

**Chapel Hill
transit**

NORTHBUS RAPID TRANSIT
SOUTHBUS RAPID TRANSIT 

Progress & Funding Update

Chapel Hill Town Council
November 16, 2022



AGENDA

- North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT)
- Transit oriented development (TOD) & LUMO
- Funding update



NSBRT IS...

More than just “better” bus service.

NSBRT is a landmark investment in Chapel Hill’s transportation future.

PROJECT BENEFITS



Eubanks Road Park & Ride to Southern Village Park & Ride (8.2 miles)



Dedicated, curb running transit lanes*



7-minute headways at peak times



17 world class stations with cutting edge amenities



Multiuse path with connections to greenway network



Faster, more reliable transit access to local and regional employment centers

**Where right of way allows*

NSBRT IS...

14+ years of ideas, analysis, studies, plans, conversations, dedication, and investment

- 2008** Identified as a priority in Long Range Transportation Plan
- 2011** North-South BRT Alternatives Analysis completed
Project Purpose & Need Statement adopted
- 2014** Initial Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) adopted by Town Council
- 2016** NSBRT approved for entry into FTA project development
- 2019** Updated LPA adopted by Town Council
- 2020** FTA Small Starts Rating Released for NSBRT
Town Council Adopts Final LPA
NSBRT 30% Design Completed; NEPA initiated



NSBRT IS...

14+ years of ideas, analysis, studies, plans, conversations, dedication, and investment

2021 CHT awarded FTA grant to develop TOD plan for NSBRT station areas (\$592,000)

2022 TOD planning begins
NSBRT 60% Design initiated

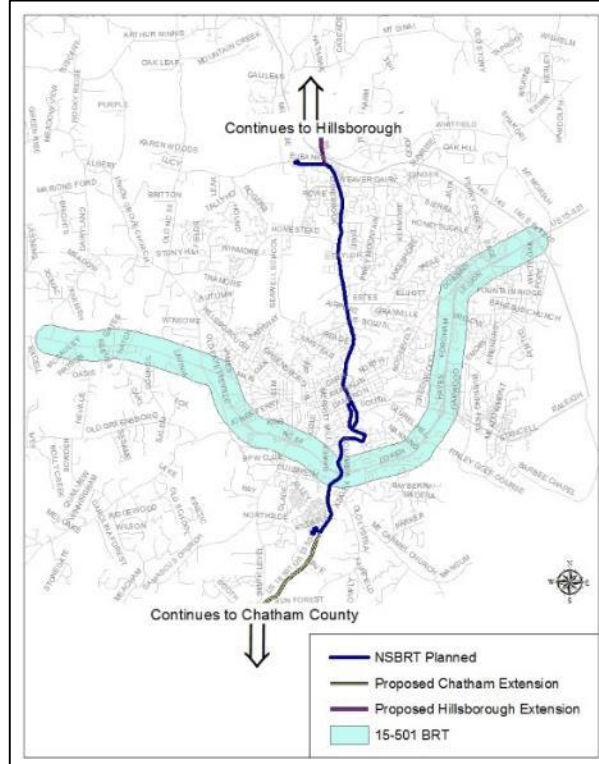
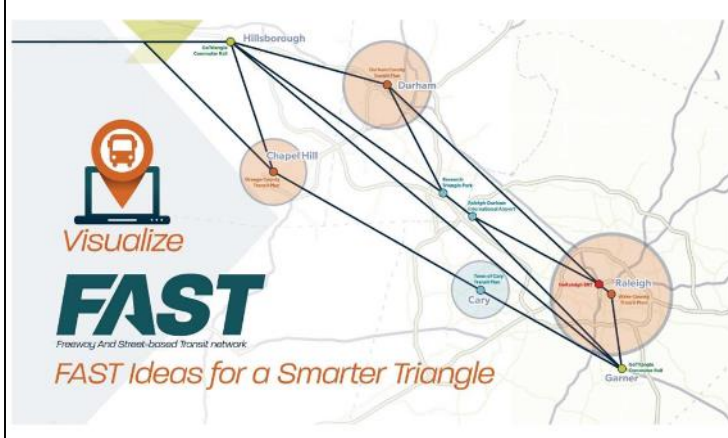
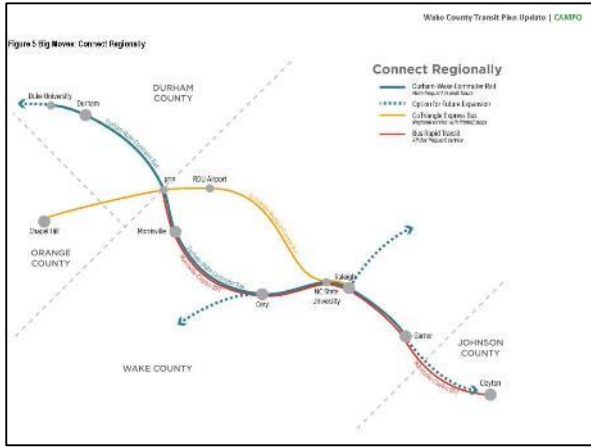
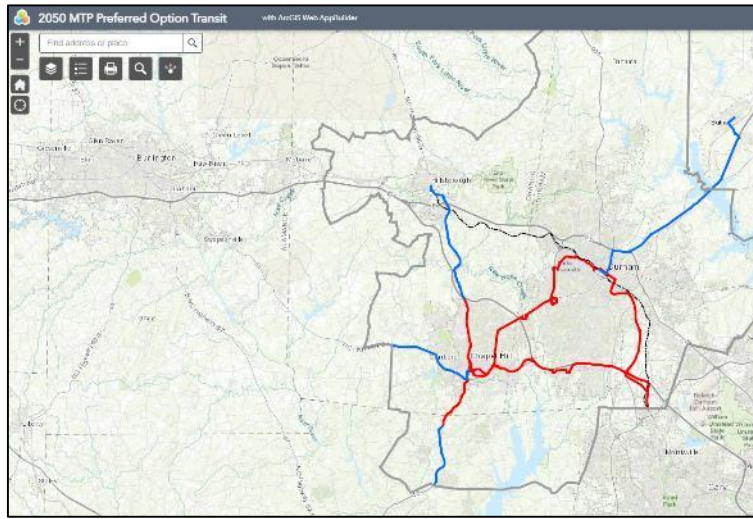
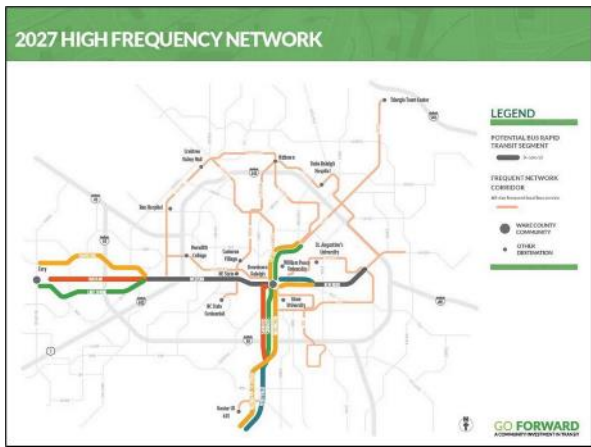
2023 (February) TOD implementation plan presented to Town Council for consideration of adoption as an amendment to Comprehensive Plan
(August) CHT requests Small Starts Grant Agreement from FTA; NSBRT receives updated project rating as part of FTA review process



