



Orange County
Transit Plan Update

Transit Choices Brochure



Why Does Orange County Need a New Transit Plan?

In a growing region like ours, a transit plan (and great transit service) is a key ingredient of success. But - what is a transit plan? And why does Orange County need one? In 2012, Orange County residents approved a **half-cent sales tax** used to fund improved transit service. The tax requires that the County prepare a **transit plan** to distribute the proceeds of the tax.

A **transit plan** is a service and investment strategy supporting the community's public transportation needs and goals to the greatest extent possible while respecting the limits of a fixed budget. A transit plan identifies the types of transit service that will be provided (modes), where that transit will go (routes), when transit service will be provided (frequency and span), and how we will pay for the transit services we need (costs, revenues, and budget).



This plan update is how we can ensure that transit service in Orange County is meeting the needs of the community. To do that, we need to hear from you!

Since the tax was approved, Orange County has prepared two transit plans—one in 2012 and one in 2017. Central to both plans was the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DOLRT) project. That project's recent discontinuation offers a new and unique opportunity to rethink and reorient transit service and transit investments in Orange County. And this plan update is how we can ensure that transit service in Orange County is meeting the needs of the community. To do that, we need to hear from you!



The Transit Choices Brochure is your go-to transit planning resource as we collectively work to update Orange County's Transit Plan. We hope that this resource clarifies the planning process and explains the key choices that need to be made, in terms that we can all understand and relate to.

How is Transit Funded in Orange County?

There are four dedicated revenue streams funding the local share of projects and services in Orange County's Transit Plan (Tax District Revenues). These include:

Article 43: Half-Cent Sales and Use Tax

Article 50: 5% Vehicle Rental Tax

Article 51: Three-Dollar increase to GoTriangle Regional Vehicle Registration Fee

Article 52: Seven-Dollar County Vehicle Registration Fee

If at any point during the planning process you have questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to visit our project website www.octransit2020.com or reach out to a member of our team.

Speaking the Language of Transit

Access/accessibility: The ability to get to (access) destinations (jobs, schools, recreation, entertainment, healthcare, social services, and more); can be measured in the number of destinations (opportunities) available to us using a certain type of transportation (mode) in a certain amount of time (ex. how many places can I get to in 25 minutes riding the bus service available to me)

Capital expenses: typically, physical assets such as vehicles and transit shelters

Cost per rider: The expense of providing transit service to one passenger; used to measure cost-effectiveness of transit service; a higher cost-per-rider indicates less efficient transit service (either because there are fewer riders or a higher cost to provide service)

Coverage: the physical or geographic area served by a transit route or system; higher coverage ensures everyone in the transit service area has access to at least some transit service

Demand response service/On-demand service: non-fixed route, flexible transit service, often referred to as dial-a-ride; provides curb-to-curb or door-to-door pickups and drop-offs upon customers' request and usually requires advanced scheduling by the customer

Density: an indicator of transit ridership potential; the number of people, jobs, and activities in or near a certain area, such as a transit stop; higher density in this context means more people, jobs, etc. (for example within walking distance of a transit stop)

Farebox revenue: the amount of money collected by a transit service provider from fares paid by riders during a certain time

Farebox recovery ratio: the portion of operating expenses which are met by the fares paid by passengers; calculated by dividing the system's total fare revenue by its total operating expenses

Fixed route service: buses pick up and drop off at designated bus stops and times; can be local or express service (ex. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT))

Fixed route service with deviation(s): operates like a fixed route with fixed stops but unlike fixed routes, has schedule flexibility to deviate up to 1/4 mile off the fixed route (typically with prior approval); fares may be increased or a "convenience fee" may be added for stops off of the fixed route

Flex zone: lower ridership areas where transit riders can request demand-response service in lieu of fixed route transit service; connects people with nearby transit centers and bus stops on the edges of the zone, as well as within the zone

Frequency: how often a transit vehicle provides service; ex. the bus comes every 30 minutes on a certain transit route

Headway: like frequency; the amount of time between transit vehicle arrivals at a stop; ex. a transit route has a 30-minute headway (buses come every 30 minutes on that route)

Linearity: an indicator of transit ridership potential; the "directness" of a path between two destinations; ex. a more direct (i.e. shorter) path between two destinations is more appealing than a meandering (longer) path; less direct paths also cost more to serve

Mode/Mode share: various forms of transportation, such as automobile, transit, carpooling, bicycle and walking; mode share is the percentage of travelers using a particular type of transportation or number of trips using that type; mode share can also be described for types of trips (ex. commute mode share describes the percentage of travelers using different types of transportation for their trips to/from work)

Operating expenses: day-to-day costs of providing transit service such as drivers' salaries and administrative expenses

Paratransit: provides transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use the regular, fixed route transit service that serves their region; usually door-to-door service for people who call to reserve a ride

Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT): total number of miles traveled by passengers in a given time period

Proximity: an indicator of transit ridership potential; length of the distances between destinations; shorter distances are faster and cost less to serve

Transit is More than Just A Bus!

