

An aerial photograph of the Charlotte, North Carolina skyline. The image shows several prominent skyscrapers, including the Bank of America Corporate Center on the left. The city is surrounded by green spaces and residential areas. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

**Mecklenburg County Transit
Funding: The Charlotte Story
NCSITE Mid Year Meeting**

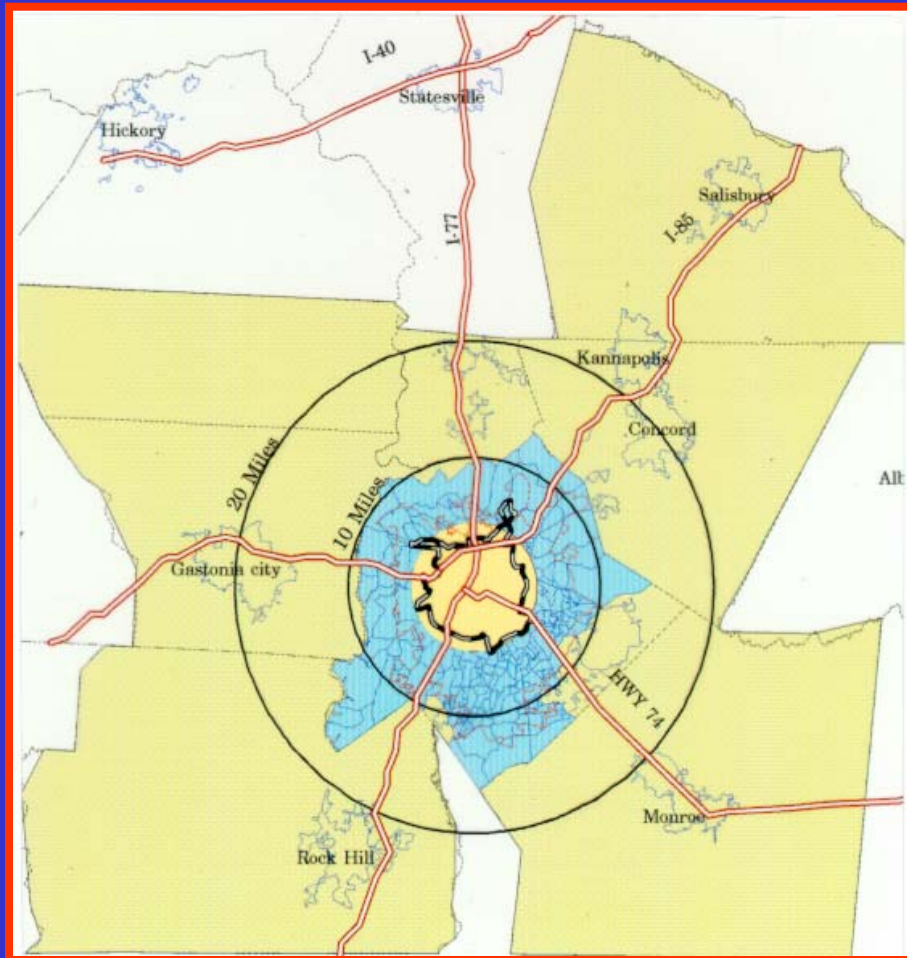
**Bill Carstarphen
May 24, 2005**

Presentation Overview

- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg region
(Population/Employment and Community profiles)**
- **Transit Planning – the early years**
- **Pursuit of a dedicated local funding source**
- **Governance Structure**
- **System Plan Development**