NSBRT IS...

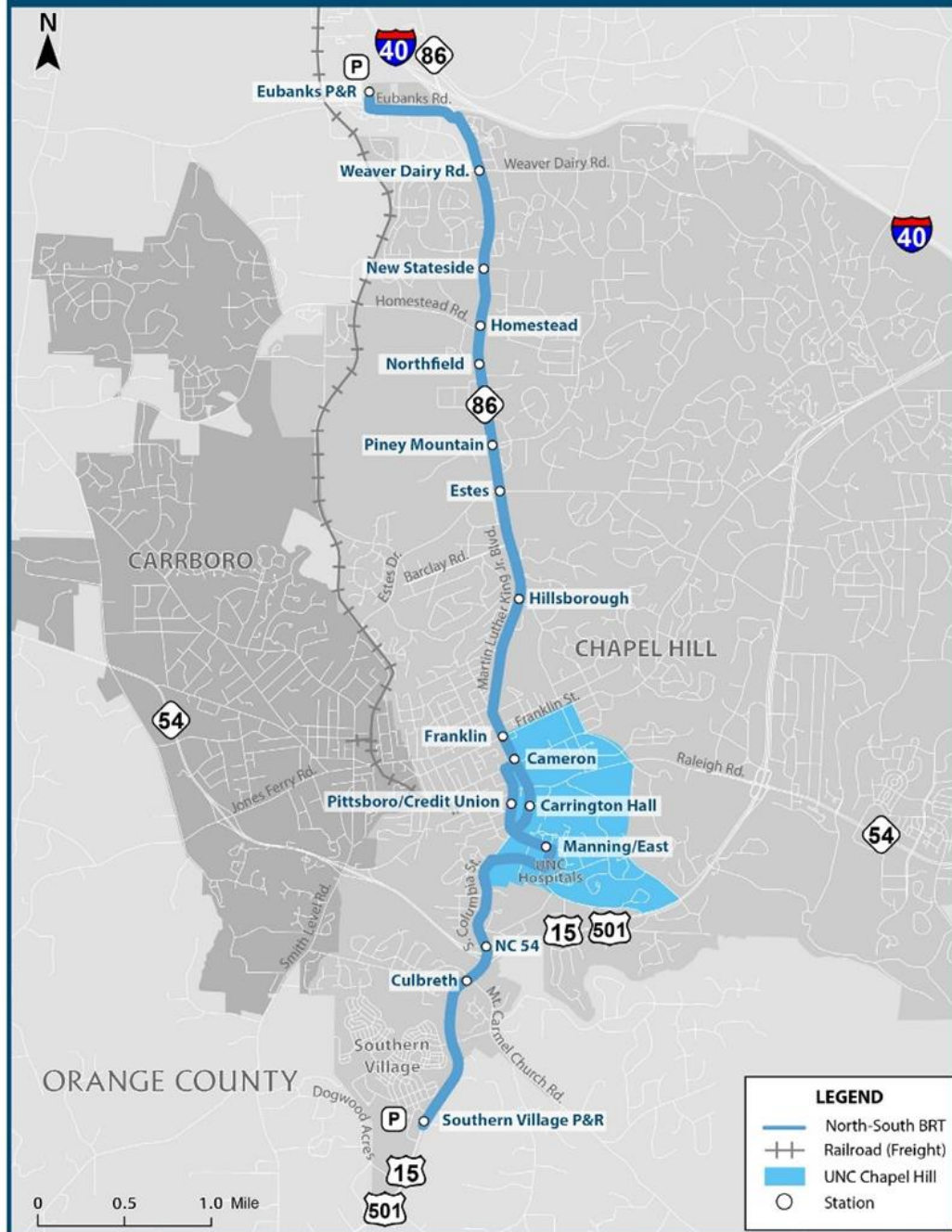
A critical element of the region's future high frequency transit network, potentially connecting to...

