informational presentation to the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) in May of 2025. MTC adoption is planned for June 2025.

Stakeholder Engagement

The plan update engaged numerous stakeholder agencies as part of participation on the Steering Committee for the study and through stakeholder interviews. These stakeholders included transportation agencies in the Charlotte region, and other organizations that work closely with seniors, veterans, or those with disabilities. In addition to engagement with members of the Steering Committee listed in the section above, follow up interviews were conducted with the following stakeholder agencies:

- » Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO)
- » Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO)
- » Charlotte Area Transportation Services (CATS) Bus Operations
- » Charlotte Area Transportation Services (CATS) Special Transportation Operations (STS / ADA Paratransit)
- » Disability Rights and Resources
- » Iredell County Area Transportation (ICATS)
- » Lions Services
- » Mecklenburg County Transportation Services (MTS)
- » Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS)

Project team staff at the November 22nd pop-up engagement event at Ella B. Scarborough Community Resource Center.



The project team held virtual stakeholder engagement interviews with a variety of stakeholders, including regional planning organizations, fixed-route transit agencies, on-demand transit service providers, and transit advocates. Stakeholders were from both the Charlotte Urban Area and the greater nine-county study region. Respondent feedback is summarized based on general theme.

The most common cited concern among all stakeholders was the first and last mile portion of the transit trip. Stakeholders from every group noted that residents using transit often had a difficult time either reaching a transit pick-up location from their home or accessing a destination from the transit stop. A variety of factors were mentioned including lack of sidewalks or a connected sidewalk network, ADA compliant curb cuts for transit users utilizing mobility aid devices, convenient crosswalk locations, and safe bus stops. Transit advocates and providers noted that some stops are located in less-than-ideal locations where the stops are signs next to the road or railroad with no other pedestrian amenities nearby. When trying to address the issue of pedestrian connectivity to destinations, two providers noted the high cost of having to install ADA compliant sidewalks and curb cuts that significantly increased the cost of the bus stop installation, limiting the number of new or improved stops that can be install each year. Part of this issue is due to the greater Charlotte region's growth pattern that favors private vehicle transportation over a multimodal growth pattern that would allow for more housing and key destination density.

Aside from accessing traditional transit and paratransit options, **stakeholders noted the difficulties of users scheduling trips**. Currently, those who wish to schedule a paratransit or deviated fixed route trip must call ahead of their desired trip, often 24 hours ahead of time. Stakeholders noted that it can be difficult for users to try to schedule their trip by phone and to plan out their day that far in advance. An online solution was discussed with several transit providers as transit providers do not currently have the ability to implement an online solution for reservations.

On many occasions, **transit providers will need to work with one another to schedule trips for seniors, those with a disability, or Medicaid mandated trips**. While transfers between providers is possible and occurs on a daily basis, the process could be improved. Possible solutions that were mentioned include an online, region-wide transfer system where providers could work together to coordinate trips and improve transfer locations and times. An online platform could also be used to hold customer information so that transit trips could be optimized on both the provider and the customer through vehicle selection and route optimization.

Due to continued funding issues among all stakeholder agencies, trips to nonessential destinations have either been reduced or eliminated. This has proved to be a challenge for seniors and those with mobility impairments to access key non-medical destinations. Transit advocates noted that while other services, such as Uber, Lyft, and community transit networks, have helped to fill in the gap, they are often difficult for these users to traverse. Uber and Lyft have a high cost of ridership that those on fixed-income or government assistance cannot afford on a regular basis. Community transit providers are nonprofit and volunteer organizations with limited vehicles and staffing that cannot accommodate the volume of requests that come in on a daily basis.

The continued underfunding of transit and paratransit in the region has also caused reliability concerns and some areas not being serviced. Both **transit advocates and providers noted that some areas of the nine-county study region are not being serviced adequately due to low demand, creating transportation deserts**. This is partially due to third-party vendors not wanting to service these areas due to the amount of deadheading required or traffic concerns to reach and service this area. **Southeastern Mecklenburg County was mentioned several times by transit advocates as an area of concern** due to low demand for this service and the long travel times due to the roadway congestion along the US 74 and parallel corridors.

A common area of optimism among all stakeholders was the idea of microtransit. CATS has recently implemented microtransit in northern Mecklenburg County in early 2025 before rolling out additional microtransit zones elsewhere in Mecklenburg County. The City of Gastonia recently started microtransit within the city limits for all residents and visitors. There are also three privately ran microtransit companies within the City of Charlotte, showing high demand for the transit option with greater flexibility of service area on the commercial front.

The final communal discussion item was **implementing a regional transit concept and enhancing partnerships between transit agencies**. This would allow transit operators to improve their service area to neighboring counties and improve operations on the back end that would result in improved transit service to the communities in which they serve. A regional concept may also aid in reducing duplicated services which could free up additional funds to improve service area, reliability, or frequency.

Public Engagement

Public engagement efforts consisted of a virtual public meeting and an in-person pop up public meeting. Short form survey (postcard) responses were collected during the in-person pop up public engagement event.

Public engagement events were held in November 2024, to let participants know about the study and to solicit response about unmet transportation services needs and gaps in the region. A short form (postcard) survey was used during the in-person pop up public engagement to solicit responses about the public transportation needs and gaps in the region, and opportunities to improve the existing public transit services.

The following public engagement meetings took place, with approximately 35 participants engaged during the meetings:

Virtual public meeting held on November 15th, 2024; presentation recording was posted to the CATS YouTube Channel after the meeting (121 views on CATS YouTube Channel)

In-person pop-up public engagement meeting held at the Ella Scarborough Community Resource Center on November 22, 2024, from 10 AM-1 PM

Short Form Public Survey Results

The pop-up public engagement events collected a total of seven short form survey responses. The majority of the short form survey comments were focused on the frequency and schedule of buses (i.e. long waits, late bus arrival times).



**CHARLOTTE REGION
COORDINATED
PUBLIC TRANSIT-
HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION
PLAN**

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is currently in the process of updating the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Charlotte Urbanized Area. The Plan will:

- review public transportation gaps and needs
- focus on seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Please help us identify existing public transit service needs and gaps by filling out the brief survey on the back of this card!





What is your home zip code? Work/school zip code?

Do you or somebody in your family take transit on a regular basis? If yes, how often?

☐ Not a transit user

☐ Very infrequently, once a month or less

☐ A few times a month

☐ At least once a week

☐ Several days a week



What do you think are the most important gaps in the existing transit services and community transportation/paratransit services in the Charlotte region?

What areas of Charlotte region needs additional transit service/improved access, including community transportation/paratransit services?



Short Form Survey
(Postcard)

The following comments were received from participants in the public engagement event:

» **Need better service to the following destinations:**

- Steele Creek
- Albemarle Road near highway (*unclear, possibly either US 74 or I-485 meant by "highway")
- Newel Hickory Grove Road

» **Trip planning and transfer improvements**

- Trip scheduling, improved timing for pickup/drop-off needed
- Finding information about bus routes/schedule is difficult

» **Would like to see improved transit stop access**

- Better crosswalks near stops
- Need more and accessible stops

» **Would like to see additional microtransit options**

Images of posters with public feedback comments recorded during the public engagement session

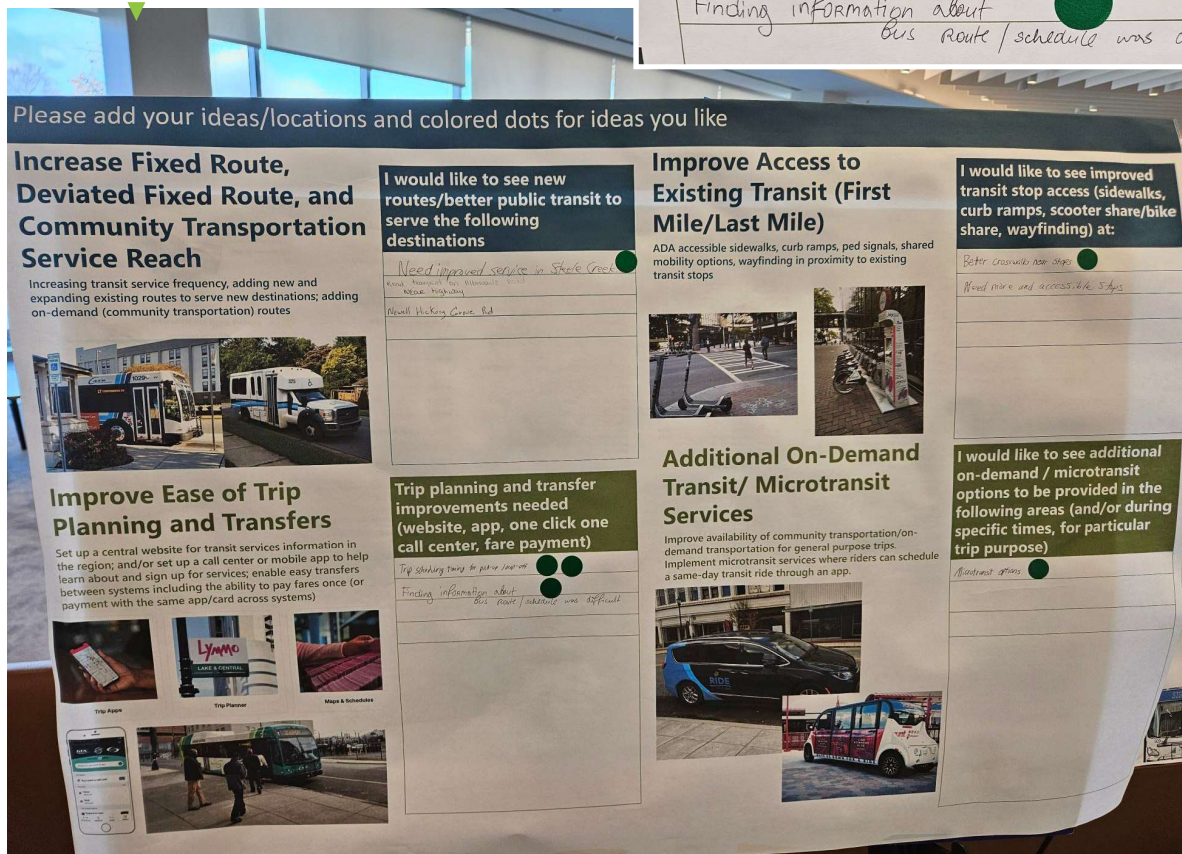
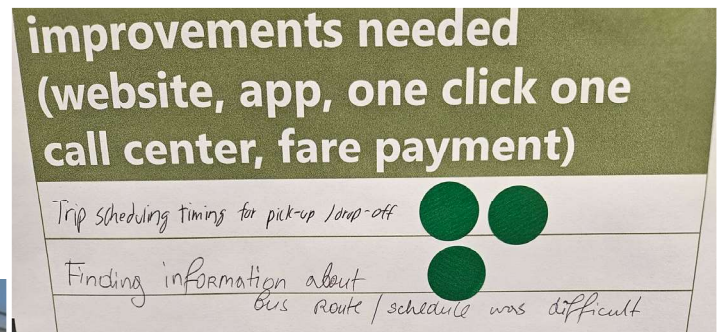


Table 1 below summarizes the responses that were received via short-form postcard survey.

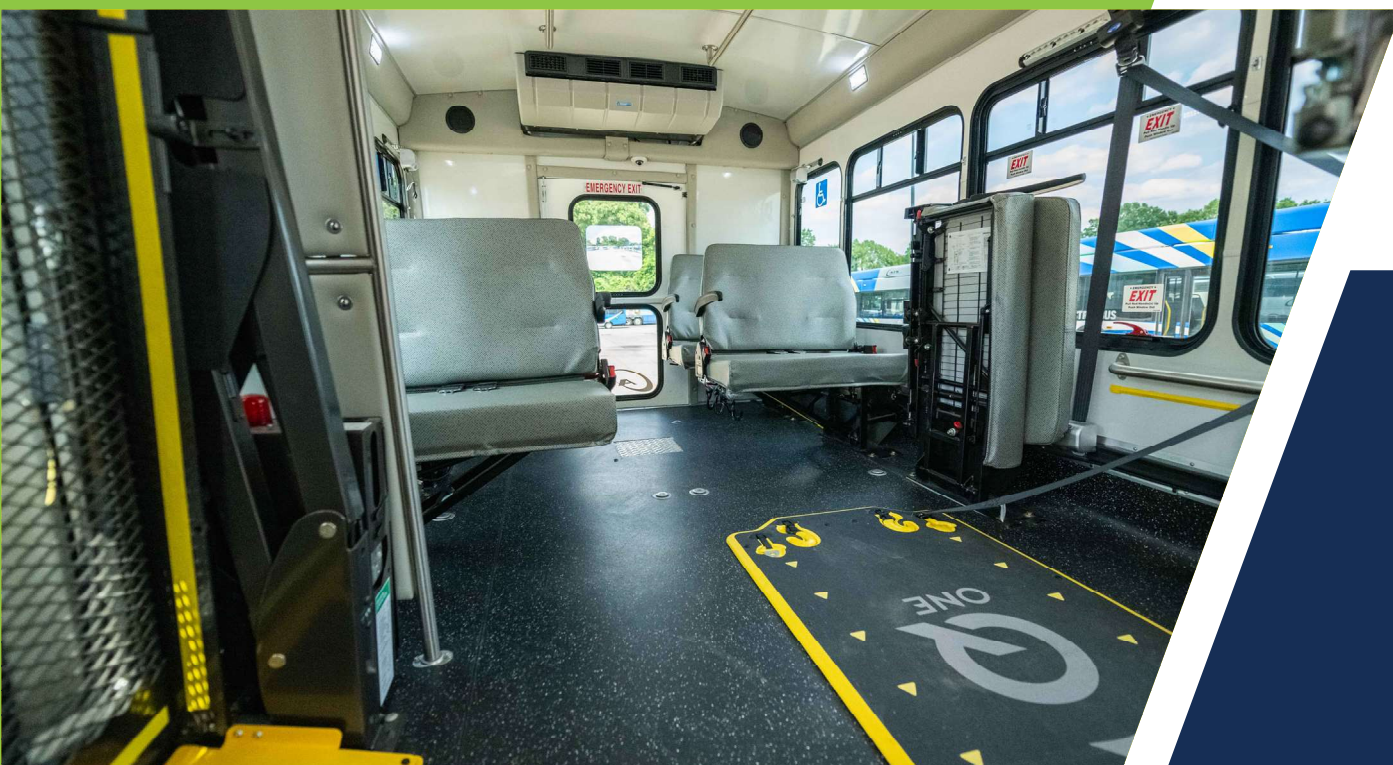
Table 1. Short Form Postcard Survey Responses

Home ZIP Code / Work Zip Code	How often do you use transit?	Most important gaps	Areas that need improvement
28269	Very infrequently, once a month or less	They are doing a good job with expansion	» Neil Rd/ Wellspring Dr (University Area) no bus route
28270	Several days a week	Difficult to cross the street on return trip back to apartment – Monroe Rd @ Sardis Dr	» Jennifer Temps – 40 min walk to bus stop » Steele Creek area (Palisades High School) -20 min+ walk to bus stop; » Routes/ schedule difficult to find online
28215 / 28213	Several days a week	Put more routes in the area where I live, I have to take 30 minutes to take bus 212	» Grocery stores, health clinics, other destinations -to get anywhere I have to walk over 20-30 minutes to start the trip
28215	Several days a week	(Transit routes) don't come where people that work need rides for work	» Newell / Hickory Grove Rd
28216	Several days a week	(Need to make sure) that buses + trains are on time	» Need to run the buses + trains 24 hrs/day for workers' convenience
28262	Several days a week	I think the most important is to have more messages	» Around Mallard Creek
28025	-	The bus from the airport area to any store (groceries/shopping). Live far from a bus station; Mecklenburg Transport and CATS offer paratransit.	-

3

Review of Unmet Needs and Gaps

This section provides an analysis of the unmet transportation needs and transportation service gaps in the nine-county region of the Charlotte Urban Area. The analysis incorporates public and stakeholder feedback received and builds on the review of demographic data trends and existing public transportation providers data.



Population and Employment within Reach of Transit

A review of various socio-economic variables such as senior populations, individuals with disabilities, existing and future population and employment distributions, coupled with an analysis of where these populations overlap with existing transportation services including fixed route, deviated fixed route, and on-demand Paratransit services found large service gaps between vulnerable populations and public transportation services in the region.

Population and Employment within Reach of Transit, with Changes Expected by 2055

As of 2024, slightly more than half the population of the nine-county region resides within ¾-miles of fixed route or deviated fixed route service. By 2055, the percentage of population within ¾-mile access of fixed route or deviated fixed route transit service will increase slightly from 50.9% to 51.3% without an increase in the number of transit routes implemented.

The employment forecast for the region will see a slight decrease in transit accessible jobs, with the percentage of jobs within a ¾-mile of transit falling from 70.6% to 69.5% by 2055. **Table 2** below provides an overview of the current and projected population and employment that live in transit accessible areas of the study area.

Table 2. Population and Employment within ¾ Mile Access of Fixed Route and Deviated Fixed Route

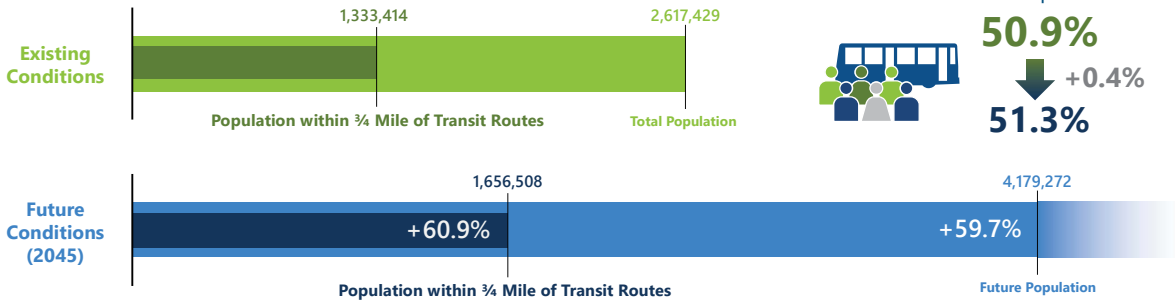
	Existing Conditions (2022)	Future Conditions (2050)	Percent Change
Total Population	2,617,429	4,179,272	59.7%
Population within ¾ Mile of Transit Routes	1,333,414	2,145,119	60.9%
Transit Accessible Population as a Percent of Total Population	50.9%	51.3%	0.4%
Total Employment	1,541,198	2,343,826	52.1%
Number of Jobs within ¾ Mile of Transit Routes	1,088,180	1,629,175	49.7%
Transit Accessible Jobs as a Percent of Total Jobs	70.6%	69.5%	-1.1%

**Population and employment numbers for the baseline (2022) and 2055 future year were based on the nine-county study region; population and employment numbers were derived from the Metrolina Regional Model (MRM23, Working Version 1). To calculate population and employment within the service area, it was assumed that if the TAZ was at least 25% covered by the ¾-mile ADA paratransit buffer of the existing transit services, then the entirety of the TAZ was accessible to transit.*

*** Transit agencies included in this analysis were CATS, ICATS, Rider, My Ride Rock Hill, Gastonia Transit, and Greenway Public Transportation. Three-quarter mile buffers were created to represent the ADA paratransit service area/deviation request zones for all fixed routes and deviated fixed routes; express routes were excluded from consideration.*

Currently, every county within the nine-county region offers either on-demand or ADA paratransit services. For residents living in counties that do not offer any fixed route transit or deviated fixed route services, they are limited to the county on-demand services. These services often do not operate outside of weekday normal working business hours (8am – 6pm) and prioritize non-emergency medical trips. Additionally, advanced reservations are often required, which further restricts the freedom of mobility for residents living in these areas. Without efforts to expand fixed route services throughout the region, mobility options for much of the region will be limited.

TOTAL POPULATION



TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

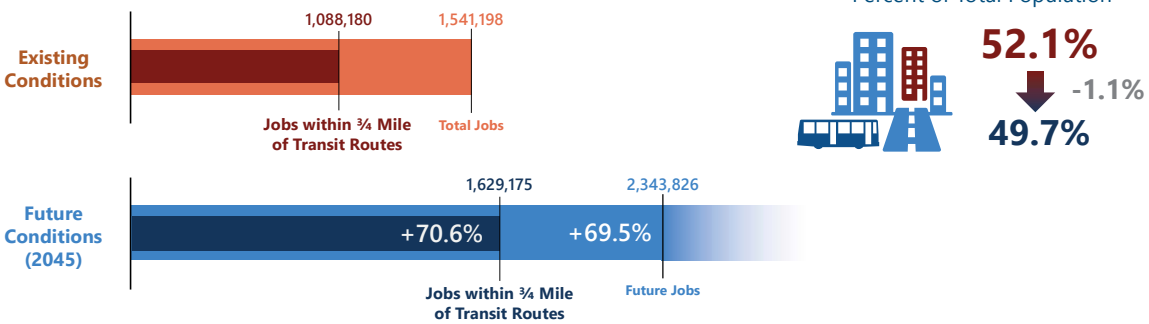


Figure 4. Total Population and Employment

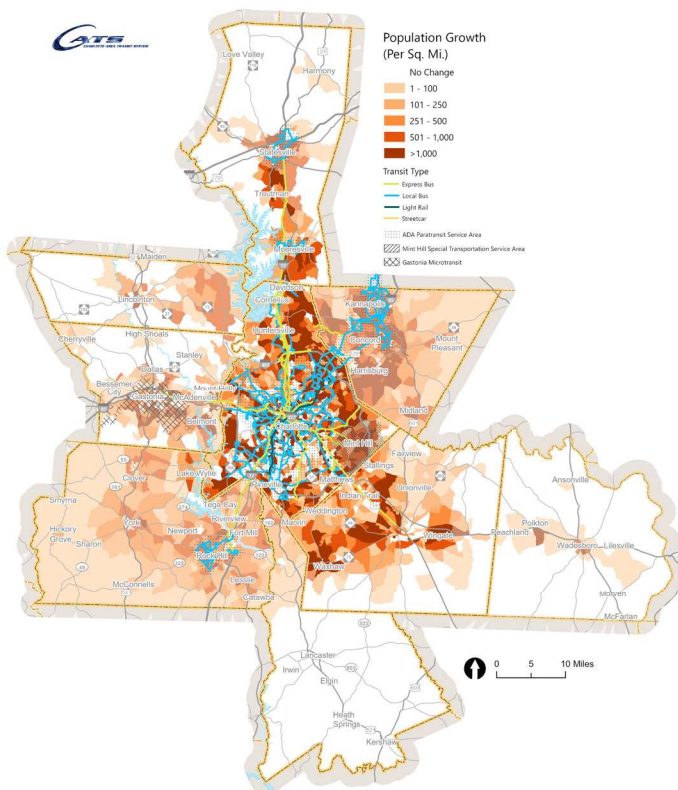


Figure 5. Population Growth and Transit Access

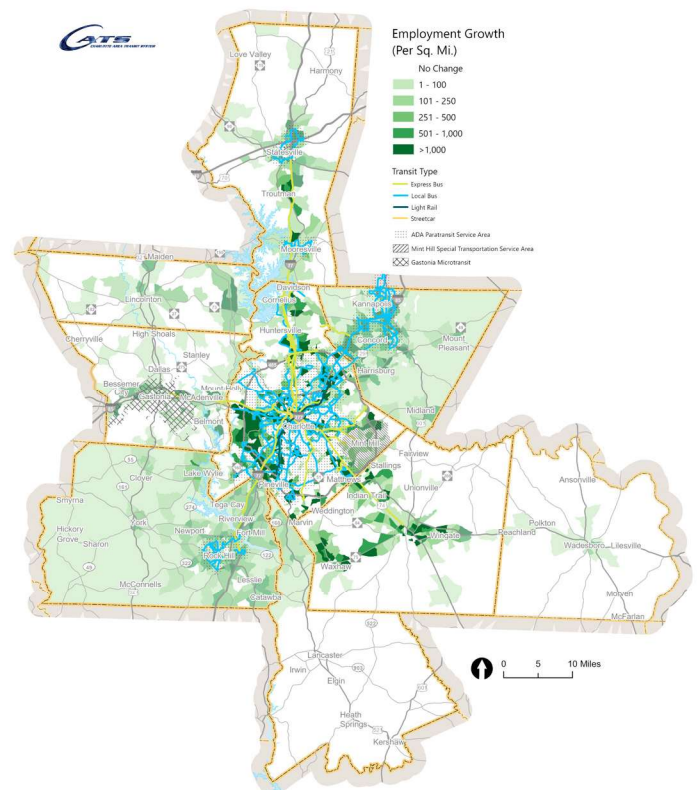


Figure 6. Employment Growth and Transit Access

See Appendix A for full size map images.

Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities within Reach of Fixed Route and Deviated Fixed Route Transit

An examination of the senior populations (65 and older) within the region found that just over two-fifths of the population lives within a ¾-mile of existing fixed route or deviated fixed route transit services (**Table 3**). This statistic means that almost 55 percent of all seniors in the region are limited to on-demand or paratransit services if they are unable to operate a vehicle or do not have family members close by that can help them get around. The region's senior population is continuing to grow, and over time the need for new or expanded transportation services will increase. If no efforts are made to invest more into public transit across the region, the percentage of senior populations that live in transit accessible regions will continue to decrease.

Much like senior populations, the spatial distribution of households with an individual with a disability that are near existing fixed route or deviated fixed route services is less than half. Currently, approximately 46 percent of the disabled population live within a ¾-mile of frequent transit, which means the majority of individuals with a disability face more limited options in terms of transportation services available outside of existing ADA paratransit or deviated fixed routed services (**Table 4**).

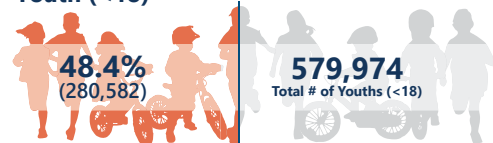
Table 3. Seniors 65+ within a ¾-mile of fixed route and deviated fixed route services

	Existing Conditions (2024)
Number of Older Adults (65+)	150,107
Percentage of Older Adults (65+)	43.9%

Table 4. Households with an individual with disability within ¾-mile access of fixed route and deviated fixed route services in the region

	Existing Conditions (2024)
Number of Households with an Individual with a Disability	107,235
Percentage of Households with an Individual with a Disability	46.6%

Youth (<18)



Veterans



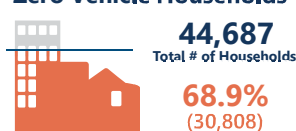
Low-Income



Seniors (65+)



Zero Vehicle Households



BIPOC



Households with an individual with disability



Transportation disadvantaged population groups in the nine-county study area within ¾ mile buffer of existing fixed route and deviated fixed route transit.

Figure 7. Transportation Disadvantaged Population Categories and Access to Transit

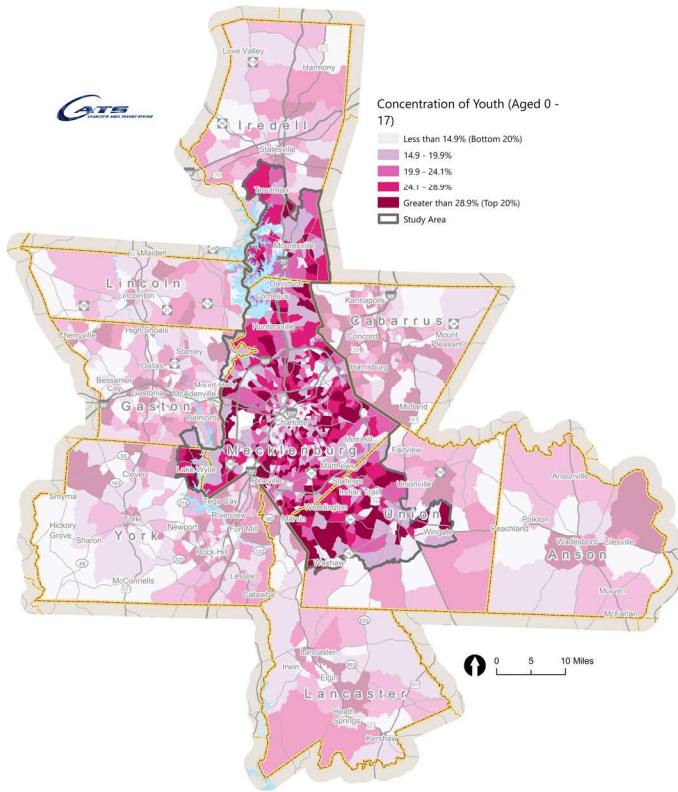


Figure 8. Concentration of Youth Population (Aged 0-17)

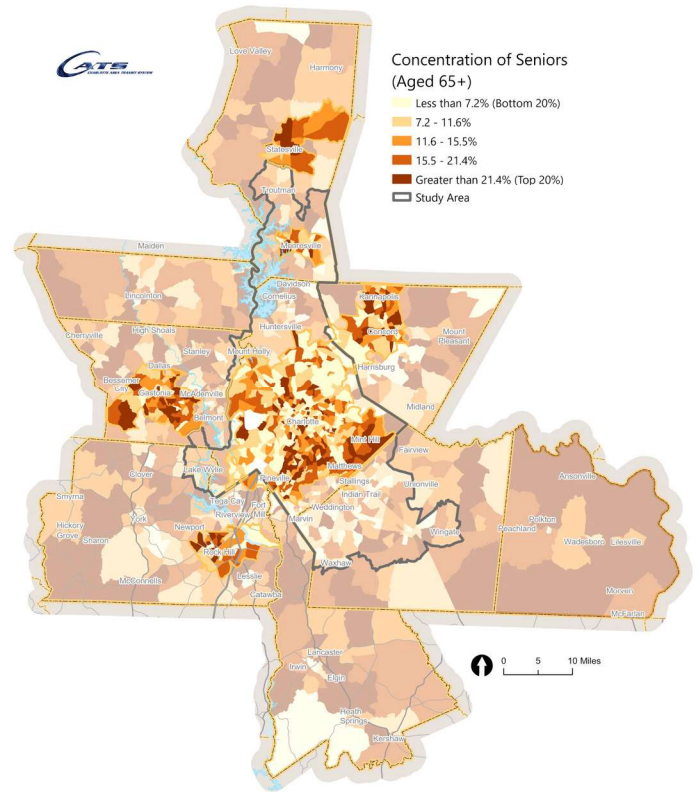


Figure 9. Concentration of Senior (Aged 65+) Population

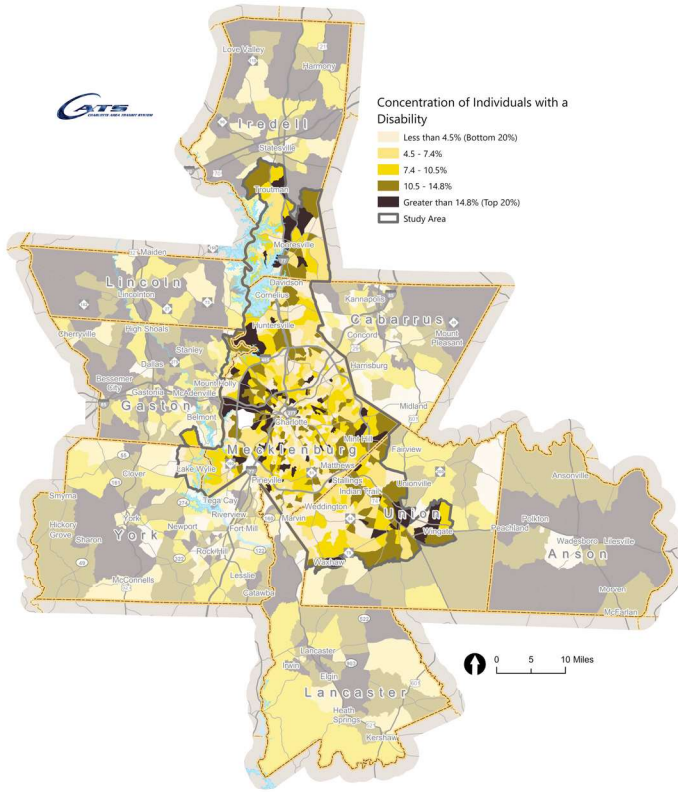


Figure 10. Concentration of Individuals with a Disability Population

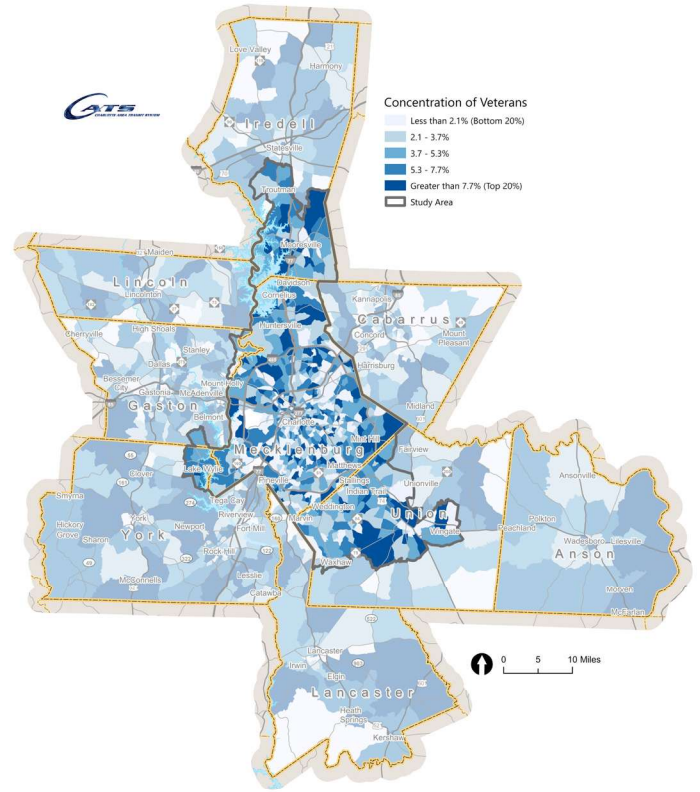


Figure 11. Concentration of Veteran Population

See Appendix A for full size map images.

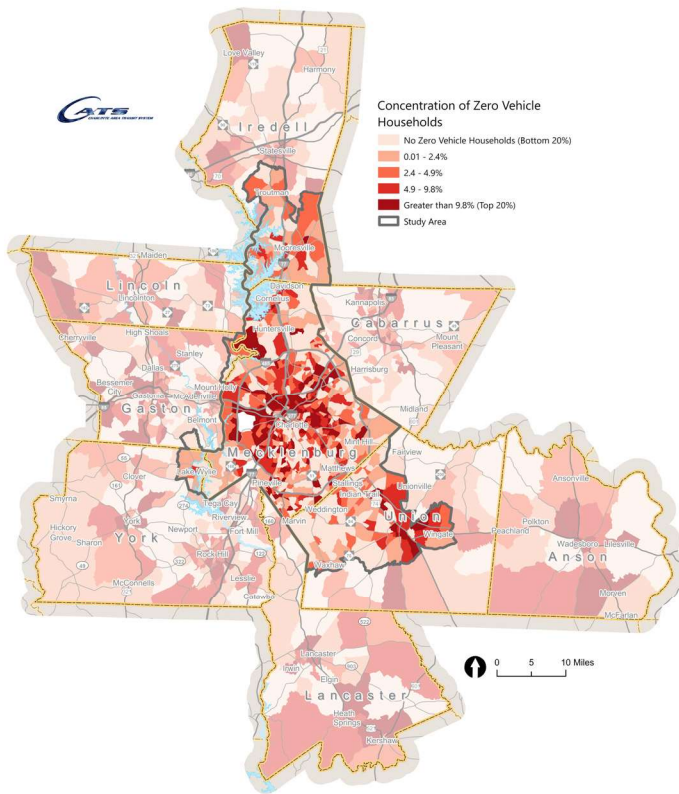


Figure 12. Concentration of Zero Vehicle Households Population

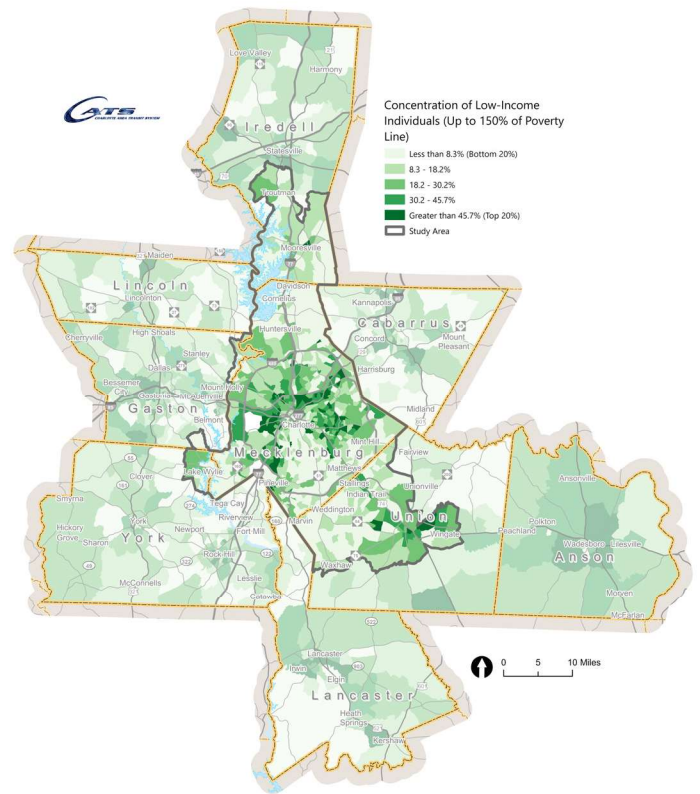


Figure 13. Concentration of Low-Income Individuals (Up to 150% of Poverty) Population

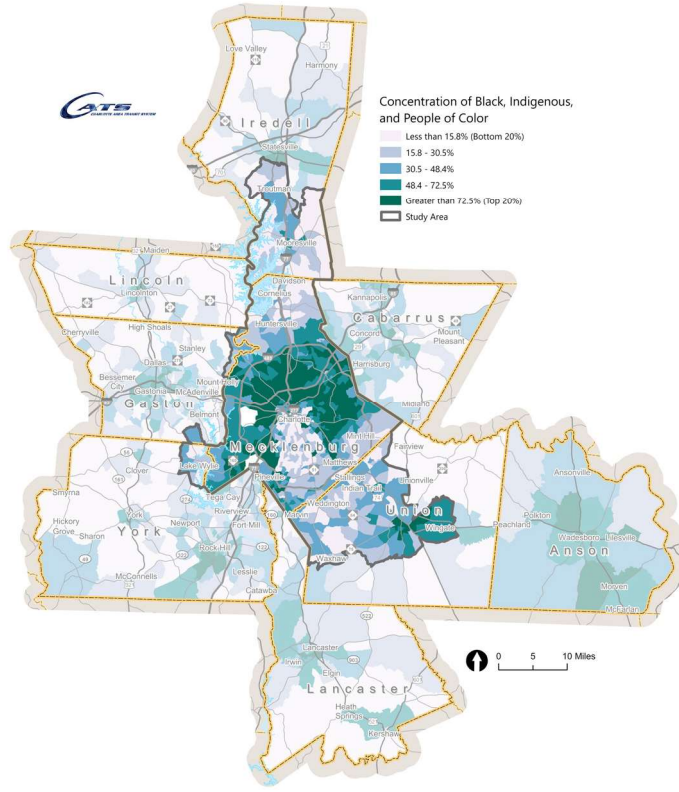


Figure 14. Concentration of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Population

See Appendix A for full size map images.

Housing Affordability

While housing costs have leveled off since the sharp increase in prices seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still growth in these costs that has resulted in an increase in housing instability across the region, with no sign of significant price declines in the near future. The “2024 State of Housing in Charlotte Report” reported that median home prices in the Charlotte area increased from \$414,360 in September 2023, to \$429,945 in September 2024, for an annual growth rate of 3.76 percent. To put this in perspective, the median home price in January 2020 was \$273,500². The 57.2 percent jump in home prices between 2020 to 2024 has placed significant housing affordability challenges on the region. Like median home prices, average rents experienced a rapid acceleration during the pandemic; however, rents in the region have decreased slightly between 2023 and 2024. This can be contributed to the influx of multifamily apartment developments over the last several years. It is also worth noting that approximately 3 in 4 of all apartment units in the region are in Mecklenburg County³.

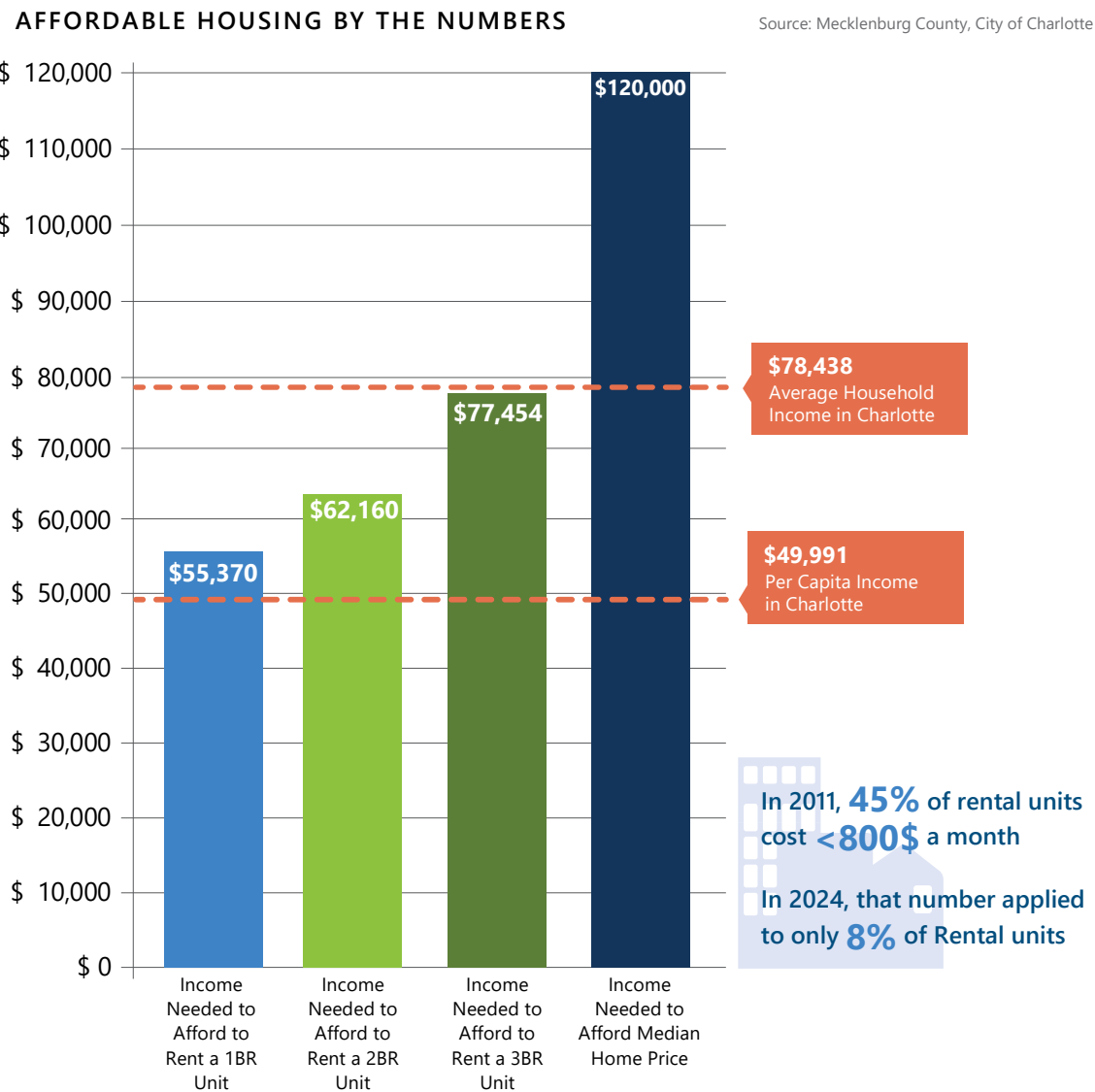


Figure 15. Housing Affordability Issues

² 2022 State of Housing in Charlotte Report

³ 2024 State of Housing in Charlotte Report

The number of low-cost rentals, or rental housing that is less than \$800 per month, in 2024 has decreased rapidly from approximately 45 percent of all rentals in 2011 to just 8 percent in Mecklenburg County⁴. This fact, paired with the 11 percent increase in population during the same time span, has contributed to a significant shortage of low-cost housing.

Rising housing costs in urban areas like Charlotte have forced households to look further out to find affordable housing, which has led to an increase in total household transportation costs due to a lack of public transportation options associated with more suburbanized and rural areas. Without efforts to improve or expand transportation options in the region, traffic congestion will continue to worsen as families are forced to move further out and rely on single-occupancy vehicles to travel to work and access other vital services.

CHARLOTTE REGION EFFECTIVE RENT FOR APARTMENTS 2000 TO 2024

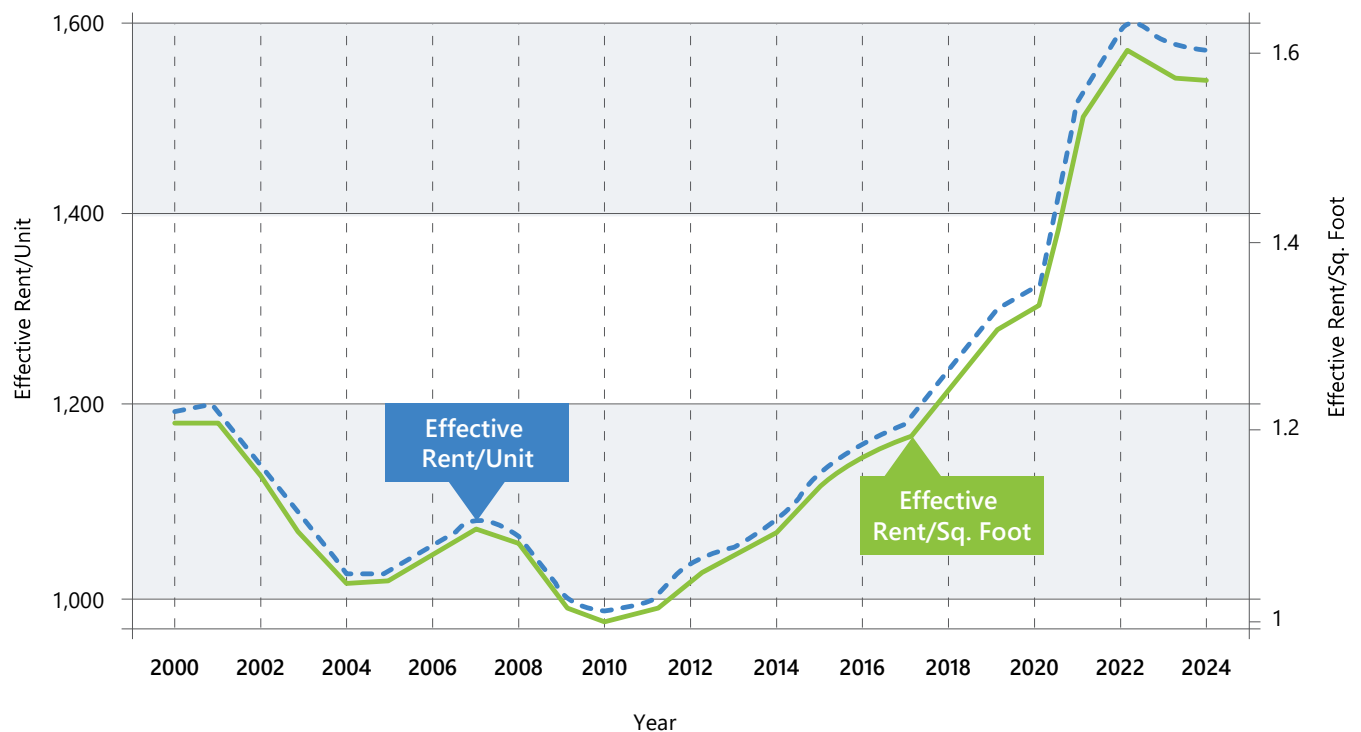


Figure 16. Charlotte Region Effective Rent for Apartments 2000 to 2024 (source: 2024 State of Housing in Charlotte Report)

⁴ [Charlotte-Mecklenburg State of Housing Instability Report](#)

Limited Footprint of Regional Transit Network

The region's existing footprint of fixed route and deviated fixed route services cover a small portion of the total area. Currently, fixed route and deviated fixed route services within the nine-county region are only offered by Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS), and Rider Transit. Express bus routes offered by CATS has expanded total connectivity across the region, but the frequencies of these routes are limited to the weekday work structure, with few route times occurring outside of 9am to 5pm business hours. The City of Gastonia has removed their fixed route transit in 2024 and replaced the service with citywide microtransit, available for all residents and visitors to any destination within the municipal limits.