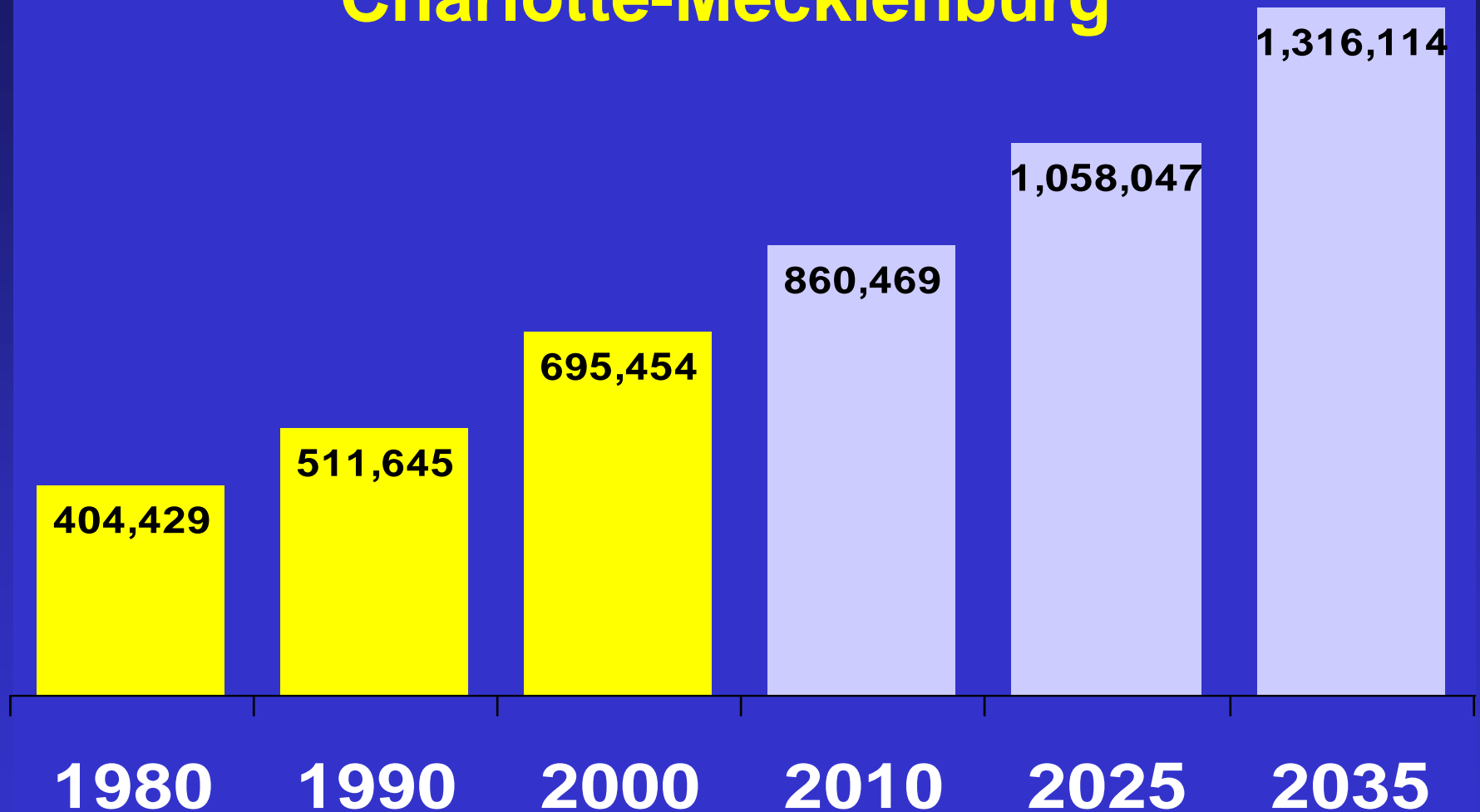


Charlotte-Mecklenburg Region

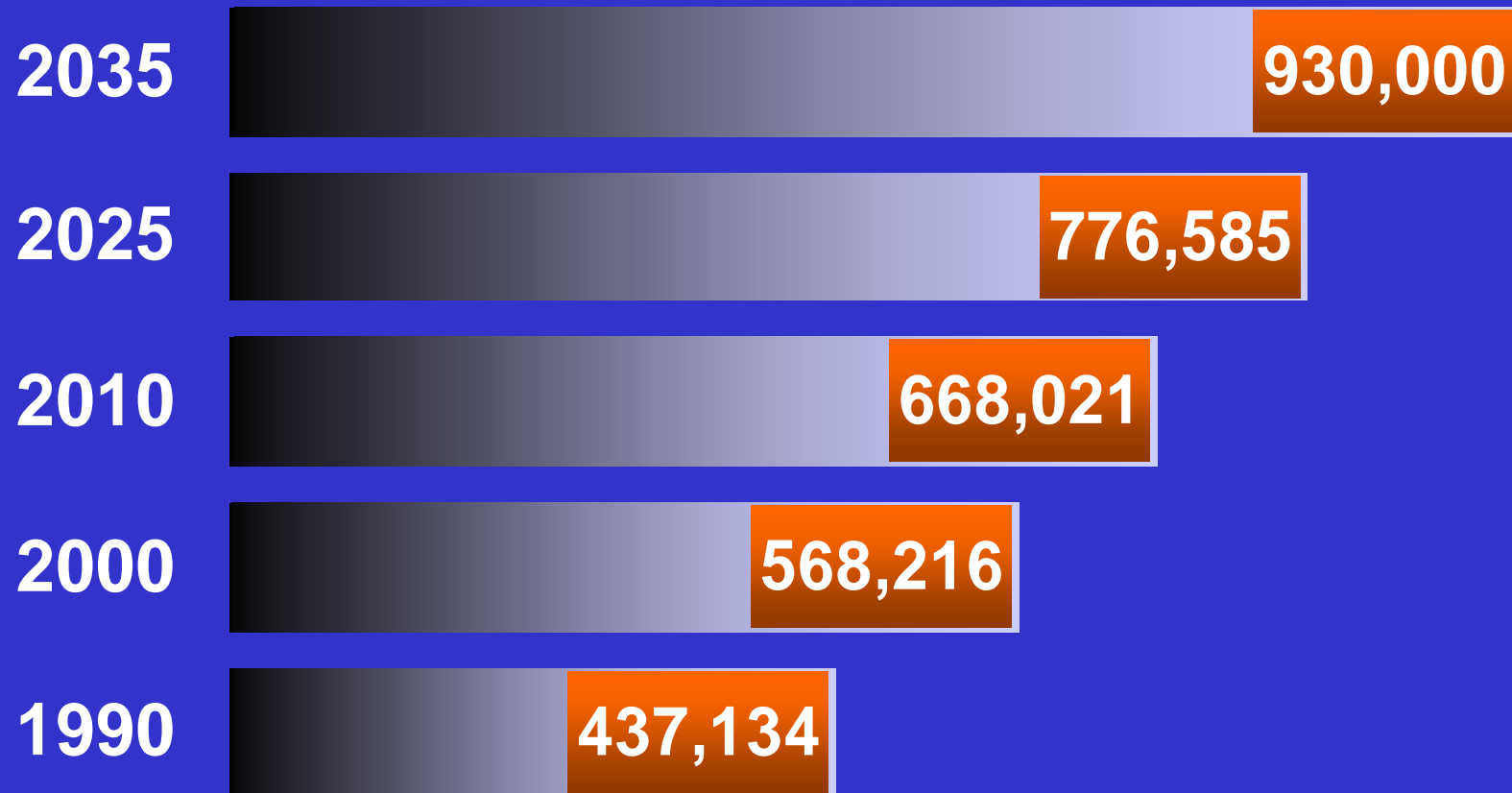


- 7 county region
- 20+ mile ring
- 1.5 million people
- 34th largest metro area

Population Growth Charlotte-Mecklenburg

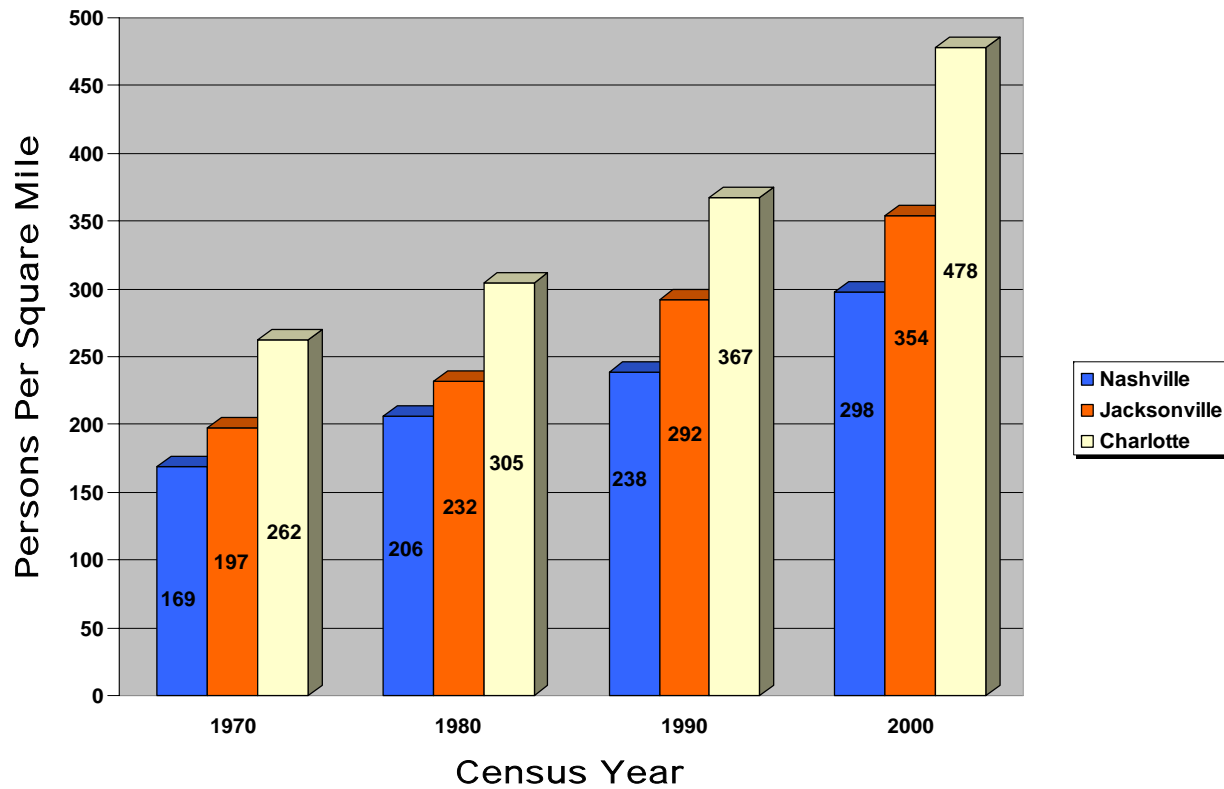


Employment Growth



Community Profile

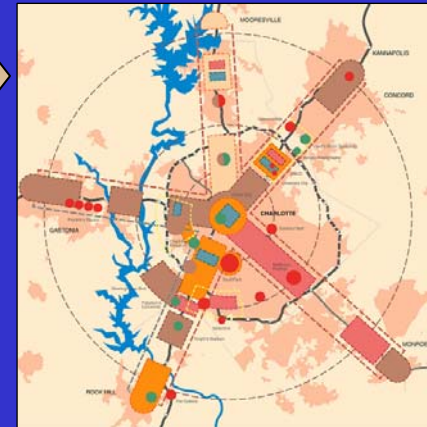
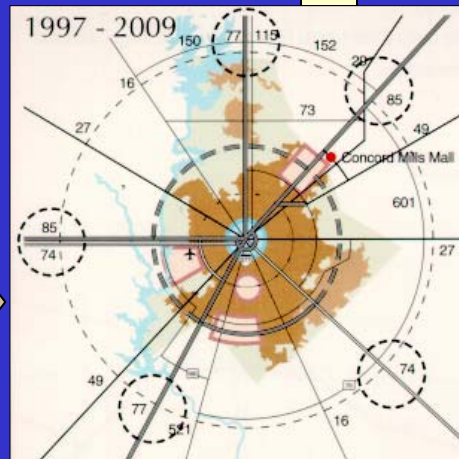
Population Density
(Based on 1990 MSA Land Area)



Challenge: Build and Maintain a Sustainable Region



How well we understand national and regional change, and anticipate and plan for growth, along with revitalization, will have a significant impact on life in the region for years to come.

