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Foreword

The Transit 2001 Commission was appointed by Governor James B. Hunt Jr. in September 1995 to provide recommendations on how to improve public transportation in the state for the 21st Century. Recognizing the need to enlarge the role of public transportation as the state continues to grow, the Commission has worked to ensure basic mobility for all citizens, provide auto-competitive rail passenger services and define the proper role of state government in funding transit services. The Commission has 26 members, including government, business and community leaders from across the state. A technical committee, consisting of 29 transit industry professionals, as well as a joint NCDOT and consultant team has supported the work of the Commission. Through a number of public forums and the work of four sub-committees, the Commission examined key issues – rural and human service transportation, urban and regional transit, intercity rail passenger service and land use and development.

The complete work of the Commission is contained in a technical report. This executive summary provides highlights of the Commission's findings and recommendations. It summarizes the challenges in helping to maintain North Carolina's quality of life, provides an action agenda to expand and enhance the state's public transportation in the near term and recommends funding mechanisms to make it a reality. A detachable map inside the back cover provides a simple visual perspective of the Transit 2001 action agenda.

January 1997



“When I recruit business to our state, I want to be able to say ‘Come to North Carolina, you won’t get stuck in traffic congestion.’ We need regional rail and high-speed rail transportation to keep North Carolina moving.”

Governor James B. Hunt Jr.



The Transit 2001 Commission submits this report to Governor Hunt, the General Assembly and to the people of North Carolina with a sense of urgency. This urgency is born of the conviction that we must address transit issues now before this window of opportunity closes. The failure to do so will have dire consequences for the future of this great state.

We do not need to guess what those consequences will be. We need only visit those urban areas in the country which developed without viable transportation systems other than the private automobile. In a poignant moment during our deliberations, one of our transit managers quoted a consultant as predicting that North Carolina might well become "Los Angeles with seasons."

North Carolina needs a first-class system of roads and highways. We have one of the nation's best. But with a population expected to grow rapidly, vehicle miles traveled on those roads will likely double early in the new century. We cannot expand the road system rapidly enough to meet this demand. Some of our most heavily traveled corridors are built-out, and we are already being given examples of the congestion which awaits us. Once this nightmare arrives, few solutions will be available. The time to act is now.

Transportation alternatives are essential to our future. The issue is not highways or transit. We must have a transportation system which embraces various modes and alternatives if we are to move goods and people safely and conveniently. Transportation must be available for those who cannot operate cars. Our rural counties especially have growing elderly populations who can enjoy independent living if they can be transported to essential life services. The disabled and others who cannot afford one or more cars must be able to get to jobs, churches and stores.

Governor Hunt has challenged us to make North Carolina the South's leader in the enhancement of passenger rail. Make no mistake: passenger rail is coming in the next century. The benefits to the state of such leadership, economic and otherwise, are potentially enormous. Indeed, Governor Hunt's vision for rail service in our state may someday be regarded as among his greatest contributions.

The increased state investment in transit this report requires is modest compared to the total transportation effort and compared to other states. These investments will pay and repay their cost in economic development, jobs and livable communities.

I would like to thank my fellow commissioners for their dedicated effort. I also thank, for the Commission, Transportation Secretary Garland Garrett and the Board of Transportation for their support. Deputy Secretary David King and his staff bring honor to the profession of government service. The trustees and staff of Wake Forest University gladly made it possible for me to undertake this assignment.

This report is yet another example of Governor Hunt's capacity to envision a better future for North Carolina and to point us in new directions. He has been a constant source of support and counsel. I am grateful for his confidence and friendship.

It has been my honor to serve with these distinguished and loyal North Carolinians in bringing these urgent issues to public consideration and determination. The Transit 2001 Commission invites your interest and involvement. If we act now, in the new century we can have robust growth and expansion, but we can also keep North Carolina home.