Table 5 below provides an overview of all the transit providers in the region, their geographic area served, type of service, and service hours. It should be noted that the service hours listed are not specific to each service and are meant to highlight the overall operating hours of each agency. Based on the table below, it becomes clear that aside from CATS and Rider Transit, most agencies do not offer any services during the weekends and most close after normal business hours (8am – 6pm). Mecklenburg County Transportation Services (MTS) offers the most robust county demand response service with service available every day. This current trend prevents users from taking advantage of these services for trip purposes outside of the traditional workday structure.

CATS CityLYNX Gold Line traveling through uptown Charlotte.



At the state level, NCDOT is actively taking steps to expand transportation options in the region and improve connectivity. For example, the Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in NC, or MEE NC, is a federally funded pilot program that eleven transportation agencies in the state have used to implement on-demand microtransit. This program was created with the aim to accelerate the deployment of high-quality, on-demand microtransit services and advance NCDOT's vision to partner with the state's rural transit systems⁵. Many of these services are expected to begin operations in Spring and Summer of 2025.

At a more local level, CATS is also taking strides to fill in mobility gaps and provide more transportation options to underserved areas. For example, CATS Micro, its new shared-ride microtransit service, began service in late February 2025⁶. The program offers rides at the same fare as a local bus and operates within a designated zone of North Mecklenburg that includes the towns of Davidson, Cornelius, and Huntersville. It is worth noting that operating hours of this service do not extend past 7pm on weekdays or weekends.

⁵ [NCDOT \(March 2025\). Webinar: IMD Multimodal Updates](#)

⁶ [CATS Micro Service](#)

Table 5. Public Transportation Providers serving Charlotte Urban Area

Provider	Geographic Area Served	Type of Service(s) Provided	Service Hours
Cabarrus County Transportation (CCTS)	Cabarrus County	Demand Response	» Weekdays (8am to 5pm) » Closed weekends
Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS)	City of Charlotte and parts of Mecklenburg County, Express Bus Service outside of Mecklenburg County	Fixed Route, Microtransit Service in Northern Mecklenburg County, Express Route, ADA Paratransit, Light Rail, Streetcar	» Monday through Saturday (5am to 2am) » Sundays and holidays (6am to 2am)
Gaston County Access	Gaston County, Limited Service to the VA in Salisbury	Deviated Fixed Route, Demand Response, Salisbury VA Shuttle, Subscription Routes	» Weekdays (4am to 6pm) » Closed weekends
Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)	Iredell County, Limited Service to Mecklenburg and to the VA in Salisbury	Deviated Fixed Route, Express Bus, Demand Response, Subscription Routes, Salisbury VA Shuttle	» Weekdays (4:50am to 5:45pm) » Closed weekends
Lancaster Area Ride Service (LARS)	Lancaster County (SC)	Demand Response	» Weekdays (9am to 3pm) » Closed weekends
Mecklenburg County Transportation Services (MTS)	Mecklenburg County	Demand Response and Subscription Routes (focus on NEMT and Seniors 60+), Rural General Public, Veterans, Transportation to Congregate Meal Sites	» Monday through Sunday (5am to 7pm)
Rider (Concord Kannapolis Area Transit)	Concord and Kannapolis areas of Cabarrus County, Express Bus to Mecklenburg County	Fixed Route, ADA Paratransit, Express Bus with connection with CATS light rail via JW Clay Station	» Weekdays (5:30am to 8:30pm) » Weekends (8:30am to 8:30pm)
Transportation Lincoln County (TLC)	Lincoln County; some trips outside the county for medical purposes	Demand Response, Subscription Routes	» Weekdays (6am to 5pm) » Closed weekends
Union County Transportation Services	Union County, some trips to Mecklenburg County and to the VA in Salisbury	Demand Response; Recently expanded to provide a greater variety of trips including General Purpose, Education, or Employment	» Weekdays (6am to 6pm) » Closed weekends
York County Access	York County (SC)	Demand Response	» Weekdays (6am to 6pm) » Closed weekends

Expanding Existing Services and Capacity Limitations

While several counties in the metro area are adding microtransit and improving or expanding paratransit services⁷, there is still a current shortage of vehicles and drivers that lead to overflow trips expanding into taxi trips instead of public transportation services. Trip booking systems for paratransit services are reported to be severely understaffed or dysfunctional, which has resulted in passengers being unable to book trips through the calling system. A more thorough analysis of the barriers to transportation within the disabled populations that exceed Title VI requirements will ensure that new or existing services are adequately prepared to meet the needs of these communities. As part of the expansion of services and fleet requirements to meet demand, considerations toward the capacity of operations and maintenance facilities will be necessary.

As part of CATS' effort to meet the growing need for public transportation, the agency is updating their Transit System Plan (TSP)⁸. The TSP will develop options for a fiscally constrained program of bus and rail improvements if additional local funding is approved for Mecklenburg County in a referendum, expected to occur in late 2025⁹. The plan calls for enhanced fixed-route bus frequency and accessibility, fully implement the CATS Micro, extend the Gold Line, build out the Red Line, and provide additional light rail transit or bus rapid transit along the silver line and blue line corridors.

COVID-19 Impacts for Public Transit Agencies

Five years on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, transit agencies across the county are still learning to adjust to new operating standards and ridership realities. Public transportation providers in North Carolina saw a significant decrease in ridership and fare revenues starting in March 2020. Rebounds from this dramatic drop have been slow, but according to CATS staff, ridership is currently at 90% of pre-pandemic ridership for the 2024 fiscal year, despite the decrease in revenue hours. To offset the significant increase in operating costs that were also seen during the pandemic, COVID-19 federal relief funds were distributed through several programs (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Acts 2021 (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds). These funds allowed transit operators in the region to cover some of the losses that were accumulated during the height of the pandemic. For most agencies, these funds are expected to expire within the next year or so. As ridership has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels, which limits returns on fare revenues, public transportation agencies in the region may be facing a "fiscal cliff" due to increased operating costs and lower fare returns from ridership without new dedicated funding sources (e.g., state and local funds or other dedicated revenues)¹⁰.

7 [CATS expands Service into Mint Hill](#)

8 [CATS Transit System Plan Update](#)

9 [Mecklenburg Transportation Tax Bill Filed](#)

10 [APTA \(June 2023\). Policy Brief: Public Transit Agencies Face Severe Fiscal Cliff](#)

4

Recommendations

This section provides an overview of recommendations developed as part of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan update for Charlotte Urban Area.



Recommendation Key Themes

Recommendations for the Charlotte Urban Area are organized around the following five key themes::



**Information
Sharing and
Customer
Service**



**Mobility
Management
and Agency
Coordination**



**Connectivity
and Safety**



**Service
Expansion**



Microtransit



Information Sharing and Customer Service

For many customers encountering the public transportation system in the Charlotte region for the first time, there are challenges in terms of information available around how to sign up and utilize the public transit services. Considering that the Charlotte region is rapidly adding population, and at the same time many seniors are aging into needing additional public transportation services over time, the demand for public transportation is likely to continue. Those new clients (as well as their family members, social and medical workers supporting them in their everyday decisions about transportation choices) would benefit from an easier, centralized information portal.

Adding to the challenge, new private and public agency service types are being added to the mix all the time. For example, several electric vehicle shuttle services have come into operations in the City of Charlotte over the last several years, including SouthPark Skipper (operating in South Park) and Jaunt and Jump Transit operating in Plaza Midwood and NODA. CATS has recently started Micro service in northern Mecklenburg County. CATS Micro is an on-demand, shared-ride service that takes passengers where they need to go, for the same fare as a local bus or rail trip, with up to 30 minutes wait times. While the CATS-Pass app allows passengers to schedule a CATS Micro trip, it does not allow scheduling of a typical ADA Paratransit (STS trip) and does not provide information about other services such as the private or quasi-public transit alternatives available in the region.

MAG Connect-a-Ride

MAG Connect-A-Ride is a listing of agencies that provide human services transportation resource information in the MAG region. Select criteria from the dropdowns below to refine your search.

DISCLAIMER: While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) makes no warranty, expressed or implied, as to its accuracy and expressly disclaims liability for the accuracy thereof. Inclusion of the such information in this directory does not equal endorsement by MAG.


Service Area

Phoenix ▾


Type of Transportation

Volunteer Driver Program ▾


Service Availability

Low Income ▾

Transportation Resources

Displaying 2 Results

[Center for Service and Volunteerism at NAU \(Senior Companion Program\)](#)

- ▲
- ▲ **Maricopa Connect-a-Ride Online Search Service.**
- ▲ <https://azmag.gov/Programs/Transportation/Human-Services-Transportation/MAG-Connect-A-Ride>

As an example of a more comprehensive public transportation services information portal, Maricopa Council of Governments hosts a “MAG Connect-a-Ride” web search function, which allows a potential rider or another interested person to look up what types of human services transportation services are available based on geography, type of transportation and special needs. For the agencies available to provide the desired service, contact phone numbers and website links are included.



STS Book of 10 Yellow Tickets

\$35.00

How It Works:

Each ticket is valid for one ride in one direction onboard CATS Special Transportation Service (STS).

Ticket cannot be used on CATS local, neighborhood, express, express plus bus service or the LYNX Blue Line.

[Add to comparison chart](#)
[View Comparison Chart](#)

- ▲
- ▲ **CATS STS (Paratransit Service) Yellow Tickets**

A more regional-facing phone application that would allow to plan for cross-jurisdictional trips, schedule microtransit and ADA Paratransit trips and purchase tickets across agencies and county lines would be another potential improvement that would provide both information and improved convenience for riders with navigating the transit systems.

Ticketing Options

In addition to information sharing about the public transit services available, transportation agencies can provide better services to riders looking for updates on their requested vehicle arrival, and additional options to pay fare for a public transportation trip. For example, while CATS Pass app allows passengers to pay for Micro, bus, and light rail trips, tickets for STS transportation (yellow tickets) still have to be purchased in paper ticket format. Transitioning to electronic ticket format, available for purchase through a transit agency app, would add convenience for passengers and might reduce the need to schedule additional trips simply to go buy more transit tickets. An additional verification step could be added to the app for passengers to add their ADA Rider/STS ID or upload a verification ID to document the ADA Paratransit passenger status.

Travel Training

Travel training and sensitivity training is another area where customer experience can be improved, especially for passengers with mobility limitations. Sensitivity training for drivers of both public and private transportation providers could help them be more aware of special needs that passengers with mobility limitations might be facing.

» As an example from a peer agency, Orlando Lynx Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan includes a recommendation for sensitivity training refresher course for ACCESS LYNX employees, with a focus on handling customer phone calls and boarding vehicles.

Travel training for seniors and transit riders new to the system (or new to the Charlotte region) could help new passengers feel more comfortable with scheduling and taking their first public transportation trip, after they have had a more in-depth introduction to the transit rider experience and how to navigate the system. While hands-on training with a dedicated mobility support person would provide the highest level of support, a welcoming packet for new riders with step-by-step instructions could also be helpful.

» As an example, Orlando Lynx Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan recommends developing a “welcome packet” or revised “How to Ride Guide” for new ACCESS LYNX clients informing them on how to schedule trips, the riders code of conduct, and other LYNX services available to them.



Mobility Management and Agency Coordination

Mobility Management and Agency Coordination refers to the variety of interagency coordination activities, committees, and technology and communication solutions that would help transit agencies communicate and coordinate with each other while also improving information-sharing with passengers.

The top priority for recommendations under Mobility Management and Agency Coordination is focused on setting up a regional Mobility Manager position. The regional Mobility Manager would work with agencies across the larger region to promote public transportation and information sharing between transit providers. Alternatively, multiple subregional mobility managers could be utilized to engage with local providers and coordinate transportation planning (similar to a recommendation in the Maricopa Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan).

Separately, or in addition to the regional mobility manager position, there remains a need for additional regional coordination between fixed route and demand response providers in the region in the form of a formalized transit committee. Currently, the CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group (launched in September of 2023) meets to discuss the issues facing transit providers funded through FTA Section 5307 (urban) funding. The focus of this work group could be expanded to include discussions around human services transportation needs and FTA Section 5310 funded projects. Alternatively, a new regional Paratransit Working Group could be formed that is focused on demand response and paratransit providers (to include representation from Union, Iredell and Mecklenburg Counties, with optional addition of other nearby counties over time). The Centralina Regional Council currently hosts quarterly Mobility Management meetings for fixed route and demand response transportation providers in the greater Charlotte region with representation from North Carolina Department of Transportation.

These quarterly meetings could be adapted or expanded upon for a formalized Paratransit Working Group meeting.

In addition to a designated Mobility Manager role and setting up a new regional committee, the following software, policy and capital investments could help improve coordination between various transit providers in the region to achieve a better result for riders:

- ✓ Invest in a unified regional demand response and paratransit scheduling software
- ✓ Review and standardize transit providers' travel policies to allow for regional trips across county lines, and for more general-purpose trips
- ✓ Develop a regional fare interoperability agreement for STS/ADA Paratransit trips where a passenger might have to transfer between systems (i.e. CK Rider to CATS STS).
- ✓ Develop a regional cross-agency utilization of vehicles agreement, so that when vehicles are not in revenue service (i.e. Anson or Iredell County van waiting while a passenger is in Charlotte at the doctor's office) they could provide additional trips for the local transit agency
- ✓ Invest in additional mobility hubs, which are comfortable and inviting, as locations for passengers to transfer between systems
 - When planning a regional mobility hub, it is recommended to solicit additional feedback from nearby transit systems for better future interoperability, in case they see an opportunity to utilize the updated mobility hub
- ✓ Support direct driver-to-driver communication for trips requiring transfers from one agency to another (i.e. through integrated software and unified radio procurement options)



Connectivity and Safety

Connectivity and Safety recommendations are related to first-mile last-mile access to transit stops, and are focused on additional transportation options, such as expanding mobility hubs, providing community shuttles and connecting passengers to other transportation options once they arrive at the transit stop closest to their destination.



- ▲
- ▲ **A mobility hub concept speaks to better connecting transit passengers to first mile-last mile transportation options via improved information sharing and amenities such as e-scooter share and WiFi at key transit stops.**

As the Charlotte region continues to grow, multi-family and affordable housing is often built further away from key job centers and convenient fixed route transit routes. Building improved, ADA compliant pedestrian networks, with safe pedestrian crossings to connect job centers, key community destinations and residential developments to transit stops would help expand the reach of existing transit in the region. Pedestrian crossing improvements are needed in addition to linear sidewalk expansion projects, to support crossing to reach the bus stop. Especially on busy multi-lane urban arterials, bus stop locations are not always close to the nearest safe pedestrian crossing opportunity, which necessitates the need for improved linear pedestrian facilities or new crossing opportunities. Bicycle access to key transit stops is another element that could help expand the reach of existing transit service.

Improved mobility hubs with seating areas protected from the elements, lighting, and WiFi can make it more convenient for passengers to transfer between different transportation modes (i.e. from e-scooter or neighborhood shuttle to a fixed route bus, or from a fixed route bus to an Uber/Lyft vehicle). Designated mobility hubs appropriate for cross-county transfer points could be identified for additional improvements needed.



Service Expansion

Due to the increase in demand, human services and public transportation service providers in the greater Charlotte region have to grow and expand. Based on stakeholder interviews conducted, as of 2024, some of the transit service providers were seeing a return to pre-COVID demand levels for public transit, including ADA Paratransit trips. Service expansion recommendations center on rebuilding back to pre-COVID public transit service levels and continuing to expand on existing public transit services in the Charlotte Urban area. Expanding human services and public transportation services requires additional funding. In addition to funding, acquiring the appropriate vehicle types and hiring and training a required number of drivers and maintenance staff is necessary.

The following specific types of trips have been identified through public and stakeholder feedback:

- ☑ Expand employment and general-purpose trips (as part of on-demand public transportation services)
- ☑ Improve availability of public transportation trips to provide access to grocery stores, childcare facilities, health clinics, job training centers and superstores, post offices/UPS and FedEx Stores ("general purpose light")

The following is a list of recommended service changes, program changes and capital investments to improve rider experience and to allow better access to key destinations via transit in the Charlotte Urban area:

- ☑ Expand transit service times/increase frequency of service on key routes
- ☑ Reduce wait times for on-demand and ADA paratransit passengers
- ☑ Expand client eligibility for on-demand trips
- ☑ Support acquisition of additional vehicles and hire and train additional drivers to enable expansion of fixed route and on demand public transportation services
- ☑ Schedule on-demand trips based on areas with higher demand (with support from hot spot analysis)
- ☑ Provide enhanced transit stops and mobility hubs at key locations to support trip chaining and transfers
- ☑ Utilize rideshare as a supportive service to expand the reach of transit (with ride vouchers to offset the cost for passengers transferring to/from fixed route transit)
- ☑ Set up a regional taxi voucher system for seniors and individuals with disabilities to offset the cost of taxi trips when public transportation service is not available or is not flexible enough to accommodate desired destinations or trip times
- ☑ Set up a regional volunteer transportation services program for older adults and people with disabilities
 - Such a program would function as a safety net service for those who do not qualify or cannot utilize other transit services (or may require additional door-through-door assistance from a volunteer)



Microtransit

Microtransit is already present in the Charlotte Urban Area, including CATS Micro operating in northern Mecklenburg County since early 2025 and GoGastonia system in operation since July 2024. Microtransit can provide a better quality of service and more flexibility for passengers in areas of the region which lack sufficient residential and employment density for frequent fixed route transit service, and where riders require additional flexibility with pick up location or timing of the trip.

Expanding microtransit service areas to additional parts of the region, in order to help bridge the spatial and temporal gap between existing light rail and fixed route transit service, residential neighborhoods, jobs and key community destinations, would help provide convenient and reliable transit service to a larger portion of the Charlotte urban area's population and would provide a better overall quality of service for passengers.

As part of microtransit service expansion, selecting an appropriate provider and model of service might be required for transit agencies who are new to this type of service. Transit agencies also have the option of providing their own call center support and vehicles or utilizing the service provider's call center support and vehicles. For transit agencies looking to utilize their own call centers and vehicles, there might be a need to increase capacity in those areas before starting a new microtransit on-demand services.

Developing and hosting a one-day Microtransit Regional Summit is recommended as a short term recommendation, in order to share best practices and lessons learned with microtransit implementation in the region.

City of Wilson Microtransit vehicles. ▶▶▶▶



Table of Recommendations

The table below includes provides a list of recommendations with suggested timeframe (near-term, mid-term or long-term) for implementation.

Charlotte Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Recommendations

Table 6. Near-Term Recommendations

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: NEAR-TERM				
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Host a Microtransit Regional Summit to Share Best Practices. Host a one-day event focused on microtransit implementation best practices for transit providers in the region.	» CRTPO » Centralina Regional Council of Governments » CATS	» NCDOT IMD » GoGastonia	-
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Establish Regional Mobility Manager position(s). The Regional Mobility Manager would help coordinate across agencies to implement policies that support public transit, build local partnerships and help coordinate transportation services across service providers and funding agencies in the region. The Regional Mobility Manager would also support the development of information tools and trip planning tools for transit riders.	» Centralina Regional Council of Governments	» CRTPO » CATS » NCDOT IMD	» CONNECT Beyond C-09 (p. 89) » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Establish a Paratransit Working Group or Include Demand Response and Paratransit Providers and Topics of Discussion as part of the CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group. Establish a Paratransit Working Group that is comprised of representatives from each Community Transportation Provider in the region and is coordinated by the Regional Mobility Manager. Alternatively, include Demand Response and Paratransit providers and topics of discussion as part of the CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group. The objective would be to coordinate paratransit policies and operations region-wide and to work together to implement CONNECT Beyond recommendations related to Community Transportation Services.	» Centralina Regional Council of Governments » CRTPO	» ADA Paratransit and Demand Response Providers in the Region- CATS » MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Rider Transit, Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	» CONNECT Beyond D-03 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)

Table 6. Near-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: NEAR-TERM				
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Update transit providers travel policies in the Charlotte region for a unified approach for trips across county lines. Review and standardize transit providers' travel policies for a unified approach for trips across county lines. The goal would be to allow for regional trips across county lines, and for more general purpose trips.	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group to initiate a discussion; CATS, MTS, ICATS and Rider Transit recommended as four initial agencies to pilot a unified policy	» CATS » MTS » ICATS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » GASTON County ACCESS » Anson County Transportation System	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Information Sharing and Customer Service	Establish a regional public transportation services information portal or regional transit information center. Establish a regional public transportation services information portal or regional transit information center for passengers and those working with potential transit riders to identify transportation services available. This could be similar to Maricopa Council of Governments "MAG Connect-a-Ride".	» Centralina Regional Council of Governments » CRTPO	» CATS » MTS	» CONNECT Beyond D-37
 Information Sharing and Customer Service	Enable CATS STS (ADA Paratransit) trip payments through the CATS Pass app. Enable CATS STS (ADA Paratransit) trip payments through the CATS Pass app to replace paper tickets for those passengers who prefer an electronic method of payment. An additional verification step could be added to the app for passengers to add their ADA Rider/STS ID or upload a verification ID to document the ADA Paratransit passenger status.	» CATS	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)

Table 6. Near-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: NEAR-TERM				
 Information Sharing and Customer Service	Travel Training. Establish transit training for seniors and individuals with disabilities as well as transit riders new to the system (or new to the Charlotte region) through a combination of group training, one-on-one training and a welcoming packet for new riders with detailed step-by-step instructions for how to ride transit.	» Could be implemented by a non-profit agency or an existing public transportation provider	» Centralina Council of Governments » CATS » MTS » ICATS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » GASTON County ACCESS » Anson County Transportation System	» CONNECT Beyond (Travel Training); Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Information Sharing and Customer Service	Implement Sensitivity Training for Transportation Operators. Sensitivity training for drivers of both public and private transportation providers could help operators be more aware of special needs that passengers with mobility limitations might be facing. Customer phone calls and boarding vehicles are two target areas to review as part of sensitivity training.	» CATS » MTS	» ICATS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » GASTON County ACCESS » Anson County Transportation System » Centralina Regional Council	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Connectivity and Safety	Improve pedestrian access and shelters at existing public transit stops with highest ridership. Identify priority bus stop locations with highest ridership. Upgrade bus stops with highest ridership with bus shelters, improve ADA compliant bus stop pads and upgrade lighting. Add Braille to fixed-route bus stops signs.	» CATS » ICATS » Rider Transit	» NCDOT (improvements as part of Complete Streets Policy) » Municipalities in the Charlotte Urban Area with existing fixed route transit (Cornelius, Davidson, Charlotte, Concord, Huntersville, Kannapolis, Matthews, Mint Hill, Mooresville, Statesville)	» CONNECT Beyond D-26 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25) » Better Bus Study (pp. 40–48) » Envision My Ride

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Connectivity and Safety	Expand microtransit service to 3-4 new service areas across the region. Expand CATS Micro service to 3-4 new services areas; continue to provide ADA-accessible vehicles and same day reservation capabilities in high demand areas to expand the reach of existing fixed route and deviated fixed route transit.	» Could be implemented by any of the existing public transportation providers in the region, or a private provider through public funding support	» NCDOT IMD	» CONNECT Beyond » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 31)
 Information Sharing and Customer Service	Establish a regional public transportation phone app. Establish a regional public transportation phone app that would work for scheduling, transit route look up and fare payments across multiple providers. Allow for access by under-banked individuals and individuals with disabilities.	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group to initiate a discussion; lead agency for implementation to be determined	-	» CONNECT Beyond
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Invest in a unified regional demand response and paratransit scheduling software. The transit agencies in the region would research potential options and invest in a unified regional demand response and paratransit scheduling software. Procurement options from the statewide contract or another unified procurement mechanism is recommended.	» Once established, discussion to be initiated at the Regional Paratransit Working Group with support from NCDOT IMD	» ADA paratransit and demand response providers in the region	» CONNECT Beyond D-69 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24) » Better Bus Study (Driver Dispatch Tools, p. 35) » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Develop a regional fare interoperability agreement for ADA Paratransit trips to allow passenger transfers without paying two different fares. Develop a regional fare interoperability agreement for ADA Paratransit trips where a passenger might have to transfer between systems (i.e. CK Rider to CATS STS. This would allow passengers to transfer between systems without having to pay the fare twice. (CONNECT Beyond B-19).	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group to initiate a discussion » CATS, MTS, ICATS and Rider Transit recommended as four initial agencies to pilot a regional fare interoperability agreement	-	» CONNECT Beyond B-19 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Develop a regional cross-utilization of vehicles agreement. Develop a regional cross-agency utilization of vehicles agreement, so that when vehicles are not in revenue service (i.e. Anson or Iredell County transit vehicle waiting while a passenger is in Charlotte at the doctor's office) they could provide additional trips for the local transit agency. A unified regional demand response and paratransit scheduling software could support this recommendation, if implemented first.	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group and Regional Paratransit Working Group to initiate a discussion » CATS, MTS, ICATS, Rider Transit and Union County Transportation recommended as five initial agencies to pilot a regional utilization of vehicles agreement	-	» CONNECT Beyond D-69 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Invest in radio and other technologies to support direct driver-to-driver communication for trips requiring transfers from one agency to another. Invest in radio and other technologies to support direct driver-to-driver communication for trips requiring transfers from one agency to another. Unified radio procurement policies would need to be developed to support radio interoperability. A unified regional demand response and paratransit scheduling software could support this recommendation, if implemented first.	» Regional Paratransit Working Group (once established) to initiate a discussion » CATS, MTS, ICATS, Rider Transit and Union County Transportation recommended as five initial agencies to pilot	-	» CONNECT Beyond D-69 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 24)
 Connectivity and Safety	Provide enhanced transit stops and regional mobility hubs at key locations to support trip chaining and transfers between modes and between transit agencies. Implement mobility hubs at key station areas including regional mobility hubs in several key locations to improve transfer and waiting areas with access to a variety of last-mile solutions including pedestrian access, ride sharing, microtransit/shuttles and taxi services.	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group to initiate a discussion to identify location for key regional mobility hubs; CATS, MTS, ICATS, Rider Transit and Union County Transportation recommended as five initial agencies to support regional mobility hubs planning and implementation	» CRTPO and NCDOT IMD (support with reviewing potential grant funding opportunities)	» CONNECT Beyond (Mobility Hubs) » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 28)

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Connectivity and Safety	Upgrade bus stops with ADA accessible loading pads and provide safe and accessible walk access routes including sidewalks and pedestrian crossing improvements in the 1/4 mile radius around bus stops to connect to nearby commercial centers, schools, other key community destinations and residential neighborhoods. Set up a capital investment program to prioritize and fund bundle of bus stop improvements, sidewalk and pedestrian crossing improvements in the 1/4 mile radius around bus stops to connect to nearby commercial centers, schools, other key community destinations and residential neighborhoods.	» CATS » ICATS » Rider Transit	» NCDOT (improvements as part of Complete Streets Policy) » Municipalities in the Charlotte Urban Area with existing fixed route transit (Cornelius, Davidson, Charlotte, Concord, Huntersville, Kannapolis, Matthews, Mint Hill, Mooresville, Statesville)	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)
 Service Expansion	Support acquisition of additional vehicles to enable expansion of fixed route and on demand public transportation services. Accommodate over-sized mobility aids and more fuel-efficient options. Invest in acquisition of additional vehicles, including wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles, which are needed to support on-demand and fixed route service expansion. As part of vehicle fleet expansion, purchase larger vehicles to accommodate over-sized mobility aids and upgrade vehicle fleets to include more fuel-efficient, environmentally-friendly options.	» CATS » MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	» CRTPO (support with potential grant funding for urban fixed route systems); NCDOT IMD (support with potential grant funding opportunities and procurement of vehicles under the statewide contract)	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Service Expansion	Hire and train additional drivers and maintenance staff to enable expansion of fixed route and on demand public transportation services. Invest in hiring and training additional operators and maintenance staff to enable expansion of fixed route and on demand public transportation services.	» CATS » MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)
 Service Expansion	Expand demand response service-additional employment trips. Increase availability of employment trips as part of on-demand transportation services.	» MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 27)
 Service Expansion	Expand demand response service-additional general purpose trips. Increase availability of on-demand general purpose transportation to provide access to grocery stores, childcare facilities, health clinics, job training centers and superstores, post offices/UPS and FedEx Stores.	» MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 27)
 Service Expansion	Expand service hours and improve frequency. Expand On-Demand and Fixed Route Transit Service Hours (Evenings and Weekends); increase frequency of fixed route service on key routes.	» CATS » MTS » ICATS, Rider Transit	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 27)

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Service Expansion	Reduce reservation wait times for on-demand transportation and ADA Paratransit. Reduce reservation wait times; provide same-day on-demand transportation services including ADA Paratransit /Special Transportation Service (STS).	» CATS » MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Rider Transit » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	-	» CONNECT Beyond » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)
 Service Expansion	Expand client eligibility for on-demand transportation. Expand client eligibility for on-demand transportation, especially in areas where fixed route service is not available.	» MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System,	-	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)
 Connectivity and Safety	Volunteer transportation services program. Launch a redesigned regional volunteer transportation services program for older adults and people with disabilities. This program is intended as a safety net service for those who do not qualify or cannot access other transit services.	» Could be implemented by a non-profit agency, Centralina Area Agency on Aging or one of the transit providers in the region	-	» CONNECT Beyond C-20 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 28)
 Connectivity and Safety	Taxi voucher program for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Implement a taxi voucher program for older adults and people with disabilities. This program is intended to help offset the cost of taxi trips when public transportation service is not available or is not flexible enough to accommodate desired destinations or trip times.	» Could be implemented by a non-profit agency, Centralina Area Agency on Aging or one of the transit providers in the region	-	» CONNECT Beyond (equity principle) » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)

Table 7. Mid-Term Recommendations Continued

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: MID-TERM				
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Regional Paratransit and Community Transportation Scheduling Integration. Perform a regional Paratransit and Community Transportation Scheduling Integration and Implementation Study.	» Regional Paratransit Working Group to initiate the discussion	» ADA paratransit and demand response providers in the region including CATS, MTS, ICATS, Gaston County ACCESS, Rider Transit, Union County Transportation, Anson County Transportation System	» CONNECT Beyond D-09 » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)
 Service Expansion	Improve existing transportation services for specific categories of passengers and trips (medical, veterans, individuals with visual impairments). Improve existing transportation services for specific categories of passengers and trips: 1. Expand medical appointments transportation including dialysis transportation 2. Improve access to transportation for veterans 3. Improve access to transportation for individuals with visual impairments	» MTS » ICATS » Gaston County ACCESS » Union County Transportation » Anson County Transportation System	-	» CONNECT Beyond (Medical/Veteran Access) » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 30)

Table 8. Long-Term Recommendations

Type	Recommendation & Recommendation Description	Agency Responsible	Supporting Partners	Additional Plans where Recommendation is Referenced
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: LONG-TERM				
 Mobility Management and Agency Coordination	Invest in additional regional mobility hubs which are comfortable and inviting as locations for passengers to transfer between systems and between transportation modes. Invest in additional mobility hubs which are comfortable and inviting as locations for passengers to transfer between systems. When planning a regional mobility hub, it is recommended for transit agencies to solicit additional feedback from nearby transit systems for better future interoperability, in case they see an opportunity to utilize the updated mobility hub. Implement additional amenities such as improved shelters and lighting, public WiFi, information stations and wayfinding, food vending and restrooms at regional mobility hubs.	» CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group to continue a discussion to identify additional location for key regional mobility hubs » CATS, MTS, ICATS, Rider Transit and Union County Transportation recommended as five initial agencies to support regional mobility hubs planning and implementation	» CRTPO and NCDOT IMD (support with reviewing potential grant funding opportunities)	» CONNECT Beyond » Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 28)
 Connectivity and Safety				
 Connectivity and Safety	Continue to upgrade bus stops with ADA accessible loading pads and safe and accessible walk access routes as part of roadway projects design and construction (Complete Streets implementation). As part of Complete Streets policy implementation, ensure bus stops in the region are upgraded with ADA accessible loading pads and safe and accessible walk access routes during roadway projects design and construction.	» CATS » ICATS » Rider Transit	» NCDOT (improvements as part of Complete Streets Policy); municipalities in the Charlotte Urban Area with existing fixed route transit (Cornelius, Davidson, Charlotte, Concord, Huntersville, Kannapolis, Matthews, Mint Hill, Mooresville, Statesville)	» Human Services Transportation Plan (p. 25)

MAY 2025

THE CHARLOTTE, NC-SC URBAN AREA

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Appendix A: Technical Memo

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



Contents

Introduction	1
Study Area	1
Existing Conditions	4
Sociodemographic Analysis	4
<i>Environmental Justice Index (EJI)</i>	4
<i>Older Adults (Aged 65+)</i>	7
<i>Youth (Aged 0-17)</i>	9
<i>Zero-Vehicle Households</i>	12
<i>Individuals with a Disability</i>	15
<i>Limited English Proficiency</i>	17
<i>Poverty</i>	20
<i>Veteran Status</i>	22
<i>Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)</i>	24
<i>Population and Employment Growth</i>	27
Charlotte Urban Area Existing Transportation Providers	31
Public Transit Agencies Serving Charlotte Urban Area.....	32
<i>Anson County Transportation Services (ACTS)</i>	33
<i>Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS)</i>	33
<i>Gaston County ACCESS</i>	34
<i>Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)</i>	34
<i>Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)</i>	36
<i>Lancaster Area Ride Service (LARS)</i>	37
<i>Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS)</i>	37
<i>Rider (Concord Kannapolis Area Transit)</i>	39
<i>Transportation Lincoln County (TLC)</i>	40
<i>Union County Transportation (UCT)</i>	41
<i>York County Access</i>	42
<i>My Ride Rock Hill</i>	43
Public Transportation Ridership Trends	44
<i>Passenger Trips</i>	44
<i>Wheelchair Ridership</i>	47
<i>Union County</i>	54
<i>Passenger Fares and Agency Funding</i>	56
Subrecipients of Charlotte Urban Area FTA Section 5310 Funding	61
Other Community Transportation Services	65
Shared Mobility Providers and Ride Sharing	66
<i>Uber and Lyft</i>	66
<i>GEST Carts</i>	67
<i>Jaunt</i>	67
<i>JUMP Transit</i>	67

<i>SouthPark Skipper</i>	68
<i>Multimodal Providers</i>	69
Private Transportation Providers	69
Prior Plans Summary	71
Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Charlotte Urban Area (FY 2022-2027)	71
<i>Strategy 1: Mobility Management and Agency Coordination</i>	71
<i>Strategy 2: Organizational Assessments</i>	71
<i>Strategy 3: Customer Service</i>	72
<i>Strategy 4: Facility Improvements for Safety</i>	72
<i>Strategy 5: Connectivity</i>	72
<i>Strategy 6: Service Expansion</i>	72
CATS Envision My Ride (EMR) Bus Priority Study	73
CONNECT Beyond (2021)	74
<i>Key Priorities</i>	75
<i>Relevant Recommendations</i>	75
CATS 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan (2020)	77
CATS Transit System Plan Update (2025)	78
CRTPO 2050 MTP	78
Iredell County Transportation Master Plan (ICTMP)	80
Rock Hill – Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan	83
2020 Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transportation Master Plan	86
North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Statewide 5310 Locally Coordinated Plan	88
Union County Multimodal Transportation Plan	89
South Carolina Statewide Public Transportation and Coordination Plan	91
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO (GCLMPO) 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	91
Charlotte Moves Task Force Report (2020)	92
NCDOT IMD On-Demand Microtransit Annual Report	93
NCSU-ITRE Public Microtransit Pilots in the State of North Carolina: Operational Characteristics, Costs, and Lessons Learned	93
Plan Review Summary	94
Peer Regions Review	95
FTA Section 5310 Peer Agency Review	95
<i>GoRaleigh</i>	95
<i>Orlando LYNX</i>	98
<i>Maricopa Association of Governments</i>	103
Public and Stakeholder Engagement	107
Public Engagement	107
Stakeholder Engagement	107

List of Figures

Figure 1: CATS HSTP Charlotte Study Area	2
Figure 2: CATS HSTP Nine County Study Area.....	3
Figure 3: Environmental Justice Index (EJI).....	6
Figure 4: Presence of Older Adults in the Study Area and the Greater Nine-County Study Region.....	8
Figure 5: Older Adult Population Trends	9
Figure 6: Youth Population in the Nine-County Study Region.....	11
Figure 7: Youth Population Trends.....	12
Figure 8: Presence of Zero Vehicle Households in the Nine-County Study Region.....	14
Figure 9: Presence of Individuals with a Disability in the Nine-County Study Region.....	16
Figure 10: Population with a Disability Trends	17
Figure 11: Presence of Limited English Proficiency in the Nine-County Study Area.....	19
Figure 12: Presence of Population in Poverty in the Nine-County Study Region	21
Figure 13: Presence of Veterans in the Nine-County Study Region.....	23
Figure 14: Veteran Population Trends.....	24
Figure 15: Presence of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the Nine-County Study Region	26
Figure 16: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Population Trends.....	27
Figure 17: Population Growth between 2022 and 2055.....	29
Figure 18: Employment Growth between 2022 and 2055 with Transit Routes Overlay.....	30
Figure 19: CATS Unlinked Passenger Trips by Mode.....	44
Figure 20: Bus Trips per Agency, Excluding CATS.....	45
Figure 21: Demand Response Passenger Trips per Agency.....	46
Figure 22: Demand Response Passenger Trips per Agency, Excluding CATS and MTS	46
Figure 23: Demand Response Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	47
Figure 24: CATS Wheelchair Trips.....	48
Figure 25: MTS Wheelchair Trips.....	48
Figure 26: MTS Annual Trips.....	49
Figure 27: MTS Bus Passes Purchased	49
Figure 28: ICATS Total Passenger Counts.....	50
Figure 29: ICATS Passengers per Service Mile.....	50
Figure 30: ICATS Service Hours.....	51
Figure 31: ICATS Service Miles	51
Figure 32: ICATS Passengers per Service Hour	52
Figure 33: ICATS Operating Days.....	52
Figure 34: ICATS Total Full Time Drivers	53
Figure 35: ICATS Total Full Time Employees.....	53
Figure 36: ICATS Operating Days.....	54
Figure 37: UCT Annual Trips.....	54
Figure 38: UCT Annual Wheelchair Trips.....	55
Figure 39: UCT Annual Service Hours.....	55
Figure 40: UCT Annual Service Miles.....	56

Figure 41: Demand Response Fares per Agency.....	56
Figure 42: Passenger Paid Fares per Agency	57
Figure 43: Passenger Paid Fares per Agency, Excluding CATS.....	58
Figure 44: Section 5310 Funding per Agency	59
Figure 45: Section 5311 Funding per Agency.....	59
Figure 46: Section 5307 Funding per Agency	60
Figure 47: Lyft Service Area in Charlotte, NC.....	67
Figure 48: CATS Envision My Ride (EMR) Bus Priority Treatment.....	74
Figure 49: CONNECT Beyond Project Priorities	74
Figure 51: CATS 2030 Transit Corridor System	77
Figure 52: ICTMP Priority Transit Projects.....	81
Figure 53 Potential High Speed Rail Corridor Alignment Options, Atlanta to Charlotte.....	84
Figure 54 Proposed Rock Hill-York County-Charlotte Bus Rapid Transit Service.....	85
Figure 55 My Ride Rock Hill Fixed Route Service Map (Launched July 2019).....	86
Figure 56. 20-Year Vision Plan Phased Service Improvements Recommendations.....	87
Figure 57. Cabarrus County 20-Year Vision Network.....	88
Figure 58 Union County Long-Term Transit Recommendations	90
Figure 59 Desired Shift in Travel Patterns in the Charlotte Region (Charlotte Moves Task Force Report).....	92

List of Tables

Table 1: Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Parameters and Averages for the 9-County Study Area	5
Table 2: Presence of Older Adults	7
Table 3: Youth Population	10
Table 4: Presence of Zero Vehicle Households.....	13
Table 5: Presence of Individuals with a Disability	15
Table 6: Presence of Limited English Proficiency	18
Table 7: Presence of Population in Poverty	20
Table 8: Presence of Veterans	22
Table 9: Presence of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Populations.....	25
Table 10: Population and Employment Projected Change in the Study Area, 2022 – 2055.....	28
Table 11: Public Transportation Providers Serving Charlotte Urban Area.....	32
Table 12: Projects Funded in Full or in Part by Section 5310 Funding in Charlotte Urban Area.....	61
Table 13: Recommended Park and Ride Lot Cost Estimates and Prioritization Score	82
Table 14: Proposed FY20 5310 Distribution Targets	89
Table 15: GoRaleigh Project Evaluation Criteria Scoring Rubric.....	97
Table 16: Orlando LYNX Grant Timeline	99
Table 17: LYNX Project Evaluation Scoring Rubric	101
Table 18: MAG FTA Section 5310 Grant Timeline	104
Table 19: MAG Selection Criteria and Scoring Matrix.....	106

Introduction

The purpose of this technical memo is to provide a data review summary, prepared as part of an update of CATS Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) for the Charlotte Urban Area.

Study Area

The plan included both a primary study area made up of generalized Charlotte Urban Area, and an expanded nine-county study region. The expanded nine-county study region included Anson, Cabarrus, Lincoln, Iredell, Gaston, and Union counties in North Carolina and Lancaster and York Counties in South Carolina. The primary study area (labeled as “study area” on the maps throughout this Memo”) is made of the generalized outline for The Charlotte Urban Area (UA) and includes all of Mecklenburg County and parts of Iredell, Gaston, and Union counties in North Carolina, as well as portions of York County in South Carolina (Figure 1). This report will focus on both the expanded nine-county study region and the more focused study area (Charlotte Urban Area), when describing current conditions in the block groups encompassed by both areas (see Figure 2 for expanded nine- county study region).

Figure 1: CATS HSTP Charlotte Study Area

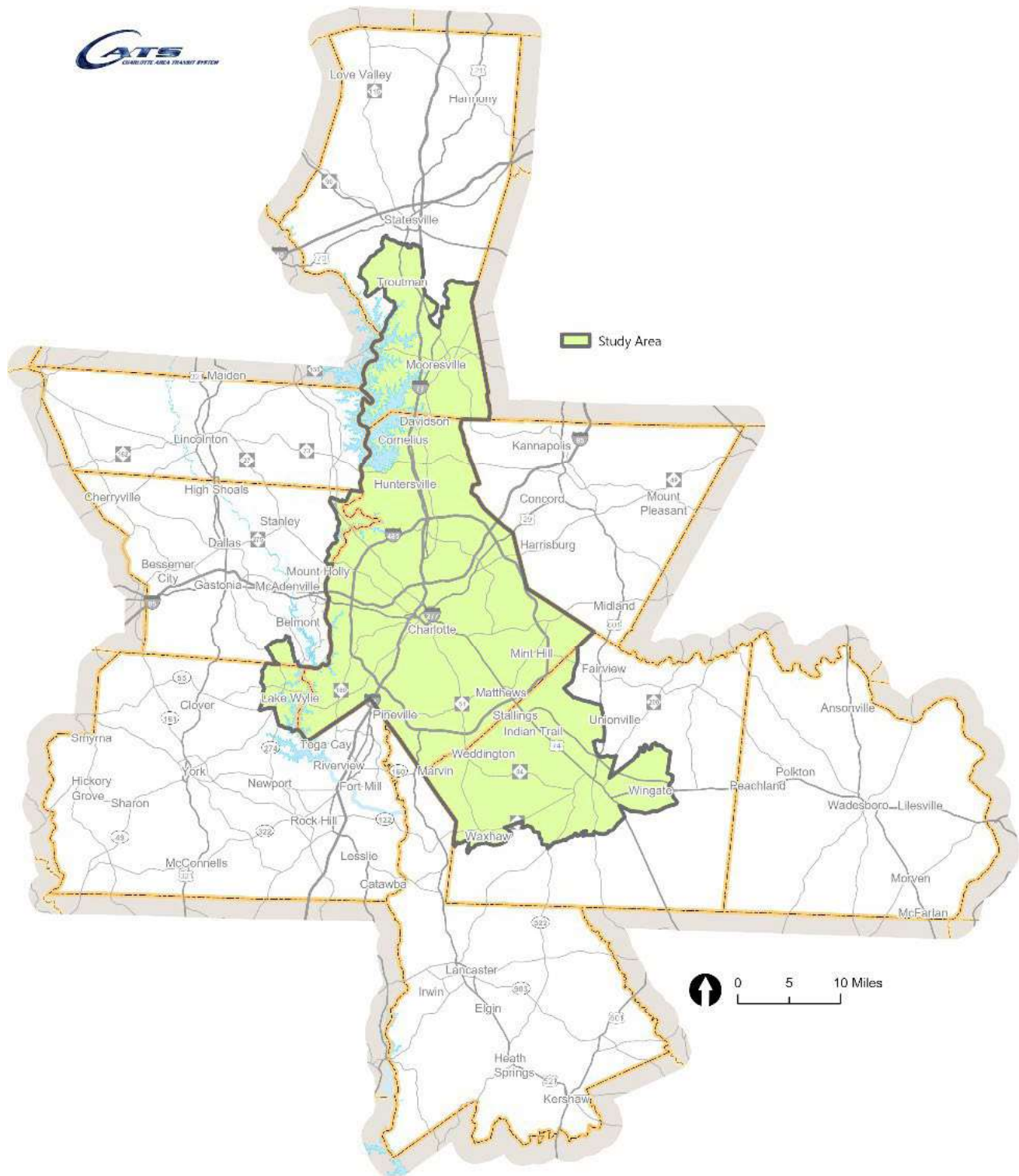
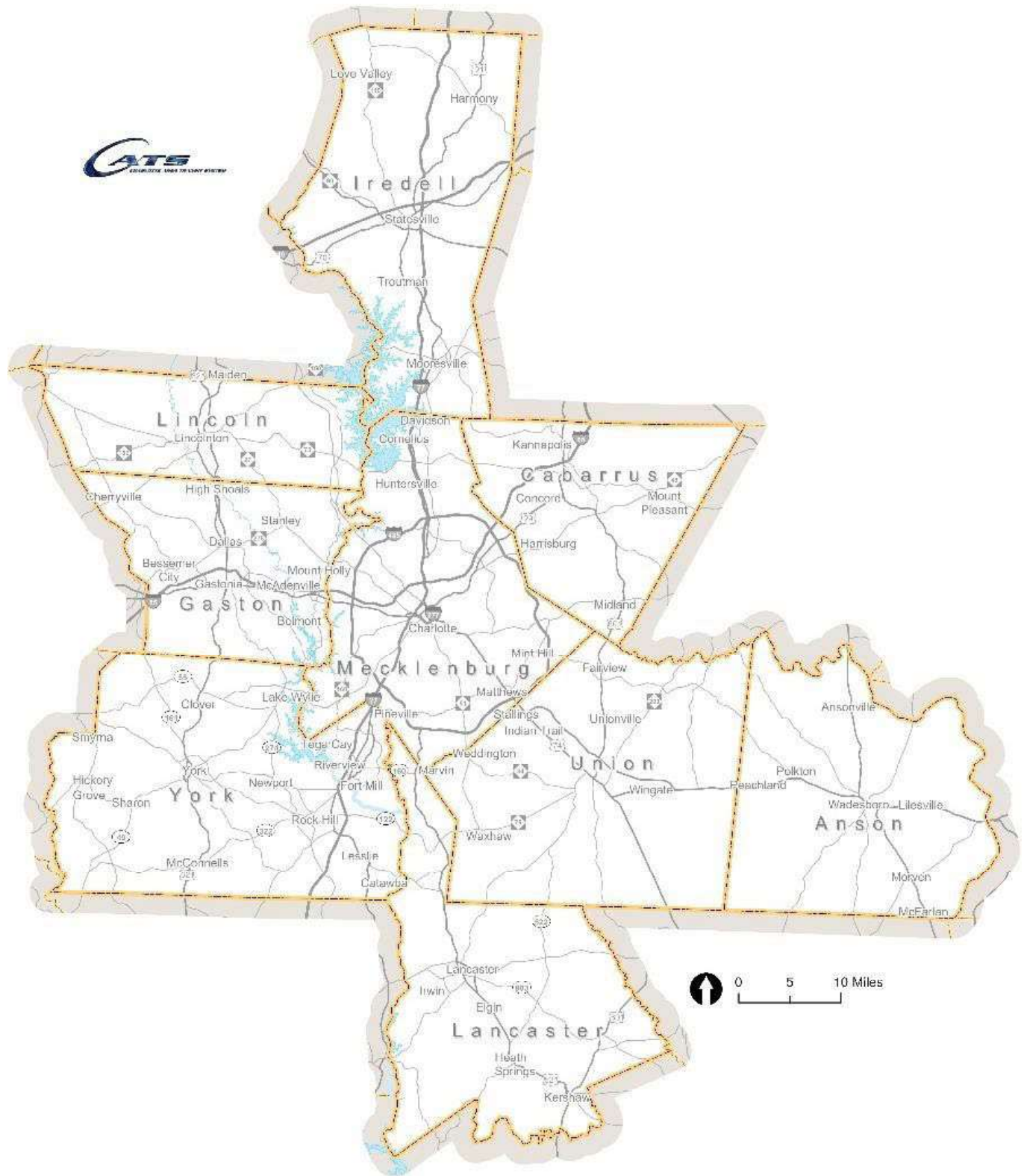


Figure 2: CATS HSTP Nine County Study Area



Existing Conditions

Sociodemographic Analysis

The sociodemographic analysis uses data from the 2022 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS). Data points were collected at the block group level and analyzed for the Charlotte UA, as well as for the nine-county region overall. For this study, eight population characteristics were analyzed: proportion of older adults (aged 65+), proportion of children (aged 0-17), proportion of households without a vehicle available for personal use, proportion of individuals that have a disability, proportion of households within 150 percent of the federal poverty level, proportion of individuals with veteran status, and proportion of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Environmental Justice Index (EJI)

A combination of demographic parameters was summarized in the form of an Environmental Justice Index (EJI) for the nine-county study region. Table 1 details the demographic parameters included as part of Environmental Justice Index. The EJI was utilized to assess the presence of population characteristics across the study region. The EJI measures the proportion of each population characteristic in a block group and compares it to the average for the nine-county study region shown in Table 1: Environmental Justice Index (EJI) . If a block group ranked above the study region average for a characteristic, a score of 1 was assigned. If a block group was below the study region average for a characteristic, a score of 0 was assigned. This process was repeated for all eight population characteristics and scores were added to calculate an EJI Score between 0 and 8. The higher the EJI Score, the greater the prevalence of population characteristics that could be indicative of potential for environmental justice concerns. Figure 3 shows EJI scores for the study area.