- Durham
- Hillsborough
- Chatham County
- RTP & Regional Transit Center
- RDU
- Raleigh's BRT network
- Mebane/ Alamance County
- Cary
- Triangle Commuter Rail
- And beyond...



North-South BRT Project

Chapel Hill, North Carolina



NSBRT IS...

Preparing Chapel Hill for the future and meeting the transportation challenges of today.

- ✓ Supporting regional connections
- ✓ Augmenting the community's off-street travel network with a new greenway along most of the BRT corridor
- ✓ Supporting the Town's ambitious climate action goals
- ✓ Investing in flexible, resilient, affordable transportation options
- ✓ Responding to growing and changing mobility demands
- ✓ Promoting sustainable development in transit corridors
- ✓ Increasing transit system capacity
- ✓ Maintaining high levels of service and reliability
- ✓ Enhancing multimodal transportation infrastructure

NSBRT IS...

Moving quickly towards a major milestone.

↓ TOD Station Area Concepts & Implementation Plan (2022-23)

↓ 60% Design (2022-23)

↓ Naming Rights Study (2022-23)

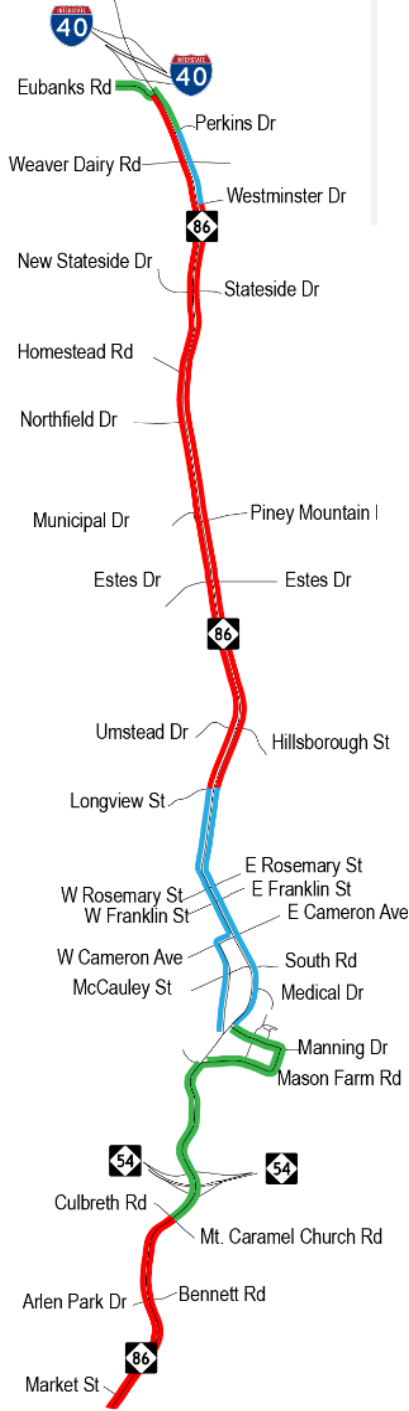
★ ↓ **Request FTA Project Rating (Aug. 2023)**

↓ Begin construction (est. 2026)