Thomas K. Hearn Jr.
Chairman, Transit 2001 Commission
January 1997

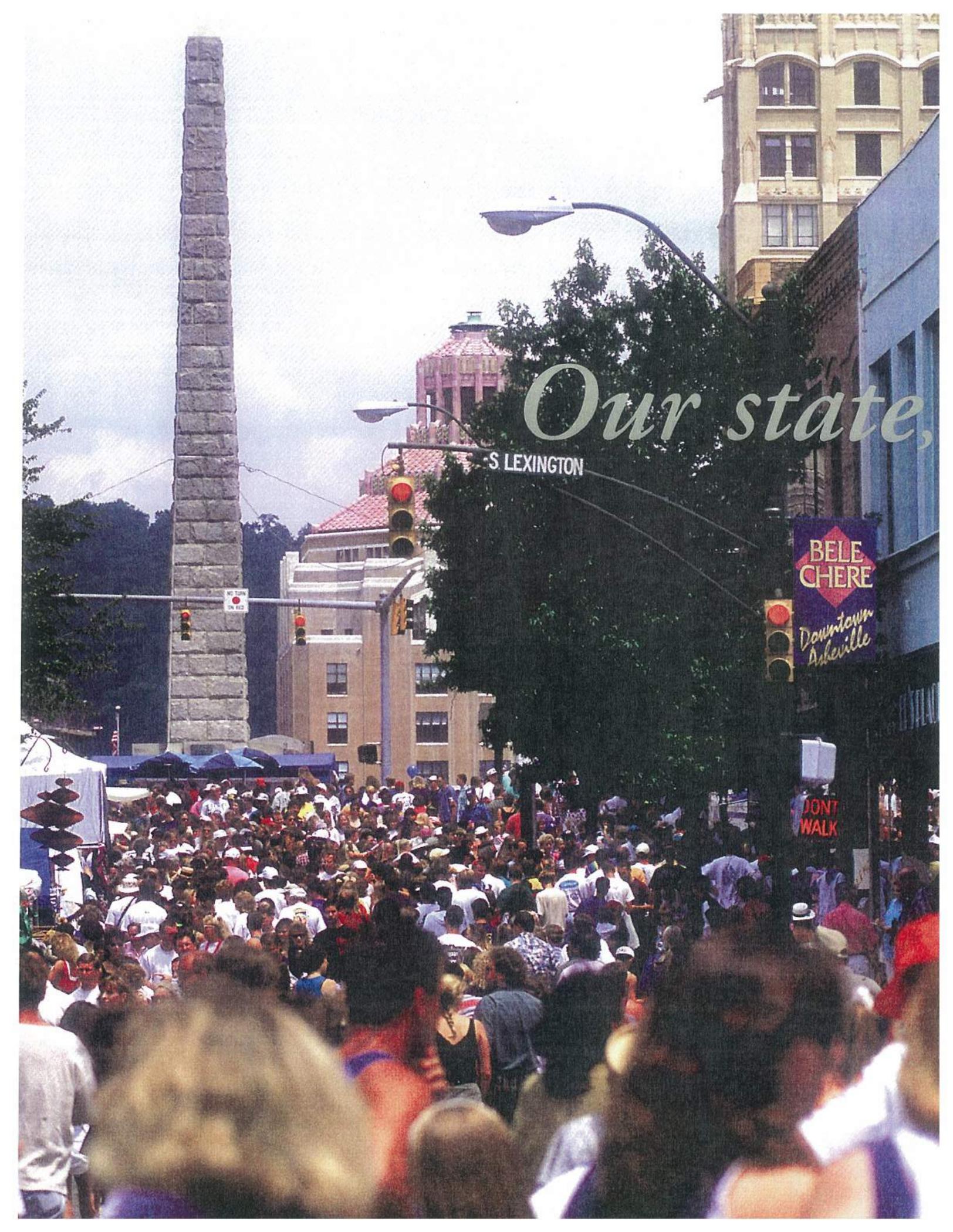
Our state,

S LEXINGTON

BELE
CHERE

*Downtown
Asheville*

DONT
WALK



“We need new transportation alternatives to reduce our pollution, save energy, avoid traffic congestion and to preserve the qualities that make North Carolina such a wonderful place to live.”

Governor Hunt, Transit 2001 Commission meeting, November 1995

During the past decade, North Carolina has emerged as one of the premier growth states in the nation.

Drawn by economic opportunity, a spectacular and varied natural environment, comfortable climate and the distinctive “North Carolina” style of living, new residents and businesses continue to relocate to the Tar Heel state to settle and prosper.



Our economic future is indeed bright!