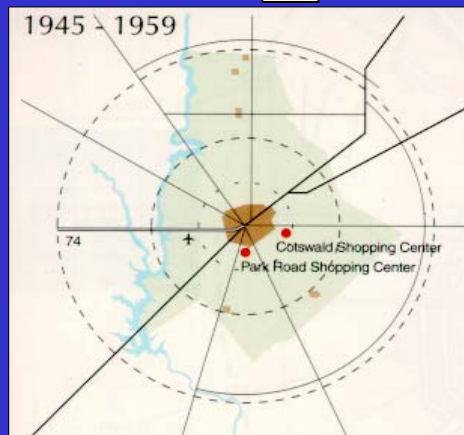


The seven county metropolitan area will grow from 1.5 million people in 2000 to 3 million residents by 2050.

85% of the metropolitan area's growth can be expected to occur outside of Charlotte.

The pressure for continued outward, auto dependant development will intensify within the metropolitan area and wider region.

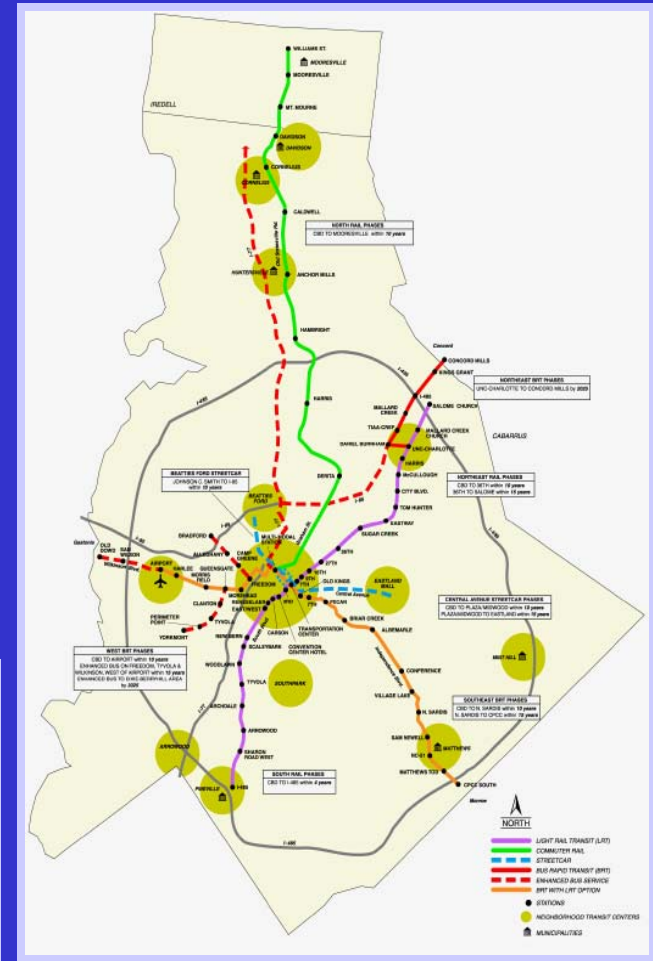
Trend growth v. sustainable growth will be a choice with significant consequences now and more so in the future.



Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan & System Plan



- Light Rail Transit
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Streetcar
- Commuter Rail: DMU
- Local Buses



Transit Planning – The Early Years

- 1977 Long Range Transit Plan – “transitways” in corridors
- 1988 Independence Blvd HOV Lane Plan
- 1989 Transit Corridor Study – high capacity transit in eight corridors
- 1994 Transitional Analysis



Committee of 100 (1994)

Composition

- 100+ members from Mecklenburg County and 5 adjacent counties
- Included elected officials and business community reps

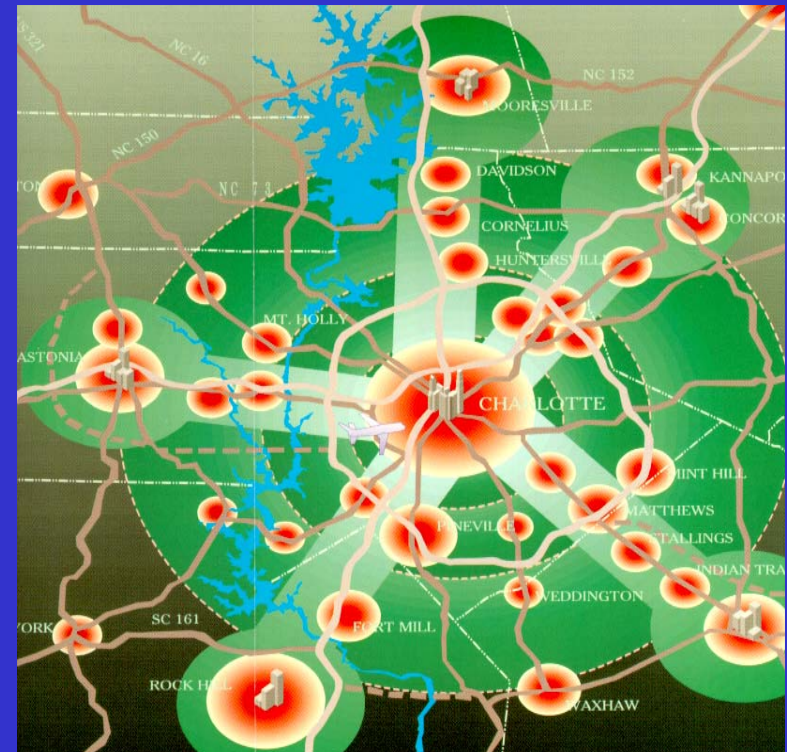
Charge

- Develop Community Consensus on Vision for Land Use and Transportation
- Define Major Revenue Sources
- Determine Organizations Structure



Committee of 100 Recommendations Land Use and Quality of Life

- Long-term growth management strategies for Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Five primary transportation and development corridors
- Transform unfocused development patterns in corridors and wedges to compact mixed-use development along corridors and in station areas



Committee of 100 Recommendations Transit Alternatives

- Improve Express, Local and Regional Bus Service over next 3-5 years
- Improve and Expand Bus Service as Primary Short-Range and Long-Range Solutions
- Plan and Execute High Capacity Transit to Meet Long-Range Needs



Committee of 100 Recommendations Organization Structure

Create Regional Planning/Coordination Office at Centralina Council of Governments (funded on per capita basis)

- Office plans/coordinates regional transit/high capacity transit
- State DOTs constructs roads
- Local governments implement local and express bus service improvements



Committee of 100 Recommendations Revenue Sources

- Seek Enabling Legislation for up to 1% Sales Tax Authorized Locally
- Revenues Generated by Each County Must be Spent in that County
- Local Autonomy in Project Selection

Other Funding Options Considered

- Vehicle Transfer Fee
- Rental Car Tax
- Local Gas Tax
- Sin Taxes
- Land Transfer Fee



Sales Tax Advantages

- Least Objectionable form of Tax/Fee
- Ease of Collection
- Generates Significant Amount of Revenue
- Applies to All
- Generates Revenue from adjacent Counties
- Grows with inflation



Committee of 100 Final Report

- Adopted by all Ring Cities
- Sales Tax implemented by South Carolina
- York County funding Highway Projects and Transit Studies with new Tax
- So What Happened on the North Carolina Side?



GOOD LUCK!
- KEVIN MEYER



KEVIN MEYER ©1994 THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

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Committee of 10 (1996/1997)

Composition

- Chair of Committee of 100
- 2 Charlotte City Council members
- Area representatives on NCBOT
- Several key business leaders