✓ Begin service (est. 2028)

LEGEND

- Mixed
- Convert
- Construct



FUNDING UPDATE



Total estimated NSBRT project cost:
\$155,000,000 (no changes)

UPDATED cost share assumptions:

- ↑ Federal: **\$124,000,000** (was \$100M)
- ↓ Local: **\$31,000,000** (was \$55M)

UPDATED committed local funding:

- ↑ Orange County Transit Plan: **\$29,100,000** (was \$14.1M)

Additional amount needed to submit request for funding to FTA:

- ↓ **\$1,900,000** (was \$40.9M)

NSBRT

FUNDING

TOD

HOW WE CLOSED THE GAP

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law raised the "Small Starts" maximum federal contribution from \$100M to \$150M
- Allows CHT to request \$124M from FTA (80% of project cost), reduces non-federal share to \$31M
- Orange County Staff Working Group approved an additional \$15M in transit plan funding (in addition to \$14.1M already committed)*

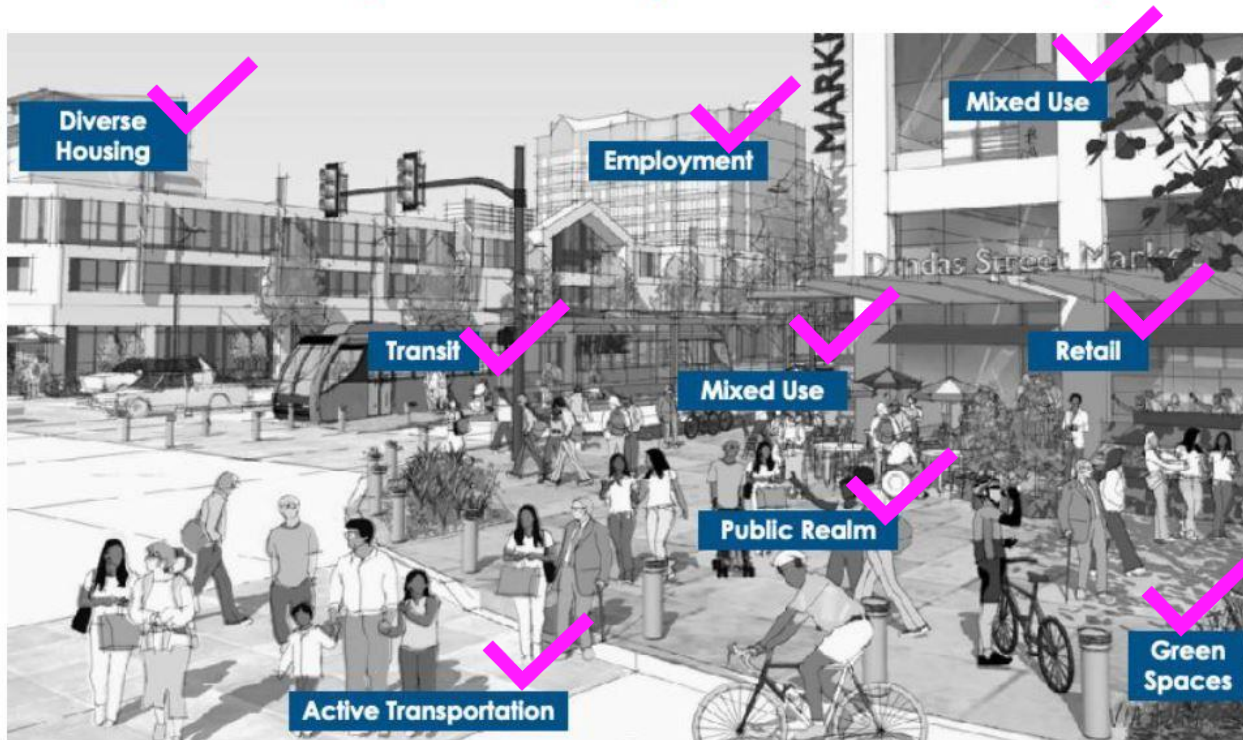
*CHT will also request \$40M from State during next SPOT funding cycle and continue to investigate/identify additional sources of funding for NSBRT, to reduce impact on OCTP

TOD...

Supports a Complete Community.



Anatomy of a Complete Community



TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



MIX OF USES



VIBRANT
PUBLIC REALM



DIVERSE HOUSING



GREEN



ACCESSIBLE



MULTIMODAL



SUSTAINABLE



CONNECTED

TOD...HOUSING

Transit & Affordable Housing
Future Policies & Programs

Implementation Strategies
Housing Toolkit

TRANSIT & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Locating affordable housing near transit reduces the two largest expenditures for most households

- Locating affordable housing near transit reduces the two largest expenditures for most households – housing and transportation costs.
- Households along the proposed BRT route could use these savings to increase their spending on goods and essential services, plan for large or unexpected expenses, and/or build household wealth.
- Nearly six out of ten renter households in Chapel Hill are cost-burdened. The North-South BRT and TOD work along the Corridor is an opportunity to address ongoing affordability challenges experienced in Chapel Hill.
- The programs, policies and strategies implemented within the TOD station areas could be extended Town-wide to address affordability challenges in a variety of local contexts.