In the City of Charlotte, the Wedge and Crescent pattern is seen in the EJI map (figure 3). The Wedge and Crescent pattern refers to historical segregation by race and income in the City, which has disproportionately pushed BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and low-income populations north of I-77 and US 74 within the larger belt of I-485¹. This portion of the City is referred to as the Crescent, categorized by having higher poverty rates, less direct access to community resources like public schools and parks, and higher BIPOC populations. The Wedge comprises an area in south Charlotte between I-77 and US 74, bounded by I-277 to the north and by I-485 to the south, categorized by higher income groups with more immediate access to community resources, and significantly lower demographic diversity. Block groups within the Wedge show much lower EJI scores than block groups in the Crescent, which have moderate to high EJI scores.

In the Charlotte UA, high EJI scores tend to cluster in urbanized spaces, like Mooresville in Iredell County to the north, and in cities, and Monroe in Union County to the southeast. In the surrounding counties, a high EJI presence was observed in Anson County, specifically in the towns of Wadesboro and Polkton. Other urban centers with high EJI scores include the Cities of Gastonia and Kannapolis, in Gaston and Cabarrus counties, respectively.

¹ Charlotte's Arc and Wedge: <https://www.cltp.com/articles/arc-wedge>

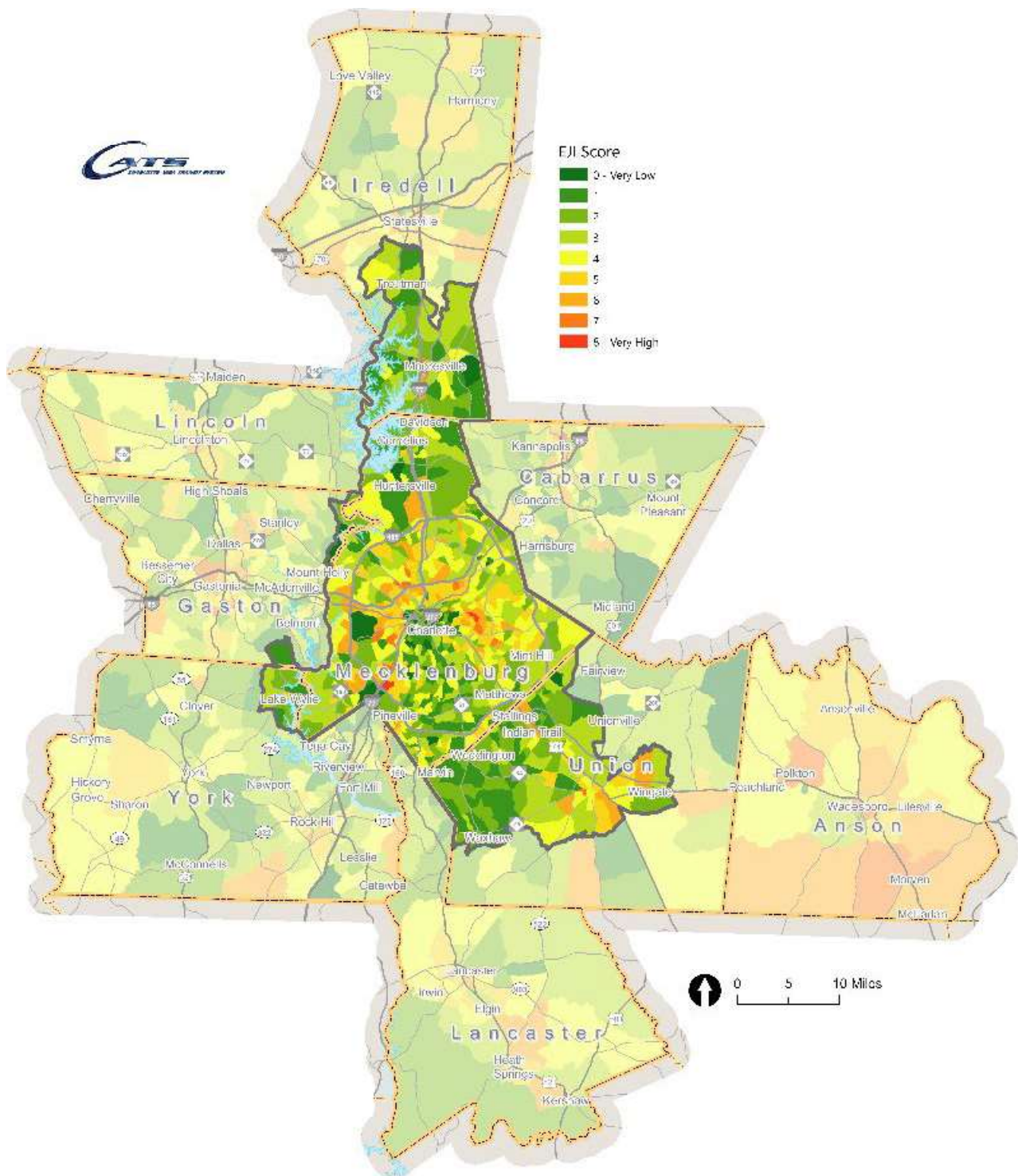
Table 1: Environmental Justice Index (EJI) Parameters and Averages for the 9-County Study Area

EJI Parameter	Study Area Average*
Older Adult (Aged 65+)	14.7%
Youth (Aged 0-17)	21.8%
Zero Vehicle Households	5.0%
Households with a Disabled Person	10.2%
Limited English Proficiency Households	2.9%
Households in Poverty (150% of Poverty Level)	18.9%
Persons with Veteran Status	5.1%
Non-White Persons	40.6%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey
Estimates

* Study area includes the Charlotte Urban Area (UA) and includes
the average block group percentage

Figure 3: Environmental Justice Index (EJI)



Older Adults (Aged 65+)

Figure 4: shows the distribution of older adults (aged 65+) in the nine-county study area, with color gradation broken up into five categories.

In the Charlotte UA, the highest rates of older adult populations are in the Wedge of the City of Charlotte, and in the towns of Cornelius and Davidson, near Lake Norman in Mecklenburg County. Concentrations of older adult populations also appear in block groups surrounding the City of Monroe in Union County, in the southeastern-most portion of the Charlotte UA. In the nine-county study region, Anson, Lancaster, and York Counties show high concentrations of older adults in block groups along county boundaries. Cabarrus, Lincoln, and Gaston Counties have a higher density of older adult populations in urban centers like Kannapolis, Lincoln, and Dallas, respectively. Block groups north of I-40 in Iredell County also show high concentrations of older adults, specifically in the City of Statesville.

The Charlotte UA (where seniors represent 12.5 percent of population) and the greater nine-county study region (14.7 percent) have smaller proportions of older adults than the United States (16.5 percent), North Carolina (16.7 percent), and South Carolina (18.2 percent) averages. Anson, Lincoln, and Lancaster Counties trend higher than national and statewide averages for older adults, but have lower population counts overall. Table 2 illustrates the change in proportion of older adult populations over time. The proportion of older adults in the nine-county study region plateaued and slowly decreased from 2010 to 2020, while the proportions of senior adult populations for North Carolina, South Carolina, and the United States steadily increased during the same timeframe.

Table 2: Presence of Older Adults

Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percentage of Population
United States	38,749,413	50,783,796	54,737,648	16.5%
North Carolina	1,167,772	1,628,013	1,747,925	16.7%
South Carolina	595,436	863,558	938,517	18.2%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		155,081	171,991	12.5%
Nine-County Study Region	205,666	309,458	342,039	14.7%
Anson County, NC	3,828	4,461	4,339	19.5%
Cabarrus County, NC	18,683	26,889	30,191	13.3%
Gaston County, NC	26,330	34,717	37,437	16.4%
Iredell County, NC	19,568	27,300	30,690	16.3%
Lincoln County, NC	9,652	14,101	16,371	18.6%
Mecklenburg County, NC	75,660	117,292	129,089	11.6%
Union County, NC	17,672	28,502	31,439	13.1%
Lancaster County, SC	10,675	18,855	20,803	21.3%
York County, SC	23,598	37,341	41,680	14.7%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 4: Presence of Older Adults in the Study Area and the Greater Nine-County Study Region

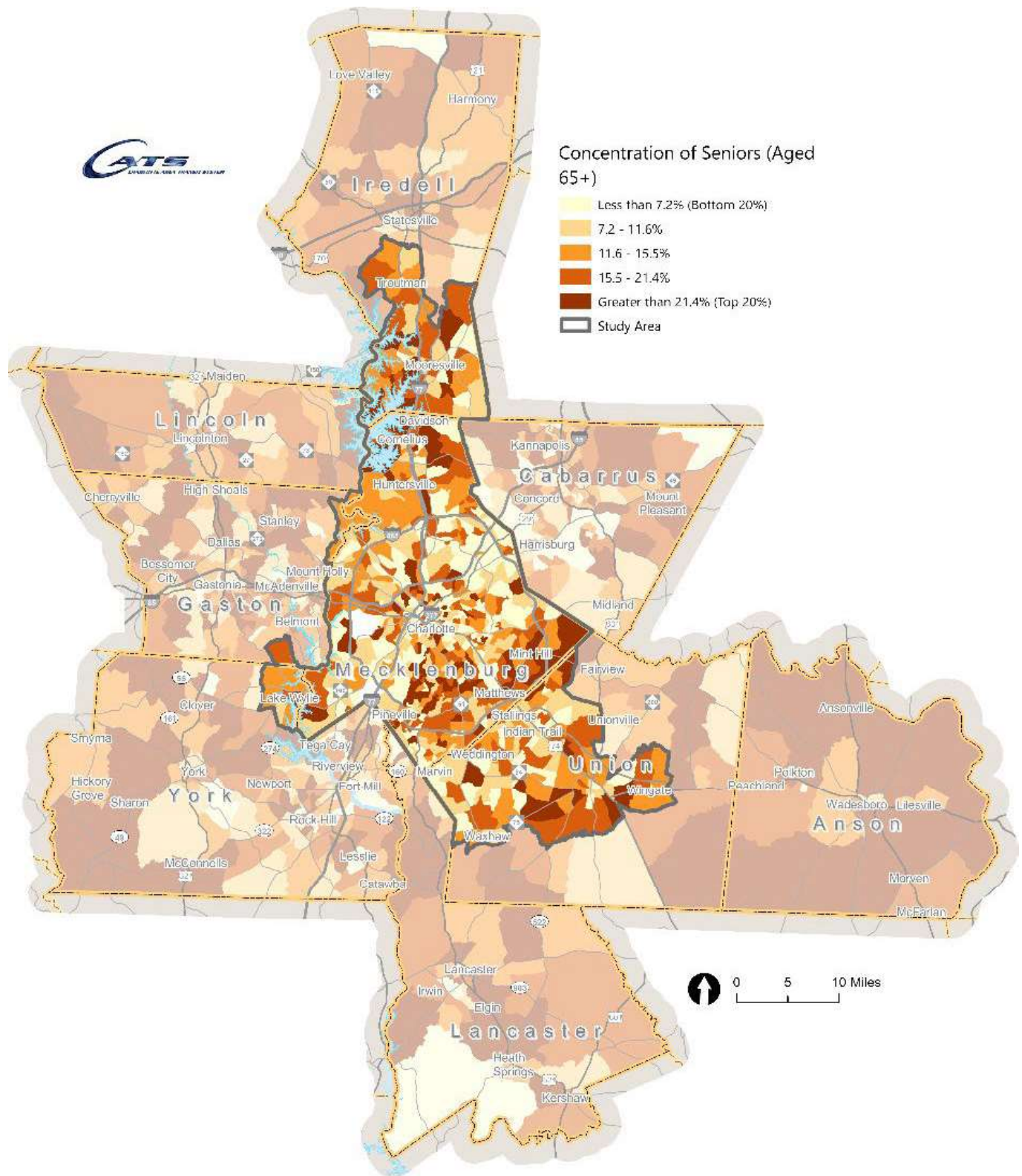
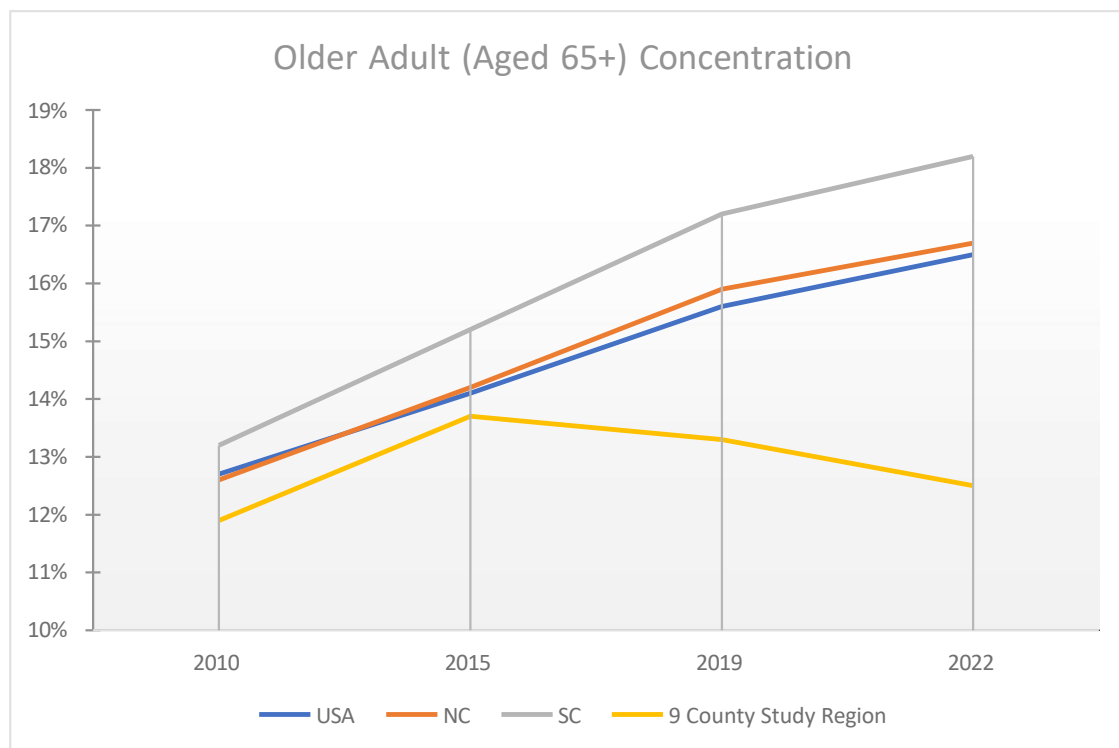


Figure 5: Older Adult Population Trends

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010, 2015, 2019, 2022)

Within the nine-county study region, nearly 112,000 older adults live within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area of a fixed route or deviated fixed route or an ADA paratransit service area. This is approximately 33 percent of the total older adult population within the greater nine-county study region. This is an approximate figure based on Census Block Groups whose centroid overlaps with the service area to approximate a 50 percent or greater service availability within the block group.

Youth (Aged 0-17)

Figure 6: Youth Population shows the distribution of youth populations (aged 0-17) in the nine-county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, the highest rates of youth populations are in the easternmost portions of the Crescent, just north of Mint Hill in Mecklenburg County. High concentrations of youth populations appear in Union County, between Waxhaw and Indian Trail. Lake Wylie in York County also exhibits a high concentration of youth populations within the Charlotte UA. In the nine-county study region, youth populations tend to cluster around urban centers like Gastonia in Gaston County. Here, youth populations stretch along the I-85 corridor into Kannapolis in Cabarrus County. High concentrations of youth populations also exist along the I-77 corridor in York County, from Rock Hill into Pineville.

Table 3: Youth Population notes the average proportions of youth populations in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study area. The Charlotte UA (22.1 percent) and overarching nine-county study area (21.8%) have similar proportions of youth populations when compared to the United States (22.1 percent), North Carolina (21.8 percent), and South Carolina (21.5 percent) averages. Cabarrus and Union counties exhibit the highest proportions of youth populations at 25.2 percent and 26 percent, respectively.

Figure 7: Youth Population Trends shows the change in proportion of youth populations over time. Youth populations in the nine-county study area followed the growth patterns similar to national and statewide averages from 2010 to 2020, displaying a sharp increase from 2015 to 2019 followed by a plateau in youth population growth between 2019 - 2022.

Table 3: Youth Population

Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	74,033,117	73,429,392	73,213,705	22.1%
North Carolina	2,238,210	2,296,614	2,283,888	21.8%
South Carolina	1,069,261	1,102,502	1,103,927	21.5%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		336,386	339,448	22.1%
Nine-County Study Region	515,240	570,472	579,974	21.8%
Anson County, NC	6,113	4,831	4,438	20.0%
Cabarrus County, NC	46,501	53,310	57,072	25.2%
Gaston County, NC	49,055	49,808	51,134	22.3%
Iredell County, NC	39,784	40,661	42,207	22.5%
Lincoln County, NC	18,095	17,764	18,225	20.8%
Mecklenburg County, NC	225,504	256,268	256,136	23.0%
Union County, NC	57,660	62,968	62,486	26.0%
Lancaster County, SC	17,129	20,067	20,880	21.4%
York County, SC	55,399	64,795	67,336	23.8%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urban area boundary

Figure 6: Youth Population in the Nine-County Study Region

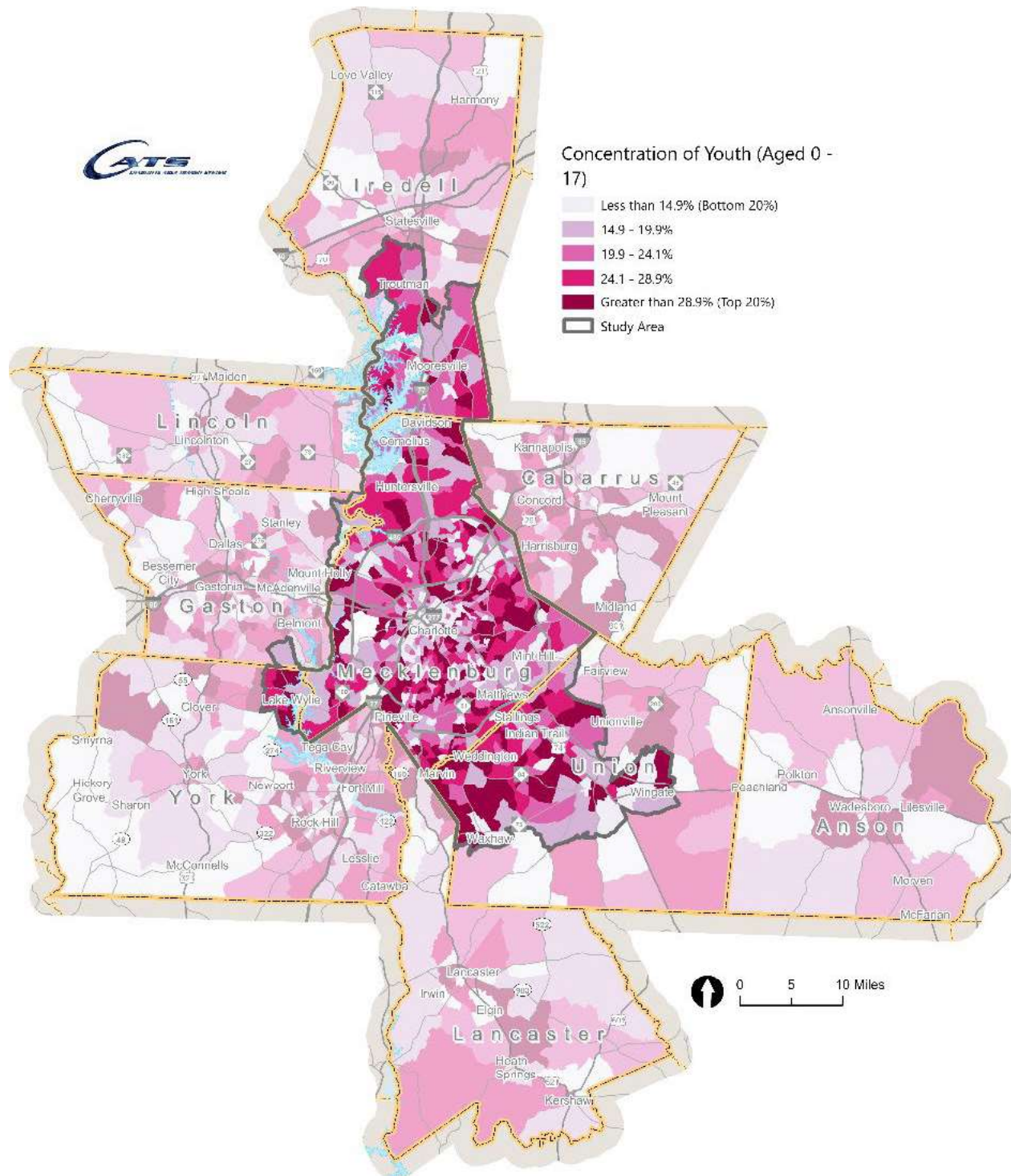
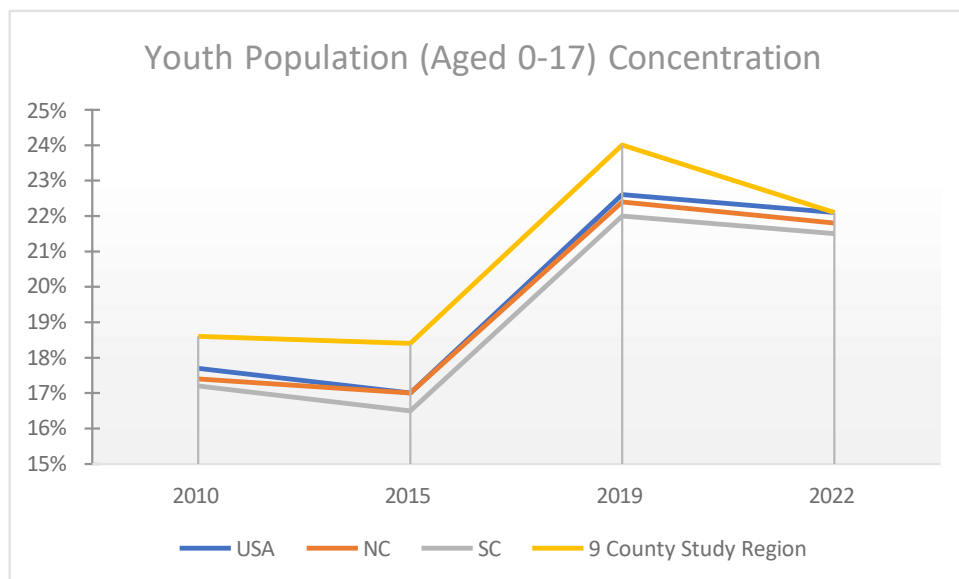


Figure 7: Youth Population Trends

Zero-Vehicle Households

Figure 8 shows the distribution of households without a vehicle available for personal use in the nine-county study area.

In the Charlotte UA, a high concentration of zero-vehicle households aligns with the Crescent of the City of Charlotte and wraps around the Uptown from west of I-77 to US-74. Block groups from Indian Trail to Wingate in Union County have high proportions of households without a vehicle as well. In the nine-county study region, zero-vehicle households are concentrated in urban centers like Gastonia and Kannapolis in Gaston and Cabarrus counties, respectively. In the City of Statesville, in Iredell County, a high percentage of zero-vehicle households is present just south of and along the I-40 corridor.

Table 4 documents the average proportions of zero-vehicle households in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study region. In the Charlotte UA (5.3 percent) and the greater nine-county study region (5 percent) proportions of households without a vehicle available for personal use are on-par with North Carolina (5.4 percent) and South Carolina (5.7 percent). When comparing nationwide averages, the United States (8.3 percent) shows higher proportions of zero-vehicle households. Anson County has the highest proportion of zero-vehicle households within the nine-county study area at 7.1 percent.

Table 4: Presence of Zero Vehicle Households

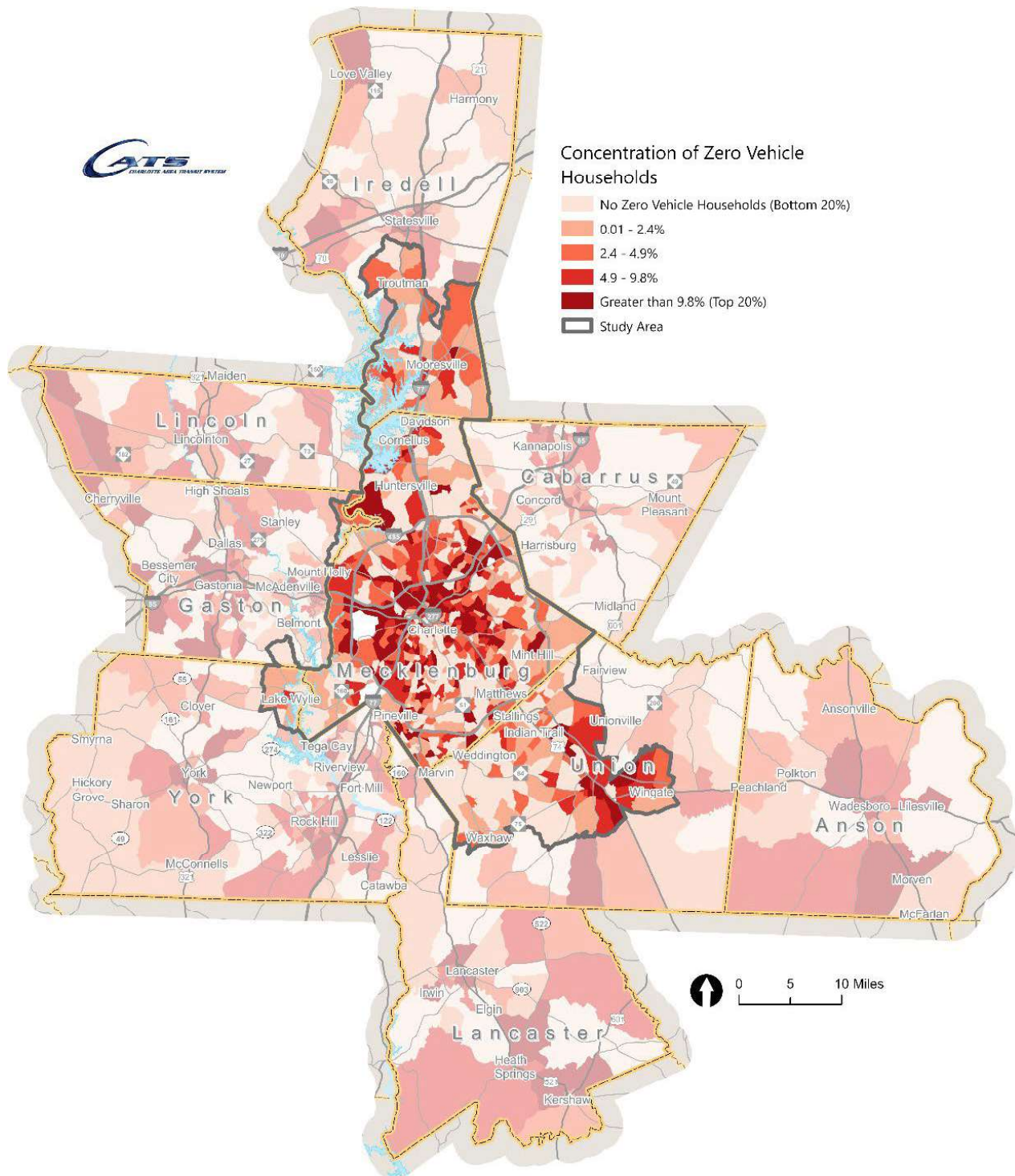
Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	10,113,299	10,395,713	10,474,870	8.3%
North Carolina	234,435	230,276	220,103	5.4%
South Carolina	123,136	120,766	115,682	5.7%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		26,181	27,970	5.3%
Nine-County Study Region	43,747	43,408	44,687	5.0%
Anson County, NC	783	843	588	7.1%
Cabarrus County, NC	3,031	3,153	2,871	3.7%
Gaston County, NC	4,716	4,632	4,844	5.4%
Iredell County, NC	2,551	2,298	2,400	3.3%
Lincoln County, NC	1,031	1,173	1,200	3.4%
Mecklenburg County, NC	23,326	23,605	24,989	5.6%
Union County, NC	2,101	1,936	2,205	2.7%
Lancaster County, SC	1,904	1,647	1,567	4.1%
York County, SC	4,294	4,121	4,023	3.7%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 8: Presence of Zero Vehicle Households in the Nine-County Study Region



Individuals with a Disability

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of individuals with a disability in the nine-county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, the highest rates of population with a disability cluster along the I-85 corridor in west Mecklenburg. Smaller concentrations of households with a disabled person exist in urban areas like Wingate in Union County. In the nine-county study region, proportions of disabled individuals are highest in larger, more rural block groups outside of urban centers. In Anson County, nearly all block groups surrounding Wadesboro have a high presence of individuals with a disability. Block groups on the outskirts of Cabarrus, Iredell, and Gaston Counties exhibit a similar trend, with a higher disability presence outside of urban centers.

Table 5 notes the average proportions of individuals with a disability in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study area. The Charlotte UA (7.9%) has a lower percentage of individuals with a disability than the overarching nine-county study area (10.2%). When compared to national and statewide averages, disability prevalence in the United States (12.9%), North Carolina (13.3%), and South Carolina (14.3%) are much higher than the study area. Anson and Lincoln counties exhibit the highest proportions of disability at 20.6% and 15.2%, respectively. Figure 10 shows the change in proportion of disability over time. Individuals with a disability in the nine-county study area follow that of national and statewide averages until 2019, decreasing thereafter.

Table 5: Presence of Individuals with a Disability

Geography	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	40,335,099	41,941,456	12.9%
North Carolina	1,352,783	1,367,517	13.3%
South Carolina	715,960	722,000	14.3%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)	115,691	108,503	7.9%
Nine-County Study Region	238,144	229,983	10.2%
Anson County, NC	4,267	4,168	20.6%
Cabarrus County, NC	21,507	23,979	10.7%
Gaston County, NC	33,008	33,386	14.7%
Iredell County, NC	22,073	22,002	11.8%
Lincoln County, NC	11,685	13,235	15.2%
Mecklenburg County, NC	85,201	90,159	8.1%
Union County, NC	21,542	22,081	9.2%
Lancaster County, SC	11,922	13,476	14.1%
York County, SC	26,939	28,399	10.1%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 9: Presence of Individuals with a Disability in the Nine-County Study Region

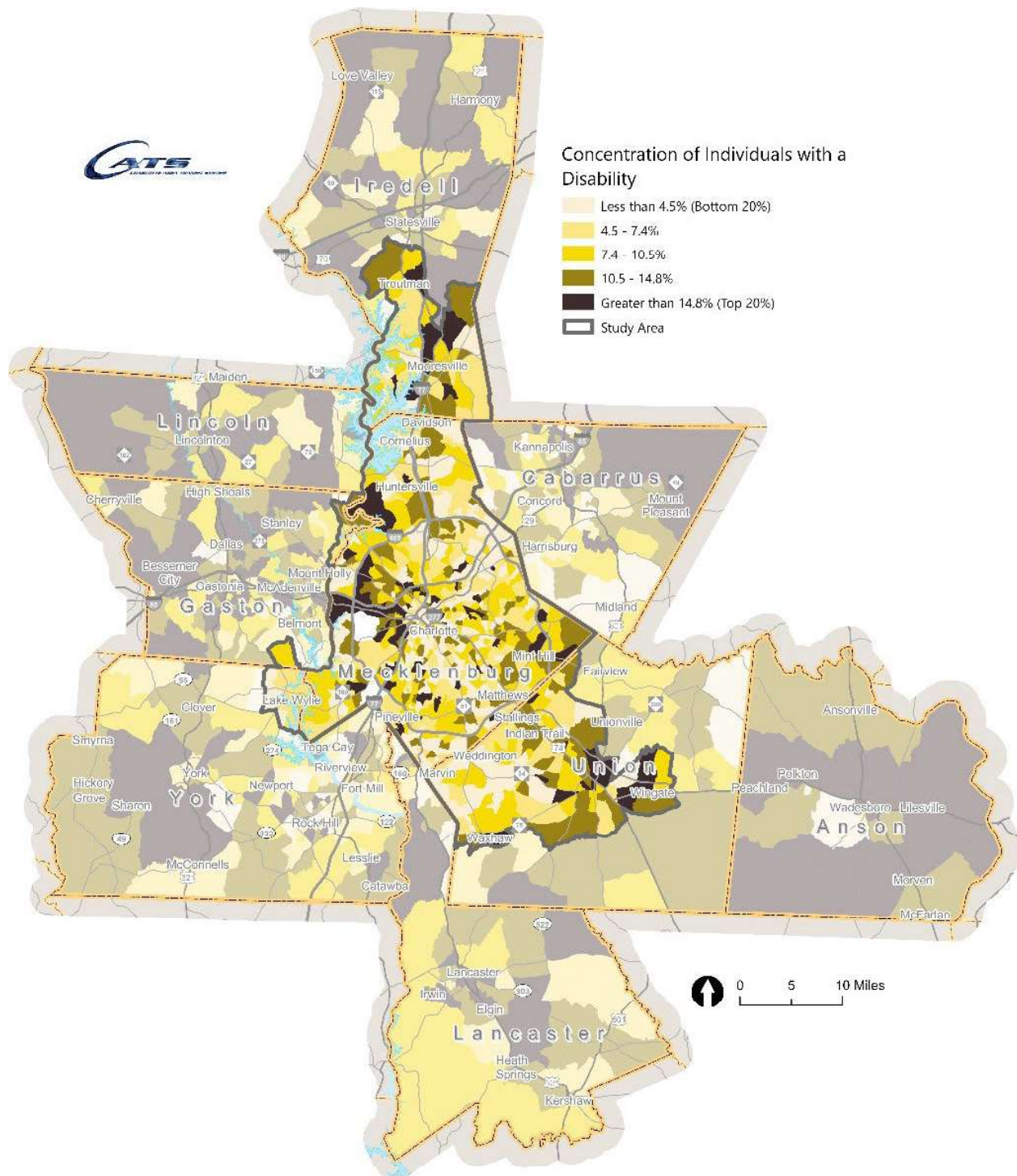
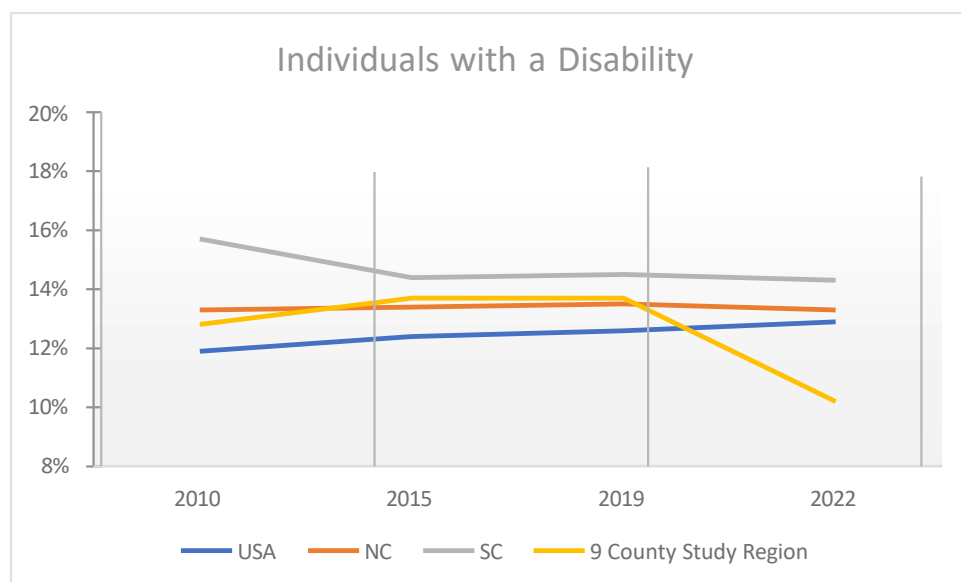


Figure 10: Population with a Disability Trends

Within the 9-county study region, nearly 80,000 households with at least one person who has a disability are within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance of a fixed route or deviated fixed route or an ADA paratransit service area. This is approximately 35 percent of the total households with a person who has a disability within the study area. This is an approximate figure based on Census Block Groups whose centroid overlaps with the service area to approximate a 50% or greater service availability within the block group.

Limited English Proficiency

Figure 11 shows the distribution of individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the nine-county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, the highest rates of LEP populations cluster in the eastern portion of the City of Charlotte's Crescent, along Albemarle Road and between Charlotte and Mint Hill in Mecklenburg County. LEP populations in Iredell and Union Counties cluster around urban centers like Mooresville and Wingate, respectively. In the nine-county study region, LEP populations tend to be more concentrated in urban centers like Gastonia in Gaston County. Moderate LEP concentrations are seen throughout Concord and Kannapolis in Cabarrus County, and around Statesville in Iredell County.

Table 6 notes the average proportions of individuals with LEP in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study area. The Charlotte UA (4.1%) and overarching nine-county study area (3%) have a lower percentage of individuals with LEP than the United States (8.2%). When comparing the study area to statewide averages, North Carolina (4.6%), and South Carolina (2.7%) have similar distributions of LEP. Mecklenburg County has the highest proportion of LEP at 9.1 percent, exceeding state, and national averages.

Table 6: Presence of Limited English Proficiency

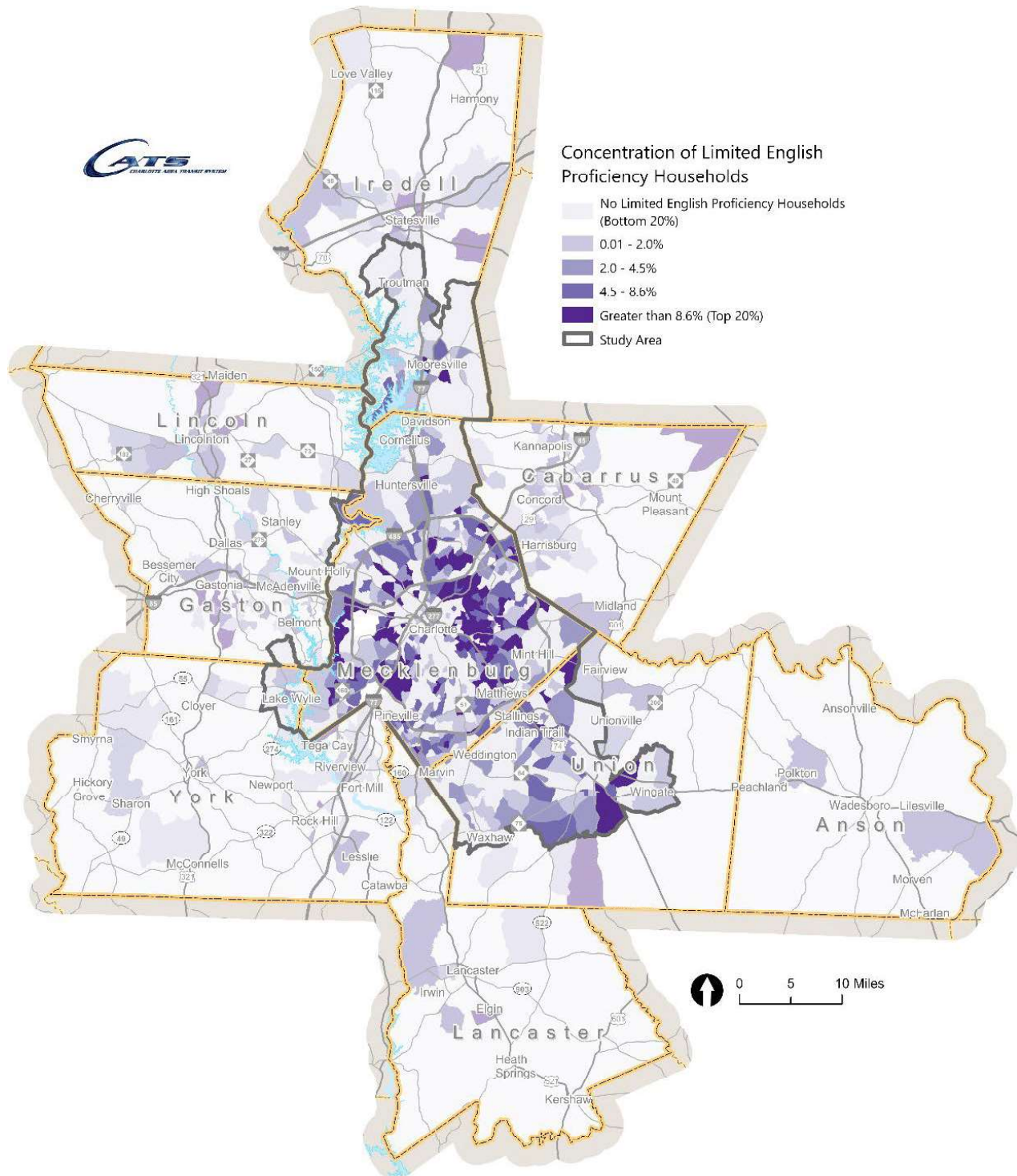
Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	24,704,754	25,615,365	25,704,846	8.2%
North Carolina	424,998	438,492	451,823	4.6%
South Carolina	130,186	132,126	132,913	2.7%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		21,584	22,775	4.1%
Nine-County Study Region	106,429	129,461	28,469	3.0%
Anson County, NC	280	479	446	2.1%
Cabarrus County, NC	8,640	7,995	8,558	4.0%
Gaston County, NC	5,663	6,187	6,963	3.2%
Iredell County, NC	4,987	5,898	6,792	3.8%
Lincoln County, NC	2,398	1,760	2,277	2.7%
Mecklenburg County, NC	69,106	88,823	94,760	9.1%
Union County, NC	9,280	10,650	12,531	5.5%
Lancaster County, SC	1,292	2,009	2,418	2.6%
York County, SC	4,783	5,660	5,572	2.1%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 11: Presence of Limited English Proficiency in the Nine-County Study Area



Poverty

Figure 12 shows the distribution of individuals at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level in the nine- county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, poverty rates are highest in urban areas. In the City of Charlotte, the Crescent exhibits a high density of residents in poverty. Block groups comprising Mooresville and Wingate also show moderate rates of poverty. In the nine-county study region, poverty is highly clustered, appearing most frequently in urban centers. The highest poverty rates in the nine-county study region are seen in Gastonia and Bessemer City in Gaston County, and along the US 601 corridor in Cabarrus County. The cities of Statesville and Lancaster in Iredell and Lancaster counties show moderate to high densities of poverty in their respective urban centers.

Table 7 notes the average proportions of individuals in poverty in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study region. The Charlotte UA (17.4 percent) and the nine-county study region (18.9 percent) have a lower percentage of individuals experiencing poverty than the United States (20.5 percent), North Carolina (22.4 percent), and South Carolina (23.4 percent). Within the nine- county study region, Anson County has the highest proportion of population in poverty at 34.8 percent, exceeding state, and national proportions by a wide margin.

Table 7: Presence of Population in Poverty

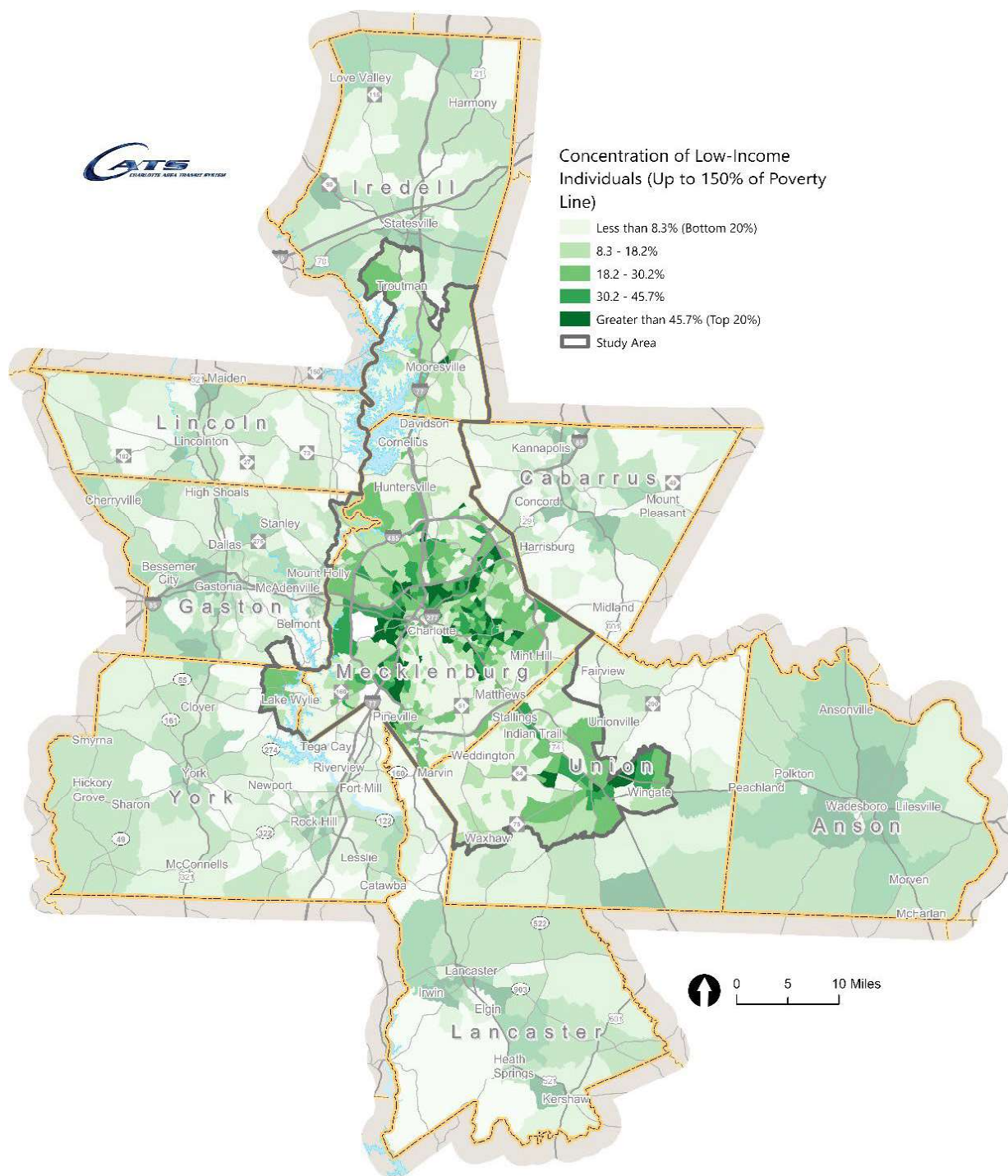
Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	36,779,798	47,677,880	66,233,791	20.5%
North Carolina	1,437,032	1,508,936	2,282,732	22.4%
South Carolina	739,875	763,163	1,169,582	23.4%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		146,377	238,291	17.4%
Nine-County Study Region	258,102	277,229	432,062	18.9%
Anson County, NC	5,491	4,856	7,033	34.8%
Cabarrus County, NC	19,209	21,075	36,903	16.5%
Gaston County, NC	33,639	31,795	50,203	22.3%
Iredell County, NC	19,175	19,134	30,327	16.3%
Lincoln County, NC	10,447	10,034	13,800	15.9%
Mecklenburg County, NC	110,346	124,640	201,035	18.3%
Union County, NC	16,180	18,947	30,235	12.8%
Lancaster County, SC	14,750	18,831	19,199	20.1%
York County, SC	28,865	27,917	43,327	15.6%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 12: Presence of Population in Poverty in the Nine-County Study Region



Veteran Status

Figure 13 shows the distribution of veterans across the nine-county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, veterans are near-evenly distributed across Mecklenburg County. Notable veteran populations exist within block groups comprising Lake Norman to the north, and in east Waxhaw to the south. Lake Wylie, in South Carolina, also shows moderate density of veteran populations. In the nine-county study region, veteran populations appear most frequently in rural block groups, outside of urban centers. The highest presence of veterans in the nine-county study area are seen on the outskirts of Anson, Gaston, Lincoln, and York Counties along US 321 and US 74.