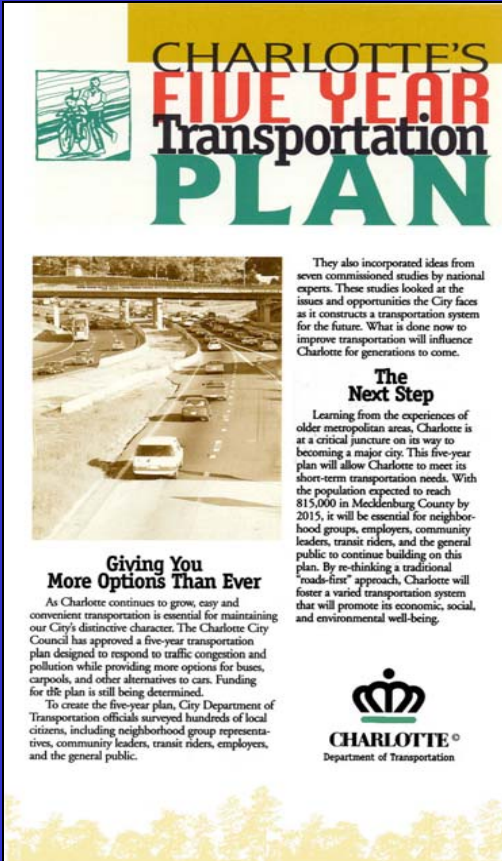
Charge

- Review and Reaffirm/Revise Recommendations of “Committee of 100”
- Determine Which Recommendations are Most Feasible and Develop Strategy for Implementation
- Collaborate with State’s Transit 2001 Commission to Address Charlotte’s Needs Through Their Proposals




Committee of 10 Results

- 5 Year Transportation Plan
- Support for “Local Option” Revenue Sources for Transit Improvements
- Led to Enabling Legislation for ½ Cent Local Option Sales Tax



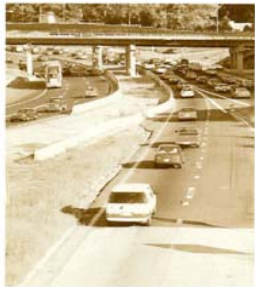
**CHARLOTTE'S
FIVE YEAR
Transportation
PLAN**



They also incorporated ideas from seven commissioned studies by national experts. These studies looked at the issues and opportunities the City faces as it constructs a transportation system for the future. What is done now to improve transportation will influence Charlotte for generations to come.

The Next Step


Learning from the experiences of older metropolitan areas, Charlotte is at a critical juncture on its way to becoming a major city. This five-year plan will allow Charlotte to meet its short-term transportation needs. With the population expected to reach 815,000 in Mecklenburg County by 2015, it will be essential for neighborhood groups, employers, community leaders, transit riders, and the general public to continue building on this plan. By re-thinking a traditional "roads-first" approach, Charlotte will foster a varied transportation system that will promote its economic, social, and environmental well-being.



Giving You More Options Than Ever

As Charlotte continues to grow, easy and convenient transportation is essential for maintaining our City's distinctive character. The Charlotte City Council has approved a five-year transportation plan designed to respond to traffic congestion and pollution while providing more options for buses, carpools, and other alternatives to cars. Funding for the plan is still being determined.

To create the five-year plan, City Department of Transportation officials surveyed hundreds of local citizens, including neighborhood group representatives, community leaders, transit riders, employers, and the general public.



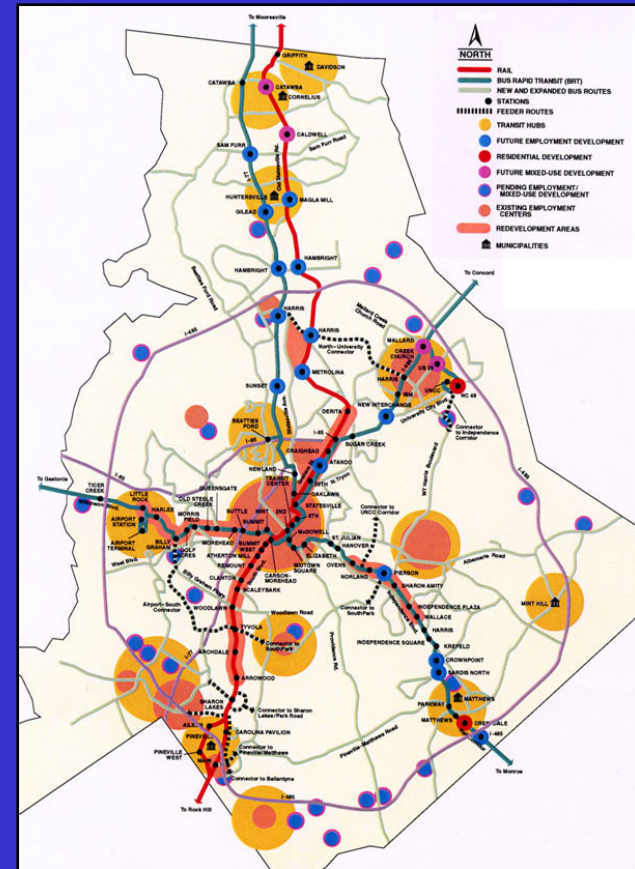
CHARLOTTE[®]
Department of Transportation



2025 Integrated Transit/ Land Use Plan

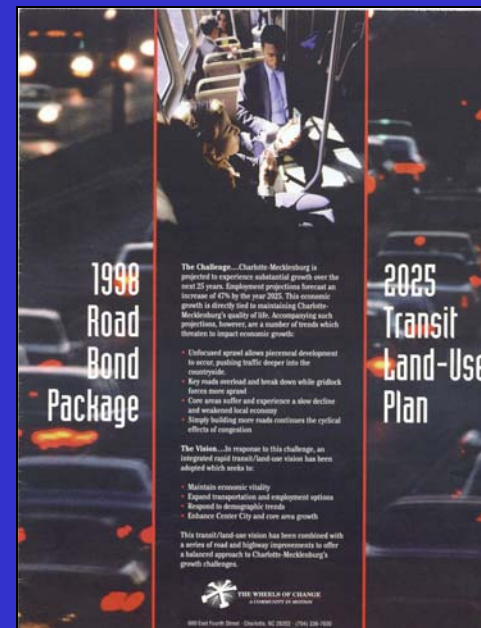
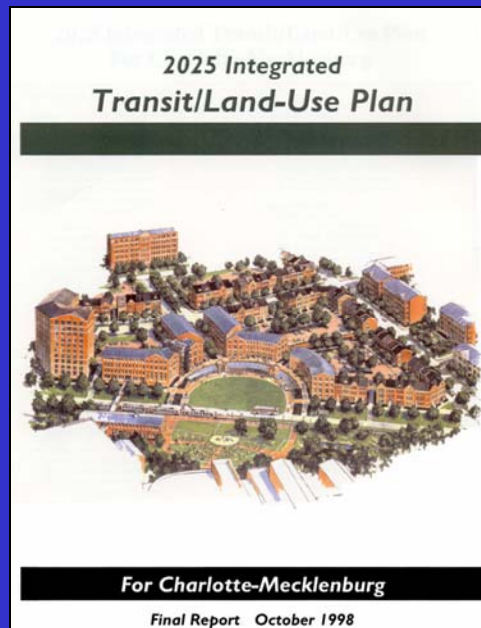
Goals