CHAPEL HILL COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

OWNER HOUSEHOLDS



19%
Owner Households
Cost Burdened

RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



58%
Renter Households
Cost Burdened

HOUSEHOLDS EARNING <\$35K



89%
Households Earning <\$35K
Cost Burdened

Leverages proximity to high-capacity transit, supporting vibrant, livable, equitable, sustainable, multimodal, mixed-use neighborhoods.

NSBRT

FUNDING

TOD

WHAT WE'VE HEARD.

Affordable Housing

- Tremendous and growing need
- Need for all housing types
- People are being displaced.
- Entitlement process is burdensome
- Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing
- Need workforce housing for university and health center workers

WHAT IS TOD?



MIX OF USES



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DIVERSE HOUSING



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TOD...ACCESSIBILITY

Transportation Equity Analysis

Equitable Transportation Investments

Priority Station Areas

- ❑ Demographics, Income levels data , Cost Burdened household data, vehicle ownership data
- ❑ Bike and Ped Crash Data
- ❑ Mobility Audit completed in April 2022
- ❑ Pedestrian and Bike Network gaps and barriers
- ❑ Studies previously done by Chapel Hill...**Mobility and Connectivity Plan** as a leading resource
- ❑ Easy access to service within 5–10-minute walk or bike ride
- ❑ Multi-modal connectivity, to and between, transit modes
- ❑ Incorporation of Complete Streets Principles
- ❑ Enhanced accessibility and universal design, ensuring that transportation systems and services accommodate people with diverse needs and abilities

NSBRT

FUNDING

TOD

WHAT WE'VE HEARD.

Connectivity

- An equitable approach to movement
- Intersections need to become more pedestrian friendly
- Bike and walking corridors, passive bike routes
- Shaded, screened pedestrian and bike routes are needed.
- Love the proposed greenways and increased connectivity

WHAT IS TOD?



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TOD...ACCESSIBILITY

Transportation Equity Analysis

Equitable Transportation Investments

Priority Station Areas

- Priority Accessibility Locations are organized and based on gaps, barrier types, demographics data, cost burdened analysis and median income data with the goal to help Chapel Hill with **prioritization of projects** in future.
- Prioritizations are focused on populations along N-S BRT Corridor and Focus Areas with greater needs or preferences for bicycling and walking, including "last mile" trips to access transit.
- Priority Accessibility Locations are recommended in areas of the N-S BRT corridor where a large number of households have low rates of vehicle ownership and lower incomes, may need more transit service to link residents to jobs and services, as well as bike and pedestrian connections to transit.