Table 8 notes the average proportions of veterans in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study area. The Charlotte UA (4.4 percent) and nine-county study region (5.1 percent) have a lower percentage of veterans than the United States (6.6 percent), North Carolina (7.8 percent), and South Carolina (8.7 percent). Counties within the nine-county study region are also characterized by a lower presence of veterans than the United States or the State of North Carolina overall. Figure 14 shows the change in proportion of veterans over time. Veteran populations in the nine-county study region mirrored the national and statewide averages, which have been steadily decreasing from 2010 to 2019. After 2019, the nine-county study region veteran populations declined at a much faster rate.

Table 8: Presence of Veterans

Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	22,652,496	18,230,322	17,038,807	6.6%
North Carolina	747,052	659,584	632,689	7.8%
South Carolina	401,258	365,139	349,000	8.7%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		63,649	63,655	4.4%
Nine-County Study Region	137,948	125,386	123,935	5.1%
Anson County, NC	1,824	1,465	1,466	8.3%
Cabarrus County, NC	12,744	11,630	11,427	6.8%
Gaston County, NC	16,327	13,243	13,229	7.5%
Iredell County, NC	11,492	9,236	9,635	6.6%
Lincoln County, NC	6,139	5,821	5,437	7.8%
Mecklenburg County, NC	54,254	47,874	47,552	5.5%
Union County, NC	12,571	12,215	11,429	6.4%
Lancaster County, SC	5,709	6,151	6,204	8.1%
York County, SC	16,888	17,751	17,586	8.2%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 13: Presence of Veterans in the Nine-County Study Region

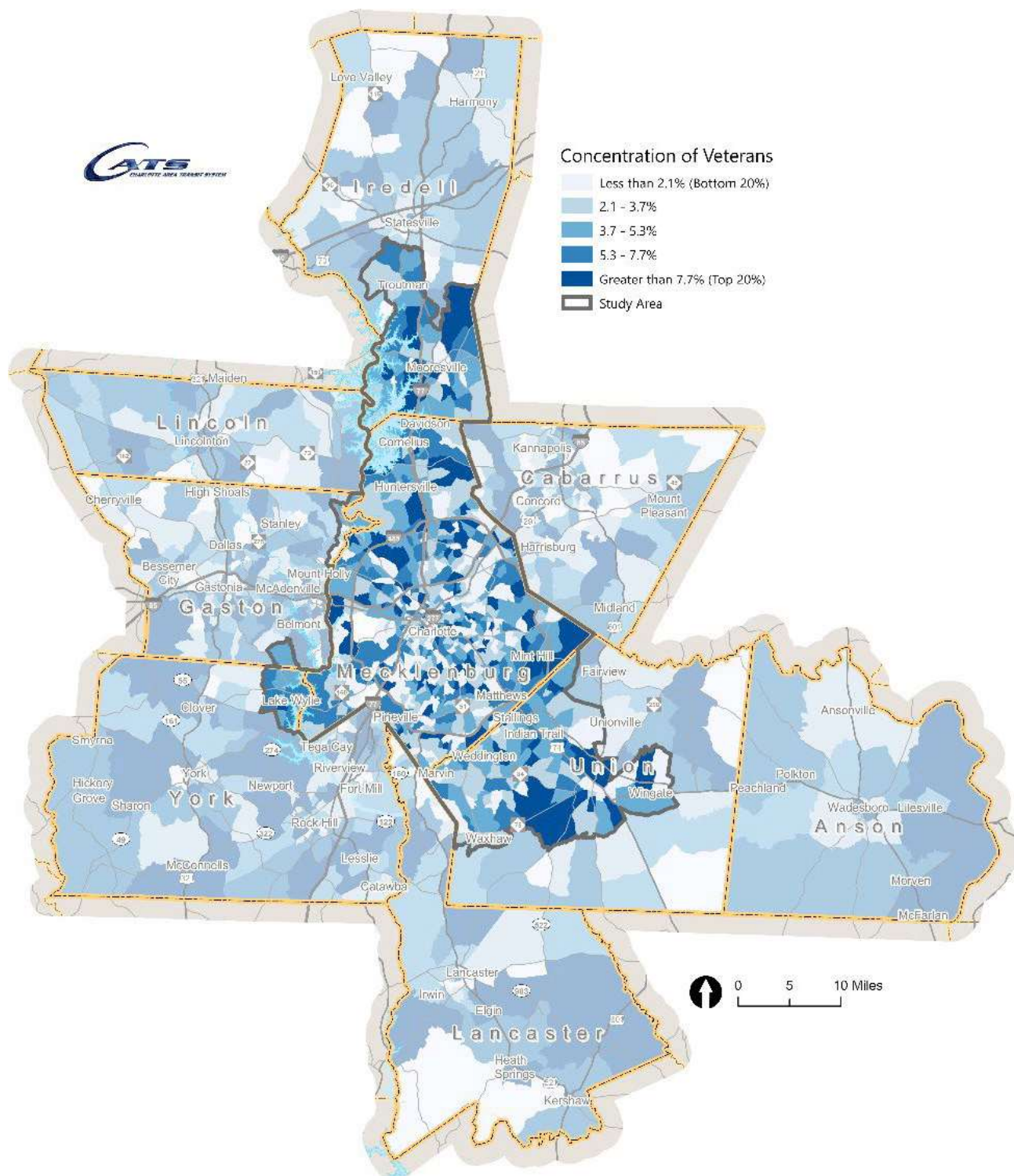
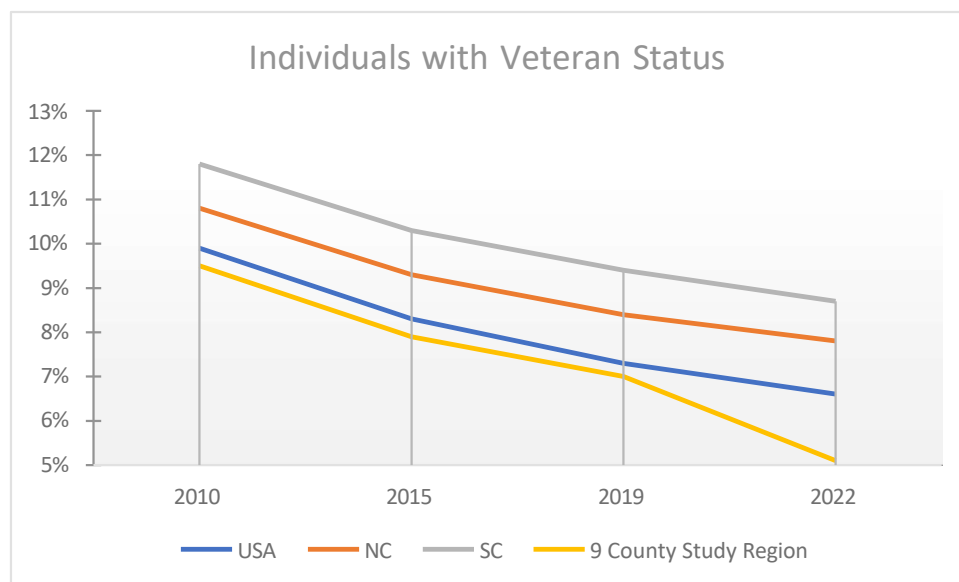


Figure 14: Veteran Population Trends

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

Figure 15 shows the distribution of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) populations in the nine- county study region.

In the Charlotte UA, the presence of BIPOC populations is highest in the area comprising the City of Charlotte's Crescent, where upwards of 70 percent of block group residents belong to BIPOC populations. High BIPOC concentrations also exist to the west of Wingate, in Union County. In the nine-county study region, BIPOC populations are most notably concentrated in urban centers. The highest presence of BIPOC populations in the nine-county study region are seen throughout Gastonia in Gaston County, and south of Rock Hill, in York County. Moderate BIPOC concentrations exist south of I-40 in Iredell County, and along the northern portion of US 601 in Cabarrus County,

Table 9 notes the average proportions of BIPOC populations in the United States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Charlotte UA, and counties comprising the nine-county study region. The Charlotte UA has a high percentage of BIPOC individuals at 48.3 percent, which trends higher than the nine-county study area by 7.7 percent. This is higher than BIPOC percentages seen across the United States (41.1 percent), North Carolina (38.3 percent), and South Carolina (37 percent). Mecklenburg County is home to a large percentage of BIPOC population, and over half (54.9 percent) of all residents in Mecklenburg County are classified as BIPOC. Figure 15: Presence of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the Nine-County Study Region

Figure 16 shows the change in proportion of BIPOC populations over time. The change in BIPOC populations in the nine-county study region followed the trajectory of national and statewide averages from 2010 to 2019, increasing slowly, then plateauing in 2022.

Table 9: Presence of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Populations

Geography	2010 Count	2019 Count	2022 Count	2022 Percent of Population
United States	72,795,064	80,100,126	136,211,129	41.1%
North Carolina	2,674,570	2,985,811	4,014,226	38.3%
South Carolina	1,419,082	1,548,387	1,902,579	37.0%
Charlotte Urban Area (UA)		550,249	704,291	48.3%
Nine-County Study Region	571,044	746,786	1,037,347	40.6%
Anson County, NC	14,044	12,767	12,385	55.8%
Cabarrus County, NC	32,445	56,115	88,453	39.1%
Gaston County, NC	40,584	45,413	69,768	30.5%
Iredell County, NC	25,537	29,312	47,922	25.5%
Lincoln County, NC	6,763	7,075	14,647	16.7%
Mecklenburg County, NC	353,787	471,910	611,904	54.9%
Union County, NC	31,794	38,450	72,835	30.3%
Lancaster County, SC	19,093	21,901	30,036	30.8%
York County, SC	46,997	63,843	89,397	31.6%

Source: 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

* Nine-County study region includes nine counties centered on and surrounding the Charlotte Urban Area (UA)

** Charlotte Urban Area (UA) includes block groups that intersect with the urbanized area boundary

Figure 15: Presence of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the Nine-County Study Region

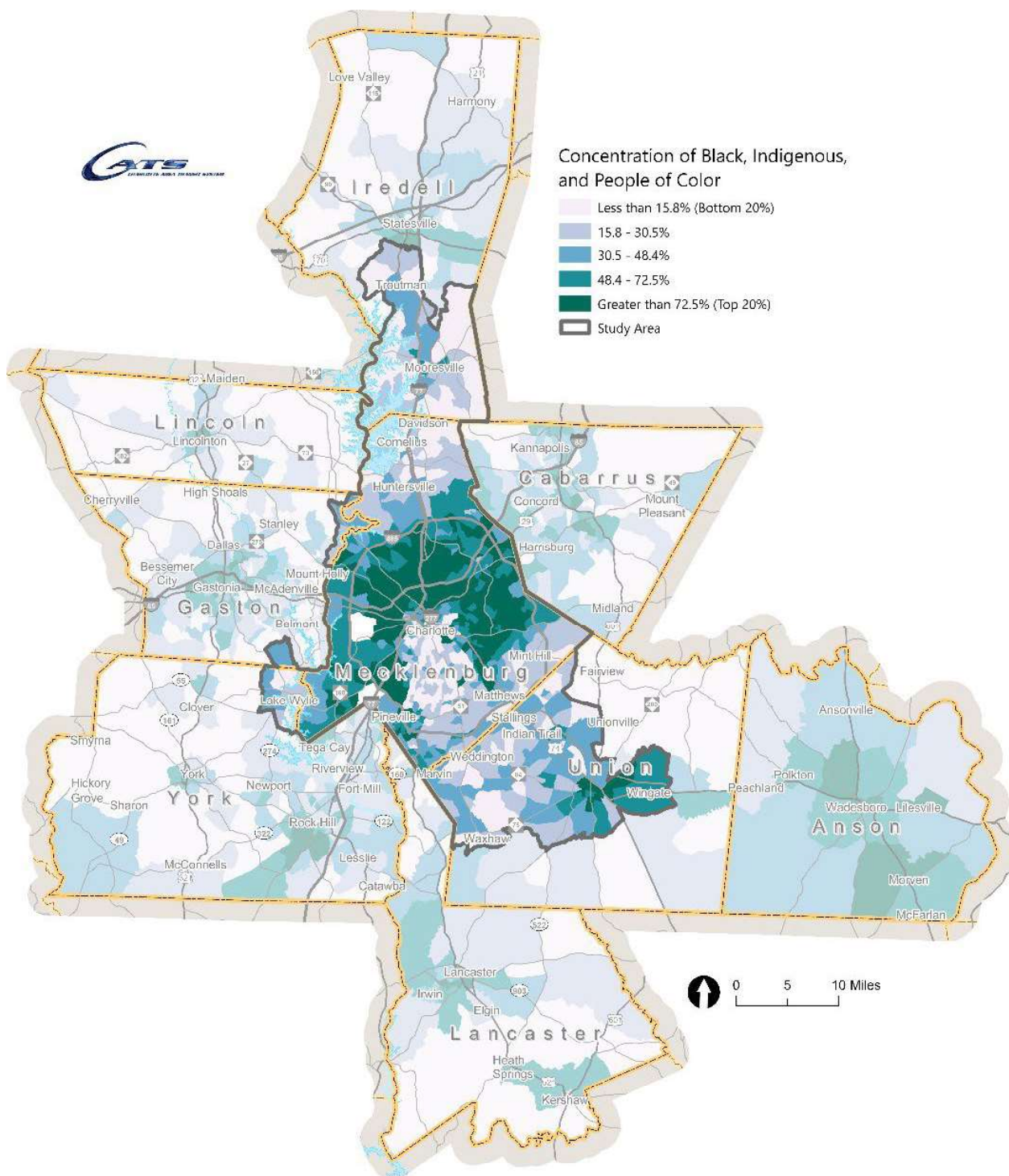
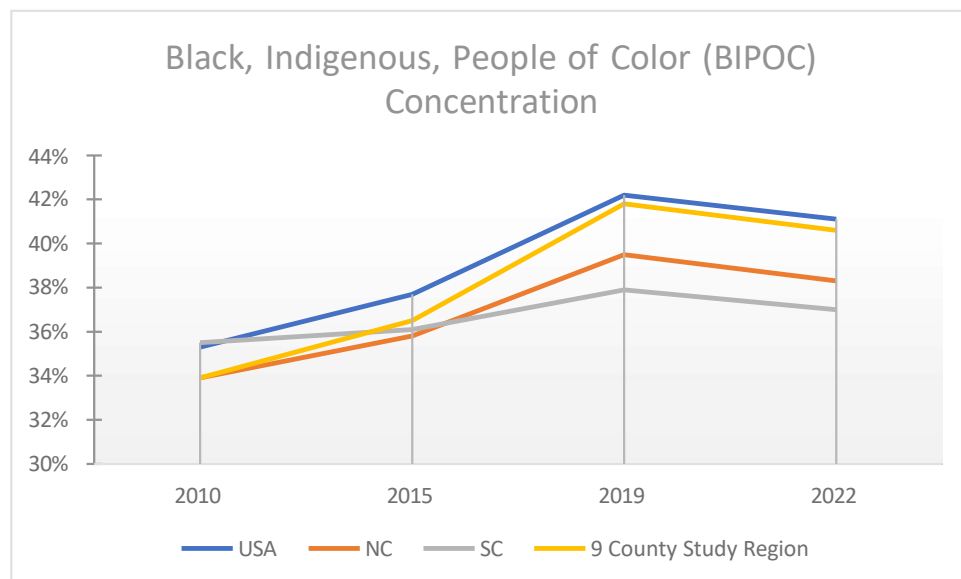


Figure 16: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Population Trends

Population and Employment Growth

Population and employment growth between 2022-2055 was reviewed for the Charlotte Urban Area (study area). Figure 12 below illustrates the expected concentration of employment growth between

2022-2055 for the study area. The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan update utilized data from the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model (TDM), more specifically from the latest tour-based Metrolina Regional Model (MRM24v1). The Metrolina TDM covers 8 of the 9 counties overlapping with the nine-county study area. In combination, 1,597 traffic analysis zones (TAZs) were reviewed as overlapping with the Charlotte Urban Area for population and employment growth. A TAZ is a special area delineated by state and/or local transportation officials for tabulating socio-economic and transportation-related data (based on trip purpose such as journey-to-work and place-of-work). The TAZs from the Metrolina TDM are populated with base year (2022) and forecasted year (2055) population and employment data. The TAZ data is used in the Travel Demand Model to project travel patterns within the region.

The population and employment projections adopted as part of the Regional Travel Demand model show that the Charlotte Urban Area will become home to 2.626 million people, 1.11 million households, and 1.659 million jobs by year 2055. These regional growth projections are depicted in Table 10 and Figures 17 and 18. These growth projections reflect 62 percent growth in population and households, and 46

percent growth in jobs when compared to the model's baseline year 2022 estimates of 1.617 million people, 685,000 households, and 1.130 million jobs.

Table 10: Population and Employment Projected Change in the Study Area, 2022 – 2055

Parameter	2022	2055	Absolute Growth	% Growth
Population, Charlotte Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Study Area	1,617,678	2,626,636	1,008,958	62.4%
Employment, Charlotte Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Study Area	1,130,364	1,659,224	528,860	62.4%

² Based on Metrolina Travel Demand Model (MRM24v1) and for TAZs overlapping with Charlotte Urban Area.

Figure 17: Population Growth between 2022 and 2055

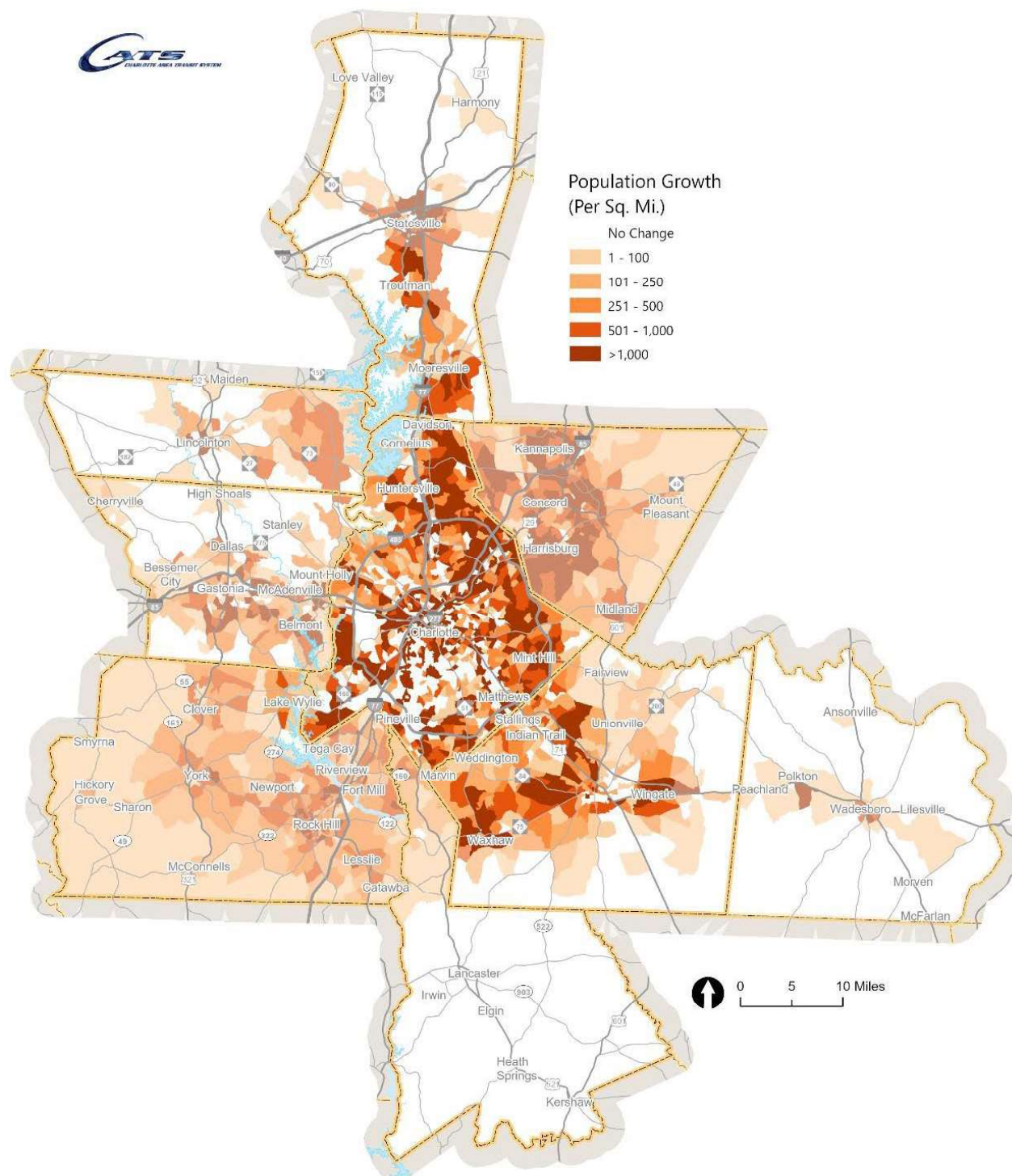
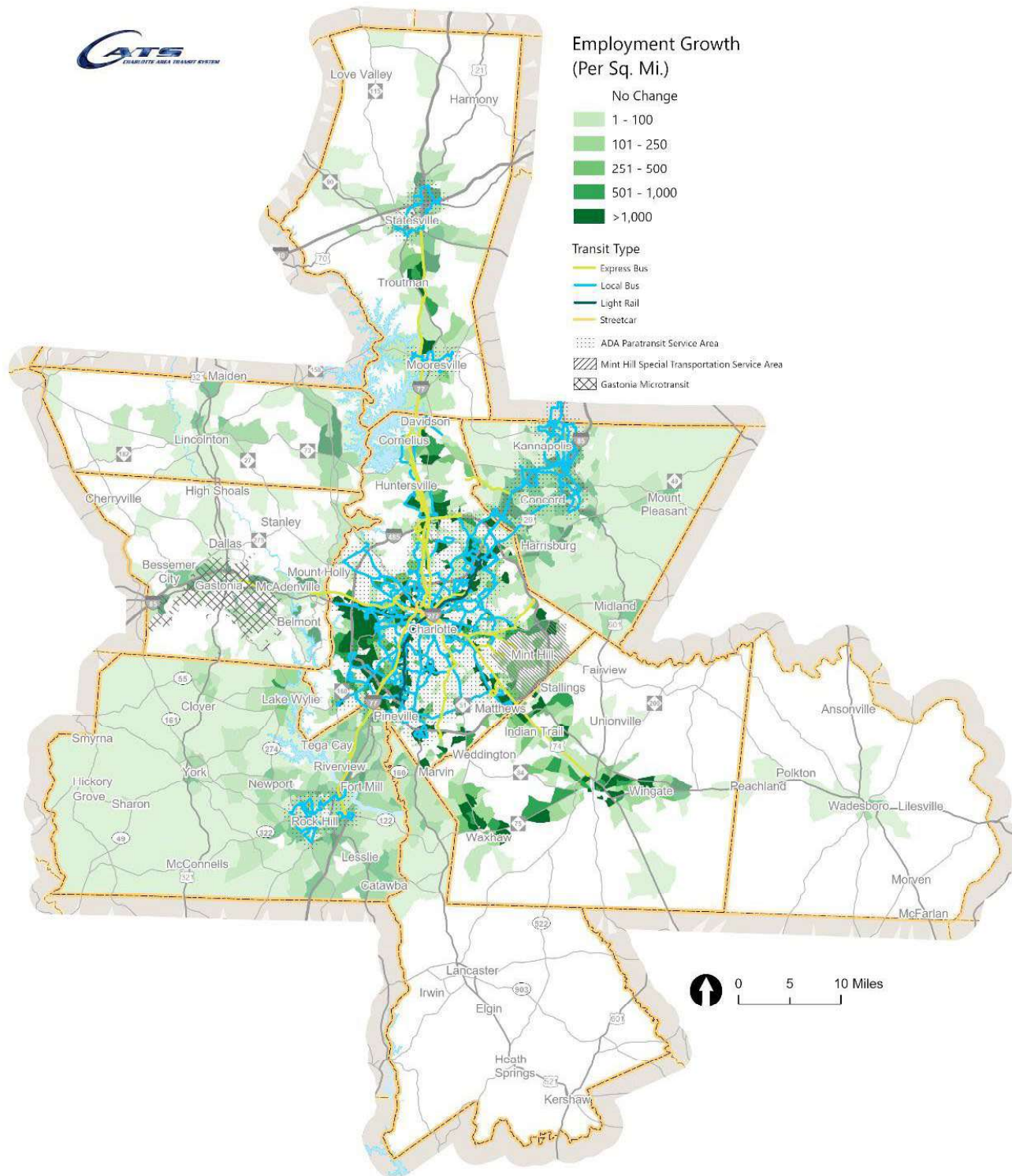


Figure 18: Employment Growth between 2022 and 2055 with Transit Routes Overlay



Charlotte Urban Area Existing Transportation Providers

A variety of public, human service and private transportation providers serve individuals traveling into and within the Charlotte Urban Area. Transportation that serves individuals with disabilities, seniors, people with low incomes and veterans is funded and operated by state, county, and local agencies. This section provides an overview of existing public, human services transportation, and private transportation providers in the Charlotte Urban Area.

Public Transit Agencies Serving Charlotte Urban Area

The table below provides a brief summary of existing public transportation providers in the region, with a more detailed description following.

Table 11: Public Transportation Providers Serving Charlotte Urban Area

Provider	Geographic Area Served	Type of Service(s) Provided
Anson County	Anson County	Demand Response
Cabarrus County Transportation (CCTS)	Cabarrus County	Demand Response
Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS)	City of Charlotte, Express Bus service outside of Mecklenburg County	Fixed Route, Deviated Fixed Route, Express Bus, ADA Paratransit, Light Rail, Streetcar
Gaston County Access	Gaston County, Limited Service to the VA in Salisbury	Demand Response
Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)	Iredell County, Limited Service to Mecklenburg and to the VA in Salisbury	Deviated Fixed Route, Express Bus, Demand Response, Subscription Routes, Salisbury VA Shuttle
Lancaster Area Ride Service "LARS"	Lancaster County (SC)	Demand Response
Mecklenburg County Transportation Services (MTS)	Mecklenburg County	Demand Response and Subscription Routes (focus on Medicaid Transportation, Seniors (60+), Rural General Public, Veterans, Transportation to Congregate Meal Sites)
Rider (Concord Kannapolis Area Transit)	Concord and Kannapolis areas of Cabarrus County, Express Bus service to Mecklenburg County	Fixed Route, ADA Paratransit, Express Bus connection with CATS light rail via JW Clay station
Transportation Lincoln County (TLC)	Lincoln County; some trips outside the County for medical appointments	Demand Response
Union County Transportation Services	Union County, some trips to Mecklenburg County and to the VA in Salisbury	Demand Response
York County Access	York County (SC)	Demand Response
My Ride Rock Hill	Rock Hill (SC)	Fixed Route, Demand Response

Anson County Transportation Services (ACTS)

Anson County Transportation Services offers demand response and scheduled route services to several destinations throughout the County, including major medical facilities, employment centers, nutrition sites, post-secondary schools, recreational events, and retail centers.

Non-Medical appointments are limited to once a week per passenger, with vehicles operating from 9:00am-3:00pm. Trips to employment destinations occur from 7:00am-5:30pm and is for residents working within Anson County only. The fee for one-way fare to work is \$4.00.

ACTS works with Union County Transportation (UCT) to provide transfer service to the City of Charlotte by transporting passengers to designated relay (transfer) sites. Relay sites provide direct access to express bus route 74x, operated by CATS.

The ACTS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 22 demand response vehicles
 - 22 cutaways, with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 10. All are ADA accessible vehicles.

Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS)

Cabarrus County Transportation Services (CCTS) is one of two public transit agencies that provide mobility options in the county, with Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) being the other agency. Cabarrus County Transportation Services operates as a demand response service with some subscription routes, primarily serving four programs: Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance Program, Adult and Aging Services Program, and Rural General Purpose (RGP) Program, providing curb-to-curb service. CCTS operates six days a week, covering approximately 481,000 miles and providing nearly 55,700 trips in 2022 with 22 vehicles.

The CCTS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 22 demand response vehicles
 - 22 cutaways, with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 10. All are ADA accessible.

Gaston County ACCESS

Gaston County operates subscription routes and demand response transit services, primarily within the urban centers of Bessemer City, Dallas, and Gastonia. Subscription route service operates Monday through Friday from 5:30am to 4:30pm, where trips originate from Gastonia Transit Bradley Bus Station. ACCESS also provides subscription routes to Gaston College, exhibiting transit stops at the Life Skills, Robinson and Dalpiaz buildings on-campus: Fare for one passenger, regardless of trip length, is \$1.00 one-way.

Passengers can also request a trip to a transit stop within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a route by calling (704) 866-3206 in advance.

The Gaston County ACCESS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 21 demand response vehicles
 - 19 cutaways with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 18. All are ADA accessible.
 - 1 minivan with seating capacity of 5. The vehicle is ADA accessible.
 - 1 van with seating capacity of 8. The vehicle is ADA accessible.

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)

CATS is the largest public transit system in North Carolina and provides public transportation services to Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, suburban towns surrounding Charlotte, and the Town of Rock Hill in York County, South Carolina. CATS carries more than 12.6 million riders annually including more than 8 million bus trips and over 200,000 demand response or vanpool trips. There were 162,263 ADA rider trips in 2022. Service is provided via local fixed route bus service, express routes, neighborhood shuttles, regional bus services, vanpool, complementary paratransit, streetcar, and light rail transportation.

In Northern Mecklenburg County, North Meck Village Rider routes operate as deviated fixed route service to connect destinations in Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson. Three routes – Route 97 Cornelius, Route 98 McCoy

Road, and Route 99 Northlake Mall/CPCC all meet at the Huntersville Gateway Park and Ride on Statesville Road. Each route has a schedule and a map; for those passengers who cannot walk to one of the stops, they can schedule a deviation up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off the main route by calling a day in



CATS Light Rail



CATS Express Bus Vehicle

advance at (704) 336-7433. North Meck Village Rider routes accept CATS weekly, monthly and transfer passes and are operated on the following schedule:

- Monday through Friday: 5:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday: 7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 12:30pm – 4:00pm

Riders without a CATS weekly, monthly, or transfer pass can purchase one-way fare for \$0.90 Transfer service from Village Rider to Local for \$1.30, and Village Rider to Express for \$2.15. Village Rider to Village Rider transfers are free-of-charge. CATS also provides ADA Paratransit services within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile buffer of

fixed route and light rail. ADA Paratransit transportation is branded as “Special Transportation Service” (STS). Riders have to pre-register as an ADA Paratransit eligible passenger. Eligibility is measured by three factors:

- Ability to get to and from a bus stop
- Ability to board and exit a bus
- Cognitive ability to navigate via fixed route systems

Once registered, an STS passenger must call a day in advance to schedule a trip.

CATS also provides paratransit service to anyone visiting the City of Charlotte with certified ADA paratransit eligibility in the jurisdiction in which they reside. Documentation for residence and disability may also be accepted if the disability is not immediately apparent. Visitor status for CATS STS is limited to 21 days per year.

A variety of fare levels and monthly passes are available for CATS passengers. A one-way fare for an STS trip is \$3.50, a 10-ride ticket book for STS costs \$30, while an STS monthly pass costs \$140. A regular local bus or light rail one-way fare is \$2.20, with a monthly pass cost of \$88. An Express bus one-way fare is \$3.00, with a monthly pass cost of \$121 and an Express Plus monthly pass cost of \$176 for an expanded number of express bus routes. Discounted fares for buses, light rail, and express buses at half the typical cost are available for seniors 62+, Medicare card holders, disabled individuals, and youth in grades K-12. Customers can choose to have digitally purchased tickets mailed directly to them by first class postage for \$2.00.

CATS-Pass mobile ticketing app includes real-time bus tracking and allows a ticket purchase for light rail and bus trips.

CATS’ vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes the following vehicles:

- 554 buses with seating capacity ranging from 22 to 40. All are ADA accessible.
 - 24 with seating capacity of 22
 - 44 with seating capacity of 28
 - 134 with seating capacity of 34
 - 12 with seating capacity of 38
 - 216 with seating capacity of 39
 - 62 with seating capacity of 40
- 74 over-the-road buses
 - All over-the-road buses are ADA accessible and have seating capacity of 49



CATS Demand Response (STS) Vehicle

- 84 demand response vehicles used for STS (ADA Paratransit) service
 - 83 cutaways – 46 with a seating capacity of 13 and 37 with a seating capacity of 17. All are ADA accessible.
 - 1 bus with a seating capacity of 20. The bus is ADA accessible.
- 44 light rail vehicles
 - 44 light rail vehicles, with seating capacity of 68. All are ADA accessible.
- Three streetcar rail vehicles
 - 3 streetcar rail vehicles, with seating capacity of 40. None are ADA accessible.
- 27 vanpool vehicles
 - 15 minivans, with seating capacity of 7. None are ADA accessible.
 - 12 vans, with seating capacity of 15. None are ADA accessible.

Operating expenses for the whole system are over \$175 million, while fare revenue is over \$12.7 million, for a farebox recovery of approximately 7 percent. The vanpool has the highest fare box recovery ratio of approximately 14% while the streetcar rail has the lowest at 0, as it does not collect fares. Other than the streetcar rail, bus has the lowest fare box recovery ratio at 6%.

Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)

Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS) is a community transportation provider that operates demand-response service, subscription routes and deviated fixed route service as well as one express bus route to Charlotte. ICATS operates as a coordinated transportation provider within Iredell County that enables routes and schedules to be structured to transport multiple passengers to multiple destinations.

Deviated fixed routes have specific stops and times and allow passengers to request a deviation up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile by requesting the deviation in advance. Deviated fixed routes include:

- The Statesville Bloom, operating on weekdays between 9:00 A.M. and 4:35 P.M.)
- The Mooresville Main, operating from 7:00 A.M. to 6:40 P.M.)
- ICATS Commuter Express, operating on weekdays between 5:00 A.M. and 5:45 P.M. The route extends south from Statesville to the Charlotte Transportation Center

Fares are set at \$1.00 per trip, with a \$3.00 fare for an express bus trip. Transfers from an express bus to a local ICATS route are free. Express bus monthly pass is \$121. Seniors 65 and older and individuals with disabilities pay a reduced fare for express bus trips at \$1.50 per trip.

ICATS also operates a VA shuttle to the VA Hospital in Salisbury every Tuesday. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. Approved riders can request to be picked up at home or at the Meeting Street stop.

The ICATS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 29 demand response vehicles
 - 21 cutaways, with seating capacity ranging from 10 to 22; all are ADA accessible.

- Eight vans, with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 10. All are ADA accessible.

Lancaster Area Ride Service (LARS)

The Council on Aging of Lancaster County provides transportation throughout the Lancaster area through the Lancaster Area Ride Service also known as "LARS." Ride service must be scheduled 3 business days in advance. Transportation services are provided on the following schedule:

- Monday through Friday: 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Riders are required to call (803) 285-6956 or visit the office in-person to complete the intake process. Program Fees vary. Residents of all ages residing in Lancaster County are eligible. One-way trips provided by the agency are priced as follows:

- \$5.00 for trips within Lancaster County
- \$10.00 for trips to and from Rock Hill
- \$20.00 for trips to Columbia, SC and Charlotte, NC. The LARS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:
 - 21 demand response vehicles
 - 12 cutaways, with seating capacity of 15. All are ADA accessible.
 - Seven minivans, with seating capacity ranging from 5 to 7. Four are ADA accessible.
 - Two vans, with seating capacity of 15. All are ADA accessible.
 - One automobile, with seating capacity of 5. None are ADA accessible.

Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS)

The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) operates the County's human service transportation program, Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS). As the largest operator of human service transportation, MTS provides demand responsive and subscription transportation with both vendor and direct service vehicles for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Services are funded by

Medicaid, health and human service agency funding, NC Dept. of Transportation and Mecklenburg County's ½ cent transit sales tax dedicated to service improvements. Some of the services provided by DSS include:

- Medicaid Transportation – Adult and children authorized to receive non-emergency Medicaid transportation are transported to and from medical destinations.
- Elderly Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) – Adults aged 60+ and children and adults with disabilities are transported to and from dialysis, chemotherapy, or other medical related appointments.
- Elderly General Purpose (EGP) – Adults aged 60+ who are not living in an assisted living facility or nursing home are transported to and from non-emergency medical appointments (physicians, lab tests, chemotherapy/radiation treatments, dialysis, mental health, etc.), dental appointments, pharmacy, grocery, employment to work and senior centers. Subsidized passes for bus or light rail public transit service are also provided. This funding stream is closed to new customers and trips for current riders are limited.
- Rural General Public (RGP) – Persons living outside, or their destination is outside the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County Urban Area are eligible to ride.
- Veterans Services Transportation – Qualified veterans are transported to and from Veterans Affairs hospitals in North Carolina, medical clinics in Charlotte and other destinations approved by the Veterans Services Office.
- Senior Citizens Nutrition Program (SCNP) Congregate Sites – Adults aged 60+ are transported to and from Mecklenburg County Senior Citizens Nutrition congregate sites for meals and social activities.
- Subscription – Transportation of individuals with disabilities to supported employment sites and Adult Day Care sites.

The MTS vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes the following:

- 28 demand response vehicles
 - 26 cutaways, with seating capacity ranging from 16 to 18. All are ADA accessible.
 - Two vans, with seating capacity of 7. None are ADA accessible.
- 66 demand response passenger vehicles (taxis)
 - 66 automobiles, with seating capacity of 4. None are ADA fleet vehicles.



MTS Vehicles

Rider (Concord Kannapolis Area Transit)

Rider (CK Rider) has been providing local fixed route service in Concord and Kannapolis, North Carolina, since 2004. Rider provides fixed route bus service on seven local fixed routes as well as the Concord Charlotte Express (CCX), a regional express route which connects passengers traveling from Cabarrus County to the Charlotte metropolitan area via the JW Clay light rail station in Charlotte. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the seven local fixed routes. In 2022, Rider covered 842,509 miles and provided 310,432 trips, operating seven days per week. There were 12,801 ADA Paratransit trips provided in 2019.

Fixed route and ADA Paratransit services operate seven days a week, 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. - Monday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Rider offers multiple options for the payment of fares.

Currently, fareboxes accept both coins and cash. Drivers cannot make change. Passes are available in 10 rides, one-day, seven-day, and 31-day increments and can be purchased at the Rider Transit Center. ADA Paratransit 10-ticket booklets can be purchased at the Rider Transit Center or from the Paratransit drivers for cash only. Reduced fares are available for fixed route service for qualified individuals: persons with disabilities, riders 65 and older, Medicare card holders (with photo ID), and current students with a valid school ID and proof of enrollment. An application must be submitted to receive a Reduced-Fare ID Card.

Rider's fare structure is as follows:

- Regular Fare: \$1.25 per ride
- Reduced Fare, regular routes \$0.60 per ride
- Children under age 5 Free
- Transfer to local routes Free
- ADA paratransit trip \$2.00
- 1-Day pass \$4.00 \$2.00
- 10-Ride pass \$10.00; Reduced fare \$5.00
- 7-Day pass \$12.00; Reduced fare \$6.00
- 31-Day pass \$40.00; Reduced fare \$20.00



Rider Bus

Rider Transit has unveiled Rider Pass, an innovative contactless digital payment system for fare transactions. Utilizing the Umo Mobile app or a Rider Pass smartcard, passengers can effortlessly purchase and manage passes, load funds, and enjoy touchless ticketing for a seamless transit experience. Highlights of this system include auto-loading funds, 31-day fare caps, real-time updates, and enhanced security for passes and account balances. Riders have the flexibility to make mobile payments via the Umo app or opt for the smartcard, while cash payments remain an option for those who prefer it.

The Rider vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 7 demand response vehicles
 - 4 cutaways, with seating capacity of 15. All are ADA accessible.
 - 3 vans, with seating capacity of 10. All are ADA accessible.
- 11 buses
 - With seating capacity ranging from 32 to 33. All are ADA accessible.

Transportation Lincoln County (TLC)

Transportation Lincoln County (TLC) is a consolidated transportation system operating in Lincoln County, NC. TLC offers demand response transportation and subscription routes. TLC has contracts to provide transportation with the following human service organizations:

- Lincoln County Senior Services
- Lincoln County Arts Center
- Lincoln County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Lincoln County Services for the Blind
- Lincoln County Department of Social Services
- Lincoln County Veterans Services
- Gaston Skills/Salem Industries

Most typical public transportation trips fall under one of the following categories:

- Medicaid Transportation (Lincoln County DSS)
- Elderly or Disabled Transportation
- Services for the Blind Transportation
- Veterans Transportation
- General Public and Other Transportation Services



TLC Vehicle

TLC has recently introduced DASH, a new reservation-based rider service. Residents of Lincoln County can call (704) 479-0020 to reserve up to one round-trip ride. Residents who call in advance are granted free pick-up and drop-off at any listed transit stop within the municipal limits of Lincolnton. If a trip is not scheduled in advance, Passengers in the "General Public" category are expected to pay a fare. Hours of service are 6 AM-5 PM Monday through Friday, with the administration office open Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM.

The TLC vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 22 demand response vehicles and buses
 - 16 cutaways, with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 14. All are ADA accessible.
 - 6 vans, with seating capacity of 8. All are ADA accessible. All the vehicles were listed as Metrobus Demand Response vehicles.

Union County Transportation (UCT)

Union County Transportation (UCT) provides demand response services and some subscription routes. No fixed route or deviated fixed route services are currently available. Passengers riding on UCT demand response vehicles must pay a fare of \$2.00.

Union County residents can access an express bus route, 74x, operated by CATS, to travel between Monroe Crossing Mall Park and Ride location and Charlotte along US 74 (Independence Boulevard) during weekday peak hours (6:31-7:19 AM and 5:11-6:21 PM)

UCT has received access to a suballocation of urban transit (section 5307 funding) in recent years, allowing UCT to expand eligibility to a greater variety of trips. Section 5307 funding has become available to UCT since 2019. UCT is expecting a further increase in urban transit funding, with an accompanying decrease in rural (section 5311) funding as Union County is becoming more urban. Prior to receiving urban transit funding, transportation services available to residents of Union County were more limited, based on available grant programs or through sponsorship of a local human service agency.

Section 5307 funding can be used as fares for those who may be unable to pay the \$2.00 trip fare. Trips eligible for assisted payments include:

- Senior citizens at least 60 years of age (for trips to daycare, nutrition sites, medical appointments)
- Developmentally disabled adults
- Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) clients
- Veterans eligible for medical treatment at a VA Hospital or clinic
- Transportation services are also provided to the clients of contracting human service agencies such as Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran Services, and Senior Nutrition.

For Rural General Public passengers, a fare of \$2 per trip is required. Wheelchair passengers who fall under the Rural General Public category also pay a \$2 per trip fare. As with most on demand transportation services, a potential transit rider has to pre-register with UCT. The determination of whether a fare is required is made at the time of registration and may be dependent upon the type of trip being scheduled.



Union County Transportation Vehicle

Some work-purpose trips require a wait to ensure that a seat is available on a vehicle that can make the pick-ups and drop offs at the time desired. No wait is required to sign up for urgent trips such as for dialysis. Trips must be scheduled 48 hours in advance.

Service hours are between 6 AM and 5 PM.

UCT vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 30 demand response vehicles (Union County staff reported 24 vehicles as actively in use as of February 2022)
 - 21 cutaways – with seating capacity ranging from 8 to 19. Fourteen are ADA accessible.
 - 8 minivans – all with a seating capacity of 6. Three are ADA accessible.
 - 5 vans – each with a seating capacity of 9. Two are ADA accessible. UCT is in the process of converting additional vehicles to be ADA accessible.

UCT partners with Anson County Transportation three days a week to transfer passengers for some of the trips into Mecklenburg County. UCT will drop off passengers at relay (transfer) sites, and Anson County Transportation can take the passengers to Charlotte. Another transfer occurs for the reverse leg of the journey.

York County Access

York County Access is operated through the York County Council on Aging and provides two transportation programs: Essential Service and Ride to Work Service. Essential service provides transportation to the doctor, pharmacy grocery store, or medical treatment facilities in York County. This service operates from 6 AM to 6 PM on weekdays. Ride to Work Service is only offered within the city limits of Rock Hill and provides transportation to work within the city. This service operates from 5:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:30 PM to 6:00 PM on weekdays. Trips must be scheduled 48 hours in advance for Essential Service, and 24 hours in advance for Ride to Work Service. Fares for both services are \$2.50 each way within York County – trips outside York County require an additional fare that is determined on an individual basis. Residents can reserve space by calling York County Council on Aging at (803) 327-6694.

The York County vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 23 demand response vehicles
 - 16 cutaways, with seating capacity of 14. All but one are ADA accessible.
 - 5 minivans, with seating capacity of 4. All are ADA accessible.
 - 2 vans, with seating capacity of 10. All are ADA accessible.

My Ride Rock Hill

The City of Rock Hill operates a fixed-route bus system with full service, operating Monday through Saturday, 7am-7pm. Service first began on July 1st of 2019, in partnership with Winthrop University, Piedmont Medical Center, and Family Trust Federal Credit Union. The service currently offers four routes at 60-minute frequencies at no cost to riders:

- Downtown Loop
 - From Winthrop University to Downtown Rock Hill and Herlong Ave
- Saluda/Heckle Loop
 - Serving areas along Saluda St, Heckle Blvd, W Main St, and Piedmont Medical Center
- Cherry/Riverwalk Line
 - Downtown Rock Hill to Riverwalk via Cherry Rd
- Dave Lyle/Galleria Line
 - Downtown Rock Hill and Galleria Mall via Dave Lyle Blvd

The agency also operates a mobile app (also named My Ride Rock Hill on the Google Play Store and App Store) that shows route maps, current bus locations, and live schedules for busses in operation. My Ride Rock Hill's transit hub is located on the ground floor of Parking Deck B in University Center at 343 Technology Center Way in Rock Hill.

My Ride Rock Hill vehicle fleet as reported in 2022 NTD data includes:

- 10 buses, with seating capacity of 28. All are ADA accessible.
- 3 demand response vehicles
 - 3 cutaways, with seating capacity of 15. All are ADA accessible.