- Support Centers and Corridors Land Use Vision
- Provide Choices in Mode of Travel
- Develop a Regional Transit System
- Support Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

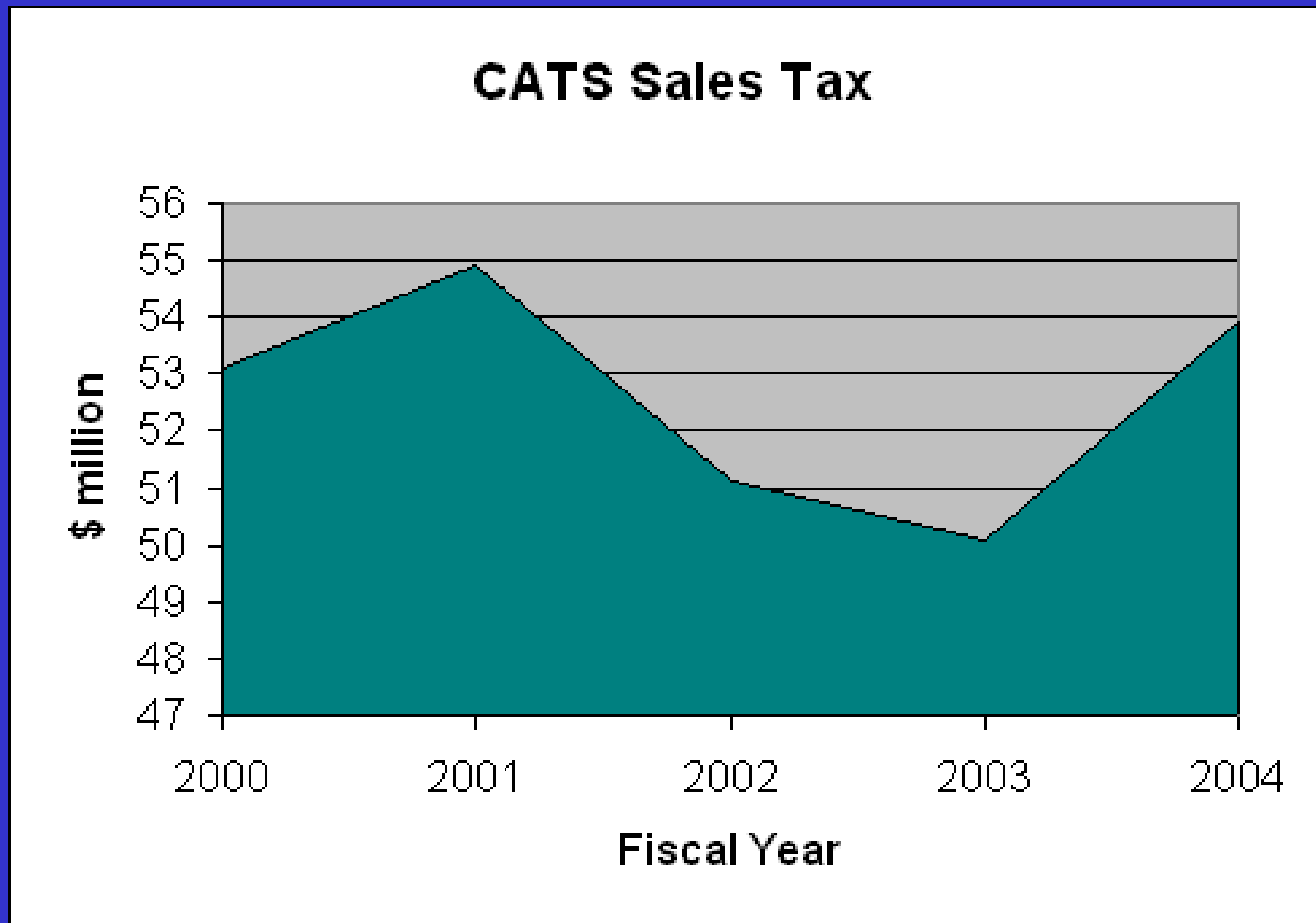


Success in 1998!

- Voter referendum on ½ percent sales use tax for public transportation on November 1998 ballot
- Promoted by Chamber and paired with \$100 million Road Bond
- Sales tax approved 58% to 42%



Transit Sales Tax Growth



Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement (1999)

Governance Structure Characteristics

- 8 equal votes amongst 8 Mecklenburg County jurisdictions
 - **1 vote each on the MTC**
- Ex officio involvement of surrounding jurisdictions and State DOT's
- Chair rotation between Charlotte Mayor and Mecklenburg County Board of Commission Chair
- City Administration of transit system:
 - **CATS is a City department**
 - **CEO reports to the City Manager**
 - **Administration under City policies**
 - **City Council approves contracting actions**
- City Council and Board of County Commissioners must approve annual transit program/budget
- Towns can withdraw/dropout



Metropolitan Transit Commission

- **Public Transit System Governing Board**
 - ✓ Provides policy direction for system development and operation
 - ✓ Oversees management activities
- **MTC Composition – 23 members**
 - ✓ 16 from Mecklenburg County
 - ✓ 5 ex-officio from 5 surrounding counties
 - ✓ 1 NCDOT (ex-officio)
 - ✓ 1 SCDOT (ex-officio)
- **Citizen Advisory Committees**
 - ✓ CTAG (planning and finances)
 - ✓ TSAC (service delivery)
- **Governance Structure Review underway**



Evolution of Transit Department

Pre - 1999

- Bus system operated by City DOT

1999

- Signing of Interlocal Agreement
- Creation of Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC)
- Transit Department created within City (November)
- Ron Tober hired as Public Transit Director