Ridership: the number of passenger boardings on public transportation; often used as an indicator of route or system viability

Rush hour/peak service: service provided only during times of high ridership (traditionally early morning and late afternoon, matching a 9-5 workday); typically more costly to provide (more operators needed for shorter shifts, more vehicles to own/maintain, one-way flow of travel generates “deadheading” (empty) buses moving in the reverse-peak direction)

Service area: the geographic limits of a transit service

Service providers: agencies that plan, manage, and operate transit services in a transit service area

Span: the length of time or number of days that when transit services are provided (ex. a route may provide service from 8 AM to 9 PM on Monday through Friday)

Transit Choices Brochure: this document; a transit planning resource to refer to during the process of developing the Orange County Transit Plan Update

Transit market: the aggregation of likely transit riders in a particular area; often used to assess the viability/impact of transit investments

Unlinked passenger trips (UPT): total count of individual vehicle boardings during a given time period

Vehicle Revenue hours (VRH): The hours that vehicles are scheduled to or actually travel while in revenue service (carrying or traveling to pick up passengers)

Vehicle revenue miles (VRM): The miles that vehicles are scheduled to or actually travel while in revenue service (carrying or traveling to pick up passengers)

Walkability: an indicator of transit ridership potential; measures how friendly an area is to walking; includes pedestrian safety such as the availability of safe crosswalks, sidewalks, and other supportive infrastructure

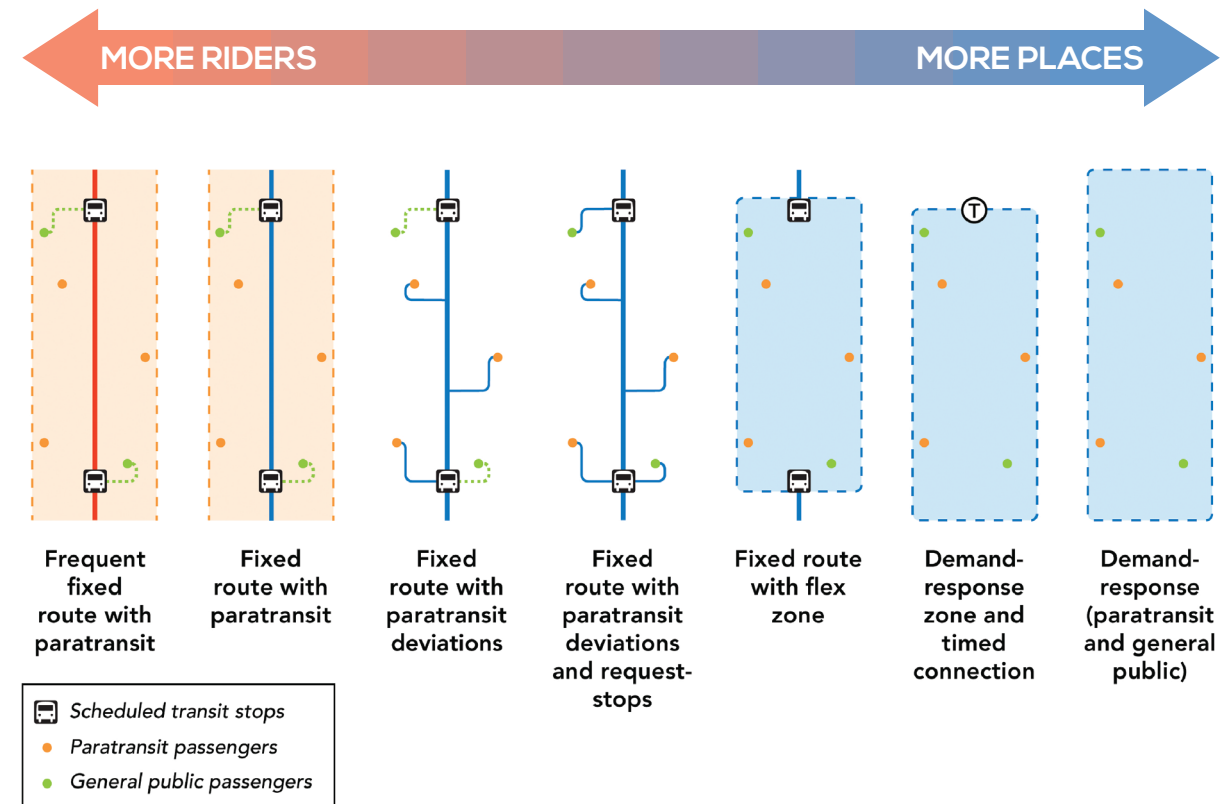
Walkshed: the area around a transit station/stop – or any central destination -- that is reachable on foot for the average person; typically measured in minutes to account for individual differences in travel speed (i.e. What can I reach in a 10 minute walk, in any direction, from the transit stop?)