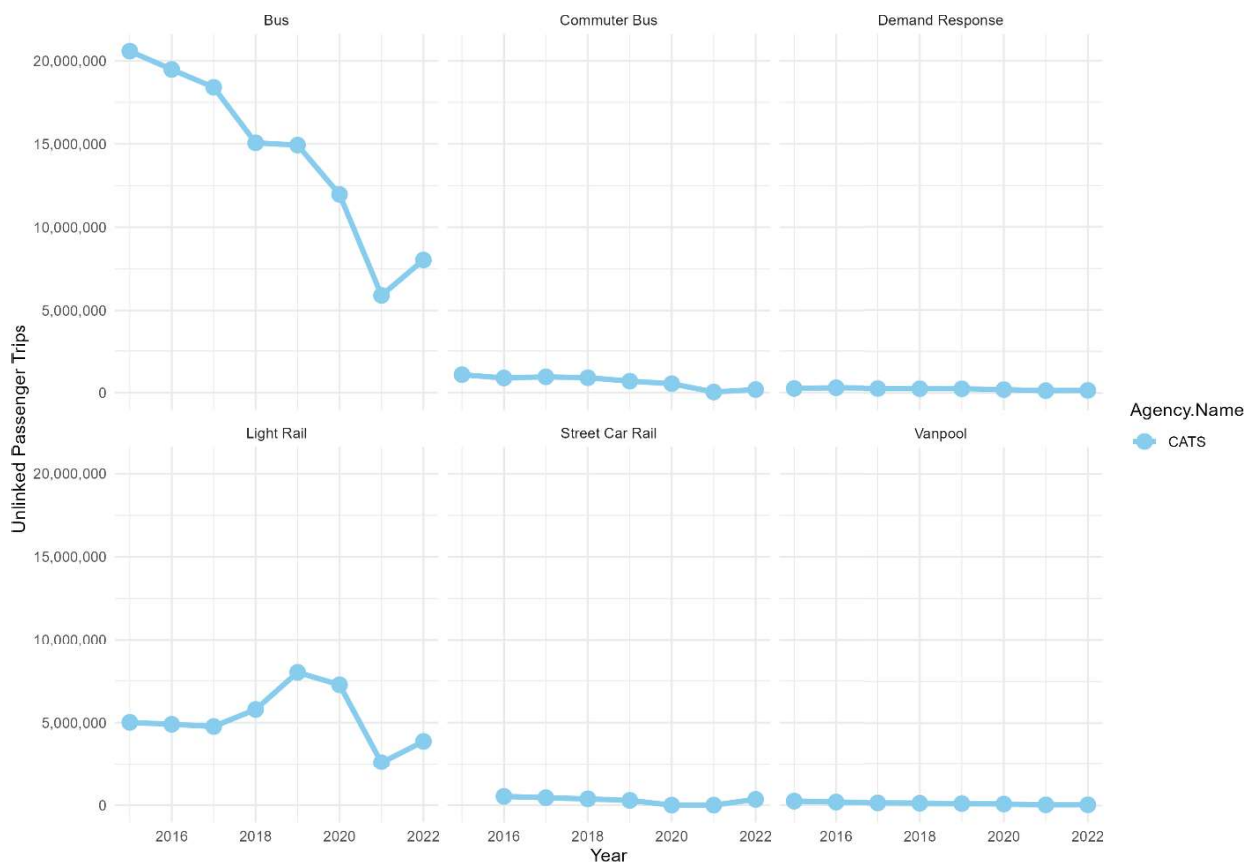
Public Transportation Ridership Trends

Passenger Trips

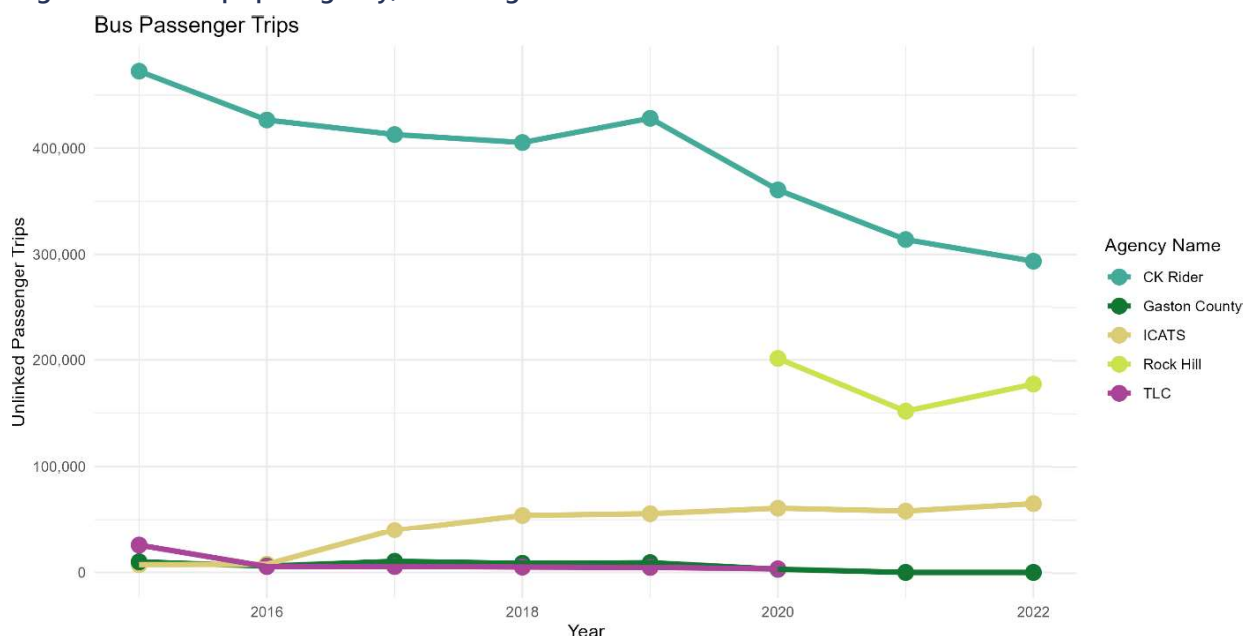
NTD data were reviewed for the public transportation providers in the Charlotte region. Passenger trips were evaluated by mode with a particular focus on bus and demand response trips. Due to the size of CATS compared to other regional agencies, the values were evaluated both together and in separate graphs to enable a better view of the smaller agencies' data. Figure 19 shows the unlinked passenger trips (UPT) across all CATS modes. The majority of CATS's ridership comes from bus and light rail passengers.

Ridership on buses showed a significant decrease from 2019 to 2021, around the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In 2022, bus ridership increased. Light rail ridership displays a notable increase in popularity from 2017 to 2019, then taking a dive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other transit services offered by CATS (including demand response and vanpool) detail much less popularity relative to bus and light rail.

Figure 19: CATS Unlinked Passenger Trips by Mode



Bus passenger trips were evaluated for agencies excluding CATS in Figure 20. Following CATS, Rider has the highest number of bus passenger trips in the region. Rider saw the largest decline in passenger trips, with trips declining before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Other agencies had relatively stable passenger trips, although ICATS has been trending upwards in ridership since 2015, including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of My Ride Rock Hill's fixed route transit system proves to be popular in its first years of service, sustaining only a slight dip in UPT for 2021.

Figure 20: Bus Trips per Agency, Excluding CATS

The number of demand response passenger trips between 2015 and 2022 are shown in Figure 21. MTS has the highest amount of demand response passenger trips, followed by CATS. MTS and CATS passenger trips rapidly increased from 2015 to 2018, where trips then plateaued and decreased in the following years. The other regional agencies are further examined in Figure 22, which excludes MTS and CATS demand response ridership to provide better insight into smaller agency trends. Agencies' demand response passenger trip volumes vary but were largely stable pre-COVID-19. Gaston County and Cabarrus County ridership were exceptions to this stability, seeing continued decreases in ridership in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all agencies saw a decrease in passenger trip volume with the onset of the pandemic, except for Rider, who continued to grow in demand response ridership during said time frame.

Figure 21: Demand Response Passenger Trips per Agency

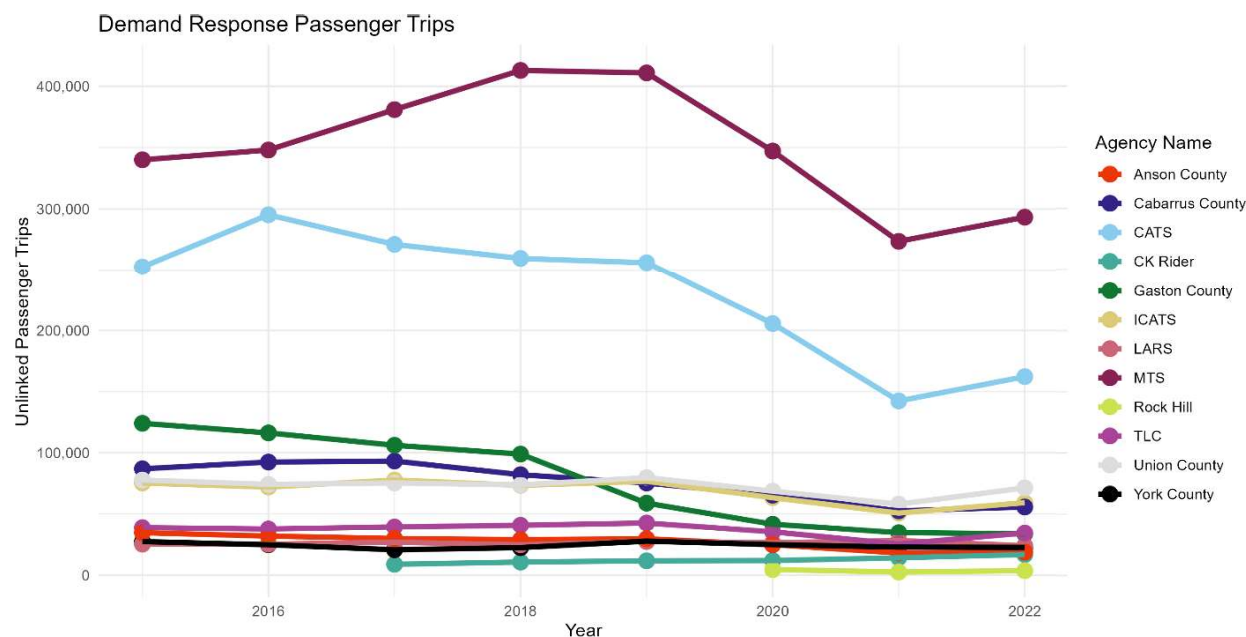
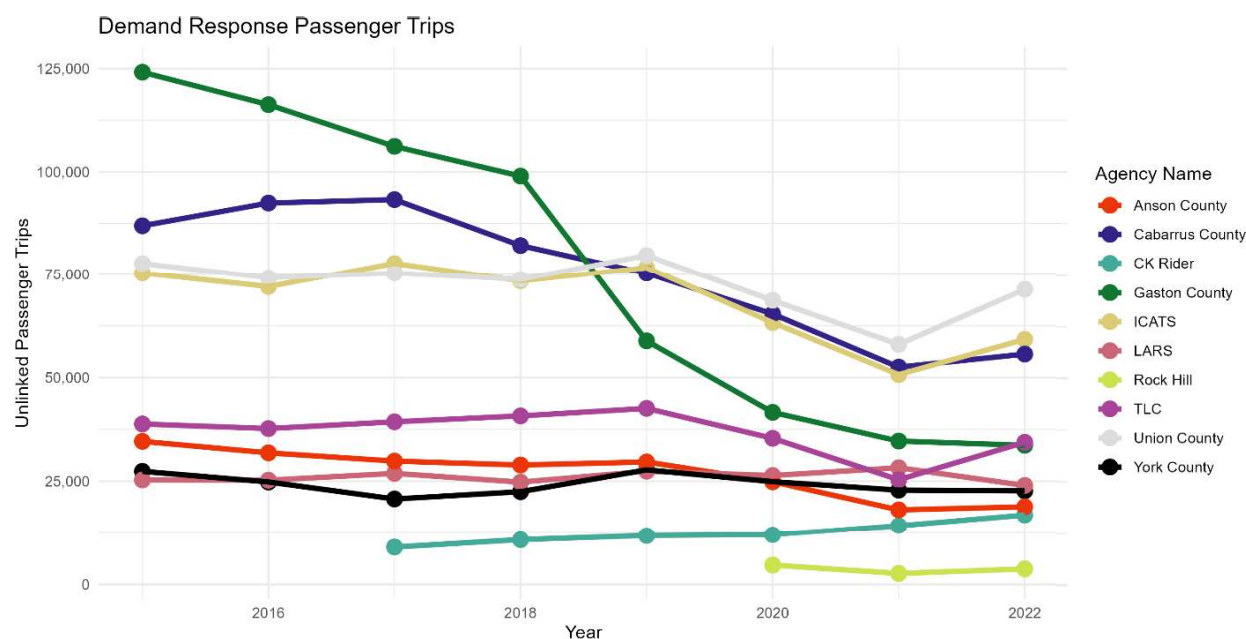
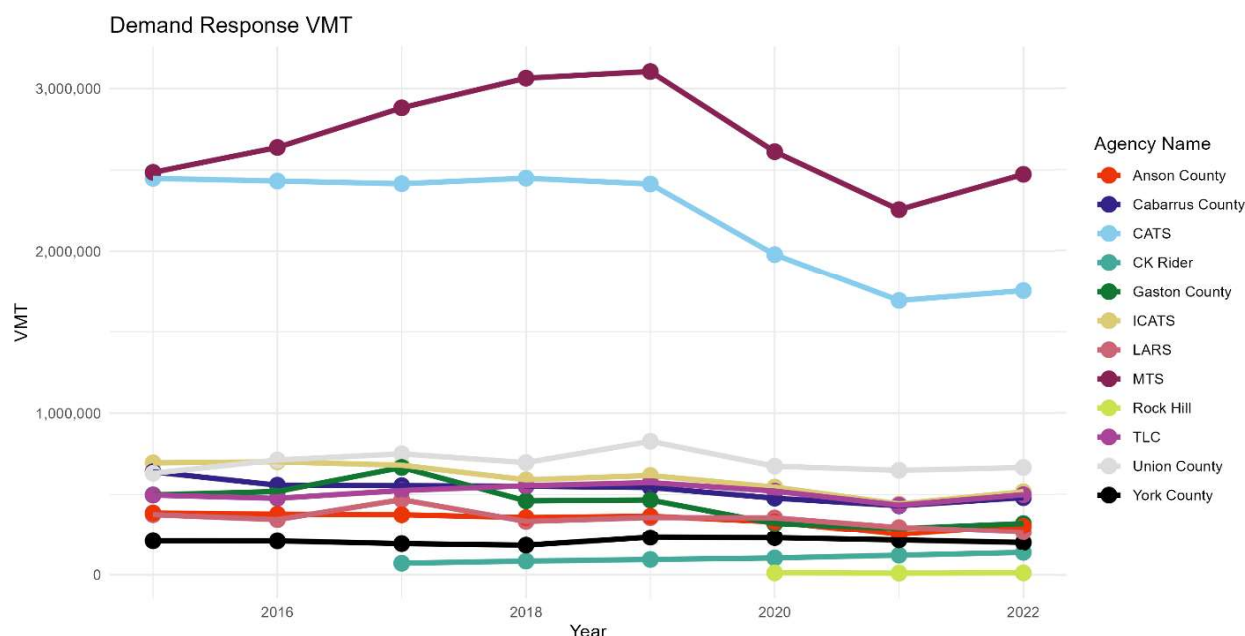


Figure 22: Demand Response Passenger Trips per Agency, Excluding CATS and MTS



Demand response VMT trends were examined, as illustrated in Figure 23. VMT trends mostly followed the trends for agency passenger trips.

Figure 23: Demand Response Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)



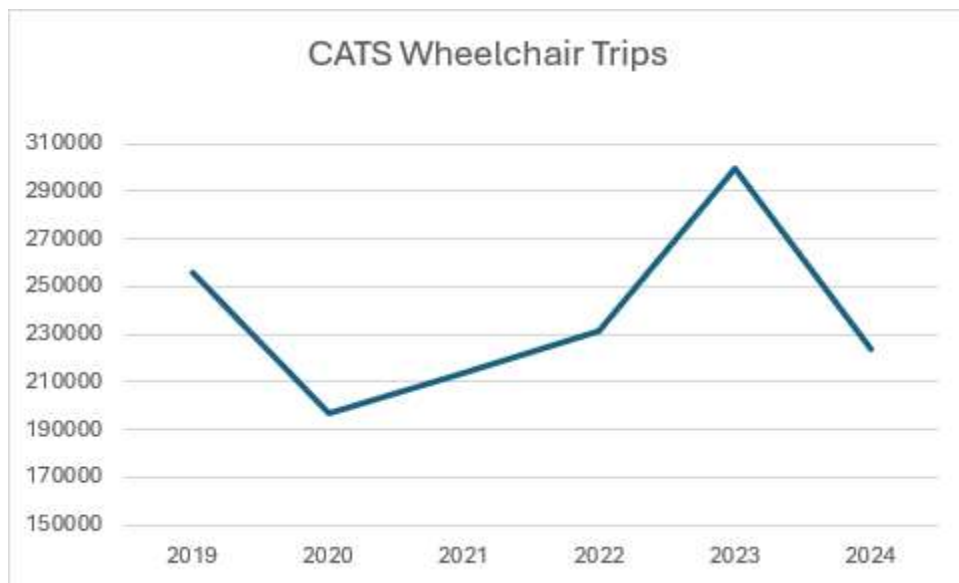
Wheelchair Ridership

This section reviews additional detail for transit agencies that directly serve the Charlotte Urban Area (CATS, MTS, ICATS, Rider and Union County Transportation) with a focus on the annual passenger count, annual wheelchair trip count, and the proportion of the annual passenger count that were wheelchair trips.

CATS

CATS provided total annual wheelchair trips from 2019 to 2024. In 2019, CATS provided over 250,000 wheelchair trips. A sharp decrease in wheelchair trips provided by CATS is observed in 2020, falling below 200,000 due to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Wheelchair trips steadily increased from 2020 to 2022 before spiking in 2023, where CATS provided nearly 300,000 trips in a year's time (Figure 24). Data for 2024 is measured from January to August, explaining the visible decrease in wheelchair trips for the year. Trends indicate that CATS is on-course to continue experiencing growth in terms of wheelchair trips, in-line with general ridership trends for CATS-provided transit services.

Figure 24: CATS Wheelchair Trips



MTS

MTS shared the number of wheelchair trips from 2017 to 2024, Total passenger trips from 2017 to 2022, and the number of bus passes purchased from 2017 to 2022. Annual wheelchair trips provided by MTS saw slight deviation from year-to-year, with slight decreases observed in 2020 and 2022. Wheelchair trips remain steady overall, teetering near 50,000 for most of the highlighted years. MTS saw a dip in the number of total annual trips from 2019 to 2020 associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Since 2020, Annual trips have steadily increased. Bus passes purchased from MTS were most popular in 2017 but have decreased since.

Figure 25: MTS Wheelchair Trips

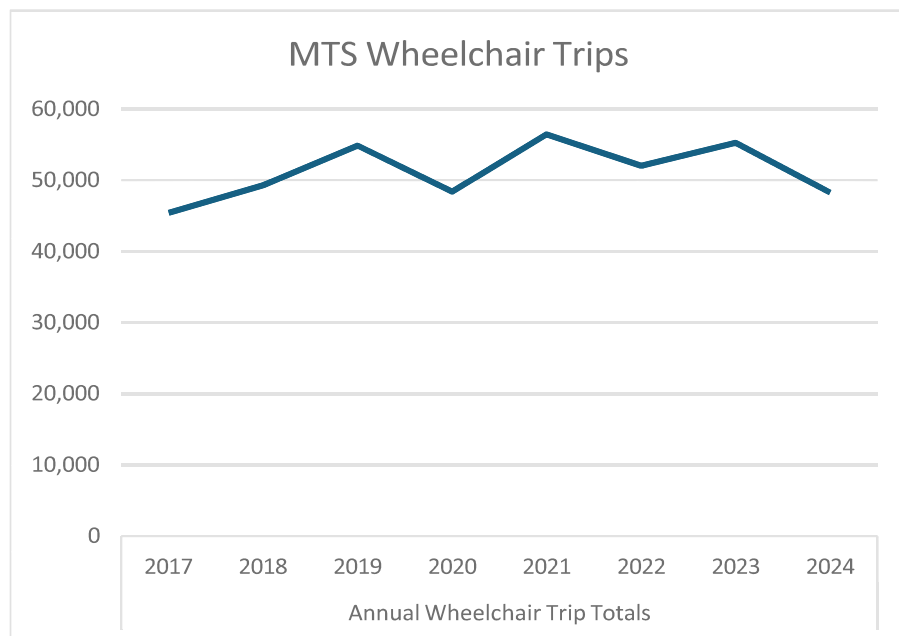


Figure 26: MTS Annual Trips

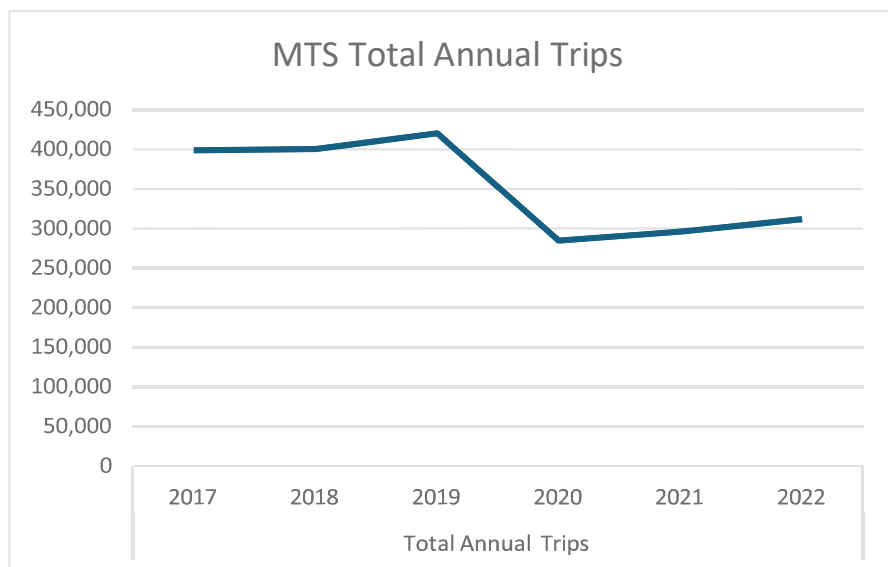
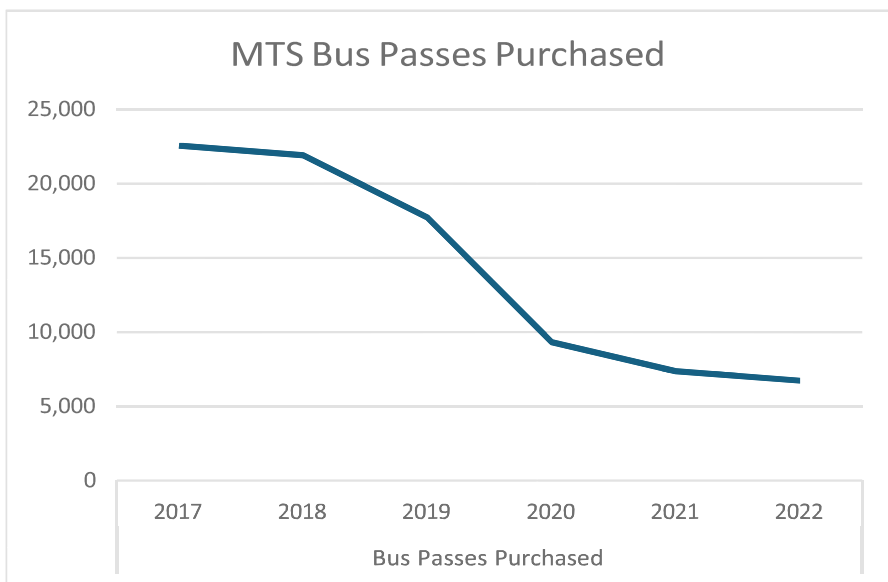


Figure 27: MTS Bus Passes Purchased



ICATS

ICATS shared transit operation characteristics by fiscal year. Figure 28 shows the overall number of passengers from FY 2008 to FY 2024. Passenger counts create an ebb and flow pattern as seen in Figure 28, with the number of total passengers being the highest at the peaks of FY 2010, FY 2019, and FY 2024. ICATS has seen an uptick in the number of passengers it is servicing per mile, while having fewer total service hours, as seen in Figure 29 and Figure 30, respectively. The same is true for average passengers per service hour and average passengers per day, indicating an uptick in efficiency among ICATS services. Reporting issues were noted for staff data, explaining the break in full-time employees (FTE) in FY 2012 and FY 2013.

Figure 28: ICATS Total Passenger Counts

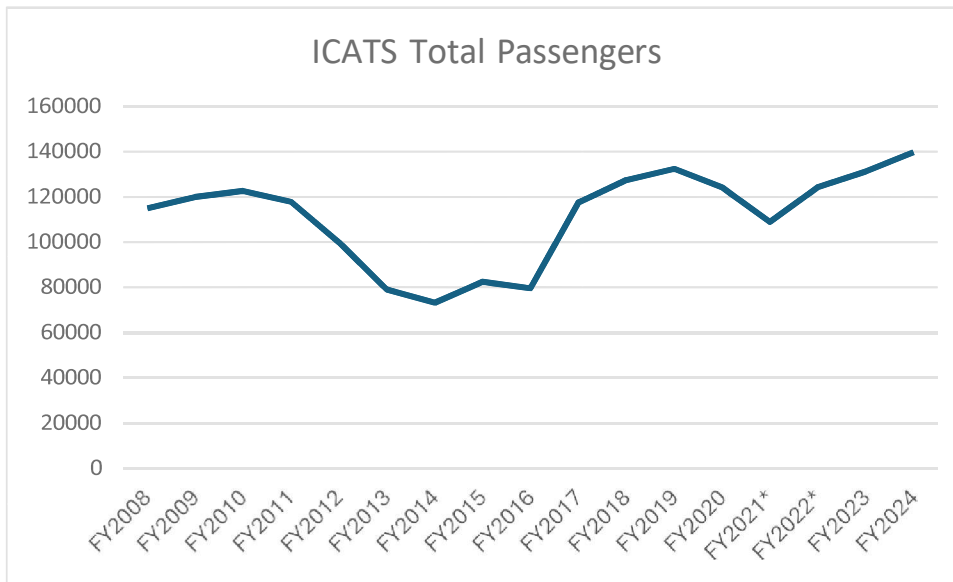


Figure 29: ICATS Passengers per Service Mile

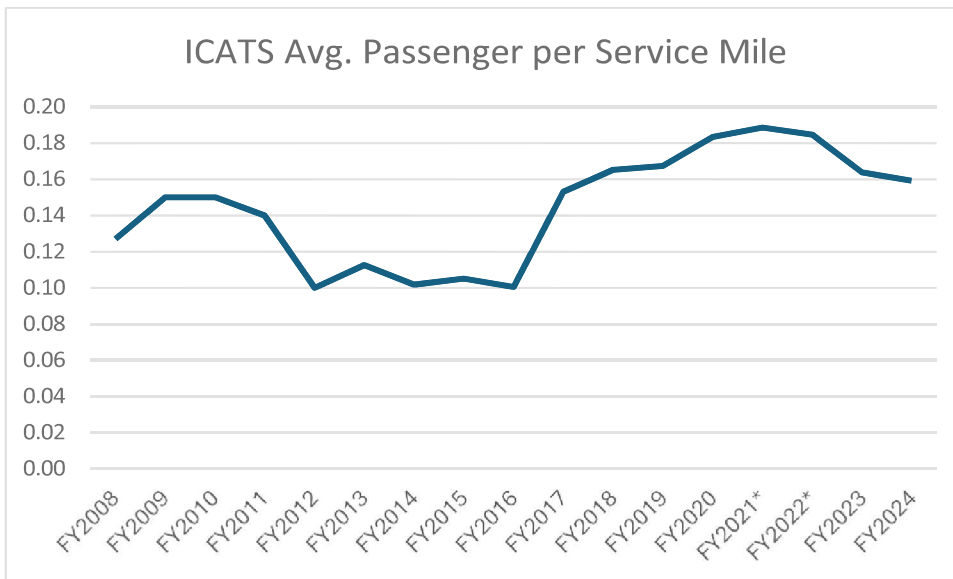


Figure 30: ICATS Service Hours

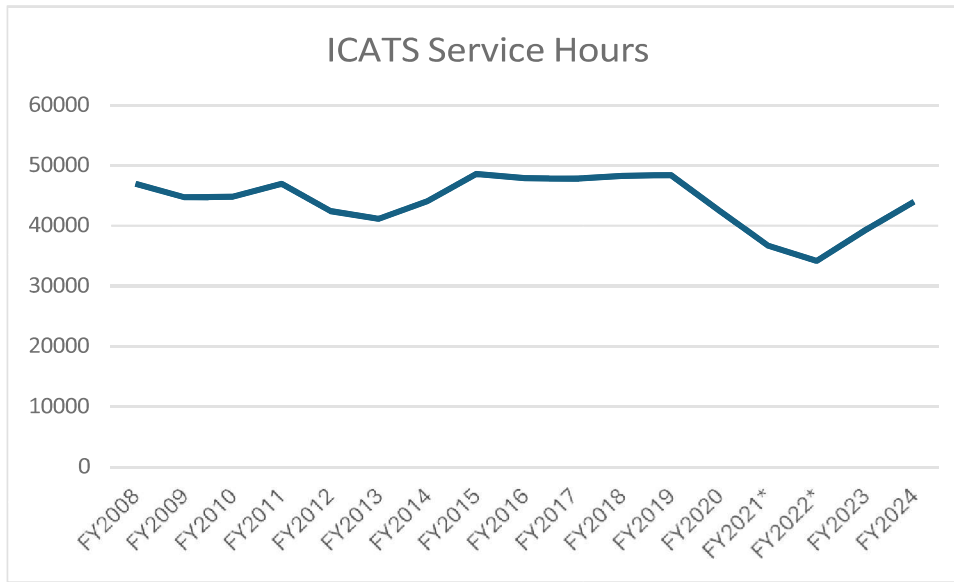


Figure 31: ICATS Service Miles

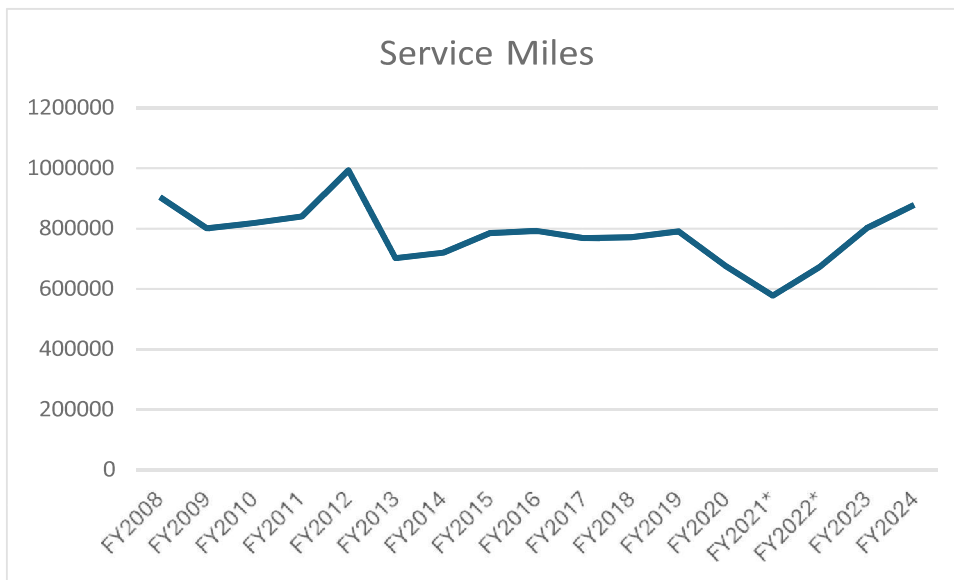


Figure 32: ICATS Passengers per Service Hour

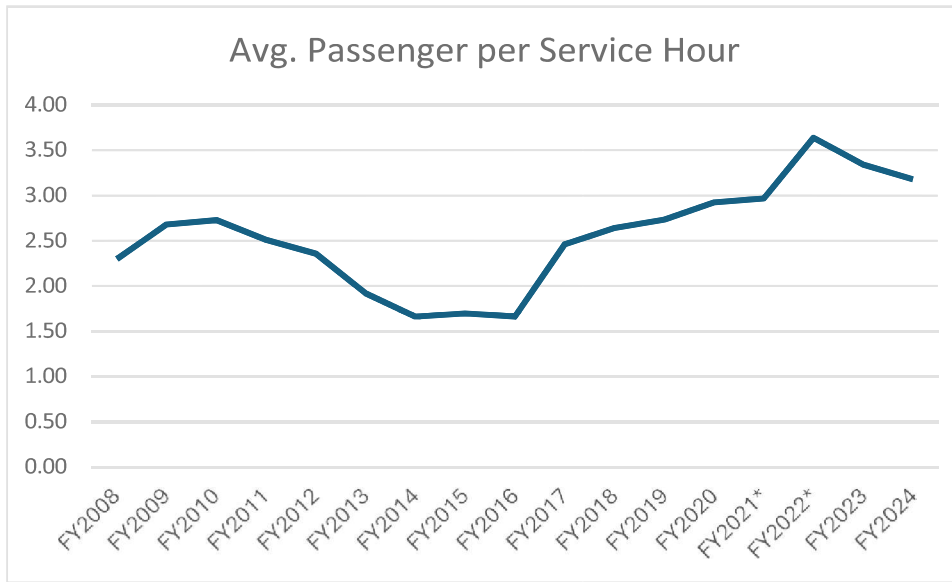


Figure 33: ICATS Operating Days

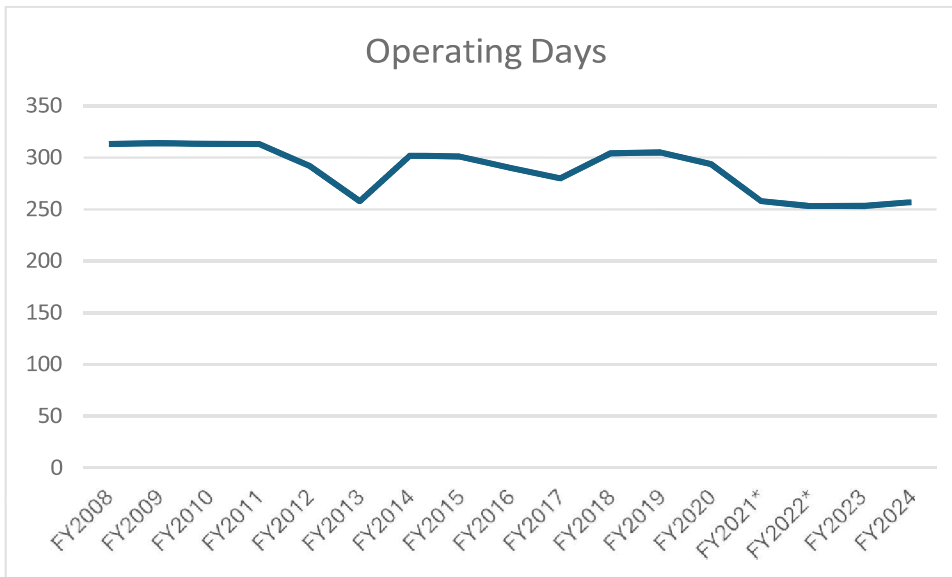


Figure 34: ICATS Total Full Time Drivers

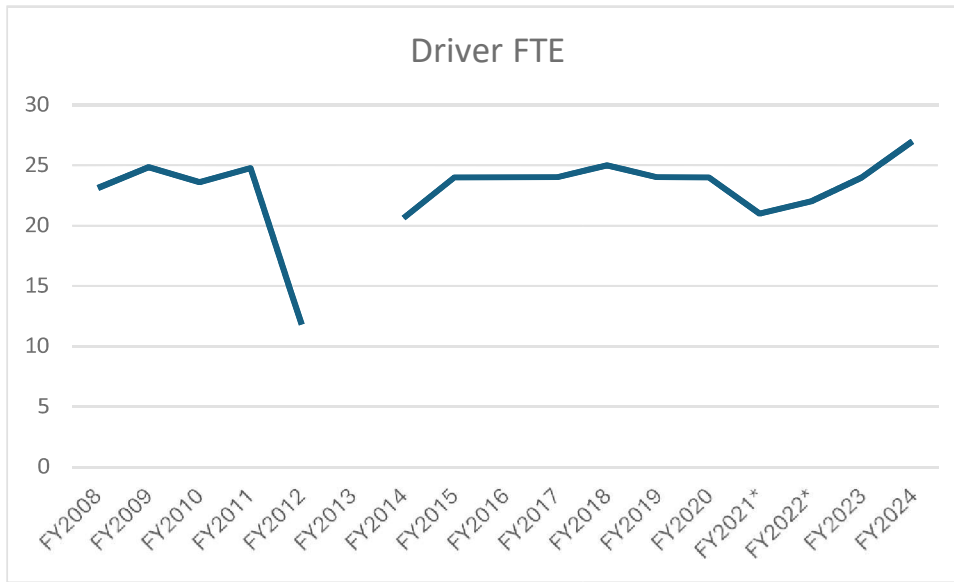


Figure 35: ICATS Total Full Time Employees

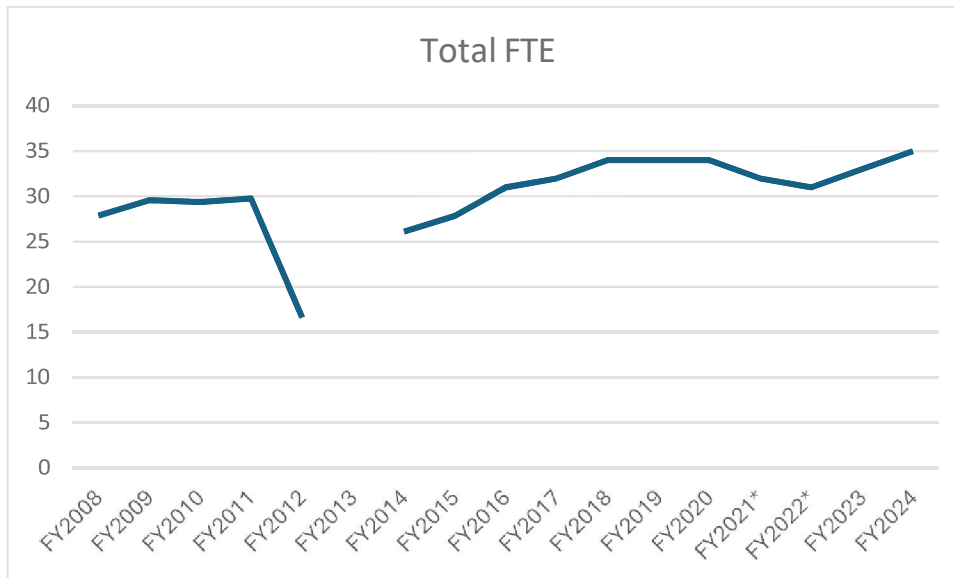
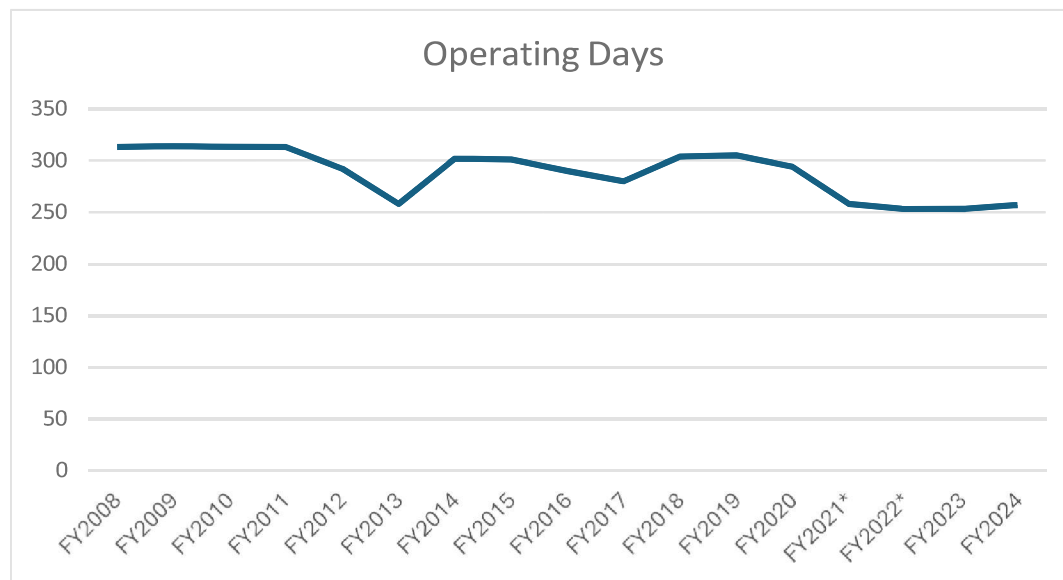


Figure 36: ICATS Operating Days



Union County

Union County provided a variety of transit service characteristics, including annual trips, annual wheelchair trips, annual service hours, and annual service miles from 2017 to 2022. UCT had its highest number of annual trips in 2019, where it then began to decrease. Trips ticked upwards in 2022. Annual wheelchair trips for UCT have continued to experience growth since 2017, with trends indicating the potential for additional wheelchair trips in the coming years. Annual service hours and miles have both remained relatively stable from 2017 to 2022.

Figure 37: UCT Annual Trips

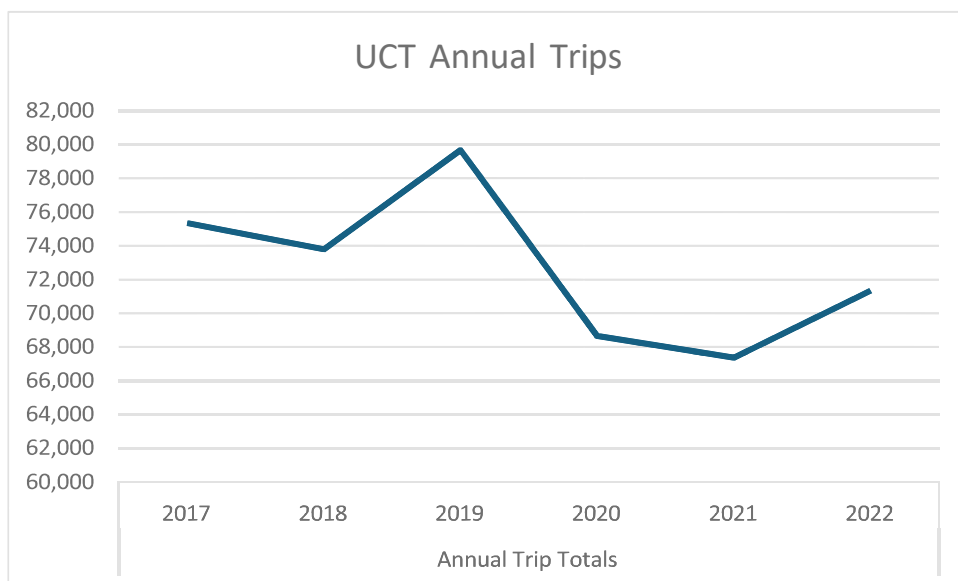


Figure 38: UCT Annual Wheelchair Trips

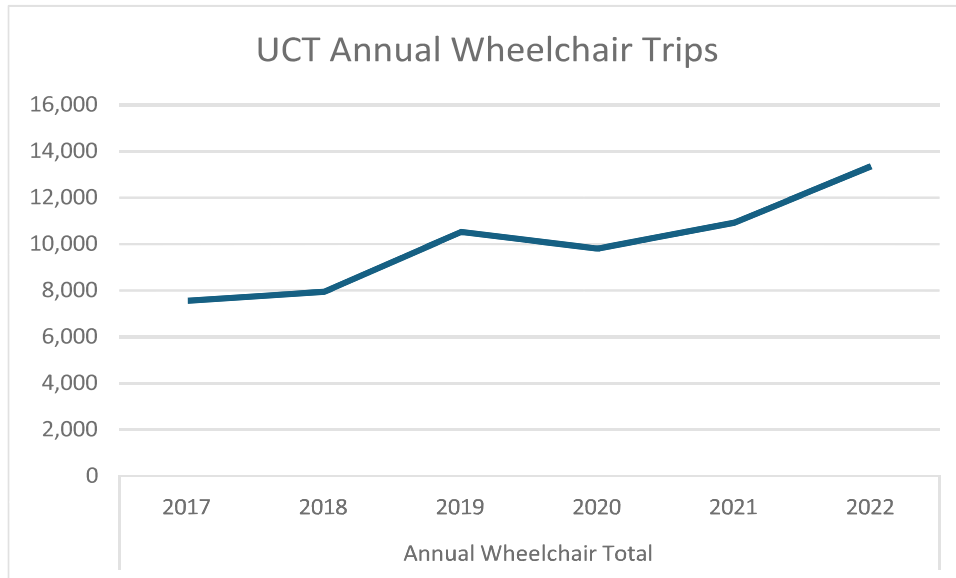


Figure 39: UCT Annual Service Hours

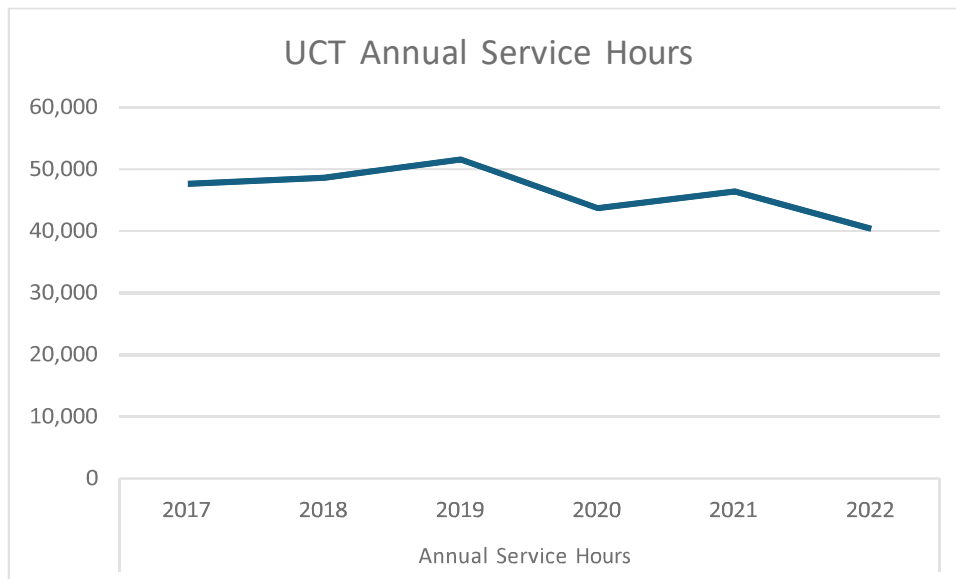
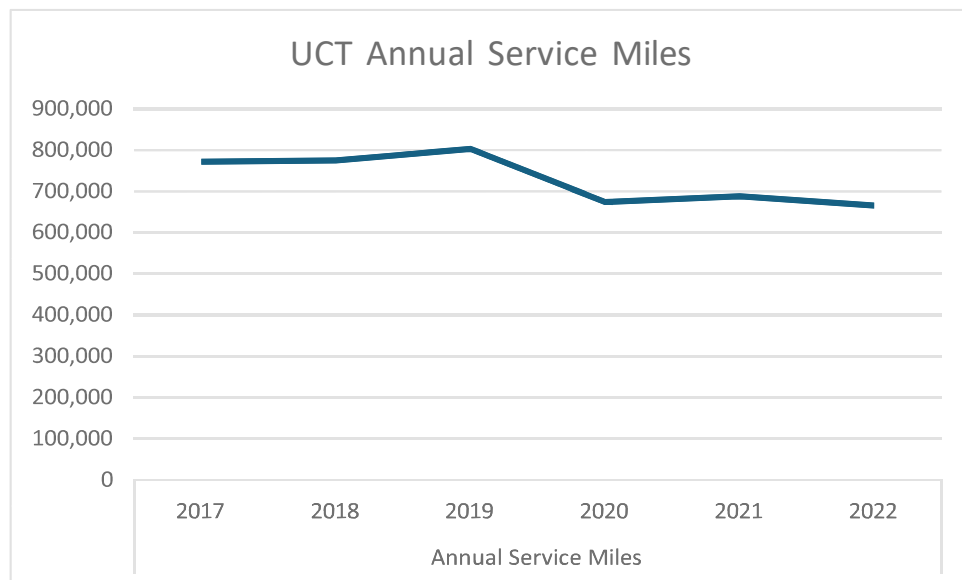


Figure 40: UCT Annual Service Miles



Passenger Fares and Agency Funding

Passenger fare collection trends as well as trends in funding by FTA grant funding category by agency were reviewed for the last seven years where National Transit Database (NTD) data were available.

Figure 41 examines the total demand response fares by agency. It should be noted that the NTD data did not distinguish between "Passenger Paid Fares" and "Organization Paid Fares" in their fare data until 2018.

Figure 41: Demand Response Fares per Agency

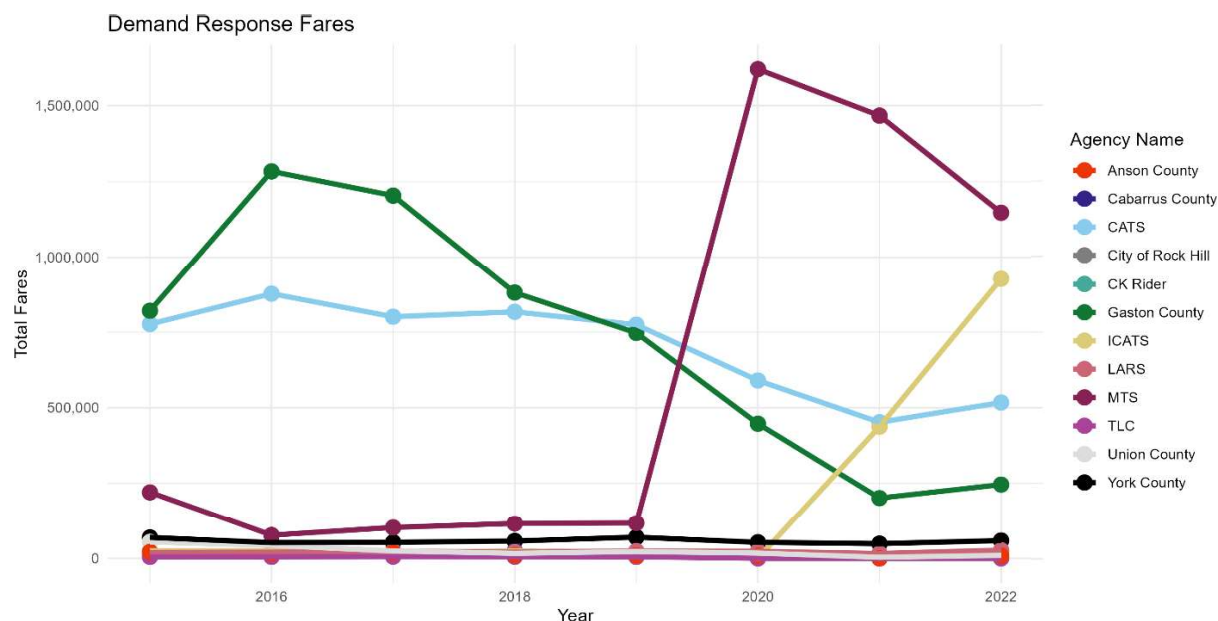


Figure 42 shows the total passenger paid fares. Until 2020, MTS reported their total fare data as only their passenger paid fares, whereas in 2020 and beyond, their total fare data included passenger paid fares and organization paid fares, explaining the huge spike in their 2020 value in Figure 43. Despite having the highest amount of demand response passenger trip volume, MTS has a small number of total fares received from the service. Most agencies receive very little passenger fare revenue from their transit services. CATS receives the most amount of passenger paid fares.