2000

- Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) created



System Plan Development

1999

- South Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS) begins

2000

- Completion of South Corridor MIS and final selection of Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- Major Investment Studies begin in four remaining corridors
- Preliminary Engineering of South Corridor LRT (November)

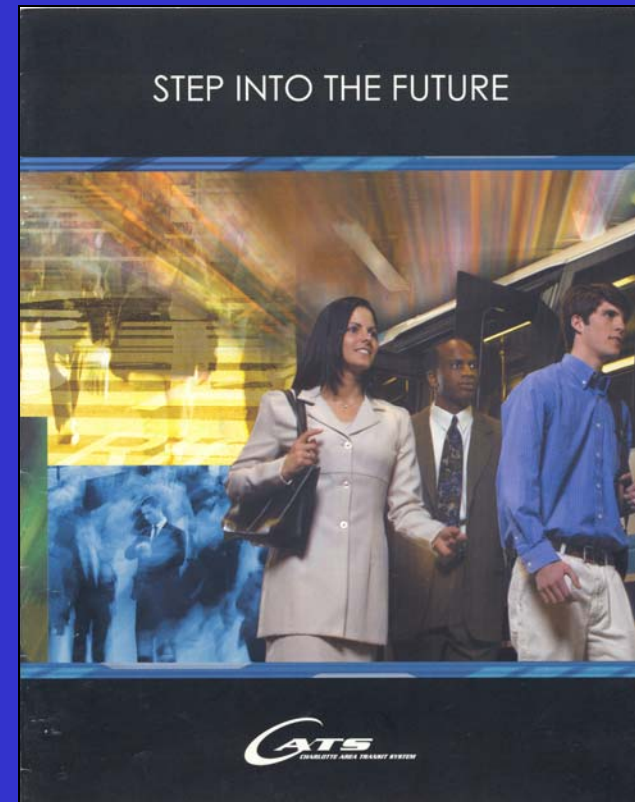


System Plan Development

(continued)

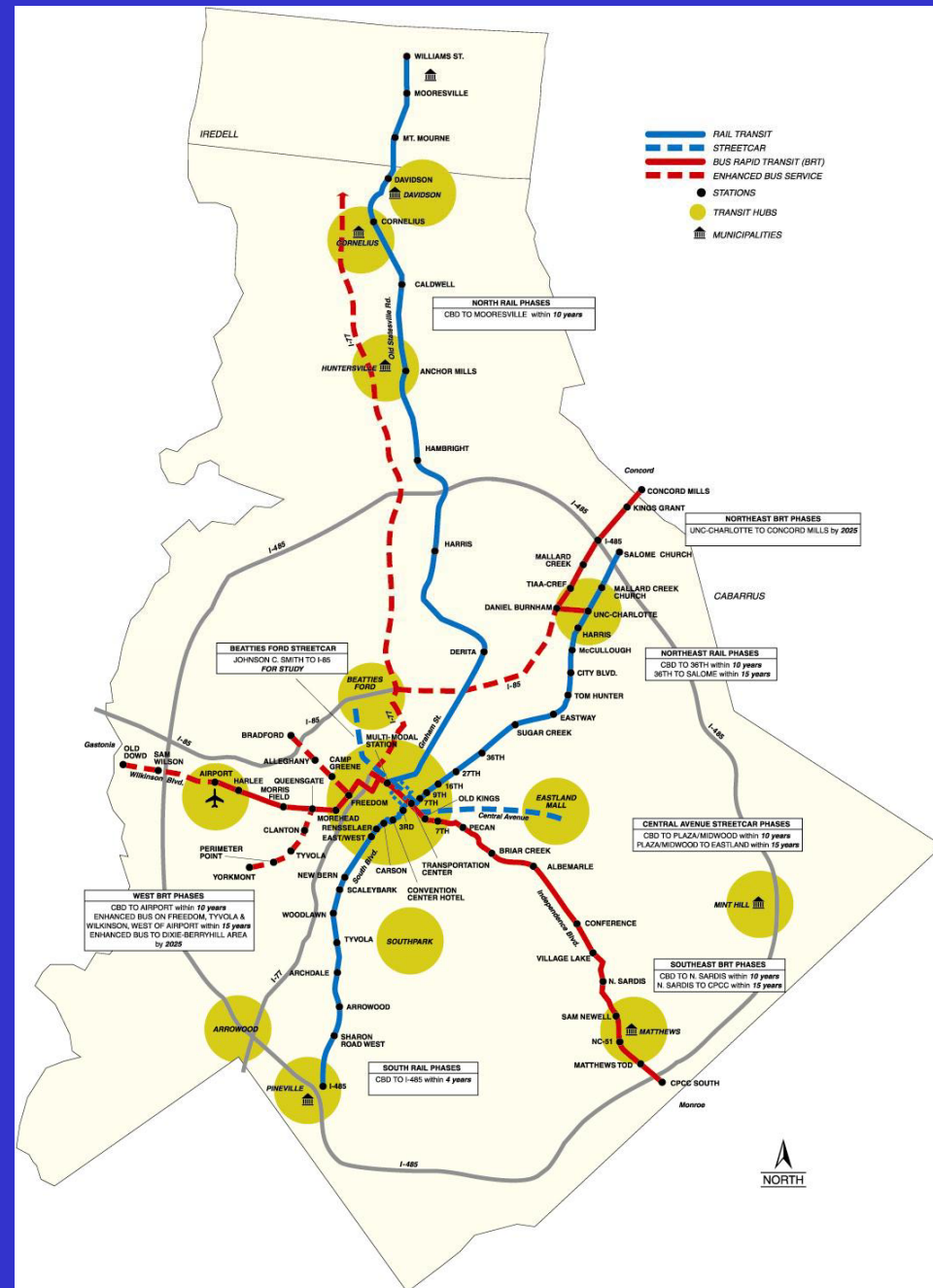
2002

- South Corridor LRT receives “highly recommended” rating from FTA
- Corridor Major Investment Studies completed
 - Staff recommends 2025 System Plan
 - MTC adopts System Plan with amendments
- South Corridor Preliminary Engineering completed and DEIS issued