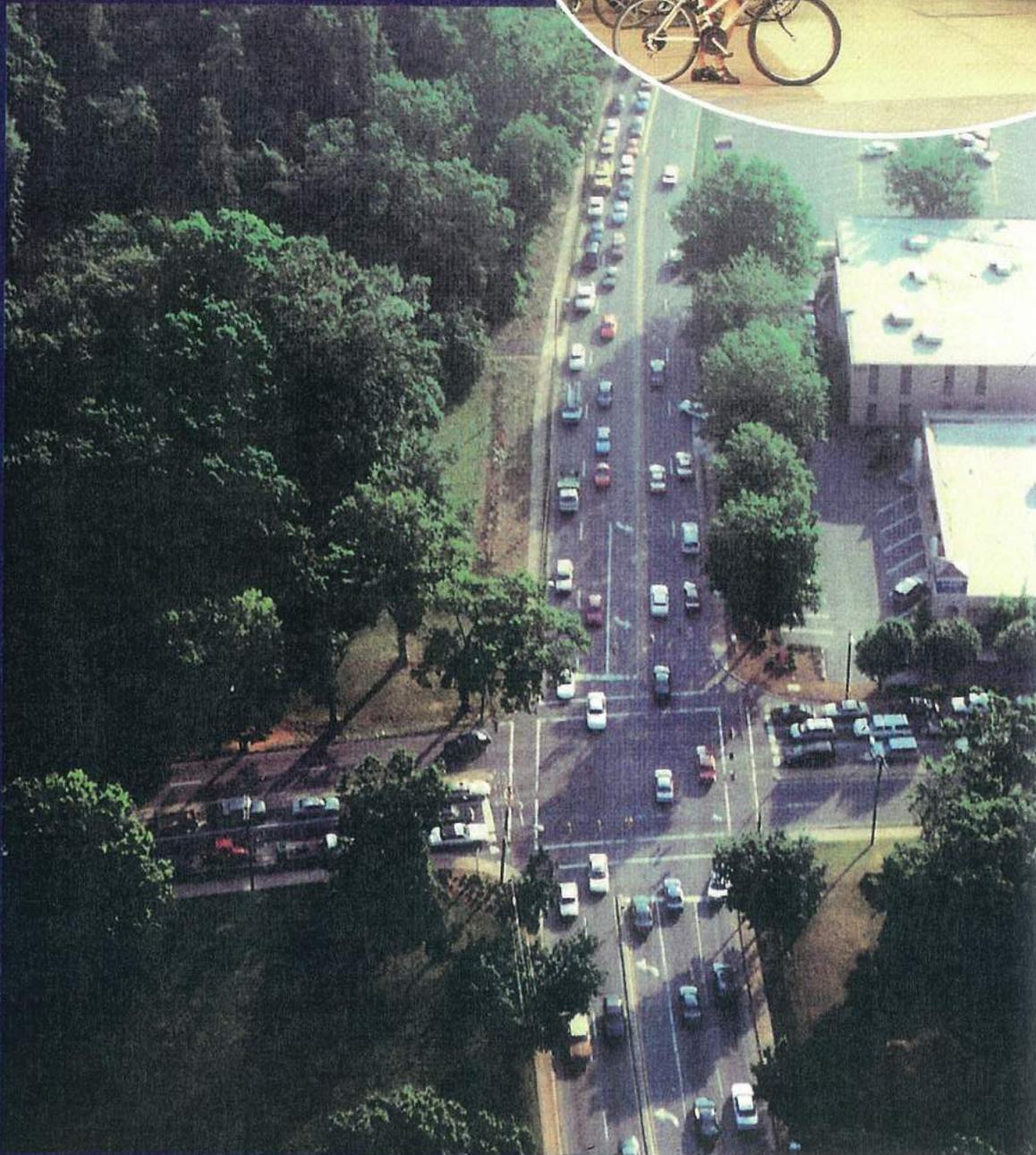
However, continued prosperity depends on far more than unrestrained growth. We must find new and better ways to accommodate future growth and development without sacrificing the qualities and values that make North Carolina an attractive place to live, work and visit.

As we look across our state and consider how communities and neighborhoods are changing, we must ask ourselves...

... Are we doing all we reasonably can to improve quality of life, protect the character of our communities and maintain the “North Carolina” style of living?

In one critical area – public transportation – the answer, unfortunately, is no!

Our transportation future looks bleak unless we introduce new choices in transportation to serve future growth.



Throughout North Carolina we are seeing and experiencing breakdowns in our street and roadway system. Congestion and delays are occurring more frequently throughout our urban communities. Many rural North Carolinians are isolated and have limited local and inter-city transportation options to meet their basic needs.