Figure 42: Passenger Paid Fares per Agency

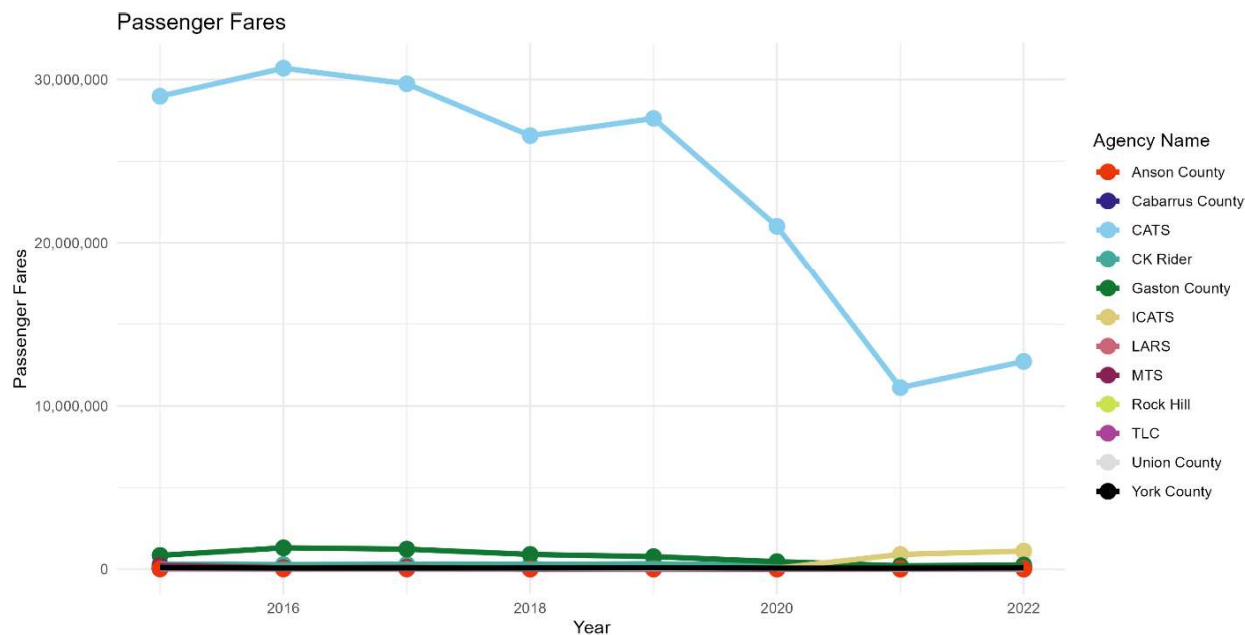
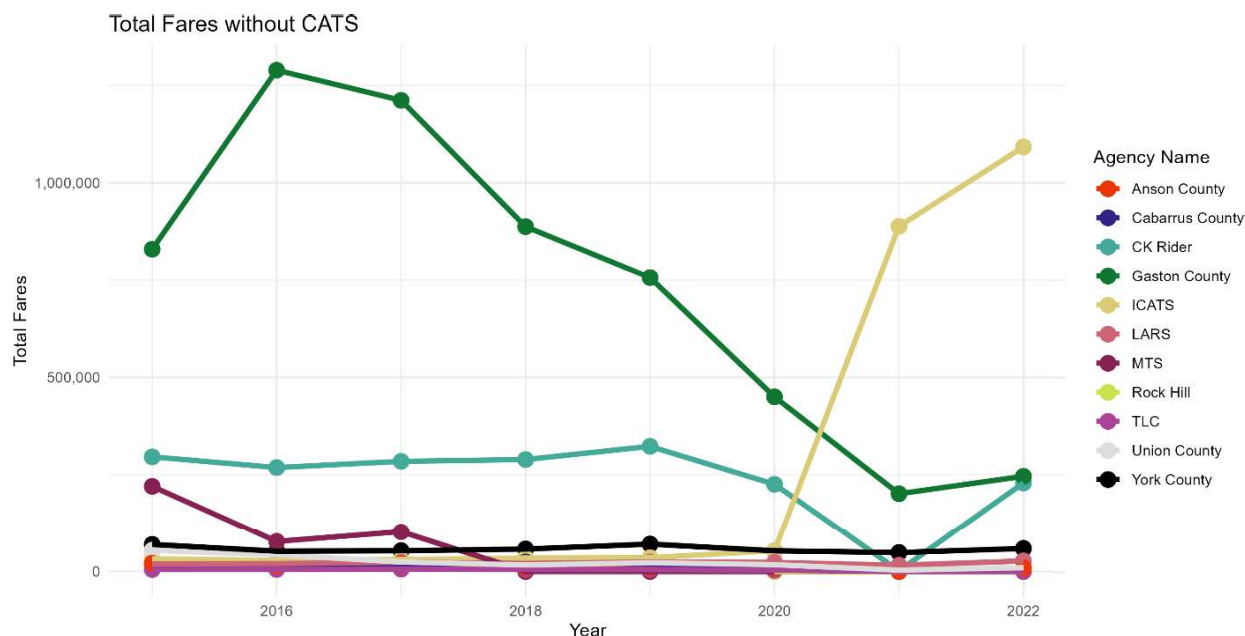
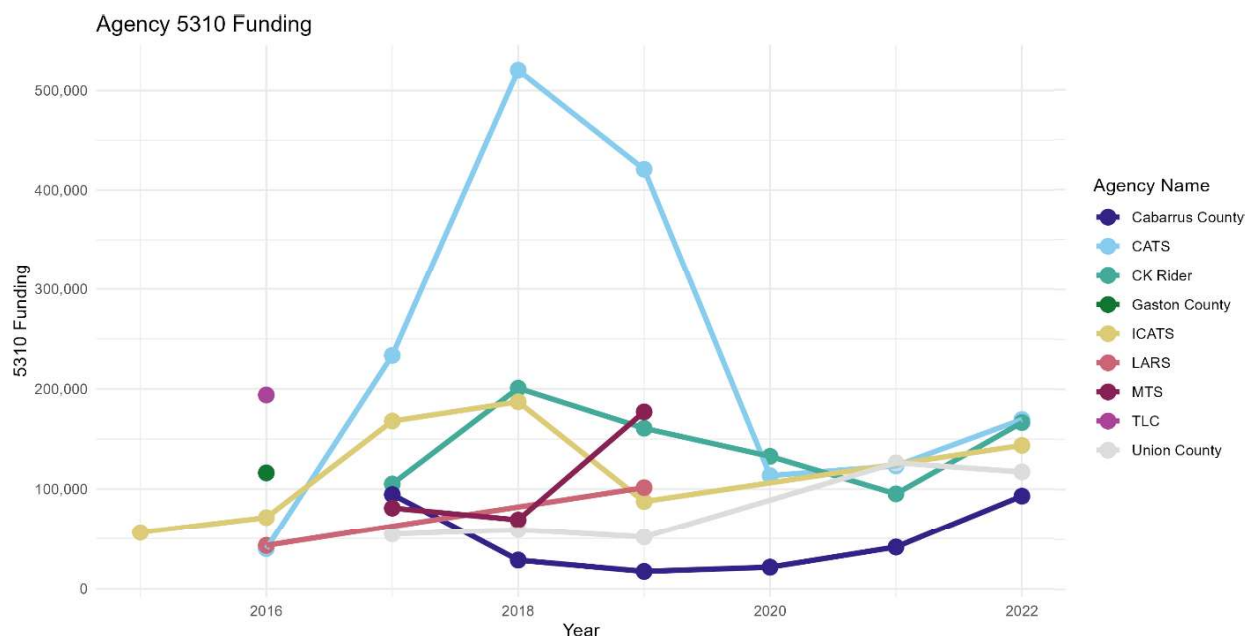


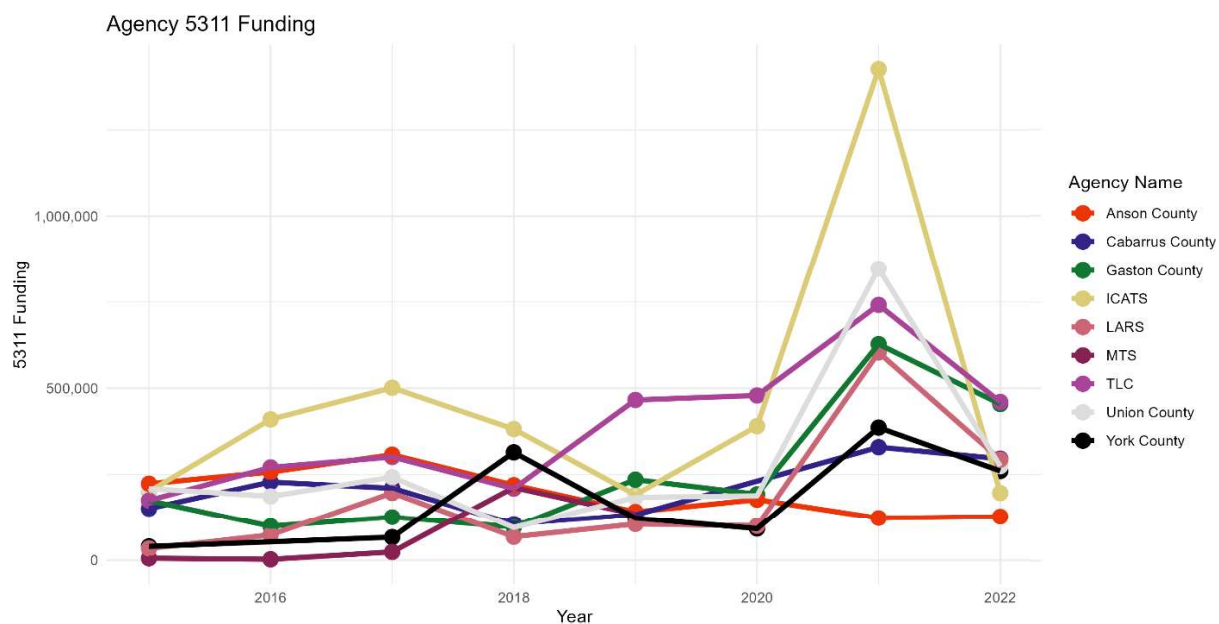
Figure 43 further examines passenger paid fares by all agencies, excluding CATS. Removing CATS allows the data for the smaller agencies to be more readable. ICATS, Gaston County, and Rider have the highest total passenger paid fares following CATS. Most agencies receive less than \$25,000 a year in passenger paid fares.

Figure 43: Passenger Paid Fares per Agency, Excluding CATS

The FTA Section 5310 (improved mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities), Section 5311 (rural transit capital, planning, and operating assistance), and Section 5307 (urban transit capital and operating assistance) funding was examined by agency. CATS received large amounts of 5310 funding in years 2018 and 2019. 2020 shows a steep drop in Section 5310 funding, with a slow increase in 5310 funding since 2020. Rider and ICATS both tended to receive some of the highest amounts of funding in recent years following CATS. Union County also saw Section 5310 Funding post-COVID-19. While MTS has the highest volume of demand response passenger trips, it receives some of the lowest amounts of Section 5310 funding when compared to other agencies in the region.

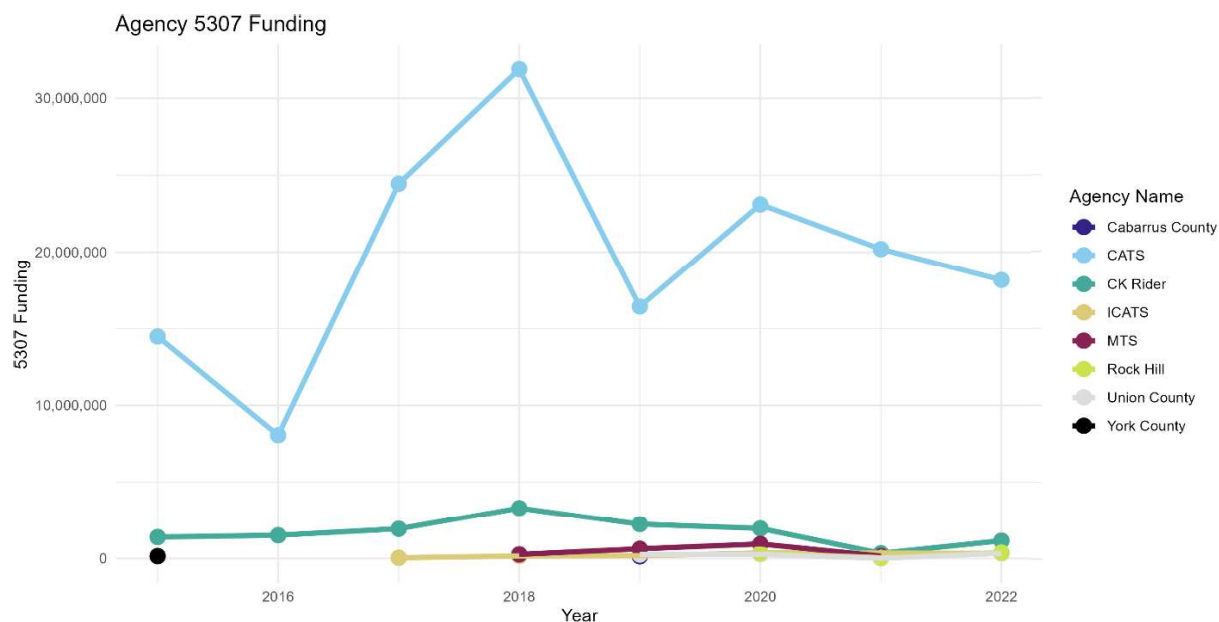
Figure 44: Section 5310 Funding per Agency


ICATS, TLC, and Union County received the highest amounts of 5311 funding between 2019 and 2022. Anson County, TLC, and ICATS had a large spike in 5311 funding in 2017. All agencies except for Anson County received significant funding in 2021, largely due to the introduction of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provided a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. CATS and Rider have not received any 5311 funding.

Figure 45: Section 5311 Funding per Agency


CATS received the greatest amount of 5307 funding over the seven-year period, receiving more than \$10 million annually from 2017 to 2022, and \$30 million in 2018 alone. Most other agencies receive under \$2.5 million annually. Gaston County, LARS, and TLC have not received any 5307 funding. Union County and Rock Hill started to receive 5307 funding in 2019 and 2020, respectively. MTS, Cabarrus County, and York County received funding at varying points across the seven-year period.

Figure 46: Section 5307 Funding per Agency



Subrecipients of Charlotte Urban Area FTA Section 5310 Funding

In addition to existing public transit agencies, a variety of non-profit and public agencies in the area have received FTA Section 5310 funding through a CATS call for grant funding in recent years. The following is a list of non-profit and public agencies who have been recent recipients of FTA Section 5310 funding apportioned to Charlotte Urban Area, based on FY 2018 through FY 2022 grant funding calls for projects.

Table 12: Projects Funded in Full or in Part by Section 5310 Funding in Charlotte Urban Area

Fiscal Year	Recipient	Project Description
2018	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	- Utilize three vans to provide opportunities for regional transportation for blind and visually impaired people. - Provide 3,500 door-through-door trips.
2018	Mainstreaming Consultants, DBA Disability Rights and Resources (DRR)	- Provide travel training for 150 people with disabilities and seniors. - Maintain a toolbox of transportation services and distribute 100 toolboxes to target populations. - Provide educational outreach to 20 local groups. - Provide sensitivity training to 15 transportation providers. - Provide 1,500 one-way trips during travel training.
2018	Iredell County Area Transit System (ICATS)	- Purchase three expansion vehicles. - Provide additional transit service to seniors and those with a disability on a new fixed route operating Monday through Saturday from 4am to 9:30pm. Additional accommodations available for residents with mobility issues.
2018	Union County Transportation (UCT)	Provide demand response transportation to county residents who have a disability or are 65 or older to maintain pace with an aging population.
2018	Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)	- Conduct three bus stop or walking audits. - Provide transportation education to seniors, veterans, and people with a disability.

Fiscal Year	Recipient	Project Description
		• Coordinate two transportation fairs. • Host two focus groups to capture older adult and disabled persons feedback on current transportation and transit conditions. • Provide dementia training to transportation operators.
2019	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	• Utilize three vans to provide opportunities for regional transportation for blind and visually impaired people. • Provide 3,500 door-through-door trips.
2019	Mainstreaming Consultants, DBA Disability Rights and Resources (DRR)	• Provide travel training for 150 people with disabilities and seniors. • Maintain a toolbox of transportation services and distribute 100 toolboxes to target populations. • Provide educational outreach to 20 local groups. • Provide sensitivity training to 15 transportation providers. • Provide 1,500 one-way trips during travel training.
2019	C.W. Williams Community Health Center Inc.	• Provide door to door non-emergency transportation for elderly and disabled populations.
2019	Union County Transportation	• Provide demand response transportation to county residents who are 65 or older to account for an aging population. • Purchase one 20-foot lift equipped Light Transit Vehicle expansion vehicle to expand regional connectivity and services for elderly and disabled residents.
2019	Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)	• Conduct three bus stop or walking audits. • Provide transportation education to seniors, veterans, and people with a disability. • Coordinate two transportation fairs. • Host two focus groups to capture older adult and disabled persons feedback on current transportation and transit conditions.

Fiscal Year	Recipient	Project Description
		• Provide dementia training to transportation operators.
2020	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	• Utilize three vans to provide opportunities for regional transportation for blind and visually impaired people. • Provide 3,800 door-through-door trips.
2020	C.W. Williams Community Health Center Inc.	• Provide 1,000 door to door non-emergency trips for elderly, disabled, and additional transportation challenged populations.
2020	Union County Transportation	• Provide demand response transportation to county residents who are 65 or older to account for an aging population. • Provide 1,500 to 1,700 trips per month utilizing 5310 services.
2020	Iredell County Area Transit System (ICATS)	• Provide paratransit and demand response transportation options to residents of Iredell County that are 65 years or older or have one or more disabilities. • Improve overall service delivery.
2020	Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)	• Purchase an extended REMIX software license to assist local agencies in developing local and regional transportation service plans, specifically to support the mobility needs of people with a disability and seniors.
2020	Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)	• Conduct three bus stop or walking audits. • Provide transportation education to seniors, veterans, and people with a disability. • Coordinate two transportation fairs. • Host two focus groups to capture older adult and disabled persons feedback on current transportation and transit conditions. • Provide dementia training to transportation operators.
2020	Universal Institute for Successful Aging of Carolinas dba Shanti Niketan Senior Center	• Purchase one new ADA equipped vehicle to transport older refugees, immigrants, and new Americans living within the region to the senior center.

Fiscal Year	Recipient	Project Description
		Provide a projected 13,260 trips within a one-year period.
2021	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	- Purchase an electric van and charging station to provide cleaner, more efficient services. - Provide travel training.
2021	Mainstreaming Consultants, DBA Disability Rights and Resources (DRR)	Share transportation related information on CATS services to enable seniors and those with a disability to become transit independent.
2021	C.W. Williams Community Health Center Inc.	- Provide 1,000 door to door non-emergency trips for elderly, disabled, and additional transportation challenged populations. - Expand medical appointment transportation access. - Improve transportation access for veterans and persons with a visual impairment or other disability.
2021	Iredell County Area Transit System (ICATS)	- Provide paratransit and demand response transportation options to residents of Iredell County that are 65 years or older or have one or more disabilities. - Improve overall service delivery.
2021	Union County Transportation	Provide demand response transportation to county residents who are 65 or older to account for an aging population.
2021	Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)	Use the ADA Transition Plan to identify 10-15 transit stops in greatest need of improvements by analyzing variables such as: sidewalk accessibility, Senior population proximity and density, and distance to major activity centers.
2022	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	Purchase one hybrid van and home charger. Use funds to purchase dispatching and route-mapping software to expedite the vehicle to fleet-ready.
2022	Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB)	- Utilize two vans to provide opportunities for regional transportation for blind and visually impaired people. - Provide 3,800 door-through-door trips.

Fiscal Year	Recipient	Project Description
2022	Mainstreaming Consultants, DBA Disability Rights and Resources (DRR)	Update the DRR Let's All Go program.
2022	C.W. Williams Community Health Center Inc.	Provide 1,000 door to door non-emergency trips for elderly, disabled, and additional transportation challenged populations.
2022	Iredell County Area Transit System (ICATS)	- Provide paratransit and demand response transportation options to residents of Iredell County that are 65 years or older or have one or more disabilities. - Improve overall service delivery.
2022	Union County Transportation	Provide demand response transportation to county residents who are 65 or older to account for an aging population.
2022	Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)	Use the ADA Transition Plan to identify 10-15 transit stops in greatest need of improvements by analyzing variables such as: sidewalk accessibility, Senior population proximity and density, and distance to major activity centers.
2022	Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)	- Conduct three bus stop or walking audits. - Provide transportation education to seniors, veterans, and people with a disability. - Coordinate two transportation fairs.
2022	Pearl Transit Corp	Fund personnel expenses associated with providing senior and disability transportation services.

Other Community Transportation Services

There are several community-based transportation services that are operated by non-profit, health and human service, faith-based agencies, churches, and school districts. Most of these services are eligibility- based, providing transportation to their specific client populations for specific trip purposes. Several community transportation service providers, of which some have utilized FTA Section 5310 funding in the past are as follows:

- UNC Charlotte operates "Niner Transit" system which serves UNC Charlotte campus and takes students to key community destinations including providing a shopping shuttle, which provides transit to popular grocery stores like Target and Harris Teeter. There are currently four on-campus

bus routes that connect students to campus buildings and parking decks, and an additional route for transportation to and from Greek Village.

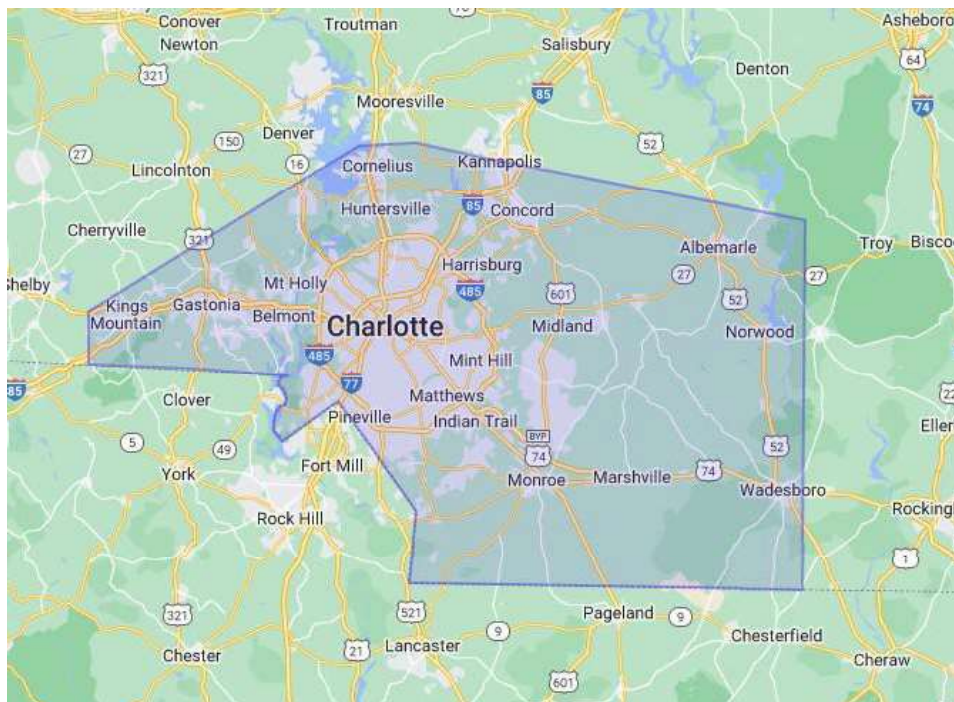
- Metrolina Association of the Blind (MAB) operates three vans, each with a seating capacity of seven, for its clients. One of the vehicles is ADA accessible. MAB services the counties of Mecklenburg, Union, and Cabarrus, operating 7 days a week from 6:30am to 8:30pm. MAB pays for roughly 80% of transportation costs. Fares for roundtrips up to 26 miles cost \$10 at the time of the ride. Any trip beyond 26 miles costs an additional \$10. Reduced fees are available for residents living below 125% of the poverty line. Users can schedule trips in advance by calling (704) 887-5134.
- Mainstreaming Consultants, Inc., dba Disability Rights, provides travel training and information for individuals with disabilities.
- Centralina Regional Council of Governments provides travel training and hosts transportation- related education events.
- Lancaster County D.A.V. Van: volunteer driver-based program to transport veterans in Lancaster County, South Carolina to Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia or Rock Hill VA Clinic on certain days of the week.
- Pearl Transit Corporation is newer to the transportation scene, receiving small portions of federal grants in places outside of the Charlotte UA since 2013. The entity is a non-profit, providing free and low-cost community transportation options for services like nonperishable food delivery and senior mobility. The entity received its first share of CATS Section 5310 funding in FY 2022.

Shared Mobility Providers and Ride Sharing

Existing shared mobility providers in the Charlotte region include Lyft and Uber ridesharing services, as well as several scooter-share companies and a bikeshare program.

Uber and Lyft

Uber and Lyft operate in the City of Charlotte as well as the entirety of Mecklenburg and Union counties. Additional service is observed in portions of Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, and Lincoln counties. The screen shot below from a Lyft driver sign-up page illustrates the Lyft service area as reported to potential drivers in the fall of 2024.

Figure 47: Lyft Service Area in Charlotte, NC

GEST Carts

Recently, GEST Carts (Green Easy Safe Transportation) service has been introduced to the Charlotte area and now provides service in a limited area including the Uptown and South End. The services are targeting limited hours focused on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. GEST Carts provide a free electric shuttle, with advertising covering the operating expenses. Those interested in taking a GEST Cart to their next destination may download the GEST app on the Google Play Store or Apple Store, where they can then request a ride.

Jaunt

Another provider, Jaunt, has been operating in Uptown, South End, and West End, and provides services Monday-Thursday from 11am to 5pm and on Friday and Saturday from 8pm to 2am. Jaunt also provides free rides in an electric shuttle vehicle and allows immediate trip-booking via the Jaunt App (available in the Google Play Store and App Store) or via phone call. As of Fall 2024, Jaunt does not accept reservations more than a few hours in advance for rides.

JUMP Transit

JUMP Transit operates a microtransit service primarily within the Optimist Park, Villa Heights, NoDa, and Howie Acres neighborhoods in Charlotte, with portions of Lockwood, Tryon Hills, and Sugaw Creek also included along N Tryon Rd. The service area was chosen based on residential density, a mix of residential and retail spaces, access to public transit, and limited parking or traffic issues. Expansion plans are being evaluated to extend coverage. The service offers curb-to-curb rides, except for addresses on roads with speed limits above 35 mph, which are inaccessible to its Low-Speed Vehicle (LSV) fleet. Predetermined

"JUMP Stops" are also available for high-frequency locations and community events, providing the same rider experience as user-selected destinations.

JUMP operates on weekends: Friday from 4 PM to 11 PM, Saturday from 12 PM to 11 PM, and Sunday from 12 PM to 8 PM, with plans to expand hours as demand grows. The service charges \$3 per one-way ride, \$7 for unlimited ride day passes, and is set to launch monthly subscriptions. Payment is processed through a web app and supports modern payment methods, including Apple Pay and Google Wallet. Free rides are occasionally offered for community-focused initiatives, such as rides to voting locations. Rides are booked via a web app, which displays real-time vehicle locations and estimated wait times. A mobile app is in development.

The fleet consists of three GEM e6 shuttles, supported by four part-time employee drivers, as JUMP avoids a contractor model. Ridership data is not yet publicly available due to the early-stage nature of the startup. JUMP promotes its services through community engagement, local advertising, neighborhood association meetings, business flyers, signage, and organic social media.

Currently, JUMP does not coordinate directly with the City of Charlotte or CATS but complies with local laws and regulations. However, the company is interesting in collaboration, seeing microtransit as a complement to public transit. Potential partnerships could include integrating free transfers between CATS and JUMP, installing JUMP signage at LYNX Blue Line stations, and exploring public-private collaborations to expand service, particularly in underserved areas like the N Tryon/N Graham Corridor of Opportunity adjacent to the existing service area.

SouthPark Skipper

The SouthPark Skipper, a microtransit program developed by SouthPark Community Partners (SCP), launched in November 2024 as a one-year pilot with the potential for extension. The service is part of the SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan and aims to provide free, on-demand, door-to-door transportation within the one-square-mile SouthPark Municipal Service District (MSD). Operating daily from 9 AM to 9 PM, the program utilizes a fleet of six Tesla Model X sedans and one ADA-accessible Toyota Sienna minivan, managed by the microtransit operator Freebee. Rides can be booked through the Ride Freebee app or via a toll-free dispatch number, with real-time tracking and wait-time updates available in the app.

Promotional efforts for the SouthPark Skipper target properties and businesses within the MSD, the broader Charlotte area, and transit users via cross-platform collaborations with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS). Messaging appears in the CATS app, and signage is placed at bus stops within the service area. SCP, along with CATS, the City of Charlotte's strategic mobility division, and the Centralina Regional Council, will meet regularly post-launch to assess the program's performance and share insights.

This program aspires to become a regional model for microtransit services, emphasizing interagency cooperation and shared learnings. SCP remains open to ongoing discussions and feedback as the program progresses.

None of the above private providers have ADA paratransit vehicles available based on the information available.

Multimodal Providers

E-scooters appeared in Charlotte in 2018 and remained while the dockless bikeshare systems were phased out. Scooter share services operating in the Charlotte region include Lime, Bird, and Spin. Those three operators have between 400 and 600 e-scooters each. Prior to COVID-19, scooter use was reported to be highest in denser neighborhoods in and around Uptown, including South End and Plaza Midwood.

Ridership plummeted to zero in April of 2020. Scooter ridership began a resurgence in the summer months of 2021 and 2022 but have yet to see ridership return to pre-COVID levels.

Docked bicycle share system in Charlotte has initially launched in 2012 as Charlotte B-cycle with 200 bikes and 20 bikeshare stations. Recently the system been rebranded as “Charlotte Joy Rides” and now features pedal-assisted electric bikes. The system hours are from 5 AM until midnight. The system is operated by a non-profit, with several healthcare industry partners and sponsors, including:

- BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina
- Atrium Health
- Charlotte Center City Partners
- City of Charlotte
- Trips For Kids

Additional sponsors for the maintenance and upkeep of stations include:

- University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte)
- Johnson and Wales University Charlotte Campus
- Silos South End
- Colonial Reserve at South End Apartment Homes
- Crescent Communities

A bikeshare program that operated in Gastonia for about three years, set up through a cooperative effort between Go Gaston and a private firm named Zagster, stopped operations in June 2021 in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Typically, users of e-scooter systems are expected to make a reservation via a smart phone mobile app. Joy Rides allows a reservation and payment via a kiosk at one of the stations.

Private Transportation Providers

Private transportation providers are also major players in the greater Charlotte region. These include operators of taxi companies, limousines, accessible vans, airport shuttles and intercity, tour and charter bus companies.

In Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department’s Passenger Vehicles for Hire (PVH) Office administers and enforces Chapter 22 of the Charlotte City Code-Passenger Vehicle for Hire ordinance, governing taxis, limousines, sedans, SUVs, shuttles, vans, vehicle operators, and chauffeur

licensing. As of January 2022, the posted list of approved Passenger Vehicles for Hire in Mecklenburg County for 2024-2025 included 176 companies.

The following list includes a summary of private transportation providers, by county, based on online research:

- Anson County: 2 providers
- Cabarrus County: 28 providers
- Gaston County: 26 providers
- Iredell County: 43 providers
- Lancaster County, South Carolina: 14 providers
- Lincoln County: 8 providers
- Mecklenburg County: 88 providers
- Union County: 14 providers
- York County, South Carolina: 4 providers

Please refer to the Appendix C for a full list of private transportation providers by county.

Prior Plans Summary

This section provides a summary of some of the key prior transportation planning studies in the region.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Charlotte Urban Area (FY 2022-2027)

This document is the previous Human Services Transportation Plan for the Charlotte Urban Area, approved in 2012. The plan recommendations centered around the following six key themes:

Strategy 1: Mobility Management and Agency Coordination

- Establish and hire a Regional Mobility Manager position(s). The Regional Mobility Manager promotes public transit, working with multiple Community Transportation Providers
- Establish a Paratransit Working Group that is made up of representatives from each Community Transportation Provider in the region and is coordinated by the Regional Mobility Manager
- Develop and Implement Travel Training Programs in the Region
- Improve Marketing and Information Sharing about Existing Services
- Expand Mobility Choices: Promote Regional Coordination on Emerging Mobility Technology
- Establish a Unified Regional Paratransit Scheduling Software

Strategy 2: Organizational Assessments

- Review the Impacts of Medicaid Managed Care on Transportation Providers in the Region
- Perform a Regional Paratransit and Community Transportation Scheduling Integration Study
- Evaluate additional funding options and next steps to generate additional public transportation revenue streams to support future service expansion

Strategy 3: Customer Service

- Establish a Regional Information Center to direct customers on what transportation services may be available to service their desired trip
- Improve service times for seniors and individuals with a disability who are traveling via on- demand transportation options
- Reduce reservation wait times for on-demand transportation and ADA Paratransit
- Develop a regional fare strategy which would include fare interoperability agreements and a shared mobile ticketing platform
- Adopt a regional platform for demand response trip scheduling and dispatching
- Develop a standardized ADA certification process across all agencies and reciprocity agreements
- Provide disability sensitivity training for private providers

Strategy 4: Facility Improvements for Safety

- Develop a comprehensive transit safety and convenience program to review issues in proximity to transit stops and address them
- Upgrade bus stops with highest ridership with bus shelters, improve ADA compliant bus stop pads and upgrade lighting, add braille to fixed-route bus stop signs
- Upgrade bus stops with ADA accessible loading pads and walk access routes as part of roadway projects design and construction (NCDOT Complete Streets policy implementation)

Strategy 5: Connectivity

- Develop a Microtransit / Community Shuttle Pilot Program
- Develop a Mobility Hub Pilot Program to learn best practices on mobility hubs and identify the highest priority locations for Mobility Hub implementation; identify funding partners
- Establish a Volunteer Transportation Services Program in the region to help close the gaps between transportation needs and existing services
- Expand mobility choices
- Establish connecting services procedures between transit providers, including identifying and establishing additional improved transfer locations, working through communication protocols for improved communication from operator to operator when possible, and establishing protocols for how the scheduling software reports can help communicate potential shared trip information between multiple agencies
- Strengthen rural to urban connections; involve community transportation providers in CONNECT Beyond service planning workgroup.

Strategy 6: Service Expansion

- Increase service with a particular focus on increasing trip availability for on-demand non- emergency trips through community transportation providers
- Expand on-demand / community transportation service hours to provide more evenings and weekends
- Improve existing service for medical appointments, purchasing additional ADA-accessible vehicles including larger vehicles to accommodate over-sized mobility aids, improve transportation options for

employment and related needs, improve access to transportation for veterans and other individuals with disabilities and visual impairments, and upgrade vehicle fleets to include more fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly options

CATS Envision My Ride (EMR) Bus Priority Study

The CATS Envision My Ride (EMR) study is a planning initiative to redesign the current bus system. As part of this initiative, the CATS EMR study is taking a comprehensive look at the structure and frequency of the existing bus network to determine how the system can best serve the City of Charlotte and the greater region. The study is currently in progress and is expected to finish in 2022. Its key vision is to create a better bus network. The key aspects around which EMR study recommendations will be developed include the following:

- More frequent bus service
- More direct bus service
- More crosstown and suburb connections to other transit lines, bikeshare, park & rides, and other mobility options
- Greater connectivity between different routes to improve transfer opportunities

Twenty-two future high-frequency bus routes were evaluated for focused treatments based on the study goals and objectives. The team looked at the following options:

- Enhancing access to opportunities
- Connecting the priority bus network to all other modes
- Providing equitable transit access for underserved and vulnerable populations modes
- Offering resilient travel options

Ongoing bus stops improvement initiatives include the following projects, subject to funding availability:

- Charlotte Corridors of Opportunity
 - West Boulevard and Remount Road Mobility Plaza
 - Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Application Mobility Hub Improvements
 - Ashley Road and Freedom Drive
 - West Boulevard and Clanton Road
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant
 - Sugar Creek Road Corridor
- Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) Grant
 - Albemarle Road Corridor

Figure 48 below illustrates an example of potential bus priority treatment.

Treatment Toolbox

Q

Queue jumps allow buses to bypass traffic at congested intersections.

T

Transit signal priority allows buses to get a green light at traffic signals

D

Dedicated bus lanes reduce re-entry delay by removing need for bus to merge back into traffic

B

Bus bulb-outs reduce re-entry delay by removing the need for bus to merge back into traffic

L

Level boarding makes the bus door line up with the curb for faster and easier boarding

F

Faster fare collection reduces dwell delay by collecting fares off-board or at all doors

Route 2 — Ashley / Scaleybank Crosstown

CONNECT Beyond is a regional mobility plan designed to enhance connectivity across the rural, suburban, and urban communities within the 12-county area overseen by the Centralina Regional Council and the Metropolitan Transit Commission. This plan provides a strategic framework for guiding and aligning future mobility investments over the next 20 years. It aims to serve as a roadmap for establishing a robust, integrated public transit network that encompasses high- capacity transit lines, enhanced bus services, localized mobility solutions, and cutting-edge transportation technologies.

Increase Economic Competitiveness

Improve Transportation Choices

Enhance Public Transit

Advance Equity

Promote Sustainable Regional Growth

Encourage Environmental Stewardship

Figure 49: CONNECT Beyond Project Priorities

Key Priorities

The plan emphasizes the significance of equity, recognizing that in the Charlotte region, transportation is vital for ensuring access to education, employment, and housing. By enhancing these aspects, the plan aims to improve both economic and social mobility, acknowledging the diverse needs and contexts of all communities within the region.

Relevant Recommendations

The plan identifies five interconnected “Mobility Moves,” acting as the foundation to guide priorities and implementation strategies:

- **Create Mobility-Friendly Places:** This strategy outlines how the region can collaboratively promote sustainable growth by implementing land-use policies and community development practices that support mobility. It emphasizes creating interconnected communities that facilitate easy access to various transportation modes, thereby encouraging residents and visitors to adopt alternative transportation options. Through coordinated regional efforts, the plan aims to enhance connectivity and ensure that land use and transportation planning go hand in hand, fostering vibrant, accessible, and sustainable environments throughout the region.
- **Expand Mobility Choices:** This initiative focuses on how regional partners can collaboratively expand and refine Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to improve the efficiency and user experience of the region's comprehensive mobility network. By embracing emerging mobility trends, such as shared transportation services and advanced technologies, this strategy aims to create a more user-friendly and adaptable transit system. Additionally, it involves the development and implementation of a network of Mobility Hubs, which will serve as critical nodes supporting seamless integration across several transportation modes within the region's total mobility network. Through these coordinated efforts, the plan seeks to optimize mobility options and enhance overall accessibility and connectivity for all users.
- **Strengthen Rural to Urban Connections:** This initiative aims to enhance mobility and transportation options for individuals residing in rural communities, who have less direct access to transit services for transportation to and from essential services such as medical appointments, employment, and daily activities. Improving connectivity between urban and rural areas is crucial as it can effectively close the gap of equitable access to the opportunities and resources that are more readily available in more developed areas, thus fostering inclusivity and balanced regional development. By enhancing transportation infrastructure and services between rural and highly developed urban areas, the strategy aims to reduce isolation, boost the local economy, and improve the overall quality of life for rural residents. This approach underscores the importance of an integrated mobility network that serves both urban and rural populations effectively, promoting social and economic cohesion across the population density gradient exhibited by the 12-county region.
- **Build a Better Bus Network:** Enhancing a bus network holds considerable economic and environmental benefits. A high-quality bus system is crucial for creating multimodal connections and providing reliable access to economic, social, and educational opportunities. From an economic standpoint, an effective bus network enables a more robust labor force by facilitating easier commutes for workers to reach employment centers. Environmentally, efficient bus services help reduce traffic congestion, thereby lowering greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. By decreasing reliance on single-occupant vehicle travel, a well-integrated bus network promotes environmental efficiency and public health, ultimately supporting a dynamic and resilient economy while contributing to the overall quality of life in the region.

- Invest in Strategic Mobility Corridors:** The team conducted a thorough evaluation to pinpoint and assess Strategic Mobility Corridors within the region, utilizing a High-Capacity Transit Corridor Identification and Evaluation Process alongside a Commuter Rail Assessment. The analysis identified the top seven corridors, with four designated for short-term network expansion and three for long-term development. Additionally, 'Emerging Mobility Corridors' were highlighted in smaller towns and municipalities for future integration. The plan outlines strategies for securing and allocating funding, as well as detailing immediate and long-term improvements to ensure the effective implementation of Strategic Mobility Corridors.

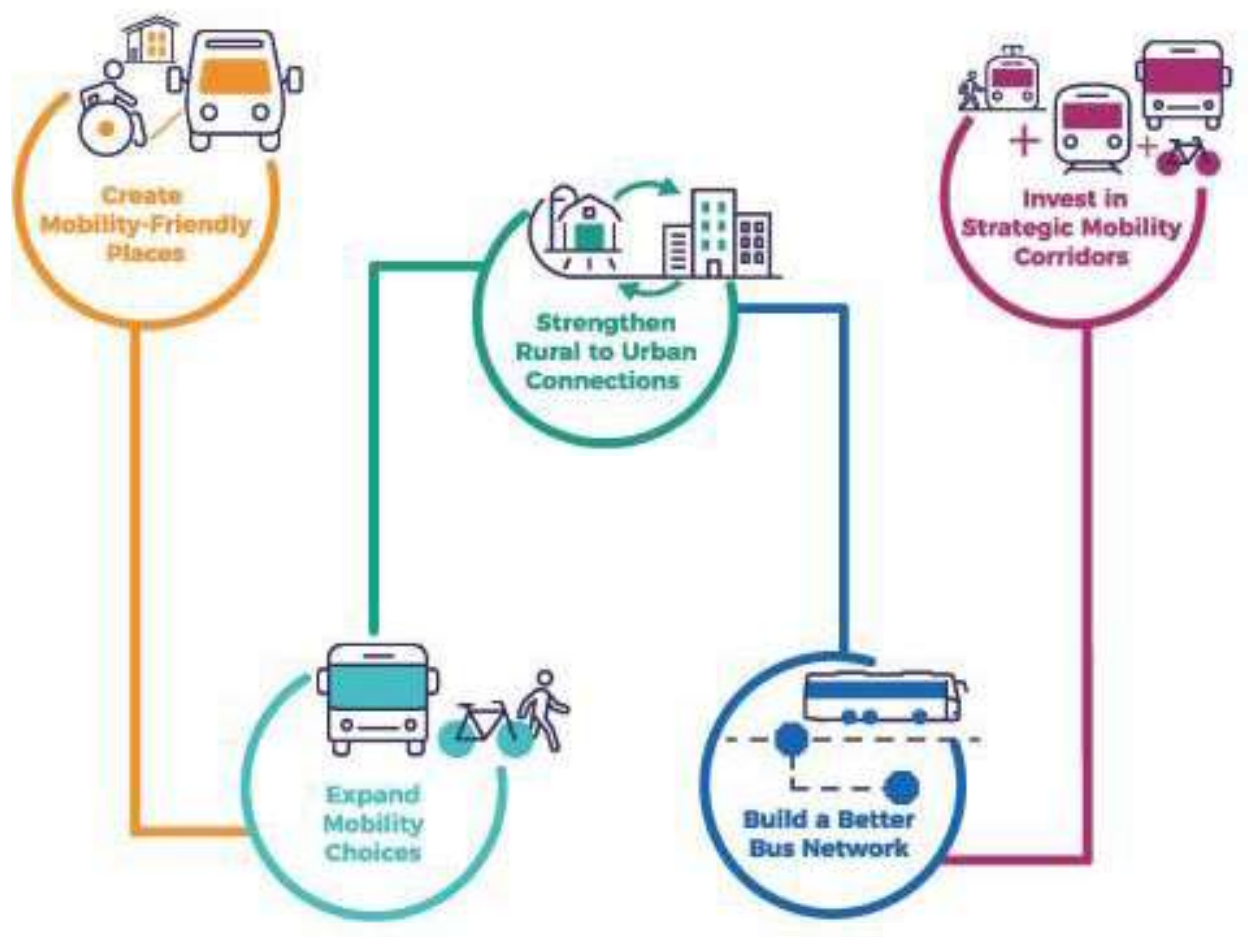
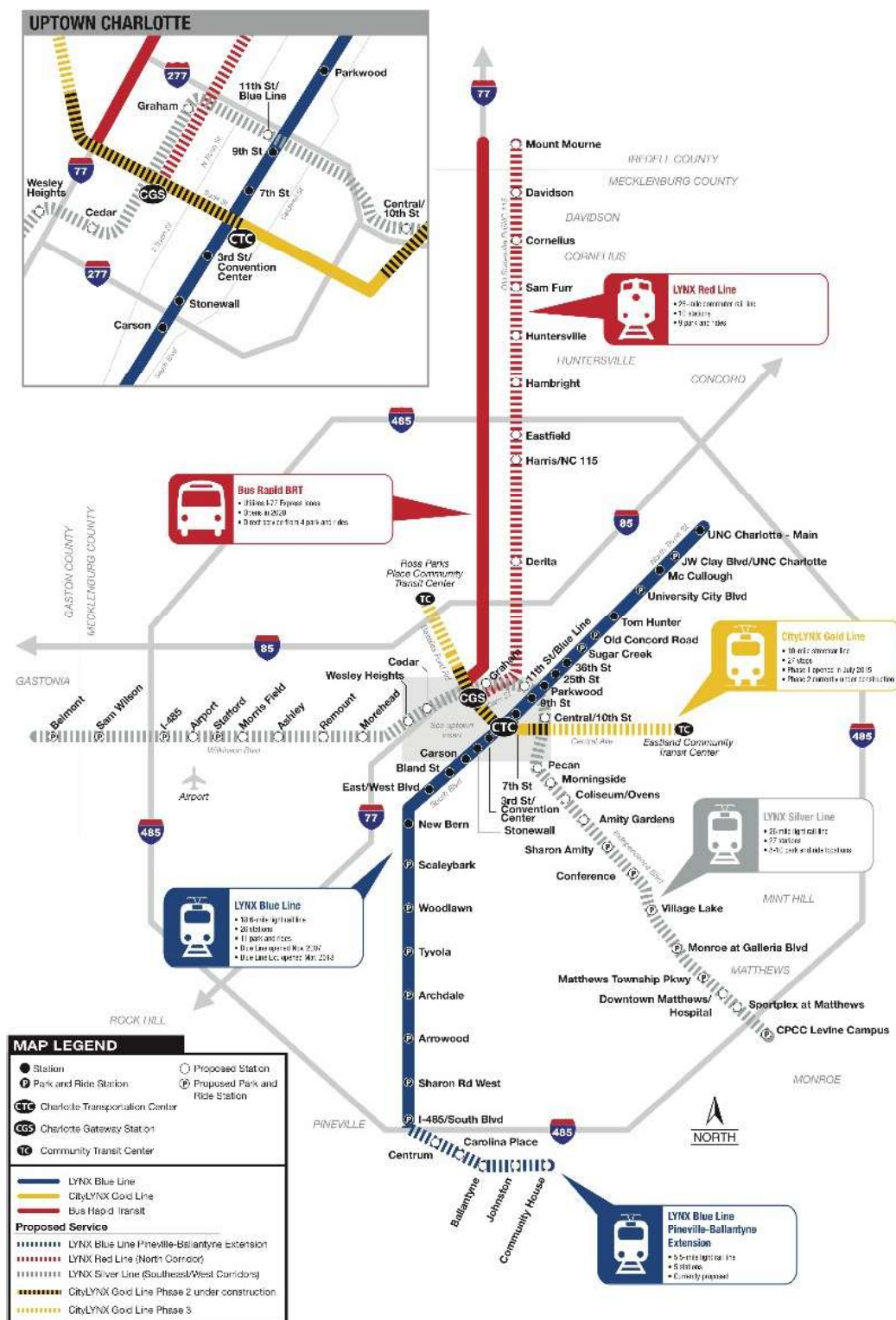


Figure 50: CONNECT Beyond Mobility Moves

CATS 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan (2020)

Figure 51: CATS 2030 Transit Corridor System



In 1998, the County created the 2025 Transit-Land Use Plan and enacted the half-cent sales tax as a blueprint for investing in public transit projects to proactively address these potential “growing pains.” The purpose was to integrate rapid transit system with land-use planning along five strategic corridors to support economic growth in a way that encouraged sustainable environments, improved the quality of life, and attracted businesses and people to the region.

CATS continues to update the 2030 Transit System Plan while implementing rapid transit project improvements and strengthening the current bus network. These investments increase access and mobility options through the expansion of transit services, enhancing customer amenities at stops, creating pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods in close proximity to light rail stations, and integrating transit-oriented development policies.