Finding the Right Balance

The most difficult transit choice for the public and other decision makers is often between providing higher frequency, longer span transit service (generally attracting higher ridership in a more concentrated area) and providing coverage over a larger service area (generally lower ridership but more geographically equitable). **A transit service agency cannot equally provide both at the same time - service design is a spectrum falling somewhere these two endpoints.** Understanding where that sweet spot falls is based on transit riders' needs (given the realities of budget constraints) and is a critical component of the early work being done to update Orange County's Transit Plan.

DESIGNING SERVICE FOR MORE RIDERS	DESIGNING SERVICE FOR MORE PLACES
Competes more effectively with cars; places can grow without increasing traffic congestion	Ensures that everyone in the service area has access to some transit service, no matter where they live
Collects more fare revenue, increasing the share of the transit budget paid for by fares	Provides access for people without personal vehicles living in more distant places
Makes more efficient use of tax dollars by reducing the cost to provide each ride	Serves newly developing places, even if they don't yet have the size or density to constitute a large transit market
Improves air quality by replacing single-occupancy vehicle trips with transit trips, reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Extends service to more places.
Supports dense, walkable development and redevelopment	Supports regional commuter service.
Extends the most useful and frequent services to more people	Supports transit in harder to serve rural areas.



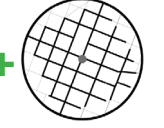


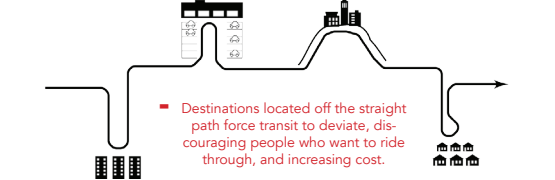




OTHER TRANSIT SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS:	
Peak service	All-day service
Speed	Access (regional vs. local)
Walking	Waiting

VS

Patterns of development influence the goals and outcomes of transit service. Transit service attracts more riders when service is frequent (shorter wait times between vehicles) and longer-spanned (services runs for more hours on more days) in places that support transit (denser, more walkable, and with more people and destinations near each other). This type of transit service is most successful in more urban areas.

Four Geographic Indicators of High Ridership Potential

<p>DENSITY <i>How many people, jobs, and activities are near each transit stop?</i></p>  <p>+ Many people and jobs are within walking distance of transit.</p>  <p>- Fewer people and jobs are within walking distance of transit.</p>	<p>WALKABILITY <i>Can people walk to and from the stop?</i></p>  <p>+ The dot at the center of these circles is a transit stop, while the circle is a 1/4 mile radius. The whole area is within 1/4 mile, but only the black-shaded streets are within a 1/4 mile walk.</p>  <p>- It must also be safe to cross the street at a stop. You usually need the stops on both sides for two-way travel!</p>
<p>LINEARITY <i>Can transit run in reasonably straight lines?</i></p>  <p>+ A direct path between any two destinations makes transit appealing.</p>  <p>- Destinations located off the straight path force transit to deviate, discouraging people who want to ride through, and increasing cost.</p>	<p>PROXIMITY <i>Does transit have to traverse long gaps?</i></p>  <p>+ Short distances between many destinations are faster and cheaper to serve.</p>  <p>- Long distances between destinations means a higher cost per passenger.</p>

Rural and suburban areas have transit needs, too. In places where people and destinations are more spread out, ridership is generally lower and there are likely longer wait times between vehicles and shorter hours/days of service (due to higher costs). The type of transit service available in these areas will look different than the service in denser, more urban areas.

Orange County has both types of places – finding a balance between the types of transit service needed is a key goal of the Orange County Transit Plan Update.

To plan Orange County's transit network, we need to hear from you! **Finding the right balance of service (ridership or coverage oriented, peak vs. all-day service, regional vs. local orientation, and more) is based on community needs and values – it is not a technical problem to be solved!** Your values, along with patterns of development and the funding available for transit, determine which transit tools and services are included in the plan. For example, if we hear that transit riders in Orange County want to be able to travel to more places in a larger area, we can consider options like on-demand transit service to reach places with fewer people. Or if we hear that transit riders want to focus service in places with more people and more destinations, we can include options for frequent, fixed route transit in the most heavily traveled corridors. Or – maybe the needs of transit riders are somewhere in between – we can include options for this, too! But first – we need to know what transit riders need and want. Over the course of the project there will be opportunities to participate and provide feedback. Please participate and help us plan the future of transit in Orange County!

Summer 2020 - Fall 2020	Winter 2020 - Spring 2021
PHASE 1: Introduces key transit planning concepts and frames choices in terms of easy-to-understand values to generate alternative conceptual transit scenarios	PHASE 2: identifies proposed projects, prioritization criteria, and available revenues to produce implementation recommendations through 2040.

Submit Questions/Comments via Website	[Active]	
Small Group Listening Sessions	[Active]	
Survey 1	[Active]	
Transit Summit 1	[Active]	
Survey 2		[Active]
Transit Summit 2		[Active]
Public Comment on Draft Plan		[Active]



ORANGE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

Chapel Hill
transit



www.octransit2020.com

PROJECT CONTACT:

Craig Benedict, AICP

Phone: 919-245-2585

Email: cbenedict@orangecountync.gov