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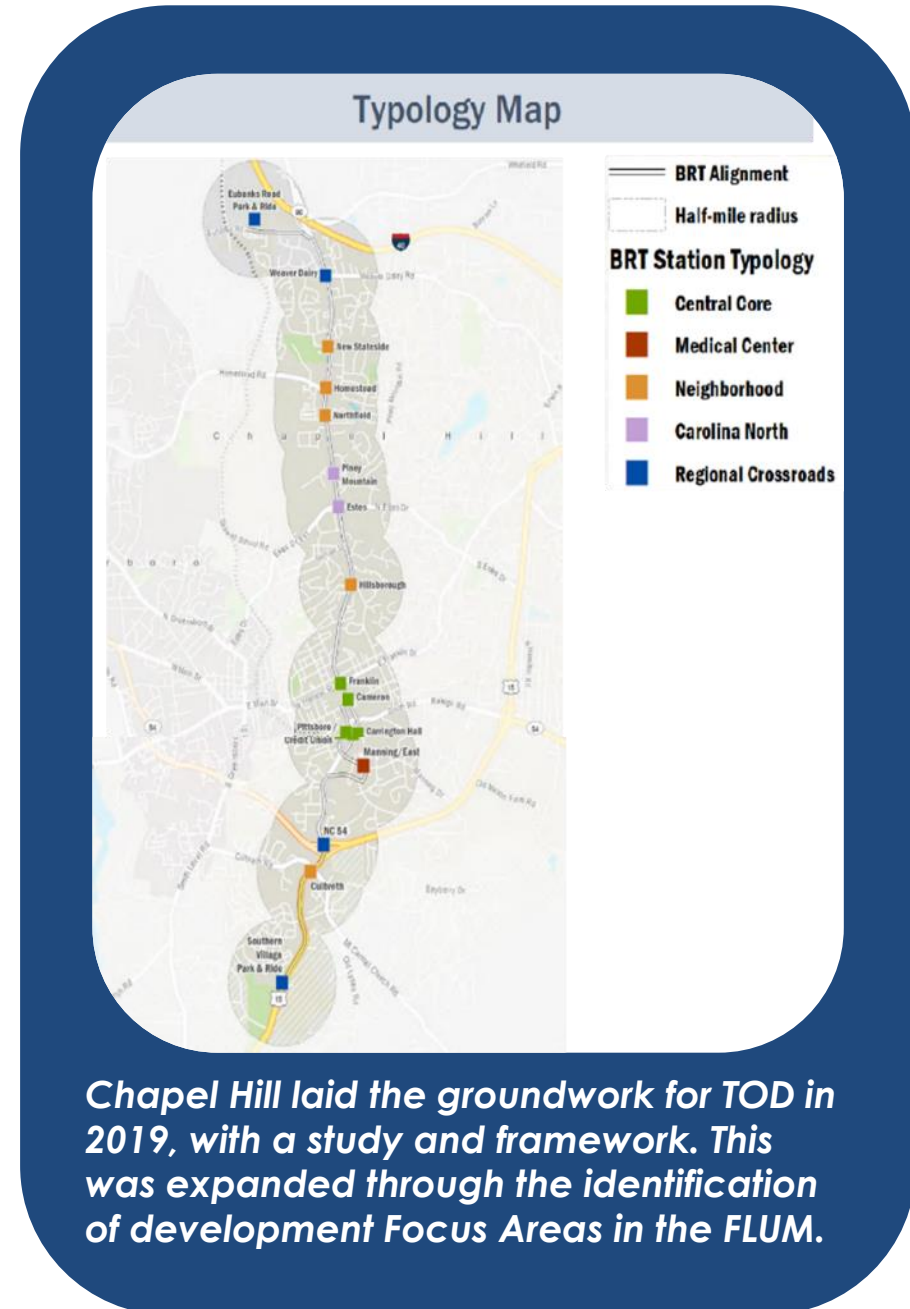


CONNECTED

TOD...

Requires visioning, planning, guiding policies, and implementation mechanisms.

- NSBRT's lowest rated FTA criteria was "Transit Supportive Plans & Policies" based on a **lack of "implementation techniques or mechanisms"** and "**limited regulatory and financial incentives**" promoting transit supportive development
- This criteria rating is easily improved by adopting policies and regulatory tools supporting TOD in the NSBRT corridor (and other future transit corridors)
- **But, to increase NSBRT's project rating, policies and regulations to *implement* and *incentivize* TOD would need to be adopted before next rating (when full funding request is made to FTA in Aug. 2023)**



Chapel Hill laid the groundwork for TOD in 2019, with a study and framework. This was expanded through the identification of development Focus Areas in the FLUM.

TOD & THE LUMO

Plan Alignment

Culture

Content

Plan Alignment

FINDINGS:

- The comprehensive plan lacks the vision and priorities needed to drive the standards in the LUMO--*if everything is a priority, nothing can be a priority*
- The LUMO has not been updated to reflect FLUM - heights and building typologies are indicated in Focus Area policy, but not expressed in the code / regulations
- The LUMO is effectively acting as a de facto plan that is reactive and site-specific rather than comprehensive. It is unpredictable, and ineffective in achieving desired land use patterns that promote transit, affordable housing, and other outcomes that create resilience and equity

NSBRT

FUNDING

TOD

WHAT WE'VE HEARD.

Development Decision Making

- Development review process needs streamlining
- Entitlement process is burdensome, drives away affordable housing developers
- Have more idea meetings for transparency – share the process in many ways to residents
- Create systems for building with equity- not just talking about it

WHAT IS TOD?



MIX OF USES



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MULTIMODAL



SUSTAINABLE



CONNECTED

TOD & THE LUMO



Plan Alignment
Content
Culture

LUMO Content

KEY FINDINGS:

- Zoning and development review is focused on the process, not product
- Conditional zoning is used too often and creates create uncertainty for applicants
- The 20,000-square-foot threshold has unintended consequences
- The concept development plan requirements, while well intentioned initially, are onerous and expensive
- Most processes are linear, allowing little concurrent review or coordination
- Professional planning staff are underused, often serving in clerical rather than advisory roles



NSBRT

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CONNECTED

TOD...WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Growth Potential

- The nature of remaining sites is shifting as the town has built out
- Growth needed to achieve community goals
- A strategy for high quality re-use and in-fill is needed

Single Family Zoning

- It's exclusionary
- People value their low-density, treed lots
- Eliminate Single Family Zoning in the TOD area

Downtown

- Needs a stronger experience
- Gaps in services typically found within Downtowns
- Too many parking lots
- Residential density will support businesses
- Include community services

Development Density

- Development that enriches people's quality of life – density developed with equitably and to deliver benefits
- Regulations need to be updated to achieve goals

Affordable Housing

- Tremendous and growing need
- Need for all housing types
- People are being displaced.
- Entitlement process is burdensome
- Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing
- Need workforce housing for university and health center workers

TOD...WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Design Character

- Recognize character of Chapel Hill, and the uniqueness of each place
- Define new typologies that respond to this
- Tree cover and habitat corridors should be maintained
- Need better “green avenues” more trees with new development
- Quality BRT stations
- Well-lit transit stops with shade
- Importance of places for people to gather – indoor and outdoor shared spaces.