Integrated land-use planning and transit-oriented development (TOD) are the cornerstones of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan and a key component in moving the region forward.

The 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan consists of multiple transit modes in five corridors, a series of improvements in Charlotte’s Center City and bus service and facility improvements to link the area’s key centers of economic activity.

Once completed, this plan will encompass 25 miles of commuter rail, 45 miles of light rail, 10 miles of streetcar, and an expanded network of buses and other transit services.

CATS Transit System Plan Update (2025)

CATS is currently updating their Transit System Plan as the agency continues towards building out a high-quality transit network to service the Charlotte region. The plan is developing a fiscally constrained program of bus and rail improvements that will be incorporated into the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization’s (CRTPO) 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update. The Transit System Plan Update will include recommendations from the Better Bus Program, Rapid Transit Corridor System Plan, and other recently adopted plans as well as public feedback.

CRTPO 2050 MTP

The CRTPO 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), adopted in April 2022, is a comprehensive, long-term strategy to address the transportation needs of Iredell, Mecklenburg, and Union counties. As a federally mandated plan, the MTP must be updated every four years to account for changing conditions, emerging trends, and evolving transportation priorities across its member jurisdictions, which include municipalities such as the City of Statesville, Town of Mooresville, City of Charlotte, and Town of Matthews.

The MTP serves as the primary framework for identifying and prioritizing transportation projects and policies, establishing goals and objectives, and guiding CRTPO’s investments over the next 20 years. By focusing on multi-modal infrastructure and integrating active transportation corridors, the MTP aims to balance growth with sustainable transportation solutions.

In developing the 2050 MTP, CRTPO emphasized public engagement through a variety of channels. Outreach efforts included a project website, social media updates, a public kickoff event, webinars, interactive mapping tools, presentations, and specific youth outreach initiatives.

This plan emphasized Transportation Demand Management (TDM), a set of strategies aimed at reducing congestion by managing demand rather than expanding road capacity. TDM focuses on influencing commuter behavior and promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel. Key TDM strategies include carpooling, vanpools, ridesharing, bikeshare programs, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, teleworking, flexible work schedules, and promoting public transit and active transportation infrastructure. By shifting travel away from peak periods and encouraging alternative commuting modes, TDM initiatives support more efficient use of the existing transportation system and reduce strain on road networks.

The 2050 MTP also acknowledges the role of passenger vehicle-for-hire and ride-sharing services, such as Uber, Lyft, and local taxicabs, in expanding mobility options across the Charlotte region. These services provide on-demand transportation solutions, helping to bridge gaps in the transit network and meet diverse rider needs, from everyday commuters to individuals requiring specialized transportation. By complementing traditional transit services, ride-sharing services play an important role in addressing first/last mile challenges and increasing accessibility in areas where fixed-route transit may be less practical.

The CRTPO is currently updating its MTP for the 2055 horizon year. The MTP aims to promote an integrated, accessible, and multimodal transportation system and promote transportation options for the economically disadvantaged, minority, aging, and disabled populations within its jurisdiction. As part of these multimodal goals, the 2055 MTP aims to serve transportation disadvantaged populations with convenience access to employment, convenience, and care locations.

Iredell County Transportation Master Plan (ICTMP)

Iredell County Transportation Master Plan (ICTMP) outlines a comprehensive transportation

strategy to manage congestion, improve mobility and safety, and position the county to meet future transportation needs. Iredell County Transportation Master Plan identified the following priority transit corridors to improve public transportation in Iredell County and connections to the greater Charlotte region:

- North corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-77 from Center City Charlotte to NC 150
- Priority High-Capacity Transit (HTC) Corridor on I-77 from NC 150 to I-40 in Statesville
- Emerging Mobility Corridor on US 21 from I-77 to US 64/Front Street in Statesville
- HTC Commuter Rail Corridor on NC 115 from Faith Road in Mt. Mourne to East Iredell Avenue in Mooresville

ICTMP also recognizes that CONNECT Beyond has identified I-77 as one of 13 HTCs currently ready for high-capacity transit investments in the region. US 21 is one of 24 emerging mobility corridors meaning that it is a good candidate for high-capacity transit in the future but is currently suitable for other types of transit investments. NC 115 has been identified as a commuter rail corridor that would transport passengers during peak periods when traffic congestions is heaviest. The plan also acknowledges the EV Corridor on I-40. Figure 52 shows the priority transit corridors in Iredell County.

- **Nodes** – Areas along CONNECT Beyond corridors with a high concentration of trip generators and activity level were recommended as transit nodes. Six potential nodes are recommended:
 - Downtown Statesville.
 - Commercial corridor along US 21/North Main Street/South Main Street approximately from Mills Street to Perry Road in Troutman.
 - Commercial corridor along NC 150/River Highway approximately from Morris Plantation Park to US 21/Charlotte Highway in Mooresville.
 - Downtown Mooresville.
 - Commercial and recreational area around NC 115/South Main Street approximately from West Lowrance Avenue to East Wilson Avenue in Mooresville.
 - Commercial area approximately within I-77, Fairview Road, NC 115 / Mecklenburg Highway, and Langtree Road in Mooresville.

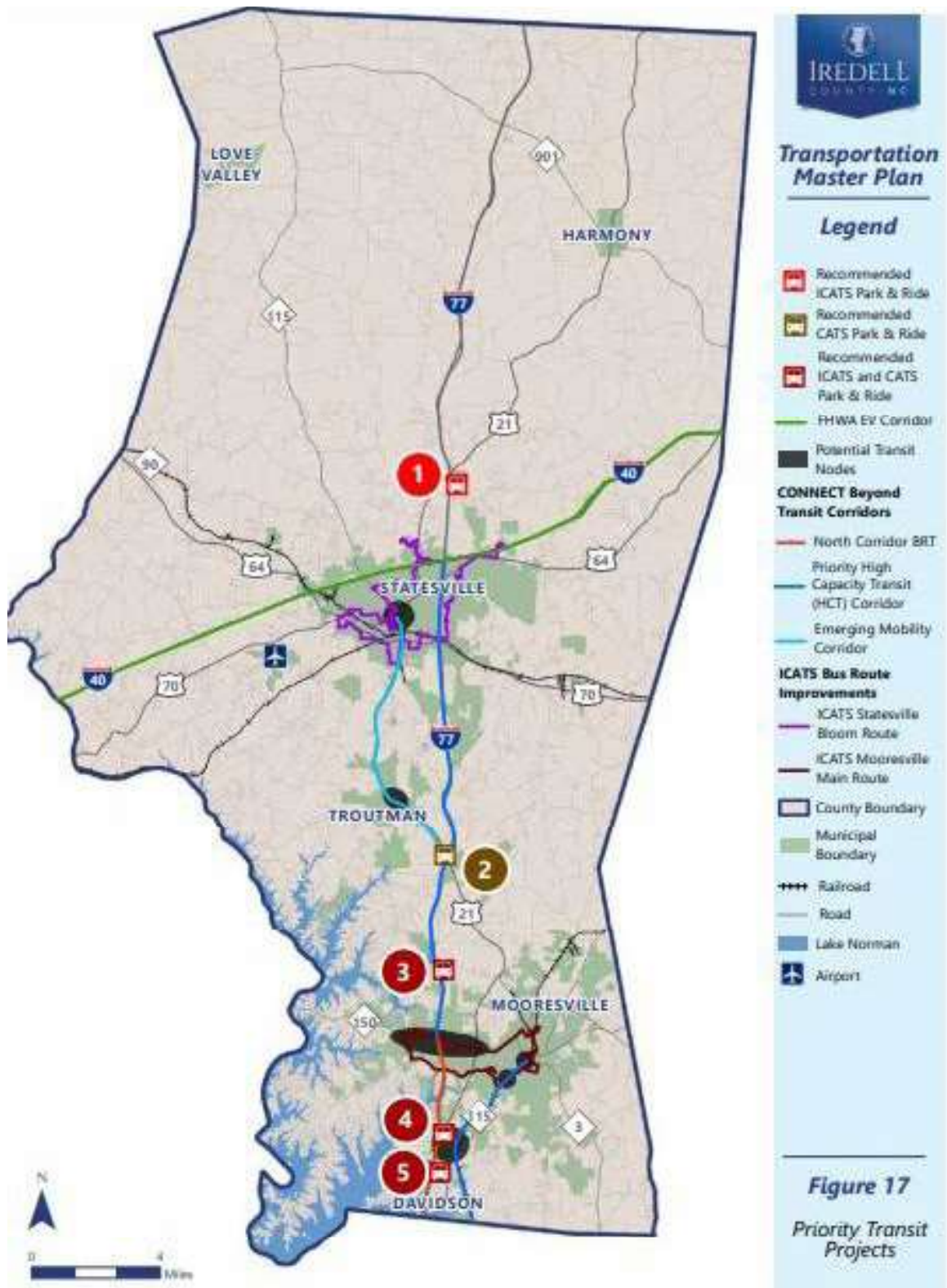


Figure 52: ICTMP Priority Transit Projects

- **Facilities** – ICATS future transit center was identified as a high priority. The location of this future center remains to be determined. This center is expected to serve as a hub for all transit services in the county and is critical to enhancing transit operations in the county.
- **Routes** – ICATS plans to double service frequency on local circulators in Morrisville and Statesville which will reduce headway and increase reliability.
- **Park and Ride Lots** – These facilities provide a convenient, safe transfer area for transit carpool and vanpool passengers, cyclists, and pedestrians (Table 13).

Table 13: Recommended Park and Ride Lot Cost Estimates and Prioritization Score

#	P&R Lot Location	Estimated Cost	Prioritization Score
ICATS			
1	I-77 Exit 54 (reinstatement of old park and ride lot)	\$758,000	1
CATS			
2	North Corridor BRT (US 21 at Julian Pl)	\$3.031M	2
ICATS and CATS			
3	North Corridor BRT (Cornelius Rd at Dorothy Ln)	\$3.031M	3
4	– Mt Mourne (Fairview Rd at Center Church Rd)	\$3.031M	1
5	BRT -Langtree Rd (Langtree Rd at Castle Dr)	\$3.031M	2

Rock Hill – Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

Rock Hill – Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) covers the urban areas of York and Lancaster counties, South Carolina. The RFATS region has a local fixed route transit service implemented in 2020, My Ride Rock Hill. In addition, there are several available connections to Charlotte:

- Express bus service between downtown Rock Hill and uptown Charlotte (operated by the Charlotte Area Transit System – CATS) operates at peak hours on weekdays, with connections to the following Park & Ride locations:
 - Rock Hill Park & Ride lot in downtown Rock Hill
 - Manchester Cinemas (a Park & Ride lot adjacent to I-77)
 - Baxter Village in Fort Mill Park & Ride
 - Carowinds/Cabela's Park & Ride
- CATS feeder bus services connecting to the CATS LYNX Blue Line Station (light rail)
- A vanpool program for commuting trips that either begin or end within the Charlotte Urban Area
- Intercity bus and rail – the closest available service is in the neighborhood communities of Charlotte, NC, and Spartanburg, SC, no passenger rail service currently

A major change in intercity service could come from the development of a national high speed passenger rail (HSR) network. The high-speed rail corridor would serve Charlotte, potentially providing access to RFATS area residents via connecting bus service (Figure 54). Three potential routes are under study for the high-speed rail corridor between Atlanta and Charlotte (Figure 53):

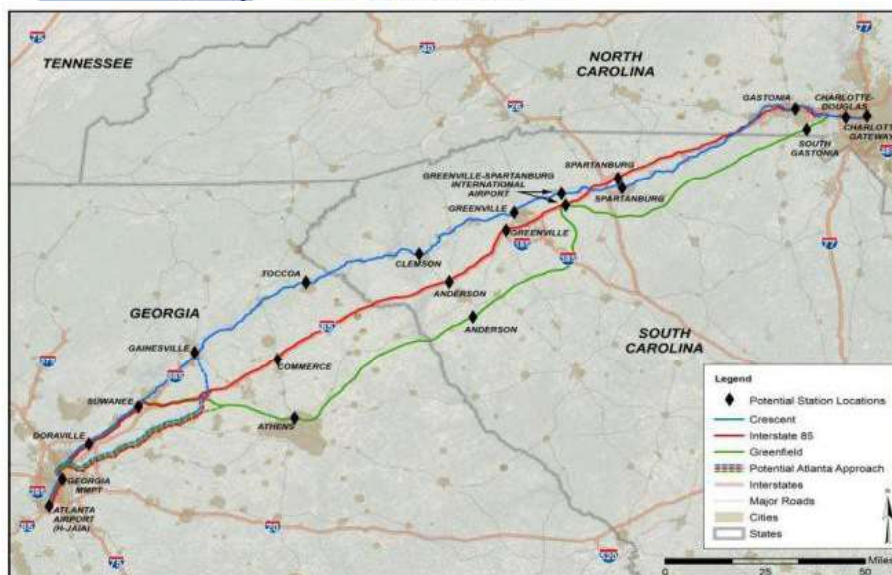
- The Norfolk Southern (NS) railroad corridor
- The I-85 corridor
- A “greenfield” corridor which offers the opportunity to define a fully grade-separated route alignment with optimal geometric characteristics for high-speed passenger rail service.

Figure 53 Potential High Speed Rail Corridor Alignment Options, Atlanta to Charlotte



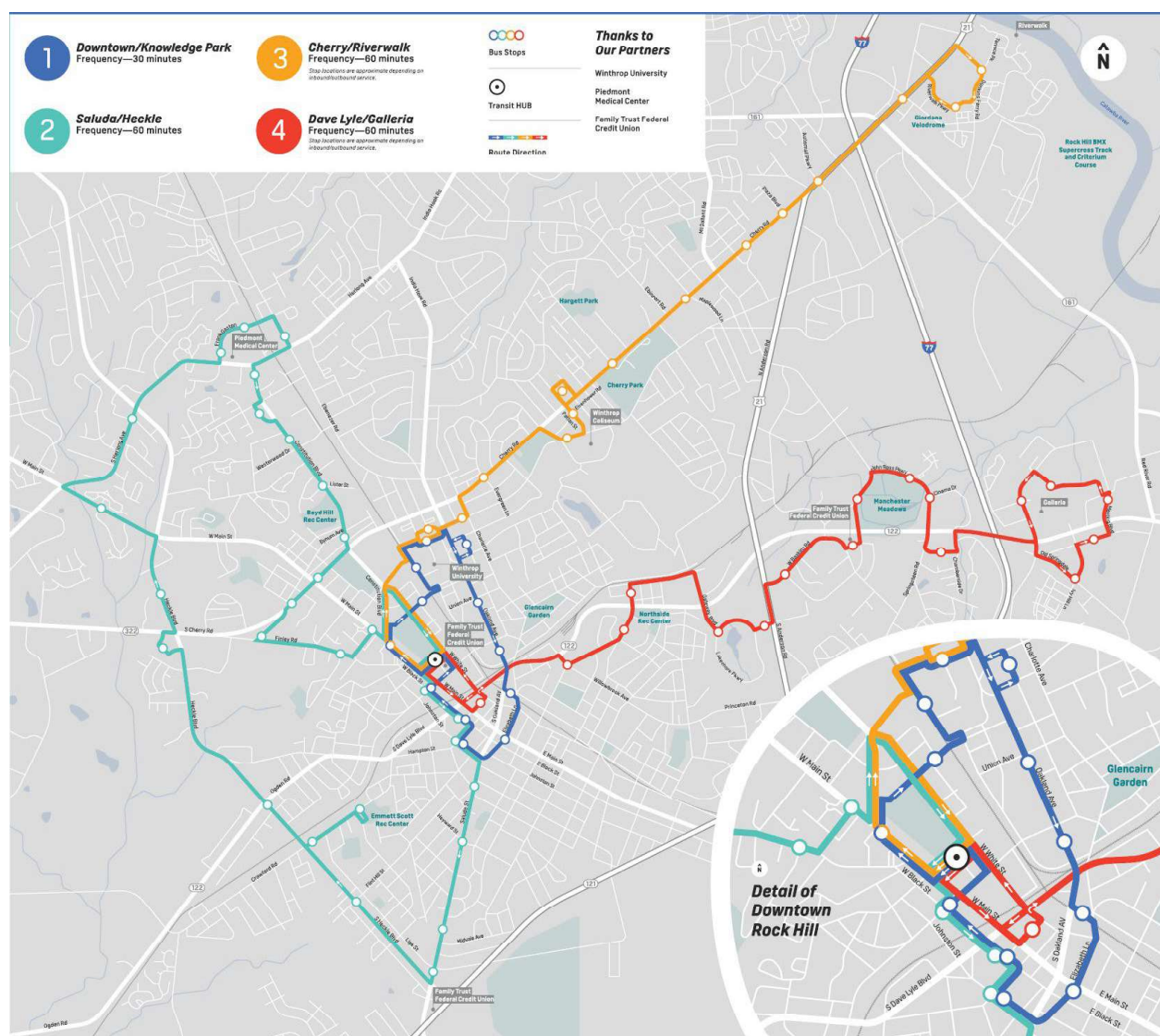
There is an interest in connecting Columbia to the expanding passenger rail network that passes through the Charlotte Region. The South Carolina Department of Transportation SCDOT's Statewide Transit Plan (2014) identified the Rock Hill to

Charlotte corridor as having potential for commuter rail. However, there are currently no active plans for commuter rail service to serve the RFATS region.



- Demand-response transportation service for portions of the region
- Lynx Blue Line Feeder Bus Route
- Lancaster Area Ride Service improvements
- Intercity Bus and commuter rail improvements
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service: connect Rock Hill to Charlotte with stops in Pineville and at I-485 in North Carolina (Figure 54)
- Provide local transit service in the Tega Cay/Fort Mill
- Provide local service in the Rock Hill area (implemented since the study has been adopted, in July 2019 with free service utilizing all-electric buses, see routes in Figure 55 below).

Figure 55 My Ride Rock Hill Fixed Route Service Map (Launched July 2019)



2020 Cabarrus County Long Range Public Transportation Master Plan

Cabarrus County Transportation Service (CCTS) and Rider Transit created a Long-Range Public Transportation Master Plan in order to have a strong vision for improved public transportation throughout Cabarrus County to address both today's and future community needs. Two public transit agencies help provide mobility options in the Cabarrus County – Cabarrus County Transportation Service (CCTS) and Concord Kannapolis Area Transportation (Rider). The Master Plan includes phased service recommendations for a 20-year horizon (Figure 56).

The key recommendations include the following:

- New and replacement fixed route vehicles
 - Improve weekday frequency to 30-40 minutes
 - Add needed vehicles for weekday service (requires two vehicles per route)
- New and replacement demand response vehicles
- Bus stop amenities
- Technology, software, and data
- Three new transit hubs that would serve as major connection points between Fixed Routes and Demand Response zones
- New administration and maintenance facility
- Additional studies (high-capacity transit, park and ride studies, site feasibility, etc.)
- Park and ride lot construction

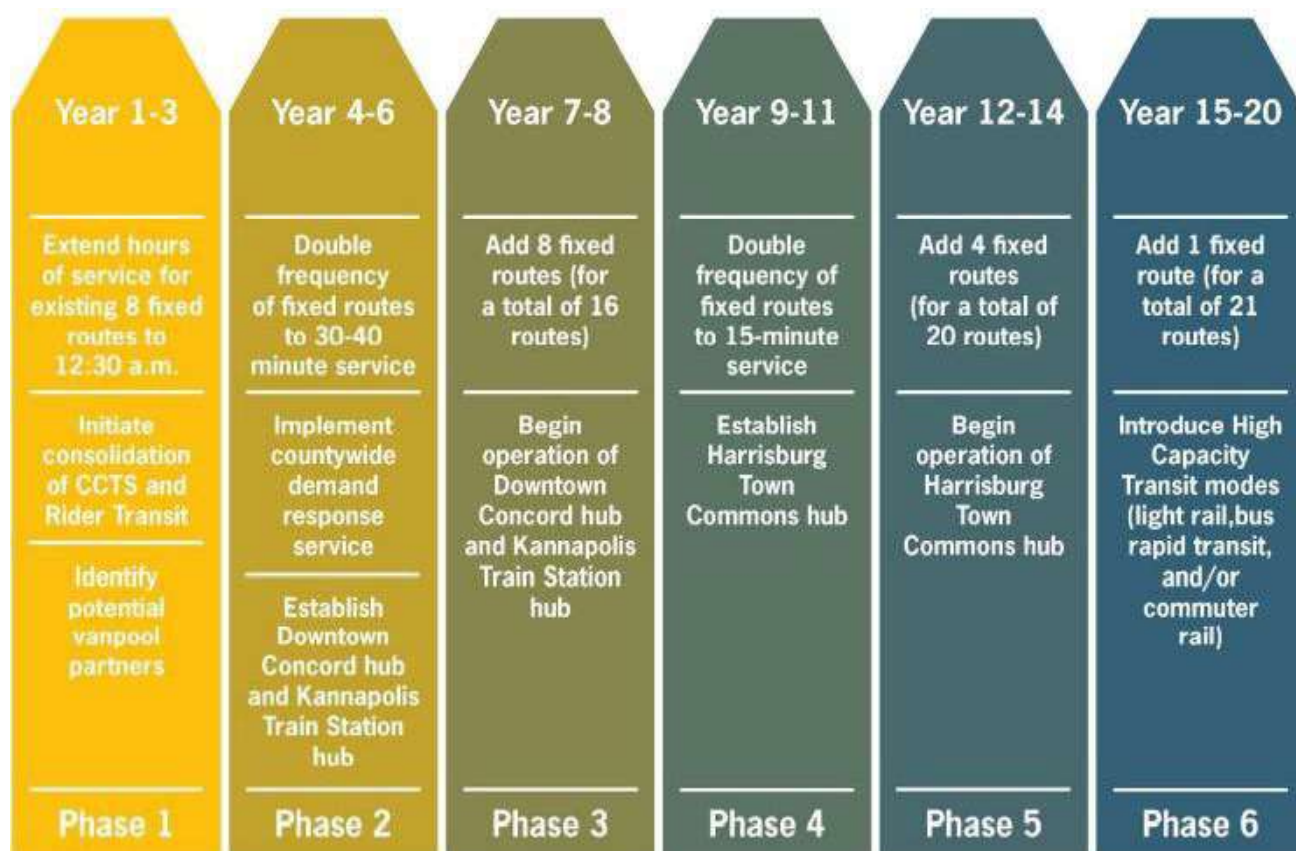


Figure 56. 20-Year Vision Plan Phased Service Improvements Recommendations

Public transit in Cabarrus County after full implementation of the 20-year vision is expected to have the following characteristics (Figure 57):

- One system
- No unserved areas
- 194 vehicles (108 buses, 86 Demand Response)
- 559 employees
- \$70.56 million annual budget (Plan Year 20)
- 6.4 to 6.9 million passenger trips annually – not including high-capacity transit
- High-Capacity Transit (one or more modes)
- An overall “world class level” transit service

Total 20-year investment required:

- Bus and Demand Response System (non-HCT)
 - Operating: \$759,482,819
 - Personnel: \$54,070,056
 - Capital: \$201,374,000
 - Total Cost: \$1,014,926,875
- High-Capacity Transit Options: \$1.5-\$4 billion

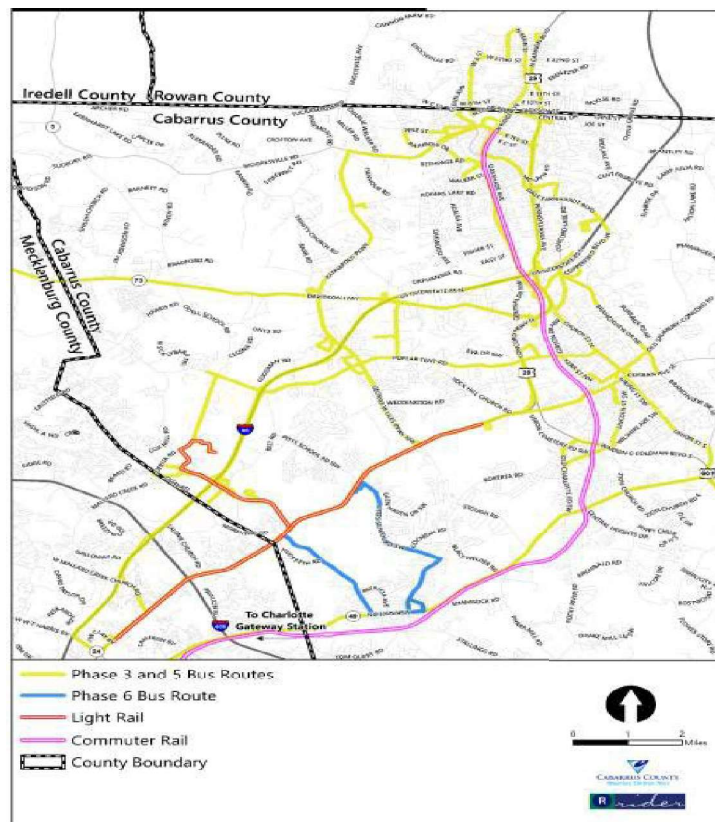


Figure 57. Cabarrus County 20-Year Vision Network

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Statewide 5310 Locally Coordinated Plan

A statewide Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) is required for programming of funding under FTA Section 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and is relevant to other transportation programs, such as FTA Section 5311 program that addressed transportation for rural areas and the FTA Section 5307 program for small urban areas.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) presented recommendations for project prioritization, regional distribution, the call for projects, and annual 5310 program of projects. The study recommendations were organized around the following key themes:

- service expansion
- service coordination
- improved communication between agencies

Table 14: Proposed FY20 5310 Distribution Targets

Proposed 5310 Distribution Targets		Small Urban FTA Apportionment Data		Rural Census Data		FY20 5310 Targets by District		
Analysis District	Small Urbanized Area	With disabilities Under 65	Older Population	With disabilities Under 65	Older Population	5310 Small Urbanized	5310 Rural	Total
1--Southwestern		-	-	35,804	72,654	\$0	\$228,726	\$228,726
2--Northwestern	Gastonia	18,635	23,878	78,589	130,290	\$299,641	\$440,500	\$740,141
3--Yadkin Valley	High Point	14,868	23,391	31,256	50,746	\$269,658	\$172,933	\$442,590
4--Rocky River				25,051	42,976	\$0	\$143,462	\$143,462
5--Piedmont / Triangle	Burlington	10,054	18,592	56,529	108,571	\$201,903	\$348,176	\$550,079
6--Sandhills				55,318	61,775	\$0	\$246,934	\$246,934
7--Cape Fear				22,842	36,033	\$0	\$124,160	\$124,160
8--North Central	Rocky Mount	6,715	10,308	64,808	88,336	\$119,982	\$322,962	\$442,944
9--East	Goldsboro, Greenville, Jacksonville, New Bern	26,139	36,364	64,945	88,712	\$440,534	\$324,044	\$764,578
10--North East				29,345	47,709	\$0	\$162,498	\$162,498
Total		76,411	112,533	464,487	727,802	\$1,331,717	\$2,514,393	\$3,846,110
FY18 5310 Appropriation						\$1,479,686	\$2,793,770	
Administration (10%)						\$147,969	\$279,377	

The project priorities identified in the plan for funding with FTA section 5310 funding included the following:

- Vehicle replacement (capital)
- Contracting for trips (capital)
- Provision of trips (operating)
- Mobility manager (capital)
- ADA bus stops and shelters (capital)

Table 144 shows the NCDOT proposed FY 2020 target distribution amounts.

Union County Multimodal Transportation Plan

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update and associated Multimodal Transportation Plan was initiated by the Union County Commissioners to identify a sustainable land use and transportation strategy for the growing communities. The 74X Regional Express route operated by CATS connects from the northwest side of Monroe to Charlotte. No local fixed route transit service currently exists in Union County.

Union County Public Transportation Plan divided the recommendations into two phases:

- Phase 1: Short-Term Transit Recommendations
 - Enhancing the 74X express route with improved headways and weekend services
 - Extending the route into downtown Monroe
- Phase 2: Long-Term Transit Recommendations (Figure 58)
 - Circulator system in Monroe

- Downtown transit hub, preferably with 30-minute headways on the circulator system
- Extension of the 74X express route to at least Wingate to the east
- Creation of a fourth park-and-ride location
- Extension of the 61X express route into Waxhaw on NC 16
- Suitable station/ park-and-ride facility in town
- Route deviated service or a companion circulator service to cover the areas of Waxhaw

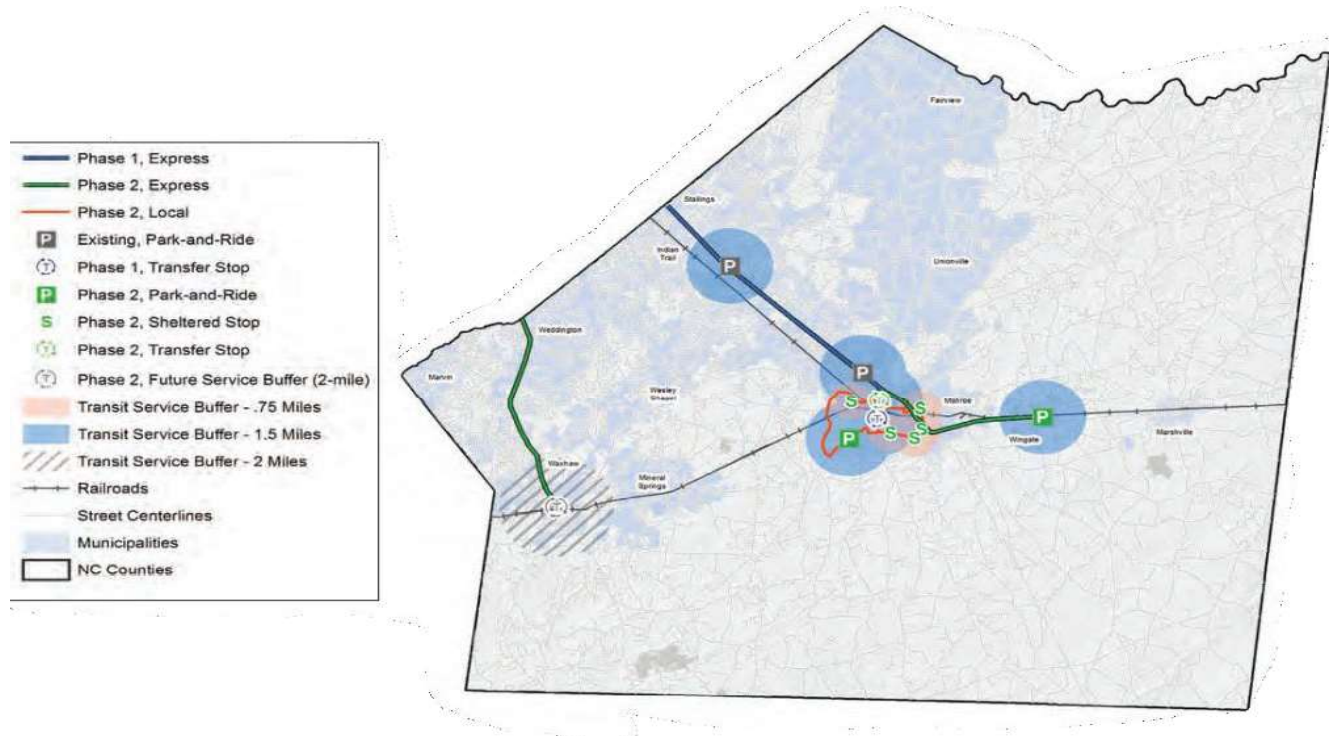


Figure 58 Union County Long-Term Transit Recommendations

South Carolina Statewide Public Transportation and Coordination Plan

The South Carolina Statewide Transportation and Coordination Plan was prepared in coordination with the development of the 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan and it is the update of the Statewide Transit Plan 2008. The purpose of this update was to identify existing public transportation services, needs, and strategies through the planning horizon of 2040. The plan reviewed the following transit and rail service types relevant to the Charlotte Urban Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan:

- Fixed route transit service
- Route deviation service
- Demand response service
- Complementary Paratransit Services
- Commuter Bus
- Intercity Services (statewide intercity & regional bus network plan)

The 2040 transit and passenger rail needs identified in the plan total \$1.65 billion and include the following key projects:

- \$516 million for Rock Hill – York County – Charlotte Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- \$50 million for Greenville Bus Rapid Transit
- \$46 million for Charleston Commuter Corridor
- \$1.038 billion for the South Carolina segment of the Atlanta to Charlotte High Speed Rail

Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO (GCLMPO) 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) is a long-range transportation plan. GCLMPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning entity for Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln Counties of North Carolina. The GCLMPO area's transit services range from demand-response to vanpools to fixed-route bus service, intercity rail service, and intercity bus service.

GCLMPO 2045 MTP transit recommendations are as follow:

- Study the feasibility of vanpool service.
- Add bike racks to transit buses.
- Continue to use large buses for fixed route operations on major arterials but consider using Light Transit Vehicles (LTVs) on routes where passenger capacities are much lower.
- Request federal funds to purchase scheduling software and registering fare boxes with card readers to allow passengers to use 'Smart Cards.'
- Bus replacement

As part of the GCLMPO 2045 MTP study recommendations, the following future CATS initiatives are recommended:

- Develop a new rapid transit vision for Charlotte’s West Corridor, which is currently poised for streetcar under the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan.
- The LYNX Silver Line continues through uptown Charlotte and extended to the airport as a light rail corridor.

Charlotte Moves Task Force Report (2020)

The Charlotte Moves Task Force Report (2020) is a long-range multi-modal transportation action plan that was produced as a result of the Charlotte Moves Task Force. The Task Force was convened by the Mayor of Charlotte in 2019 to advise the City of Charlotte in the creation of a new Strategic Mobility Plan. The report focused on providing safe and equitable mobility to city and county residents that supports a sustainable, connected, and innovated network of multi-modal transportation options. The report identified recommendations for a transformational mobility network that addresses the growing mobility needs in the area and a funding strategy to pay for it. The recommended mobility

network improvements are expected to support the future shift in travel patterns and modes towards a commute pattern less centered on drive alone mode (Figure 59). The transformational mobility network consists of the following elements:

Travel Patterns and Mode

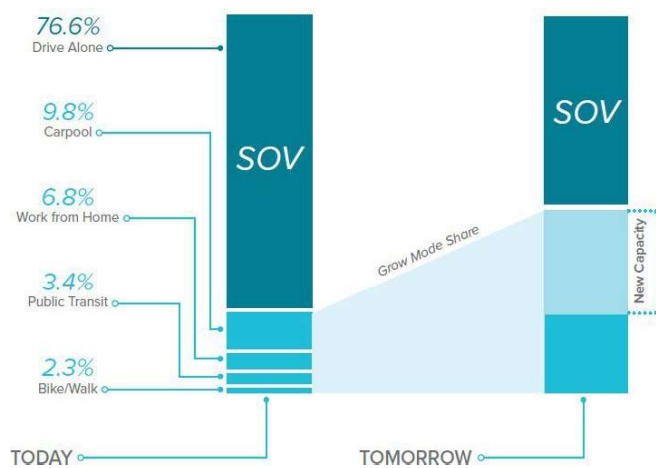


Figure 59 Desired Shift in Travel Patterns in the Charlotte Region (Charlotte Moves Task Force Report)

- Ninety miles of new rapid transit corridor investments including the LYNX Silver Line light rail, LYNX red line commuter rail corridor, MetroRapid I-77 BRT, CityLYNX Gold Line streetcar extension, and the LYNX Blue Line light rail Pineville-Ballantyne extension
- 140 miles of bus priority corridor investment including expanding the network of high frequency bus routes, improving headways on all routes to 30 minutes or better, developing bus priority corridors, and improving customer amenities
- 115 miles of new greenways including the Mooresville to Charlotte Trail, Cross Charlotte Trail (XCLT) 2.0, and the North Charlotte Arc Trail
- 75 miles of bicycle facilities including the Uptown CycleLink, Silver Line Rail Trail, urban trails, and commuting corridors
- 150 square miles of focused first and last mile pedestrian investment including filling critical sidewalk gaps, enhancing walkability in activity centers, improving pedestrian safety, and creating mobility hubs
- Sixty miles of roadway corridor investment including new street connections, congestion management, and partnerships with state and private investment projects

The plan is estimated to cost between \$8 to \$12 billion to design, build and finance and assumes a 50-50 funding approach between local and state and federal sources. To fill the \$4 to \$6 billion local funding gap, the plan proposed a one-cent sales tax increase within Mecklenburg County is the primary funding source along with a dedicated property tax increase and vehicle registration fee as secondary funding sources, if needed.

NCDOT IMD On-Demand Microtransit Annual Report

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's Integrated Mobility Division (NCDOT IMD) published this report in October 2023 addressing on-demand Microtransit initiative, which aims to provide technology-enabled, flexible public transit based on real-time trip demand. The IMD positions microtransit as a convenient and adaptive transit solution that serves rider needs within communities that traditional transit services may not efficiently cover.

Drawing insight from existing in-state programs, IMD has identified key strategies and best practices to guide the deployment of microtransit. One takeaway is the need to anticipate and plan for increased ridership due to the convenience and flexibility of on-demand services. Furthermore, this report emphasizes the importance of designing microtransit systems that are equitable and accessible. For instance, setting up a call center and accepting pre-paid debit cards can broaden access, ensuring that the service is inclusive to all demographics, including those who may face digital or financial barriers. Similarly, to maximize effectiveness, on-demand options should incorporate features like pre-booking, allowing riders to schedule trips in advance, and curb-to-curb service for passengers utilizing wheelchairs.

Additionally, IMD recommends partnering with local maintenance providers to reduce vehicle downtime, thus enhancing service reliability. The division also stresses the importance of balancing wait times with service zone coverage and fleet size to ensure timely service without overextending resources.

NCSU-ITRE Public Microtransit Pilots in the State of

North Carolina: Operational Characteristics, Costs, and Lessons Learned

The NCSU-ITRE study, published in January 2023, explores the implementation of microtransit systems across North Carolina, examining their operational characteristics, costs, and the challenges. This research aims to provide guidance for planning and designing successful microtransit services by analyzing case studies from various counties in the state.

The study emphasizes that there is no universal approach to microtransit. Rather, the effectiveness depends on aligning the service design with specific community needs and goals. For example, counties like Orange, Wake, and Wilmington use microtransit to enhance mobility in suburban zones near urban areas, whereas smaller cities like Wilson leverage microtransit as a replacement for fixed-route transit.

These communities vary widely in demographics, including poverty rates, vehicle access, and racial composition, highlighting the importance of customized planning.

Three primary service delivery models emerged from the research: Turnkey Systems, where private entities manage all aspects of service; Technology Acquisition, in which agencies retain control while outsourcing certain components; and Separate Contracts, which allow for maximum customization but require more resources and expertise. Selecting the right model depends on the agency's capacity, desired level of control, and long-term goals.

The study also highlighted specific challenges faced by microtransit agencies. Funding constraints make it difficult to scale services and the need to comply with ADA requirements can be complicated. Technology barriers, such as the reliance on smartphones or credit cards, may exclude vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the ongoing driver shortage presents a significant hurdle for sustained operations. The study underscores the importance of addressing these issues during the planning phase to ensure the service meets community needs effectively.

The research concludes that early and inclusive planning is critical for microtransit success. Agencies must engage diverse stakeholders, including local governments, transit agencies, senior centers, and major employers, to align goals and secure buy-in. Long-term planning should consider funding prospects, potential expansions, and scalability. Developing a marketing strategy to reach target populations and addressing operational concerns, such as driver training and service equity, are also essential steps. With these measures in place, microtransit systems can effectively enhance mobility while addressing the unique challenges of different communities.

Plan Review Summary

The region has seen dramatic investment and growth in its transit services in the last two decades. At the same time, ongoing population and employment growth and increases in traffic congestion highlight the need for additional and better-connected transit services across the regional footprint. CONNECT Beyond is probably the most comprehensive vision of the regional transit improvement needs, and includes both major transit capital improvement recommendations as well as recommendations for how to improve and build upon the existing transit planning, interagency coordination and transit governance structures in the region through adding new positions such as a Regional Mobility Manager, regional committees, follow-up studies, and improving communication methods to better share information about existing transit agencies and services.

Peer Regions Review

A review of three peer regions was conducted to identify FTA Section 5310 program management practices and project scoring methodologies. The description below highlights some of the findings.

FTA Section 5310 Peer Agency Review

GoRaleigh

The selection process for GoRaleigh FTA 5310 funding call for projects utilizes a 2-step evaluation process for their biennial call for projects. The review committee consists of GoRaleigh staff and external advisors utilizing a five-category rubric.

FTA 5310 Program Management

GoRaleigh and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) administer the FTA 5310 funding for the Raleigh-Cary Urban Area, with GoRaleigh facilitating the call for projects application process. In 2023, GoRaleigh was had \$2,272,632 in available funding, including additional COVID relief grants from the American Rescue Plan and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act. Under their most recent call for projects window, eligible applicants were able to apply for funding for projects that were scheduled to occur between October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025.

As part of the GoRaleigh 5310 Program Management Plan's³ biannual program of projects development and approval process, the call for projects is parsed out into 6 distinct tasks:

- **Advertise 5310 Program Funding Availability** – notify public and private transportation providers, non-profit groups, and other relevant stakeholders of funding availability.
- **Call for Projects** – GoRaleigh opens the application window for 4 weeks.
- **Applicant Workshop** – GoRaleigh hosts a workshop to assist applicants in completing their project applications within the application window.

³ Go Raleigh 5310 Program Management Plan - <https://cityofraleigh0drupal.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/drupal-prod/COR28/GoRaleighProgramManagementPlan2020.pdf>

- **Application Review** – GoRaleigh forwards eligible applications to the CAMPO Application Review Subcommittee who will score applications based on the selection criteria noted in the program management plan.
- **Develop Program of Projects** – GoRaleigh submits the Program of Projects to FTA.
- **Subrecipient Notification** – CAMPO will provide letters to approved project applicants advising the applicant that their project was recommended for funding and describing their responsibilities as a subrecipient.

In the most recent call for projects for the 2023 – 2025 period, the application window opened on

February 27, 2023. The virtual webinar was held on March 7, 2023 (week 2 of the application window) and the virtual recording was hosted on the call for projects webpage until the end of the application window on March 23, 2023. Applications were able to be submitted either online or via mail. Projects awards were announced in June of 2023.

Call for Projects Scoring Methodology

GoRaleigh established a two-phased approach for proposed project scoring methodology. The first phase is a three-part basic screening to ensure the project meets the essential qualifications for FTA 5310 funds and has a complete application. The three screening criteria include:

- Is the project of a type that meets the basic goals for the Section 5310 program, i.e., it has a primary focus of serving seniors and individuals with disabilities?
- Is the project application complete, including attachments providing the budget and certified local match sources?
- Does the project serve trips that have an origin and/or destination within the Raleigh-Cary urbanized area?

If any of the above screening criteria were answered with “no,” the project is deemed ineligible for funding and will not move to the scoring phase of the selection methodology process.

For project proposals that met phase one criteria, the CAMPO Application Review Subcommittee scored the projects based on a five-category rubric. The five primary categories were weighted based out of a total score of 100 points and included:

- **Project Needs (20 points)** – Project application clearly states the need for the project and demonstrates how the project is consistent with the objectives of the Section 5310 grant program. The application indicates how the project will enhance transportation for the urbanized area’s elderly and disabled populations and provides a connection between the project and the Locally Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan
- **Project Planning and Implementation (20 points)** – The applicant provides a well-defined service operations plan and/or capital procurement plan and describes the implementation steps and timeline for carrying out the plan.
- **Project Budget and Grants Management (15 points)** – Project application includes a complete project budget, indicating anticipated project expenditures and revenues, documents matching

funds, addresses long-term efforts, and identifies potential funding sources for sustaining the service beyond the grant period.

- **Program Effectiveness and Evaluation (20 points)** – The project is evaluated based on the applicant's identification of clear, measurable outcome-based performance measures, including customer satisfaction, to track the effectiveness of the service.
- **Organizational Preparedness and Technical Capacity (25 points)** – Projects should be a good fit in the applicant's organization for their mission and expertise. The applicant demonstrates that it has staff with the technical experience to manage or operate a transportation service and are prepared to monitor and provide safe services.

The full scoring rubric can be seen in Table 15 below.

Table 15: GoRaleigh Project Evaluation Criteria Scoring Rubric

Project Evaluation Criteria	Possible Points (100 Maximum)
1. Project Needs	20
Does the project support the 5310 grant program's objectives?	0 or 5
To what degree will the project increase or enhance the availability of transportation for the elderly and disabled populations in and around the Raleigh-Cary Urbanized Area's?	0-5
How well does the project address needs identified in the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan?	0-5
Does the project provide a service that otherwise would not be available?	0 or 5
2. Project Planning and Implementation	20
To what degree does the project include coordination and/or partnerships with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders?	0-5
Is the project timeline realistic?	0 or 5
To what extent does the applicant include plans to market to the target group and promote public awareness of their project?	0-5
Is there evidence the applicant has done all the necessary planning and is ready to begin the project upon being funded?	0-5
3. Project Budget and Grants Management	15
Does the submitted budget clearly identify anticipated project expenditures and revenues?	0 or 5
Does the documentation demonstrate the matching funds are identified and available?	0 or 5
How well does the agency demonstrate continued commitment to the life of the project beyond the availability of the requested grant resources?	0-5
4. Program Effectiveness and Evaluation	20
How well does the application describe collecting data and/or documenting the delivery and utilization of services?	0-10
Does the applicant propose monitoring measurable indicators of success?	0-10
5. Organizational Preparedness and Technical Capacity	25
How closely does the proposed project align with the organization's mission and objectives?	0-5
How experienced is the applicant staff in managing transportation projects and/or operating passenger transportation?	0-5
How experienced is the applicant with financial responsibilities such as quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting?	0-10
If the applicant has previously been awarded a Section 5310 grant by GoRaleigh, does its documented past performance indicate that it may struggle to successfully manage the project and/or operate passenger transportation? <i>Note: This question allows points gained for experience to be reduced based on previous performance.</i>	-5 - 0
Does the applicant describe activities such as: training, vehicle maintenance, inspection, or monitoring to manage risk and to provide safe services?	0-5
Total Score	0-100

Projects with the highest scores based on the objective rubric from the CAMPO Application Review Subcommittee will be recommended to FTA for funding by GoRaleigh. Of note, GoRaleigh has one section of the scoring rubric where the CAMPO Application Review Subcommittee can subtract points based on an applicant's previous Section 5310 grant award by GoRaleigh if there are documented past performance issues that indicate the applicant may struggle to successfully manage the project and/or operate passenger transportation.

Orlando LYNX

The selection process for Orlando LYNX FTA 5310 funding call for projects utilizes a 2-step evaluation process for their annual call for projects. The evaluation committee is made up of individuals who represent the interests of the elderly and persons with disabilities, as well as mobility across the region.

FTA 5310 Program Management

The Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX) is the administrator of FTA 5310 funding for the Orlando Urban Area. For the 2024 fiscal year, LYNX has \$2,180,020 in available funding for their call for projects application period. In the most recent call for projects cycles, LYNX has typically seen 7 to 9 applicants per cycle. Under LYNX's program management plan, call for projects occur on an annual basis through fully executed subrecipient agreements between the awardee and LYNX. LYNX also is able to award contingency projects based on submitted applications on a year-to-year basis.

As part of the Orlando LYNX Section 5310 Grant Manual⁴, the call for projects and award notification process is broken down into twelve tasks. For the 2024 call for projects application window, the tasks and their associated timelines were posted in accordance with Table 16. The LYNX Grant Webinar occurs on the day the application window opens, and application assistance is provided for a two-week period in the middle of the window.

Application windows are established with LYNX's fiscal year and additional application windows may be initiated outside of the established window if additional funding becomes available. Of note for the LYNX application window is the requirement to request a Secured Portal link from a member of LYNX staff one week prior to the application deadline. No hard copies or emails are accepted as part of the LYNX FTA Section 5310 call for projects.

⁴ Orlando Lynx Section 5310 Grant Manual - <https://www.golynx.com/core/fileparse.php/142441/urlt/LYNX-Section-5310-FY2025-26-Grant-Manual.pdf>

Table 16: Orlando LYNX Grant Timeline

2025/26 Orlando and Kissimmee Urbanized Area Grant Timeline	
TASK	DATE
Applications are published	Thursday, July 11, 2024
LYNX Grant Webinar	Thursday, July 11, 2024 Presentation: 10:30am-11:30am
Application Assistance and Community Transportation Coordination (CTC) Meetings/Contract/Letter of Intent	July 15, 2024 to July 26, 2024
Secured Portal Request Deadline: Applicants must request a Secured Portal link from BGarces@golynx.com to upload their application documents. Hard copies and e-mails will not be accepted.	Thursday, August 8, 2024 <u>Failure to request a Secured Portal link by this date will result in the inability to apply.</u>
Application Deadline Upload all documents to the Secured Portal link by this date. The link will expire on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 5:00pm and additional documents will not be allowed for upload at that time.	Thursday, August 15, 2024 @ 5:00pm <u>Late applications will not be accepted</u>
Cone of Silence	Application Deadline to Board Approval
Application Evaluations	August 16, 2024, to September 27, 2024
Notification Letters Sent	Winter 2024
LYNX Board of Directors Final Award Recommendations Approval	Winter 2024
Pre-Award Meetings and Site Visits	March-June 2025
Subrecipient Agreement and Notice to Proceed Issued	Summer 2025
Vehicle Delivery	TBD based on vehicle availability

Based on prior years' application pools, LYNX believes that the 5-week window period has been sufficient for applicants to complete the funding application. There have been no documented concerns from interested applicants about the 5-week window period, especially due in part to the two-week period for questions. Any submitted questions and provided answers are hosted on the agency's FAQ webpage under the FTA Section 5310 call for projects for any applicant to review, benefiting all participants.