Recommended System Plan

- Serve 205,000 – 215,000 daily transit riders by 2025
- 28 miles of BRT guideway
- 21 miles of LRT
- 11 miles of streetcar
- 29 miles of commuter rail
- Extensive network of bus and other types of transit services throughout the region





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Implementation Plan

Corridor	First 10 yrs. (to 2012)	First 15 yrs. (to 2017)	By 2025
South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LRT to I-485 		
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter rail to Mooresville • Enhanced bus services on I-77 HOV lanes 		
Northeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LRT to 36th St. (NoDa) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LRT to I-485 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRT / enhanced bus to University Research Park Area
Southeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRT to N. Sardis station • Central Ave. streetcar to Plaza / Midwood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRT to I-485 • Streetcar to Eastland Mall 	
West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRT to Charlotte Douglas Int'l Airport • Beginning of enhanced bus along Freedom Dr. and Tyvola Rd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced bus on Tyvola Rd. • Enhanced bus on Freedom Dr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced bus on Wilkinson Blvd. west of airport
Center City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Street facilities and streetscape • Trade Street Streetcar • West Trade Multi-Modal Station • Transportation Center improvements • Beatties Ford Road Streetcar 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center City streetcar loop

2025 CORRIDOR SYSTEM PLAN COSTS AND FUNDING

- Capital Investment
 - Costs estimated at \$2.9 billion (inflated \$)
 - Funding:

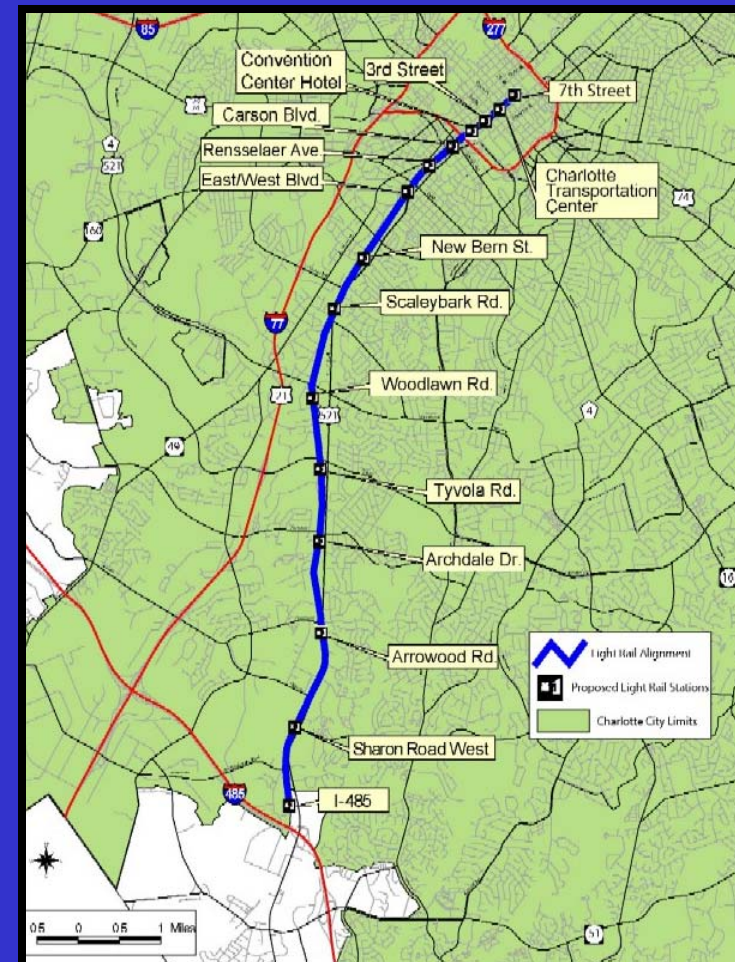
Federal	56%
State	26%
Local/Sales Tax	18%
- Operating Costs
 - Net Cost estimated at \$3.1 billion (inflated \$)
 - Funding:

Local/Sales Tax	64%
Local/Other	21%
State	15%



South Corridor Light Rail Characteristics

- Uptown Charlotte to I-485
 - 9.6 miles
- Trolley – South End to Uptown
- 15 stations (7 park-n-rides)
- Operate from 5:00 am to 1:00 am daily
- Service frequency
 - Rush hour: 7.5 minutes
 - Non-rush hour: 15 minutes
- Project Budget – \$427M
- Start of Service – Spring 2007



Economic Impact of Development Within Corridor

- Momentum for economic development continues to accelerate throughout Corridor.
- City of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County are committed to Smart Growth principles and actions, including transit supportive development policies and zoning districts.
- Major trip generators are under construction or have been completed in Center City (Arena; Westin Hotel/Conf. Center, Johnson & Wales; Imaginon etc.)
- Over 3,000 housing units added in Center City since 1997. Recently announced high rise residential towers to add approx. 1,500 units. Pre-selling phase.
- South End Historic District – Over \$300M in private sector investment includes 33 restaurants, 700,000 s.f. office/retail and 1,245 new housing units.
- Estimated tax value of developments within corridor in excess of \$550 million. Value of properties in the South End District alone have increased 89% between 2001 and 2004 (\$233M to \$442M).
- Estimated increase in tax revenues - from \$240,000 to over \$6,000,000 annually.



Goals of Next Phase of Work

- Continue to progress all corridors
- Refine the Locally Preferred Alternatives from adopted Corridor System Plan
 - Alignment
 - Station Locations
 - Technology (Southeast / West Corridors)
- Evaluate potential environmental impacts and define mitigation measures
- Prepare engineering plans and cost estimates
- Refine implementation schedules



Other Charlotte Major Transit Projects

- 2025 Corridor System Plan
 - North Corridor Commuter Rail
 - Northeast Corridor Light Rail extension
 - Southeast-West Corridor Bus Rapid or Light Rail
 - Central area streetcar project
 - Multi-modal Station Project (w/NCDOT)
- Preliminary Engineering/DEIS Studies underway
- Studies to be completed in 2006-07



Keys to Success

- Land use connection
- Thinking and acting regionally
- Demonstrating progress
- Funding: Local, State and Federal
- Controlling costs of transportation system
- Safe, user-friendly design