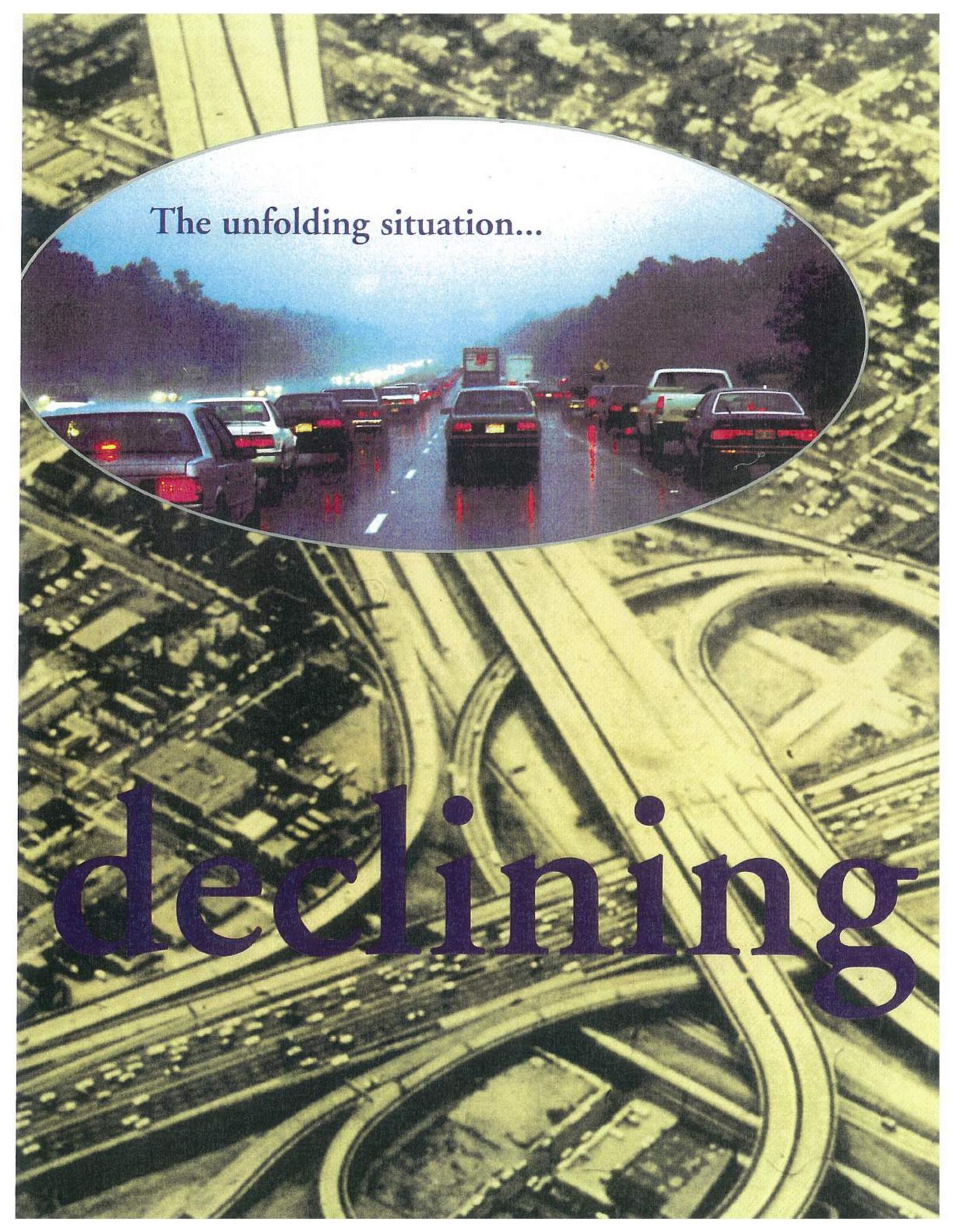
Extensive investment in highways over a long period has supported our state's emergence as an economic force. However our near total reliance on personal vehicles – cars, light trucks and vans – to make virtually every trip has begun to erode the qualities that make North Carolina an attractive place to live and do business.

We have dramatically under-invested in transit facilities and services and have reinforced auto-dependent development patterns. This has reduced the availability and use of other forms of travel – buses, rail passenger service, walking and bicycling. In short, our past transportation strategies have left us without the options we need if we are to manage the growth caused by continued economic success in the new century.

To sustain our economic growth and preserve the quality of life in the future, we must broaden the state's investment in transportation by providing North Carolinians with a new generation of public transportation services together with more travel options and more pedestrian and transit-friendly residential and commercial development. The cost of this investment can be viewed both as the price of our prosperity as well as the foundation for continued success.

The recommendations of Governor Hunt's Transit 2001 Commission outline the direction we must take and an action agenda to move forward today.



An aerial photograph of a complex highway interchange with multiple overpasses and ramps. The image is tinted with a yellowish-green hue. In the upper portion, there is an oval-shaped inset showing a ground-level view of a traffic jam on a highway at dusk or dawn. The cars' taillights are visible, and the sky is a pale blue. The text "The unfolding situation..." is overlaid on the top part of this inset.

The unfolding situation...

declining

Booming growth

mounting traffic delays

A variety of factors provide undeniable evidence that our long-standing transportation investment strategies need to be re-evaluated and that public transportation must play a substantially larger role in our future.

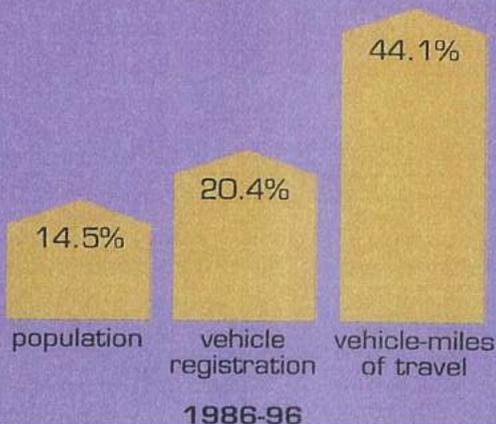
Fact: Growth in travel demand has been even more dramatic than growth in population. During the past 10 years, our population has grown 14 percent, while vehicle registrations have increased 20 percent and vehicle-miles of travel has increased 44 percent. *See chart below.*

Fact: Expansion of our highway system cannot keep up with travel demand in critical corridors, despite one of the most aggressive and efficient construction programs in the country. Vehicle-miles of travel is projected to more than *double* in 20 years. It is hard to imagine that new street and highway capacity alone can keep pace.

Fact: New developments are sprawling across the countryside in patterns that require the use of automobiles for virtually every trip. Extra-large lots, an abundance of cul-de-sacs, absence of neighborhood-scale stores and limited accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists limit travel options and impose costs that local governments can no longer afford.