Connectivity

- An equitable approach to movement
- Intersections need to become more pedestrian friendly
- Bike and walking corridors, passive bike routes
- Shaded, screened pedestrian and bike routes are needed.
- Love the proposed greenways and increased connectivity

Open spaces

- Improve park and greenway access across the town
- Create parks with lots of amenities

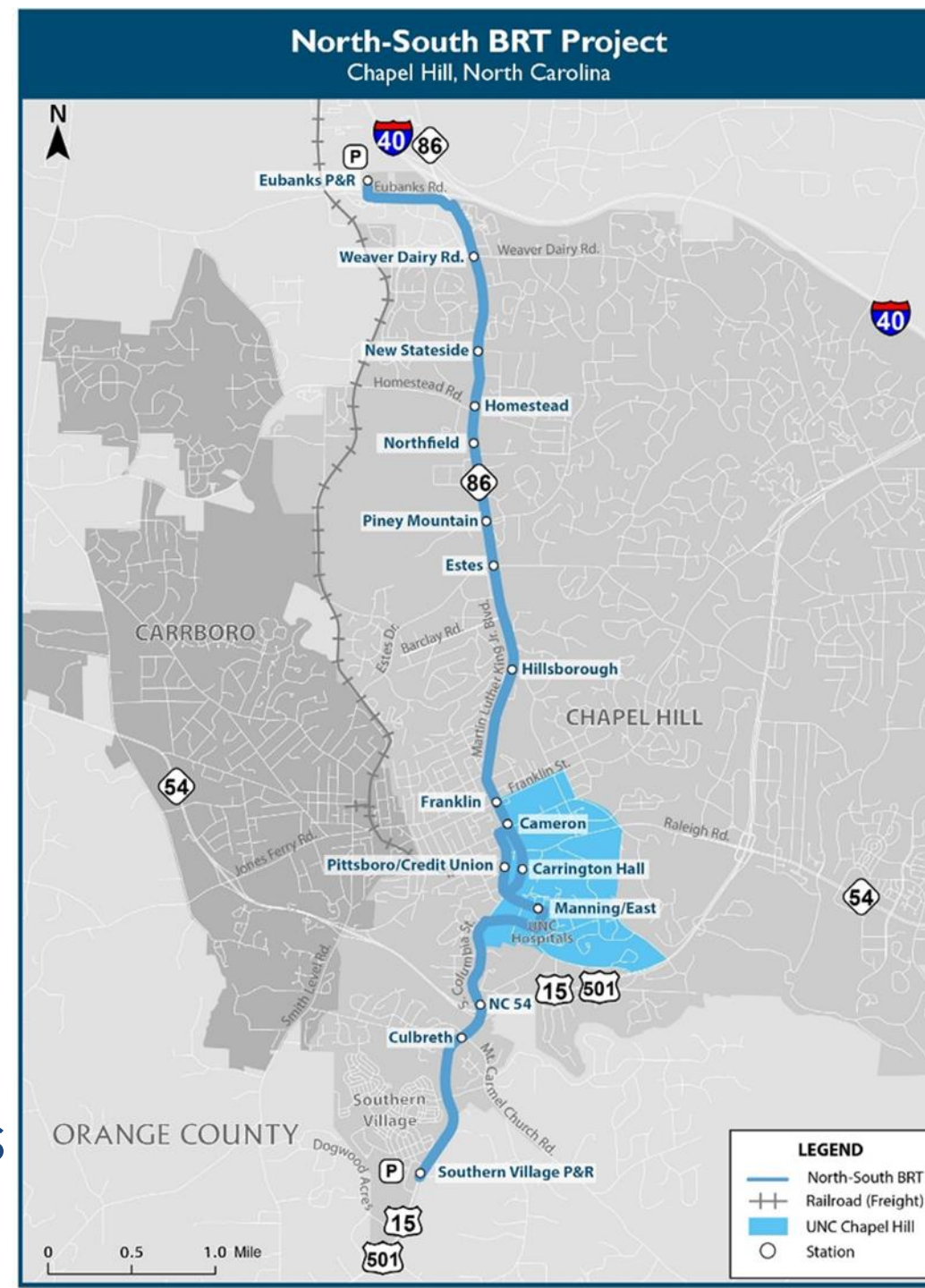
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RECAP

NSBRT is...