Call for Projects Selection Methodology

Upon the end of the application window, LYNX staff will review all submitted applications for their minimum standards for funding consideration. If any of the following conditions are not met, the application will not be considered by the evaluation committee and will be removed from funding consideration:

- Was the application received by LYNX prior to the deadline?
- Does the agency maintain active SAM.gov registration? Has the agency been disbarred?
- Has the agency provided the correct UEI number on its SF 424 form?

- Has the agency submitted all the required documents and forms listed?
- Has the agency answered all of the applicable required questions?
- Did the agency submit forms properly signed by the authorized individual?
- Has the Board Resolution been signed by an authorized individual?

Provided that the above conditions are met, the application will then be reviewed and scored by the evaluation committee. The committee is composed of three members: a representative from the MPO, a representative from the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), and a representative from the local district level of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Agencies who are invited to participate on the evaluation committee do not apply for funding to ensure impartiality and objectivity during the evaluation process and eliminates conflicts of interest concerns.

The evaluation committee will objectively score each application based on six areas:

- Required Documentation (22 points)
- Agency Information (2 points)
- Current System Description (17 points)
- Budget Considerations (25 points)
- Proposed Project Description (29 points)
- Overall Impression (5 points)

The full application scoring rubric can be found in Table 17. As noted by LYNX, if any of the required elements of the scoring rubric are omitted, the application will be disqualified from scoring and funding consideration.

Internal LYNX staff will provide two rankings in addition to the application score. These rankings include a subrecipient Risk Assessment and an application Fact Sheet. Subrecipients will be rated low, medium, or high risk based on numerical values of 1, 3, and 5, respectively for fourteen questions. While this information will contribute to final award amounts, it will not affect the applicant's overall ranking. The Fact Sheet will assess a project's efficiency and cost effectiveness. These factors will impact the applicant's funding request but not their application score, as only the evaluation committee may assign the scores and affect applicant rankings.

Upon completion of the evaluation phase, recommended projects are presented to the LYNX Board of Directors for final approval. The Board of Directors also makes decisions regarding funding allocations.

Projects not selected for funding or selected for conditional funding can solicit feedback from LYNX or utilize an appeal process if they believe their project merits reconsideration or clarification. If an applicant appeals the decision, they must do so within 14 calendar days of the postmarked date of decline notice clearly identifying the applicant, contact person, address, phone number, email address, project description, and their grounds for appeal. Appeals will be reviewed by the 5310 Program staff at LYNX.

Table 17: LYNX Project Evaluation Scoring Rubric

<i>Required Documents (22 points max)</i>	
Is each required document included in the application and in the correct order or is a document incomplete?	1 Point for each complete Document 0 Points for each incomplete Document
<i>Agency Information (2 points max)</i>	
If any questions/answers were omitted = Disqualification	
Type of Applicant: New or Existing	2 Points for a Complete Section
Have you had a Section 5310 project funded by LYNX? If yes, briefly describe your previously funded Section 5310 project and summarize project outcomes for the clients/populations served by your agency	
Have you had a Section 5310 project funded by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)? If yes, briefly describe your previous Section 5310 project funded by FDOT	
Did your agency receive \$750,000 in Federal Funds last fiscal year	
Did your agency receive federal assistance funds under 49 U.S.C. §§ 5307, 5309, or 5311? If yes, briefly describe your previously funded Section 5307, 5309, or 5311 projects.	1 Point for an Incomplete Section
Does the subrecipient have or previously had any lawsuit(s) filed against them	
Does the subrecipient have a financial management system in place to track and record program expenditures (Examples: QuickBooks, Visual Bookkeeper, Peachtree, or a Customer Proprietary System)	
<i>Current System Description (17 points max)</i>	
If any questions/answers were omitted = Disqualification	
An overview of the organization including its mission, program goals, and how transportation fits into the overall organization's mission	3 points max
Organizational structure, type of operation, number of employees, and other pertinent organizational information	4 points max
Breakdown of transportation related employees (drivers, schedulers, dispatchers, etc.)	2 points max
Does your agency require CDL certifications, etc.	.5 points max
Who is responsible for insurance, training and management, and administration of the agency's transportation programs	1.5 points max
Who provides maintenance of the vehicles	.5 point max
A detailed description of service routes/areas and ridership numbers	5 points max
Does your agency provide non-urbanized transportation services	.5 points max

Budget Considerations (25 points max)	
Are they applying for the Vanpool (identified as a program priority)	10 points
Are they applying for Operating (identified as a secondary program priority)	7.5 points
Are they applying for Operating and Vanpool	5 points
Thorough explanation of Budget Considerations Question 1 in the application	4 points max
Is the math correct and all information in the Budget completed	4 points max
Is the Urbanized Cost Per Trip calculated in the Fact Sheet cost effective	5 points max
Is the availability of a Local Match Demonstrated	2 points max
Proposed Project Description (28 points max)	
If any questions/answers were omitted = Disqualification	
Will the project maintain existing services, expand existing services, or provide a new service	4 points max
How will the project meet the purpose of the §310 program, as outlined in the Application Manual	5 points max
Is your agency coordinating with other federally assisted programs and services	1 point max
How does the proposed project fit into the coordinated transportation system in the LYNX service area	2 points max
Please explain the geographic location of your proposed service area. Will the service operate entirely within the urbanized areas of Orlando and/or Kissimmee, or will some of the services span both urban and non-urbanized areas	5 points max
What priorities does the project address in the LYNX TDSP? A) Are unmet needs or gaps (temporal or geographic) addressed by this project? Which? Please cite the pages and specific references from the TDSP for support	3 points max
If this project helps realize service (operational) efficiencies what are those efficiencies? How does the project help realize those efficiencies	2 points max
What population(s) will the project serve (elderly, disabled, other transportation disadvantaged groups, general population)	2 points max
How does the project provide a service that the CTC cannot, or at a more efficient rate than the CTC	2 points max
Will the project be sustainable after initial award, or is it only feasible to provide the service(s) with the support of these funds	2 points max
Overall Impression (5 points max)	
Using your professional experience, knowledge and insight, please evaluate the overall application package. Please be sure to take into account grammar, mathematical calculations, system efficiencies, and alignment with §310 priorities.	5 points max
Total Base Points Possible is 100	

Maricopa Association of Governments

The selection process for Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) FTA 5310 funding call for projects utilizes a 3-step evaluation process for their annual call for projects. The evaluation committee is made up of individuals from the City of Phoenix, MAG staff, and MAG Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Committee.

FTA 5310 Program Management

In October of 2023, The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Council assigned the City of Phoenix as the Designated Recipient of FTA funds for the Phoenix West – Goodyear – Avondale Urban Area (PWGA). The City of Phoenix Public Transit Department is the Designated Recipient for the FTA Section 5310 funds for the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale (PXMS) and the PWGA urban areas. The MAG coordinates the application process and the programming responsibilities. In the most recent call for projects for the Fiscal Year 2024, there were 29 applicants between the PWGA and PXMS urban areas. The amount of funding available on the 2023 apportionment was \$5.6 million for PXMS and \$1.2 million for the PWGA.

As part of the MAG Section 5310 Handbook and Program Guidelines⁵, the selection timeline occurs through a series of nine primary steps from application to decision and appeals. These steps and associated timelines are outlined in Table 18. During the 2024 call for projects, applicants had a 5-week window in which to submit an electronic application to either the PXMS or PWGA urban area funding pools. Within the application submission window, a regional 5310 grant workshop was held on week 2 and application technical assistance appointments were made available by request in the third week. Once the submission period has closed, MAG will provide a public notice of applications submitted and allow for a one-week period of public comment. One month after the public comment period closes, the MAG Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation (EPDT) Committee will provide follow-up questions to applicants, with a required interview with the committee to be held in late April. Selection notifications are sent out in June or July with a one-week appeal deadline from the date of award notification.

⁵ MAG Section 5310 Handbook and Program Guidelines <https://azmag.gov/Portals/0/EPDT/Section-5310/Section-5310-Handbook-Guidelines.pdf?ver=11iUg2qWbyJCoqL8OHVCVQ%3d%3d>

Table 18: MAG FTA Section 5310 Grant Timeline

2023 SECTION 5310 PHOENIX-MESA-SCOTTSDALE AND PHOENIX WEST GOODYEAR-AVONDALE URBAN AREAS GRANT TIMELINE	
Applications are Published	January 22, 2024
Regional 5310 Grant Workshop Virtual Meeting via Zoom Click here to register	January 30, 2024, 9:00 a.m.
Application Technical Assistance <i>Email Hezequias Rocha at HRocha@azmag.gov to schedule a 30-minute appointment.</i>	February 6 & 7, 2024, beginning at 9:00 a.m. by appointment only
Application Deadline Submit electronically by email to: DeDe Gaisthea at Dgaisthea@azmag.gov • Subject line: Agency Name Section 5310 PXMS** or PWGA**	February 26, 2024, by noon <u>No late applications will be accepted</u>
Public Notice of Applications Submitted Allows one week for public comments	February 27, 2024
Applicants to Receive MAG Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation (EPDT) Ad Hoc Committee's Follow-Up Questions	April 9, 2024
Applicant Deadline to Respond to Committee's Questions	April 12, 2024, by noon
Required Applicant Interview with EPDT Ad Hoc Committee Virtual Meeting via Zoom MAG staff will contact applicant to schedule	April 23 & 24, 2024
MAG Human Services Technical Committee	May 2024
MAG Human Services and Community Initiatives Committee	May 2024
MAG Management Committee	June 2024
MAG Regional Council	June 2024
Applicants Receive Selection Notification***	June/July 2024
Appeal Deadline	One week from notification
TIP Amendment Process	July-August 2024
FTA Application Process	September-November 2024
Phoenix/Subrecipient Agreement Process	September-November 2024
Grant Recipient Workshop with City of Phoenix	September-November 2024
Projected Availability of Funds	Late 2024 – Early 2025
Vehicle Delivery and Availability	Spring 2025

*Dates Subject to Change

**PXMS=Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, PWGA=Phoenix West-Goodyear-Avondale

***Based on FTA notice of final apportionment

Call for Projects Methodology

The project selection process consists of three steps. The first step includes an initial review of project applications to determine federal eligibility requirements and regional thresholds are met by the City of Phoenix and MAG staff. During this review, applicants who are applying for new funding with an excessive amount of funding for which the same project has been awarded and unspent will not be recommended to move forward for evaluation. As part of the project evaluation, City of Phoenix and MAG staff will ensure that potential subrecipients meet the recommended threshold for Section 5210 federal funds in coordination activities. These activities include submitting an agency Provider Inventory survey, attending three MAG Transportation Ambassador Program meetings, and attending two or more MAG sponsored training sessions and workshops in the past year. Those failing to meet the minimum coordination activities requirement may not be recommended to move forward in evaluation.

For projects that met the requirements of the initial application review, the City of Phoenix and MAG staff will provide the results of the initial review of applications and eligible projects to be independently reviewed by members of the MAG EPDT Ad Hoc Committee who will develop a primary priority listing of projects. The Ad Hoc Committee will evaluate projects utilizing the selection criteria developed in the MAG Section 5310 Handbook and Program Guidelines. The selection criteria, as shown in Table 19, is divided into six scoring categories with varying weights:

- Section 1,2, and 9 – Cover Letter, Agency Info, and Checklist Completed (5 points)
- Section 3 – Agency Experience and Capabilities (20 points)
- Section 4 and 5, 6, or 7 – Project Description (25 points)
- Section 5, 6 (A, B, or C) or 7 (A, B, or C) – Budget (10 points)
- Section 8 – Coordination (25 points)
- Applicant Interview and Presentation (15 points)

The scoring criteria for each category are broken down into three sections: Needs Improvement, Meets Criteria, and Meets All / Exceeds Criteria. These scoring subcategories have associated point thresholds for enhanced objective scoring measures.

The third and final step in the applicant evaluation process is the applicant interviews. All Section 5310 applicants who meet the criteria in step one will be required to participate in the interview process after the evaluation panel conducts a preliminary review of the applications. The interview process serves as an opportunity for applicants to present their proposed projects and allows the Ad Hoc Committee to ask the applicant questions based on their application and seek any additional clarifying information.

Upon completion of the interview stage, the MAG EDPT Ad Hoc Committee reviews the final evaluation scores. Project selections are made on the final rankings based on the selection criteria described above for each of the PXMS and PWGA urban areas. The Committee may only select projects that score at least 70 points during the evaluation period. MAG and City of Phoenix staff will then review the recommended projects and submit the list to the MAG Management Committee for recommendation and then the MAG Regional Council for final approval. Approved projects are finally sent to the Phoenix City Council for authorization and to receive and disburse grant funds.

In the event that an applicant does not agree with their decision, they may appeal the final funding recommendations as long as they met federal requirements and regional thresholds. Appealing applicants may request a meeting with MAG Staff to provide guidance on the appeals process. The appeal will be reviewed by the MAG EDPT Committee at the next meeting date. If the applicant is not satisfied with the MAG EDPT Committee's response, the applicant may request the appeal be addressed during the MAG committee process, including the MAG Management Committee.

Table 19: MAG Selection Criteria and Scoring Matrix

SELECTION CRITERIA (100 pts) *Points provided by MAG (Planning Agency) or the City of Phoenix (Designated Recipient)	Needs Improv't	Meets Criteria	Meets All/ Exceeds Criteria
SECTION 1, 2 and 9: Cover Letter, Agency Info, and Checklist Completed (5 pts) Cover letter describes the agency's need, population served, funding requested, and clearly addresses the commitment to providing local match funding with appropriate agency signature. (3 pts-MAG) * Application is complete with all appropriate required supplements. (2 pts-MAG) *	(1 pt.)	(2-3 pts.)	(4-5 pts.)
SECTION 3: Agency Experience and Capabilities (20 pts) Agency demonstrates experience with the requested project including having appropriate staff to assist in managing the program. (5 pts) Agency provides performance measures that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the requested project with measurable outcomes. (5 pts) Agency experience in managing federal funds, meeting requirements, and have policy/procedure in place. (5 pts-DR Phoenix) * Demonstrates good utilization of requested and/or past funding. If applicable, agency expends awards in a timely manner. (5 pts-Phoenix DR) *	(1-9 pts.)	(10-14 pts.)	(15-20 pts.)
SECTION 4 AND 5, 6, or 7: Project Description (25 pts) The project addresses the federal requirement of being planned, designed and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, including minority populations by providing a service that would otherwise not be available. (5 pts) The project clearly describes how it relates to other services provided in the area, fills in transportation gaps for the targeted population, and is sustainable over time. (10 pts) -Traditional Capital Requests (Section 5 or 6 A, B, or C): Project demonstrates an effective utilization of proposed service, equipment, or position and an effective use of federal funds by filling in the gaps in service and the number of clients served (10 pts) OR, -Other Capital/Operating Requests (Section 7 A, B, or C): Project provides a service that is "above and beyond" ADA requirements (5 pts). In addition, project is consistent with program objectives to improve access or provide alternatives to public transportation (5 pts). (Total 10 points)	(1-9 pts.)	(10-19 pts.)	(20-25 pts.)
SECTION 5, 6 (A, B, or C) or 7 (A, B, or C) – Budget (10 pts) Applicant adequately addresses how the requested project is cost-efficient and a good use of federal funding based on the number of clients served. (3 pts) Line items on the budget were appropriate to the project request, easy to understand, and adequately addresses the intent of the program. (2 pts) Applicant appropriately addresses the availability/reliability of required matching fund for the proposed project request including the ability to operate/maintain the grant project in future years. (5 pts-Phoenix DR) *	(1-3 pt.)	(4-7 pts.)	(8-10 pts.)
SECTION 8 – Coordination (25 pts) Coordination Participation: Attends regional coordination meetings/forums, submits all requested data information including surveys and provider updates. (10 pts-MAG) * Developing Partnerships: To what degree does the applicant coordinate with other agencies, and public or private transit and paratransit systems? (5 pts) Collaborative Activities: Applicant demonstrates participation, or willingness to participate, in a coordinated system for training activities. (5 pts) Addressing Regional Gaps: To what degree does the applicant address regional gaps as outlined in the MAG Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan, and describes plans to further coordination efforts in the future? (5 pts)	(1-9 pts.)	(10-19 pts.)	(20-25 pts.)
Applicant Interview and Presentation (15 pts) Applicant presentation adequately supports the need of the proposed project. (15 pts)	(1-4pt.)	(5-10 pts.)	(11-15 pts.)

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

A series of virtual interviews was held with various stakeholders including public transit agencies, regional government agencies, and advocacy groups. Two public engagement opportunities were held as part of the CPT-HSTP update for members of the public and other stakeholders to provide feedback.

Public Engagement

Two rounds of public engagement were held as part of the plan update. The first round of public engagement included a virtual presentation of the existing conditions analysis and future steps towards the plan's completion and adoption. The virtual presentation was held on Friday, November 15th, 2024, and was recorded and subsequently uploaded to the CATS YouTube channel to allow for interested members of the public to view and participate asynchronously. The second public engagement opportunity was held a week later on November 22nd, 2024, at the Scarborough Community Resource Center, where the project team interacted with 35 individuals. Those who participated in the in-person event were also given survey cards for additional feedback.

From the public engagement opportunities, the project team received various feedback regarding the need to access additional destinations, improvements to trip planning and transfers, and accessibility to transit stops. Members of the public requested additional service be provided around Steele Creek, Albemarle Road in Eastern Mecklenburg County, and in the Newell neighborhood. When accessing public transit stops, respondents noted that bus stops need to be more accessible to those with mobility aids or with mobility issues. Respondents suggested to improve accessibility that additional sidewalks, bus stop pads, crosswalks, and bus stop amenities be provided. When scheduling transit service, respondents noted that it can be difficult to find information about bus routes and schedules. Several respondents also noted that when using paratransit, their trips can run long, causing them to miss appointments or have limited time at their destination before their prescheduled pick-up occurs. Respondents also requested to see additional microtransit options throughout Mecklenburg County, akin to what is currently provided in Gastonia or what private service providers are offering within Mecklenburg County.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project team held virtual stakeholder engagement interviews with a variety of stakeholders, including regional planning organizations, fixed-route transit agencies, on-demand transit service providers, and transit advocates. Stakeholders were from both the Charlotte Urban Area and the greater nine-county study region. Respondent feedback is summarized based on general theme.

The most common cited concern among all stakeholders was the first and last mile portion of the transit trip. Stakeholders from every group noted that residents using transit often had a difficult time either reaching a transit pick-up location from their home or accessing a destination from the transit stop. A variety of factors were mentioned including lack of sidewalks or a connected sidewalk network, ADA compliant curb cuts for transit users utilizing

mobility aid devices, convenient crosswalk locations, and safe bus stops. Transit advocates and providers noted that some stops are located in less-than-ideal locations where the stops are signs next to the road or railroad with no other pedestrian amenities nearby. When trying to address the issue of pedestrian connectivity to destinations, two providers noted the high cost of having to install ADA compliant sidewalks and curb cuts that significantly increased the cost of the bus stop installation, limiting the number of new or improved stops that can be install each year. Part of this issue is due to the greater Charlotte region's growth pattern that favors private vehicle transportation over a multimodal growth pattern that would allow for more housing and key destination density.

Aside from accessing traditional transit and paratransit options, stakeholders noted the difficulties of users scheduling trips. Currently, those who wish to schedule a paratransit or deviated fixed route trip must call ahead of their desired trip, often 24 hours ahead of time. Stakeholders noted that it can be difficult for users to try to schedule their trip by phone and to plan out their day that far ahead of time. An online solution was discussed with several transit providers, but they do not yet have that ability.

On many occasions, transit providers will need to work with one another to schedule trips for seniors, those with a disability, or Medicaid mandated trips. While transfers between providers is possible and occurs on a daily basis, the process could be improved. Possible solutions that were mentioned include an online, region-wide transfer system where providers could work together to coordinate trips and improve transfer locations and times. An online platform could also be used to hold customer information so that transit trips could be optimized on both the provider and the customer through vehicle selection and route optimization.

Due to continued funding issues among all stakeholder agencies, trips to nonessential destinations have either been reduced or eliminated. This has proved to be a challenge for seniors and those with mobility impairments to access key non-medical destinations. Transit advocates noted that while other services, such as Uber, Lyft, and community transit networks, have helped to fill in the gap, they are often difficult for these users to traverse. Uber and Lyft have a high cost of ridership that those on fixed-income or government assistance cannot afford on a regular basis. Community transit providers are nonprofit and volunteer organizations with limited vehicles and staffing that cannot accommodate the volume of requests that come in on a daily basis.

The continued underfunding of transit and paratransit in the region has also caused reliability concerns and some areas not being serviced. Both transit advocates and providers noted that some areas of the nine-county study region are not being serviced adequately due to low demand, creating transportation deserts. This is partially due to third-party vendors not wanting to service these areas due to the amount of deadheading required or traffic concerns to reach and service this area. Southeastern Mecklenburg County was mentioned several times by transit advocates as an area of concern due to low demand for this service and the long travel times due to the roadway congestion along the US 74 and parallel corridors.

A common area of optimism among all stakeholders was the idea of microtransit. CATS will be implementing microtransit in northern Mecklenburg County in early 2025 before rolling out additional microtransit zones elsewhere in Mecklenburg County. The City of Gastonia recently offers microtransit within the city limits for all residents and visitors. There are also three privately ran microtransit companies within the City of Charlotte, showing high demand for the transit option with greater flexibility of service area on the commercial front.

The final communal discussion item was implementing a regional transit concept and enhancing partnerships between transit agencies. This would allow transit operators to improve their service area to neighboring counties and improve operations on the back end that would result in improved transit service to the communities in which they serve. A regional concept may also aid in reducing duplicated services which could free up additional funds to improve service area, reliability, or frequency.

MAY 2025

THE CHARLOTTE, NC-SC URBAN AREA

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Summaries

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Appendix B: **Stakeholder Interview Summaries**

Mecklenburg County Government – On-Demand Transportation Providers

Interviewees: Masie Jones, Gregory Tanner, and Corsha Caughman

Mecklenburg County's Transportation System provides on-demand, non-fixed route services across the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, including medical and employment-related trips. Operations rely on a mix of in-house staff and contracted vendors, running generally from 5:30 AM to 6:00 PM. The county previously operated many Medicaid-related trips but lost a significant portion of these, from roughly 2,000 daily to just 1,100 in 2021, has severely impacted their budget and operational sustainability.

The majority of riders are seniors and individuals with disabilities. Service eligibility is often tied to age or disability, though employment and educational trips are also prioritized. Key partnerships include CATS, Gaston County Access, adult day care providers, and organizations such as Enlivian and local VA services. A fare of \$1.50 is now required (exact change only), and while a recent rider survey found this amount is not a significant barrier, it remains a new adjustment for long-time riders. The agency is shifting toward a cashless payment system and consolidating scheduling with an upcoming switch to Ecolane software for better routing and data integration.

The biggest challenges cited include financial constraints, inconsistent vendor service quality, and lack of inter-county and regional coordination. The agency would prefer in-house service delivery for better accountability and has aspirations to offer 24/7 door-to-door service if funding weren't a barrier. They emphasized the need for regional data-sharing platforms and uniform systems to enable cross-county service coordination. Initiatives to address accessibility, like dementia-awareness training for staff, are already in motion.

Mecklenburg County Government – Fixed Route and ADA Paratransit

Interviewees: Masie Jones, Gregory Tanner, and Corsha Caughman – Mecklenburg County Transportation Systems

While Mecklenburg County does not operate traditional fixed-route bus service, its involvement in ADA paratransit and complementary services is critical. The agency provides curb-to-curb and door-to-door services within the federally mandated $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile buffer of fixed routes and accommodates additional needs for non-mandated riders. All trips must be booked by phone at least 24 hours in advance, with no current option for online reservations, though integration with mobile trip booking through CATS Pass is in the works.

The system operates through a hybrid model: directly provided services through Mecklenburg County and overflow handled by contractors. Hours vary, but special transportation (STS+) and late-night services accommodate riders beyond standard business hours, including weekend and holiday coverage. Fares are \$3.50 per ride, with bulk purchase options available.

Riders with mobility devices, including wheelchairs, are accounted for in service planning, though data collection is minimal beyond monthly trip counts. The county's fleet is modernizing with new vehicles using electric hydraulic systems that adjust ride height, although these larger vehicles have new clearance constraints.

Persistent challenges include first/last mile access, particularly in areas without sidewalks or accessible infrastructure. Rural sections of Mecklenburg County and destinations with low clearance awnings or inaccessible driveways present operational difficulties. Vehicle availability has also emerged as a barrier due to a growing ridership (now at 90% of pre-pandemic levels) and limited maintenance support over weekends.

If funding allowed, priorities would include full integration of ADA-accessible infrastructure, building safe pickup and drop-off zones, enhancing driver support, and increasing engagement with the disability community. A major goal is the adoption of a single software system (Spear) that consolidates scheduling and dispatching for greater system efficiency.

Disability Rights North Carolina

Interviewee: Joe Gentry – Disability Rights

Disability Rights serves residents across four counties, Mecklenburg, Gaston, Union, and Cabarrus, advocating for improved access to transportation for individuals with disabilities. Their clients primarily use paratransit, fixed-route buses, or walk to destinations when possible. However, transportation access remains a persistent barrier due to the distance from housing to bus stops, unsafe travel conditions, and the cost of alternative options like Uber. Gentry emphasized that while public buses are accessible and operators are well-trained, many individuals simply cannot reach bus stops safely.

Gentry highlighted several structural and environmental challenges that disproportionately affect seniors and individuals with disabilities. These include lack of sidewalks, unsafe crossings, inadequate lighting, and poor conditions at existing stops, such as the Graham Street stop, which is located next to active railroad tracks. Other problem areas include Albemarle Road and key community destinations like the Senior Center in Pineville and Audrey Kell High School, which are not served by nearby routes.

Additionally, clients face difficulties with scheduling paratransit trips. The system is often bogged down, with riders frequently reporting late pickups or long wait times. Some cannot reach call centers to book rides. Gentry advocated for a renewed focus on safety, including a bus stop audit, and strongly recommended microtransit services as a flexible, scalable solution. He emphasized that many riders would benefit from being able to request trips via either smartphone app or phone call, and noted that if funding were not a constraint, enhanced microtransit and safer infrastructure would be top priorities.

CATS Bus Operations & Special Transportation Services (STS)

Interviewees: Edwin Johnson (CATS Bus Operations), Dietrich Brown (CATS Special Transportation Services)

CATS provides fixed-route and paratransit services across the Charlotte region, including recent expansions into underserved areas such as Mint Hill. The new STS+ paratransit zone launched in October 2024, with another expansion planned for North Mecklenburg in early 2025. ADA paratransit services operate within a $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile buffer around fixed routes, requiring trip bookings at least 24 hours in advance. While reservations must currently be made by phone, CATS is integrating paratransit into its digital CATS Pass system, which would allow mobile trip scheduling in the future.

Service hours are extensive. night service runs until 2:00 AM on weekdays and 1:00 AM on Sundays, with STS+ covering evenings and holidays. Paratransit fares are \$3.50 per trip, with ticket bundles and monthly passes available. Riders must use physical tickets, though fare modernization is underway. Drivers are CATS employees, but overflow demand is handled by contracted taxi drivers as microtransit use grows.

Challenges include a shortage of vehicles, limited weekend maintenance capacity, and infrastructure obstacles like narrow roads, low-clearance awnings, and inaccessible sidewalks that limit safe pickups. Ridership is recovering steadily, reaching about 90% of pre-COVID levels. The system adds 50–100 new paratransit users monthly, though onboarding lacks a streamlined process for verifying eligibility across agencies.

CATS is also exploring options to better serve major destinations like the airport and Amazon fulfillment centers, as well as enhancing accessibility for wheelchair sports teams. There is widespread consensus that Charlotte's lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure (especially sidewalks and crosswalks) hinders transit access. If funding were not a barrier, priorities would include building more ADA-compliant stops, expanding vehicle turnaround options, and conducting more targeted outreach to the disability community to ensure service design reflects real needs.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (CRTPO, RFATS, CRMPO)

***Interviewees: David Hooper (RFATS Director), Phil Conrad (CRMPO),
Jerrel Leonard (CRTPO Transit Planner)***

Representatives from the region's three major Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization), RFATS (Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study), and CRMPO (Cabarrus-Rowan MPO), discussed their roles in planning and supporting human services transportation across the Charlotte metro area.

CRMPO operates the Concord Express and has local transit oversight, while CRTPO plays a coordination role with regional planning and oversees a Transit Providers Work Group that meets quarterly. RFATS has a smaller footprint in the Charlotte Urbanized Area, and due to limited demand for FTA 5310 funding, it does not maintain dedicated transit planning staff.

All agencies identified common barriers to service, including limited funding, siloed operations, and the lack of a regionally integrated mobility management system. CRMPO and CRTPO noted specific concerns about first/last mile gaps and accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Coordination across jurisdictions remains inconsistent, and while some collaborative efforts exist (like CRMPO's transit commission), broader initiatives, such as a regional call center for mobility, have not yet materialized.

Innovative ideas stalled by funding constraints include light rail expansion (CRMPO), and improved cross-county service integration (CRTPO). There is also concern over the growing disconnect between state-level agencies (NCDOT and SCDOT) and local MPOs in facilitating regional planning. Participants expressed a need for renewed efforts to coordinate funding, planning, and service delivery across boundaries, especially as urban sprawl and demographic shifts increase demand for flexible, equitable mobility solutions.

Lions Services (Advocacy Organization for Individuals with Visual Impairments)

Interviewee: Agatha Bisbikis – Lions Services

Lions Services, based in Mecklenburg County, provides vocational and support services for individuals with visual impairments. The organization does not operate transportation directly but is actively involved in helping clients access affordable, safe, and reliable mobility options. They are currently piloting a “Jaunt” vehicle program, supported by the C. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and offer transportation discounts through employer partnerships.

Transportation access is a critical issue for their clients. Rideshare services like Uber are often too expensive, and public transit is frequently inaccessible due to poor infrastructure. Agatha emphasized that many clients struggle with walking to bus stops, especially in the absence of sidewalks or due to dangerous pedestrian environments, conditions made worse for individuals with low vision. Specific safety incidents were noted, including one where a visually impaired employee was struck by a distracted driver while using a sidewalk.

Common barriers include a lack of ADA ramps, unsafe or nonexistent crosswalks, poorly maintained sidewalks, and long walking distances to and from transit stops. Additionally, buses often run late or require multiple transfers, which increases confusion and travel time, particularly for clients with mental health conditions or cognitive disabilities who may need assistance navigating the system.

If funding weren’t a barrier, Agatha would invest in additional vehicles and payment systems that are more accessible and user-friendly. Lions Services has launched a new internal program, The Lions Den, which aims to build digital literacy among employees, training them to use smartphone apps for trip booking and other transportation needs. This is part of a broader push to ensure their clients are included in the region’s shift toward microtransit and technology-enabled services.

Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)

Interviewee: Bradley Johnson – ICATS Transit Director

ICATS provides both fixed-route and demand-response transportation across all of Iredell County, connecting to Charlotte and surrounding areas. Key services include two express commuter trips each morning and afternoon into the Charlotte Transportation Center, which offer riders full access to the CATS network for a single fare. They also maintain local circulator routes in Mooresville and Statesville, although challenges persist in keeping routes consistent and ADA-compliant due to infrastructure limitations and inconsistent sidewalk coverage.

The agency faces complex geographic and financial hurdles. Many bus stops in Statesville require expensive ADA upgrades because there are no existing sidewalks. ICATS has identified necessary improvements but cannot implement them without external funding. Service reliability is a strength, with express buses maintaining a 96 to 98 percent on-time rate, but congestion on corridors like NC-150 and I-77 remains a concern. Fares are \$3 for express service and \$1 for local routes, with discounts available to seniors and people with disabilities.

ICATS operates as an enterprise fund and does not receive local general fund support. This funding structure limits their ability to expand or experiment with service models. They lost a \$5 million BUILD grant in 2019 due to delays securing land for a new operations facility and are still working toward becoming a transit authority to gain more autonomy. HIPAA and data-sharing regulations also hinder their ability to coordinate more directly with neighboring transit systems.

Johnson emphasized the importance of eliminating hard jurisdictional boundaries that restrict funding and service eligibility. Riders do not care whether their trip crosses from an "urbanized" to a "non-urbanized" area, but funding rules do. If ICATS had greater flexibility and consistent buy-in from county leadership, they could improve cross-county coordination, reduce deadhead time on Medicaid trips, and better serve the growing number of riders who depend on transit for work, healthcare, and daily living.

Appendix X: Detailed Public Engagement Summary

As part of the Charlotte NC-SC Urbanized Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (LCT-HSTP), a series of public engagement efforts were carried out in November 2024 to better understand community transportation needs, identify gaps in existing services, and gather feedback directly from residents and transit users. The engagement strategy was designed to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and meaningful public input. It included both virtual and in-person formats to accommodate varying levels of internet access, availability, and preferred modes of participation.

The public engagement component played a critical role in ensuring that the recommendations of the LCT-HSTP reflect the lived experiences of community members, particularly those who rely on human services transportation and those living in underserved areas. Through conversations, survey data, and informal feedback, residents were encouraged to voice concerns, share personal transportation challenges, and offer ideas for how public transit could be improved in their neighborhoods.

Engagement Activities

Two distinct public engagement events were held:

1. Virtual Public Meeting – November 15, 2024
This event was hosted via Microsoft Teams and featured a comprehensive presentation about the scope of the LCT-HSTP, existing conditions, and goals of the plan. Participants were invited to provide real-time feedback during the meeting through chat and discussion, and to follow up with comments via email after the event. The meeting was recorded and uploaded to the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) YouTube channel, where it received 121 views by April 2025, extending the engagement well beyond those able to attend live. Approximately 25 individuals participated during the live session, with additional viewership afterward indicating further community interest.
2. In-Person Pop-Up Public Engagement – November 22, 2024
The second event took place at the Ella Scarborough Community Resource Center from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This in-person, informal engagement featured a staffed table with educational materials, poster boards for written feedback, and copies of a short-form survey designed as a postcard. The event was structured to be approachable and conversational, inviting community members who were already accessing services at the Center to provide their input. Approximately 10 individuals engaged directly with staff during this session. Many participants took time to share detailed experiences with public transit and their ideas for service improvement.

Combined, the events engaged an estimated 35 individuals, with the in-person component allowing for more personalized and detailed feedback from participants who may not typically engage through digital channels.

Feedback Themes and Public Input

The input collected during these events revealed several consistent themes and concerns across a range of transit experiences. Most notably, participants spoke about long wait times, inconsistent bus arrival schedules, and difficulties with planning trips due to poor access to up-to-date route and schedule information. There was also a shared interest in seeing microtransit options expanded throughout the region, especially in neighborhoods with limited fixed-route coverage.

1. Concerns with Service Frequency and Scheduling

Many residents expressed frustration with long gaps between buses and the challenge of planning transfers. One participant mentioned that taking Bus 212 to reach their destination takes them over 30 minutes just to begin the journey. Others emphasized that buses often run behind schedule or are infrequent during off-peak hours and weekends, which can significantly disrupt their daily routines, particularly for workers with nontraditional or overnight shifts. Several people called for CATS to consider running buses and trains 24 hours a day to better support essential workers.

For many ADA passengers, delays in their scheduled pickup times often meant missing the very appointments or activities they were relying on transit to reach. In cases where they did arrive, the limited window between drop-off and their pre-scheduled return ride left them with only a few minutes to complete critical tasks such as medical visits, grocery shopping, or attending a community program before having to board the vehicle again.

2. Geographic Service Gaps

Numerous responses pointed to areas where service is currently inadequate or nonexistent. Specific places mentioned included:

- Steele Creek, particularly near Palisades High School, where walking distances to the nearest stop exceed 20 minutes
- Newell / Hickory Grove Road, where residents say transit does not reach major employment areas
- Albemarle Road, especially near highway intersections, where transit stops are far apart and difficult to access
- University Area, with references to Neil Road and Wellspring Drive as underserved corridors

Respondents shared that they often walk more than 20–30 minutes just to begin a transit trip. In some cases, this meant choosing between walking long distances, taking expensive rideshares, or forgoing a trip entirely.

3. Access to Transit Stops and Pedestrian Infrastructure

In addition to limited route coverage, participants highlighted barriers to reaching bus stops safely. At intersections such as Monroe Road and Sardis Drive, one resident described the danger of crossing the street without a marked crosswalk or pedestrian signal. Others noted that sidewalks are often absent, narrow, or obstructed, especially in areas with older or disconnected infrastructure. These barriers are especially acute for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people pushing strollers or carrying groceries.

4. Trip Planning and Information Accessibility

Several individuals shared that they struggle to find clear, current information about routes and schedules. The CATS website and printed schedules were both mentioned as needing improvements in usability and clarity. Comments pointed to the need for a more intuitive digital trip planning tool and improved real-time service updates.

5. Interest in Microtransit

Multiple participants voiced support for additional microtransit services. They described on-demand or flexible route options as potentially transformative, especially in areas without sufficient fixed-route coverage. There was interest in both app-based and phone-based reservation systems to make these services accessible to residents of varying digital literacy levels.

Short-Form Survey Summary

To supplement the conversations held during the in-person event, a brief postcard-style survey was distributed. This survey asked respondents to share their zip code, transit usage frequency, perceptions of service gaps, and areas needing improvement. Seven completed surveys were collected. While the number may seem small, the responses offered specific, place-based insights from transit users that mirror the broader themes captured during engagement.

For example:

- A rider from ZIP 28270 expressed concern about unsafe crossings and long walking distances from the Steele Creek area.
- A respondent from 28215/28213 emphasized the need for additional routes and better access to grocery stores and clinics.
- A respondent from 28216 asked for buses and trains to run 24 hours a day.
- Another, from 28262, simply asked for more communication and information.

Visual Documentation

Feedback gathered during the in-person event was also captured through large comment boards where participants could place sticky notes or write their concerns directly on posters. These boards offered another medium for expression, particularly for individuals with limited time to complete a full survey. Several comments mirrored those found in the surveys and conversations, reinforcing key themes around scheduling, access, and geographic coverage.

MAY 2025

THE CHARLOTTE, NC-SC URBAN AREA

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Appendix C:

Private Transportation Providers by County

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services
Transportation Plan Appendix C:

Private Transportation Providers by County

Anson County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	A&A TRANSPORTS LTD LIABILITY COMPANY
2	OK NELLZ LLC

Cabarrus County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	5 STAR LIMOUSINE
2	A LIST TRANSPORTATION LLC
3	A STEP ABOVE LIMOUSINE
4	AMERICAN REPUBLIC LIMO
5	BLUE-J TAXI
6	CAB COUNTY TAXI SERVICE
7	CABARRUS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION
8	CABARRUS TAXI CABS AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
9	CARE CABB KIDZ TRANSPORTATION
10	CAROLINA TAXI
11	CITY CABS
12	CONCORD LIMOS
13	CONCORD LUXURY LIMO
14	EARNEST PEACH TRANSPORTATION LLC
16	EXCLUSIVE LIMOUSINE SERVICE
18	JEANE TRANSPORTATIPON LLC
19	LOTUS LIMOUSINE
20	MEGA TAXI
21	PLATINUM LIMOUSINE
22	REYNOLDS LIMOUSINE SERVICE
23	SHUTTLE'S SPECIALTY
24	T J'S TAXI
25	TAXI CONCORD
26	YELLOW CAB
27	YELLOW CAB COMPANY
28	YELLOW CAB OF CONCORD

Gaston County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	5 STAR TRANSPORTATION
2	A3M TRANSPORTATION,INC.
3	AFFORDABLE CHARLOTTE SHUTTLE
4	ALTOS TRANSPORTATION
5	AUTOMATION LIMITED TOWNCAR
6	BLUE CABS OF NC
7	CAB SERVICE
8	CAROLINA SPECIALTY TRANSPORT
9	CITY CAB COMPANY
10	CLT EXPRESS
11	COOK'S CAB COMPANY
12	GASTON LIMO LLC
13	GRAND MAJESTIC LIMOUSINE
14	LUXURY TRANSPORTATION
15	MADARIS TRANSPORTATION
16	METRO CAB
17	ROYAL LIMOUSINE
18	ROYAL TRANSIT LLC
19	SS METRO ENTERPRISE
20	TDK LIMOUSINE
21	TDK TRANSPORTATION
22	TIPSY RYDE
23	VIP SERVICES
24	WILLIAMS TRANSPORTATION 704
25	YELLOW CAB CO

Iredell County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	ABBY CAB
2	ABSOLUTE CHAUFFEURED TRANSPORTATION
3	ACE AIRPORT TAXI
4	ADAM'S TAXI
5	ALEXANDER CAR SERVICE
6	ALL AMERICAN TAXI
7	BLACK TIE TRANSPORTATION INC.
8	BLUE CABS
9	BRIAN'S CAR SERVICE
10	CARLTON'S AIRPORT TAXI SERVICE
11	CATAWBA RIDESHARE
12	CEVELINE TRANSPORTATION LCC
13	CHARLOTTE FLYER TAXI CAB CO
14	CITY CAB CO
15	COLDIRON COMPANIES
16	CROWN CAB INC.
17	DIXIE CAB
18	EXECUTIVE CAR SERVICE LLC
19	HUNTERSVILLE LIMOUSINE SERVICE
20	J&J AIRPORT SHUTTLE SERVICE
21	JDC TRANSPORTATION INC.
22	LAKE NORMAN DESIGNATED DRIVE SERVICE
23	LAKE NORMAN SHUTTLE
24	LEWIS TAXI
25	MARVELS UPSCALE TRANSPORTATION
26	MEDALLION TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS
27	MORRESVILLE LIMOUSINE SERVICES
28	NEW BREED
29	NEWTON YELLOW CAB
30	NIMBA CAN CO
31	NITE MOVES
32	POWELL EXECUTIVE TRANSPORTATION
33	PRATT AND WHITNEY ENGINE SERVICES
34	PRESTIGE LIMOUSINE SERVICE, INC.
35	PRICE 4 LIMO
36	ROYAL LIMOUSINE
37	ROYAL LUXURY TRANSPORTATION
38	SATEVILLE LIMOUSINE
39	TERRY'S TAXI
40	UPSACLE CAR & LIMO
41	VIP TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
42	YELLOW CAB DISPATCH OF CAROLINAS
43	YELLOW CAB OF LAKE NORMAN

Lancaster County (SC) Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	ABC
2	AMBUSTER
3	B & C TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
4	BECKON OF HOPE
5	CASINO PROMOTIONS
6	CHARTERS OF AMERICA
7	EPLING TRANSPORTATION
8	G & G Limousine Service INC
9	LUXURY TRANSPORTATION
10	MADARIS TRANSPORTATION
11	MEDICAL TRANSPORT SERVICES-COMPASSIONATE LONG DISTANCE
12	MISSIONARY TRANSPORT INC
13	RED ROSE CAB COMPANY
14	SOCIETY TRANSPORTATION

Lincoln County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
2	CAROLINA CAR SERVICE
3	CHARTERS OF AMERICA
4	J. P. CLASSIC LIMOUSINE SERVICE
5	K & J CHARTERS
6	LUXURY TRANSPORTATION
7	SOCIETY TRANSPORTATION
8	SPECIALIZED TRANSPORT

Mecklenburg County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	A MOORE PLEASANT TRANSPORTATION & LIMOUSINE
2	A STEP ABOVE LIMOUSINE SERVICE
3	A1 ELITE TRANSPORTATION, LLC.
4	A-1 WHEELCHAIR PATIENT TRANSPORT, INC
5	AA PRESTIGE TAXI SERVICES, INC.
6	AAA LIMO SERVICE L.L.C.
7	AB PREMIUM LLC.
8	ABA TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION, LLC
9	ABSOLUTE AMERICAN TRANSPORTATION
10	ALL STATE LIMO
11	ALL THINGS SENIOR TRANSPORTATION
12	AMERICAN MOBILITY TRANSPORT
13	AMERICAN SPECIALTY TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, LLC
14	AMERICAN TRANSMED, INC.
15	AMERICAN WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION
16	AMO TRANSPORT SERVICES
17	ANY OCCASION LIMOUSINE TRANSPORTATION
18	ASSISTANCE TRAVEL & TRANSPORT, INC.
19	ATC TRANSPORT, INC.
20	ATLAS LIMOUSINE & TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
21	BALLANTYNE SAFE RIDE
22	BESTWAY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
23	BLACK TIE LIMOUSINE
24	BOSTON EXECUTIVE CAR SERVICE
25	BUSH CUSTOM TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
26	CARTIER CLASSIC TRANSPORTATION, LLC
27	C-CHARLOTTE TOURS
28	CHARLOTTE METRO TRANSPORTATION, LLP
29	Charlotte Taxi Service
30	CITY CAB TRANSPORTATION
31	CITY CAB, LLC
32	CLT EXPRESS LIVERY LLC
33	CROWN CAB COMPANY
34	CROWN TRANSPORTATION

Mecklenburg County Private Transportation Providers p.2	
Num.	Provider Name
35	DRIVE OF FAITH TRANSPORTATION, INC.
36	DUPONT
37	ELITE TRANSPORTS LLC.
38	EXCLUSIVE CHAUFFEURS, LLC
39	EXECUTIVE CAR SERVICE, LLC
40	FOR HIS GLORY LIMO SERVICE, LLC
41	GENTLE RIDE TRANSPORTATION, LLC
42	GOLDEN HORSE TRANSPORTATION
43	GREEN CAB OF CHARLOTTE
44	HIGHLAND EXPRESS SHUTTLE SERVICE
45	HUNTERSVILLE LIMOUSINE SERVICE
46	I AND J WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION
47	INNER CITY TRANSPORTATION
48	JO LIMO, LLC
49	JTW TRANSPORTATION, LLC
50	LAKE NORMAN LIMOUSINE
51	LINK CLT TRANSPORTATION
52	LSG LIMO INC./INTERNATIONAL
53	MAVERICK CAR SERVICE LLC.
54	NATIONAL MOBILITY SERVICE, INC.
55	NC WHEELCHAIRS, LLC
56	ORANGE CAB, LLC
57	ORANGE TRANSPORTATION LLC
58	PEAK LIMOUSINE, LLC
59	PRESTIGE TRANSPORTATION
60	RICHES & ROSES LIMOUSINE SERVICE
61	ROADMASTER LIMOUSINE SERVICE
62	RONALD STONE TRANSPORTATION
63	ROSE CHAUFFEURED TRANSPORTATION
64	ROYAL CAB COMPANY, INC.
65	ROYAL TRANSPORTATION
66	RYDE IN STYLE, LLC
67	SIGNATURE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, LLC.
68	SILVER FOX LIMOS, LLC

Mecklenburg County Private Transportation Providers p.3	
Num.	Provider Name
69	SILVER STAR LIMO, INC
70	SOUTHPARK LIMOUSINE SERVICE, INC.
71	SPEEDY CAB COMPANY
72	SPEEDY WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION
73	STERLING WORLDWIDE LIMOUSINE, LLC
74	SUMMIT LIMO SERVICE
75	SUNSHINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, LLC
76	SUPREME HEALTH SYSTEMS, LLC.
77	TAXI TAXI, LLC
78	TRIUMPH LIMO SERVICE LLC
79	TROLLEY PUB OF NORTH CAROLINA, LLC
80	UNITED CARE TRANSPORTATION, LLC
81	UNITED LIMOUSINE, LLC
82	UPSCALE CAR AND LIMO SERVICE
83	USA LIMO, LLC
84	VC LIMO & TRANSPORTATION SVC
85	WHEELS U TRUST, LLC
86	WRNEALSXPRESS
87	YELLOW CAB COMPANY - TAXI USA, LLC
88	YELLOW TRANSPORTATION - TAXI USA, LLC

Union County Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	A LUXURY AFFAIR
2	CALVIN YOUNG TAXI SERVICE
3	CAM TRANSPORTATION LLC
4	CONCIERGE LIMOUSINE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICE LLC
5	EXECUTIVE LIMO OF UNION COUNTY
6	F & H TAXI
7	FIVE STAR LIMO
8	Finest Transportation LLC
9	JOHNNY B'S LIMO SERVICE
10	JOHNNY B'S LIMOUSINE SERVICE
11	MR ANDRE'S TAXI LLC
12	PRIME TRANSPORTATION LLC
13	YELLOW CAB METRO AREA
14	YELLOW CAB METROPOLITAN

York County (South Carolina) Private Transportation Providers	
Num.	Provider Name
1	CHARTERS OF AMERICA
2	JOHNSON'S LIMO SERVICE
3	LUXURY TRANSPORTATION
4	Veterans Cab Company