Fact: The availability and use of existing urban public transportation services is limited severely, and the market share of travel on transit continues to decline. Today's urban transit systems in the state largely operate within the municipal boundaries of 17 urban areas although traffic patterns are increasingly regional in scope.

mobility



Transit funding in selected states

(state contributions per capita)

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Pennsylvania | \$51.40 |
| Wisconsin | 13.80 |
| Virginia | 13.50 |
| Michigan | 12.60 |
| Minnesota | 8.10 |
| Florida | 6.00 |
| Ohio | 2.90 |
| North Carolina | 2.90 |
| Tennessee | 2.30 |
| Texas | 1.10 |

Fact: Nearly 40 percent of transit demand in rural areas of the state is not being served because there are insufficient funds to expand services. This is true for both human service and general public needs, particularly as the proportion of elderly persons increases. If left unaddressed, this deficiency will diminish the effectiveness of several state initiatives, including Work First and Smart Start.

Fact: Current investment in North Carolina's public transportation systems is inadequate to meet even routine capital and operating needs of existing systems and services. In fact, as a percentage of total transportation expenditures, state investment in public transportation is among the lowest in the nation – only \$20 million out of \$1.7 billion, about one percent of the state's transportation budget.

If these trends continue, the consequences for the state are unacceptable and will jeopardize economic growth and opportunity throughout much of North Carolina.



Transit intensity in selected areas

(service hours per capita)

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Chapel Hill | 1.49 |
| Portland, Ore. | 1.36 |
| Milwaukee | 1.28 |
| San Antonio, Tex. | 1.17 |
| Minneapolis – St. Paul | 1.00 |
| Austin, Tex. | 0.92 |
| Salt Lake City | 0.80 |
| Rochester, N.Y. | 0.80 |
| Richmond, Va. | 0.79 |
| Columbus, Ohio | 0.72 |
| Durham | 0.67 |
| Charlotte | 0.66 |
| Winston-Salem | 0.52 |
| Greensboro | 0.39 |
| N.C. urban average | 0.39 |
| Raleigh | 0.34 |
| Asheville | 0.33 |
| Wilmington | 0.27 |



The scenario looming for North Carolinians is not unique. Dozens of states and communities across the country are coming to grips with conditions that are at least as severe as those we face in North Carolina.

In areas such as Houston, Los Angeles and Atlanta, strong emphasis is being placed on public transportation investments to relieve widespread congestion, achieve greater efficiencies in the use of existing streets and highways and provide more transportation choices.

In areas such as Portland, Oregon, and Sacramento, California, that have not yet encountered wholesale breakdowns of their regional transportation networks but that see that prospect looming, new investment strategies focus on aggressive expansion of transit services on a regional scale. These areas also employ new planning techniques that create more livable neighborhoods and communities and ensure that new transit services and other transportation alternatives are used to their fullest potential to shape growth.

Most states are using "flexible" federal transportation funds to augment transit investments. Thus far, North Carolina is one of a few states that has not done so. Also, many states have dedicated funding for public transportation, which results in more reliable state contributions to meet transit needs.

Building on North Carolina's past successes and learning from the rest of the country provide readily available tools with which to respond to these challenges. Governor Hunt has pushed North Carolina's rail passenger program into a position of national leadership. Additional funding is critical, however, to continue this leadership and to meet the ambitious goals being set by the Governor. For other areas of public transportation, such as human service transportation where North Carolina has been a national leader, lack of funding is the main constraint to expanding and improving services. In either case, steps must be taken now to ensure that a seamless network of transit services will be in place statewide as the new century dawns.



Our Vision

Do you share the vision?

It is in North Carolina's best interest to...

- Ensure greater choices and more travel options tailored to the varying needs of residents, visitors, business and industry.
- Increase choices in residential arrangements that minimize the burden of travel and allow safe and convenient use of a variety of travel options.
- Deploy new systems, services and technologies to ease the travel burden and to extend and increase the efficiency of the current highway system.
- Take a leadership role in development of a truly seamless multimodal transportation network which links:
 1. Access to services and facilities for those with limited transportation options in rural areas.
 2. A fully functional network of convenient shared-ride transit services in metropolitan regions.
 3. Conventional and high-speed rail passenger service in heavily traveled corridors.

In simplest terms, as we set course for the 21st Century, it is in North Carolina's long-term best interest to embrace transit options that capture a larger share of the burgeoning travel market!

The vision the Transit 2001 Commission has formulated extends well beyond the expansion of today's transit services. It embraces basic notions of what we want our cities, suburbs and rural communities to look like and how we want them to function in the future.

With this vision in mind, the Transit 2001 Commission has established a set of goals to guide future progress in public transportation planning and investment toward a seamless network of rural and human service transportation, urban and regional transit and intercity rail passenger services.

Increased investment in transit and an expanded array of transit facilities and services do not, by themselves, guarantee that transit's full potential will be reached. To get the most from current and future transit investments, state and local officials must take other steps that make transit a more convenient, reliable and affordable choice, including:

- New "demand-management" strategies and actions focused on reducing the necessity for motor vehicle use; and
- New "governing" arrangements and processes that enhance state and local planning, decision making and management of the overall transportation system.