- A **landmark investment** in Chapel Hill's transportation future and the product of 10+ years of planning and investment
- A **critical element** of the region's future transit network
- A pathway to achieving a more **Complete Community**
- Financially **positioned for success**
- Leading by example as the **only** BRT project in a community of our size in FTA's project development pipeline



RECAP

NSBRT is also...

- **Competing** against national and regional projects for the same funding sources
- **Building confidence** in our region's capacity to successfully manage and implement major transit projects
- Dependent on **high project ratings** to remain competitive and retain our position in the federal funding pipeline
- **Moving quickly** towards the next major project milestone and rating opportunity (August 2023)

REGIONAL SMALL STARTS PROJECTS

Wake BRT: New Bern Ave (awarded full funding awarded Aug. 2022)

Wake BRT: Western Blvd. (submitting funding request Fall 2023)

Wake BRT: Southern Corridor (submitting funding request Fall 2022)

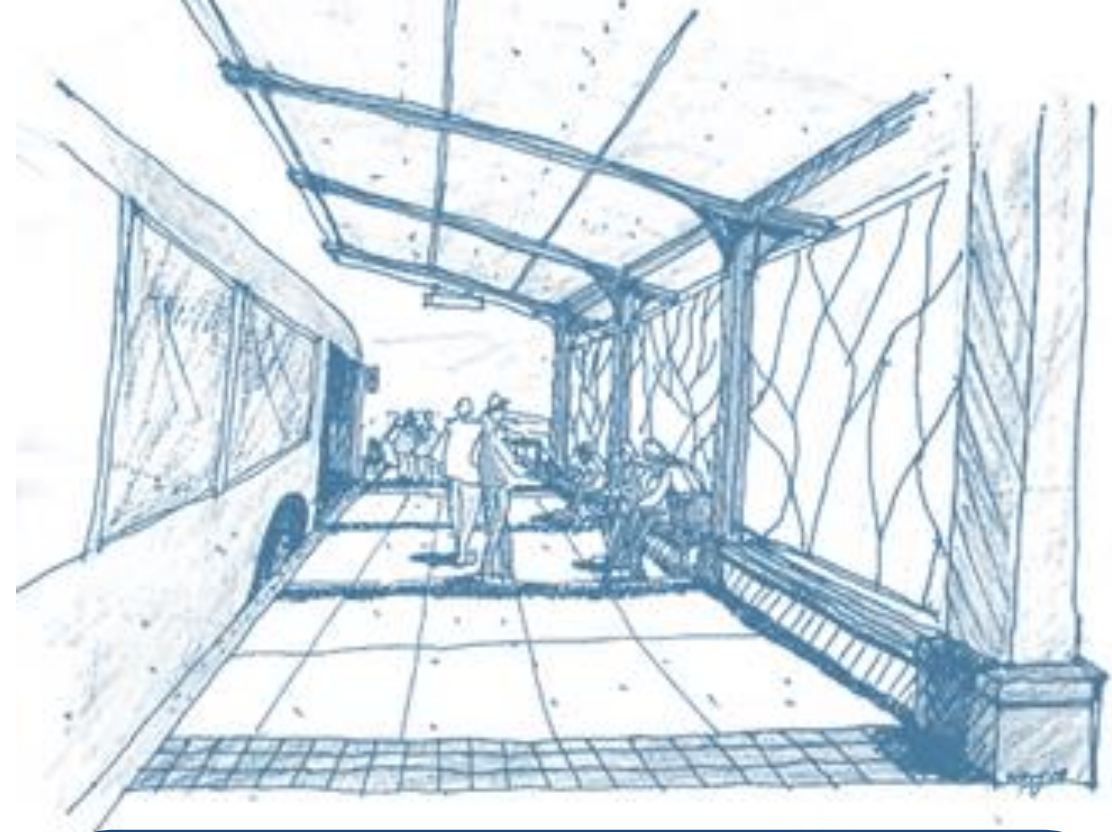
Wake BRT: Northern Corridor (MIS commenced in Spring 2022)

Wake BRT: Rapid Bus Extensions and Transit Priority Treatments MIS (studying extensions to Western Blvd. and Southern Corridor BRT projects and transit priority treatments between Cary and RTP and Garner and Clayton)

NEXT STEPS



- **Orange County Transit Plan review and adoption** (Orange County BOCC, DCHC MPO, GoTriangle), Nov-Dec. 2022
- Continue **NEPA** and **60% design** efforts, 2022/23
- Finalize and review **TOD station area concepts and implementation plan** Nov. 2022-Jan. 2023)
- Prepare request for **FTA Project Rating** from FTA, Jan-Jul 2023
- Town Council **considers TOD plan and implementation recommendations for adoption**, Feb. 2023
- **CHT submits FTA Project Rating** to FTA, Aug. 2023



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NEXT STEPS



Council Engagement