Demand-management strategies include actions to guide land use, development and growth and new ways to price and pay for transportation services. New governing arrangements include increased emphasis on regional plans that coordinate transportation and land use, enhanced technical planning capacity in local, county and regional agencies and improved coordination among state and local agencies to ensure that actions affecting transportation investment and development planning reinforce one another.

The recommendations of the Transit 2001 Commission, therefore, are multi-faceted. They require a new commitment on the part of the state to:

- Improve, expand and link transit services in rural, urban and intercity settings;
- Leverage transit investments and provide new tools to local officials to guide development;
- Apply new technologies where they are appropriate and cost-effective; and
- Link public transportation, highways, bikeways and sidewalks into one seamless, multimodal transportation network.

The combination of expanded transit services, greater attention to demand management and the introduction of new technologies and governing arrangements will enhance the quality of North Carolinians' travel experiences and distinguish North Carolina from its competitors so that high-quality economic development and job growth will continue. This investment also will help sustain the quality of life that all of us want for ourselves and our children. *Central to this multi-faceted response, however, is the need to substantially increase the state and local investment in all forms of public transportation throughout the state.*

The findings and recommendations of the Transit 2001 Commission present a new vision for public transportation in North Carolina, a vision that builds on the excellence of our highway program and achieves overall transportation excellence.

The action agenda requires new legislative measures. It calls for changes in how state and local agencies work together. It requires introduction of new technologies, innovative services and community building tools. And, it depends on stepped-up public education efforts. The action agenda also indicates a timetable for action, including short-term (one to two years) and mid to long-term (three to 10 years) activities. A variety of organizations must share responsibility for carrying out the Transit 2001 action agenda.

The Transit 2001 action agenda for the next four years will enable us to:

- 1 Aggressively expand and improve public transportation, creating a seamless network of rural, human service, urban, regional and intercity services to meet a growing share of the burgeoning travel market.
- 1 Introduce new, innovative services, technologies and decision making processes to meet the needs of all North Carolinians and preserve and extend the capacity of the existing street and highway network.
- 1 Substantially increase investment in public transportation from all levels to create a stable, reliable funding base.

Fully integrate transit into new development that will offer North Carolinians greater choices and more wisely planned residential and commercial arrangements.





The Transit 2001 action agenda charts a new course in:

- Service design and delivery;
- Community planning and development; and
- Funding.

Successful implementation will transform our state into a national leader in transit service and innovation.

Service design and delivery

The character of public transportation will change dramatically. A seamless network of new services will be introduced and existing services will be enhanced. New technologies will be combined in ways that will make public transportation a travel mode of choice.

Short-term (1 - 2 years)

- Begin to expand and enhance coordination of rural and urban transit services in terms of coverage, frequency and integration.
- Complete design, funding and financing plans for new regional rail in the Research Triangle and busways in Charlotte.
- Begin first phase of intercity rail passenger service improvements to reduce travel time to two hours between Raleigh and Charlotte.
- Implement conventional rail passenger service to Hickory and Asheville and initiate studies of the need for eastern N.C. service.
- Implement demonstration programs for new service design, technology and private-sector initiatives.
- Pass enabling legislation for creation of regional authorities.
- Build improved partnerships with metropolitan planning organizations.
- Begin multimodal regional system plan updates.
- Preserve corridors necessary for future intercity rail passenger services.

Mid to long-term (3 - 10 years)

In the mid to long-term, the state should expand on demonstration initiatives for service design, technology and private-sector participation. It should conclude the updates of regional system plans and facilitate the creation of regional transit authorities and systems.

Community planning and development

Enhanced public transportation and new patterns of development will work together to provide North Carolinians with more choices in how they live and how they travel.

Short-term (1-2 years)

- Assemble a “tool kit” of new planning practices.
- Develop a program that provides incentives for “best practice” planning.
- Improve capacity to analyze key development impacts.
- Update planning processes to make them more responsive.
- Update legislation that authorizes key planning concepts such as “transportation demand management.”

Mid to long-term (3-10 years)

In the mid to long-term, the state should facilitate the application of new planning practices, update its planning “tool kit” and expand analyses of planning practices and transit impacts.

Tomorrow's transit funding

Total investment in public transportation from all sources should increase from the current level of \$108 million per year to \$265 million per year. State support should increase by \$75 million per year.

Short-term (1 - 2 years)

- Intensify advocacy for increased federal funds for rural and human service transportation, urban and regional transit and intercity rail.
- Increase percentage of the state's gas taxes that are returned to N.C. from the federal government (end N.C.'s “donor” status).
- Provide proposals to the General Assembly which increase state transit funding.
- Pass legislative proposals to expand local authority to raise and use revenue for transit.
- Form local/regional transit coalitions.
- Form multi-state, high-speed rail coalition.

Mid to long-term (3 - 10 years)

- Obtain federal funding for regional rail and intercity rail.
- Enact local funding initiatives.

The need for transit funds greatly outstrips those sources traditionally available in the state. An additional \$75 million per year is required immediately for the state contribution, and those needs will grow to more than \$95 million in 10 years. Substantial additional funding at the local level also will be required.

The Commission has endorsed two primary funding options which produce the target revenue within a four-year time frame. Both exempt NCDOT from current payments to the state General Fund in lieu of sales taxes and end state Highway Fund responsibility for the driver education program. Both options call for more highway funds being used for transit and rail. One option suggests an increase in vehicle registration fees as a new source of revenue. The vehicle registration fee option is coupled with a proposal to return these new revenues to their "points-of-origin" to fund local transit systems.

Both funding options would produce roughly \$40 million in fiscal year 1998, increasing to the targeted additional \$75 million annually in four years.

Importantly, NCDOT must work with the North Carolina congressional delegation to aggressively seek federal funding for transit programs and for specific projects. It also must work to add intercity rail to the list of eligible uses for federal transportation funds.

After reviewing numerous options, the Transit 2001 Commission suggests the following local government transit funding approaches:

- Rental vehicle gross receipts tax
- Vehicle registration surcharge
- Parking tax
- Local option sales tax
- Land transfer fees

The state, local governments and other transit interests must work in partnership to secure authority from the General Assembly to use one or more of the above approaches at the discretion of local elected officials. Finally, ideas for private-sector financial participation must be explored. These include leveraging public and private assets and facilitating the borrowing of private funds.

The Transit 2001 Commission has met the challenge enunciated by Governor Hunt to "...play a vital role in our efforts to develop a master plan for public transportation in North Carolina that will strengthen our economy and build a brighter future for our state." Mindful of this call to action, the Commission has developed an exciting new direction and action agenda that requires that we all work together to expand the scope of public transportation and to increase the travel options available to all North Carolinians. We must enhance the quality, comfort, convenience and cost effectiveness of transit services and better link future development with our transportation investments.

Beginning today, if we are conscientious in carrying out our individual and shared responsibilities, rural transportation programs, urban and regional transit systems and intercity rail passenger services will help make North Carolina a better place to live, work and visit in the 21st Century.



"I believe that under Governor Hunt's administration, advances will be made in public transportation in much the same way that Governor Kerr Scott got people out of the mud by paving secondary roads. We are committed to a total transportation system in which public transit and rail are given the highest priorities. We'll do whatever it takes to make this a reality."

Transportation Secretary Garland B. Garrett Jr.

Transit 2001 Commission

Thomas Hearn, Ph.D.

Chairman, Transit 2001 Commission
President, Wake Forest University

Joni Bowie

N.C. House of Representatives
Co-chair, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation

David Branch, M.D.

Ophthalmologist

John Clancey

President and CEO, Sea Land Company

Tom Darden

N.C. Board of Transportation
Chairman of Board, Cherokee
Sanford Group

E.K. Fretwell, Ph.D.

Chancellor Emeritus, UNC Charlotte

Harvey Gantt

Partner, Gantt and Huberman Architects

Gorman Gilbert, Ph.D.

Co-chair, Transit 2001 Commission
N.C. Board of Transportation Member
Director, Institute for Transportation
Research and Education (ITRE)

Rusty Goode

Member, Global TransPark Authority
Board of Directors
President, University Research Park

Wib Gulley

N.C. Senate

David Hoyle

N.C. Senate
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department
of Transportation

Howard Hunter

N.C. House of Representatives
House Transportation Committee

Joyce Johnson

Director, Transportation Institute,
N.C. A&T State University

Sylvia Kerckhoff

Mayor of Durham

Margaret Kluttz

Co-chair, Transit 2001 Commission
N.C. Board of Transportation Member
Chair, N.C. Rail Council
Mayor of Salisbury

Claude McKinney

Centennial Campus Development
Coordinator, N.C. State University

David Miner

N.C. House of Representatives
Chair, House Transportation
Committee

Glenn Orr

Chairman Emeritus, Southern National
Corporation
President, Orr Management Company

David Price

U.S. House of Representatives

Norma Price

Chair, Asheville 2010 Planning
Committee

Becky Smothers

Mayor of High Point

Ed Smith

Director, Civil Rights Division,
N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings

Jim Speed

N.C. Senate, retired
Former Chair, Senate Transportation
Committee

Richard Vaughn

Former N.C. Board of Transportation
Member
CEO, John S. Clark Construction Co.

Laura Wilson

Public Relations Director
Wilson Supermarkets

Smedes York

President, York Properties

Technical Committee

Gorman Gilbert, Ph.D.

Co-chair, Transit 2001 Technical
Committee

Mark Ahrendsen

Co-chair, Transit 2001 Technical
Committee
Assistant Director, Durham
Department of Transportation

Richard Atkins

Transportation Director, City
of Greensboro

Jimmie Beckom

Director, Raleigh Department of
Transportation

Denise M. Braine

Planner, Buncombe County Planning
and Development Department

Jerome Brown

Transit Director, Fayetteville Area
System of Transit

Mary Clayton

Transportation Manager, Charlotte
Uptown Development Corporation

Wendell Edwards

Executive Director, Choanoke Public
Transportation Authority

David Foster

Director of Highway Environmental
Evaluation, N.C. Department of
Environment, Health and
Natural Resources

Robert Godding

Director of Transportation, Town of
Chapel Hill

Michael Hallperin

Transit Administrator, City of Raleigh

The mission of the Transit 2001

*Commission is "to produce a compre-
hensive and realizable plan to meet the
needs for public transportation in
North Carolina in the 21st Century
and to stimulate the public awareness
and statewide support the plan will
require for its implementation."*



David Hines

Regional Manager, ATE Management
Company

Bill Holman

Lobbyist, N.C. Public Transportation
Association and N.C. Coalition for
Public Transportation

Terry Lathrop, Ph.D.

Deputy Director, Charlotte Department
of Transportation

Brent McKinney

Director of Transportation, City of
Winston-Salem

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Assistance, N.C. Department
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Patricia A. Melvin

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Transportation Development Manager,
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Paul Norby

Director, Durham City/County Planning
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James M. Ritchey, Jr.

General Manager, Research Triangle
Regional Public Transit Authority

Dorothy H. Schmit

Director, Kerr Area Rural Transit
System

John Tippet

Assistant Planning Director, Western
Piedmont Council of Governments

Christopher Turner

Director, AppalCART

"The coming crunch can be foreseen in this statistic: the number of vehicle miles traveled in North Carolina is growing at twice the rate of our population, and in high-use corridors such as I-40 and I-85, traffic counts stand to double in the next dozen years. It's not pretty to contemplate how congestion on that scale will affect the state's economy, its environment and its attractiveness as a place to live."

Steve Ford, "New Roads Aren't the Path to Traffic Heaven," Raleigh News and Observer, July 7, 1996

"Nearly one of three people living in rural America is transit-dependent, meaning they have no car or cannot drive due to a disability, age or poverty."

"Transportation and Rural Revitalization," Community Transportation Association of America, Washington, D.C., December 1995

"A growing conservative constituency does use mass transit, when transit is high quality... Conservative policy makers who ignore these constituents are neglecting part of their base. Mass transit can serve some important conservative goals, including economic development, moving people off welfare and into productive employment and strengthening feelings of community. Again, the quality of transit strongly affects its ability to serve conservative goals."

Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind in "Conservatives and Mass Transit: Is It Time for a New Look," by the Free Congress Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1996

"To say that we're going to continue to build roads in this state that will continue to ... allow growth to push further and further out into the countryside – it's irresponsible."

Roger Perry, developer, quoted in the Charlotte Observer, October 12, 1996

"North Carolina has done a lot of planning, but it has yet to make the best use of transit combined with residential, industrial and retail development. Instead, we continue to plan as though the automobile should be the key means of transit, ad infinitum."

Jack Betts, editorial in the Charlotte Observer, January 22, 1996

"We are beginning to understand that the overwhelming choice of automobiles as our primary mode of transportation is a triumph of temporary convenience over long-term good sense. Auto dependence does not make economic sense for maintaining and improving the quality of our built and natural environments."

from "Finding and Conclusions from 'Growing Smarter,' The Regional Land Use and Transportation Conference," Chapel Hill, N.C., September 1992

"The North Carolina Railroad traverses the heart of our state's economic engine – the Piedmont Crescent. It links the three largest urban areas, each already in excess of one million population. The dramatic growth in population and employment in this region is dwarfed by the rate at which congestion grows on our highway system. We should employ the NCRR for the reason it was built nearly 150 years ago – to serve the travel and commerce needs of our state."

Commission Member Glenn Orr

"The evidence is all around us that a transportation system that pours money into roads and air travel and starves everything else doesn't work"

Jessica Matthews, "Time to Make Plans – and Tracks," Washington Post

"We cannot 'nickel and dime' the transit issue. And we must get started now."

Patrick L. McCrory, Mayor of Charlotte

Transit 2001 action agenda

The Transit 2001 action agenda for the next four years will enable us to:

- Aggressively expand and improve public transportation, creating a seamless network of rural, human service, urban, regional and intercity services to meet a growing share of the burgeoning travel market.
- Introduce new, innovative services, technologies and decision-making processes to meet the needs of all North Carolinians and preserve and extend the capacity of the existing street and highway network.
- Substantially increase investment in public transportation from all levels to create a stable, reliable funding base.
- Fully integrate transit into new development that will offer greater choice and more wisely planned housing arrangements.



Implement rail passenger service to Hickory and Asheville.

The Transit 2001 action agenda charts a new course in:

- Service design and delivery;
- Community planning and development; and
- Funding.

Service design and delivery

The character of public transportation will change dramatically. A seamless network of new services will be introduced and existing services will be enhanced. New technologies will be combined in ways that will make public transportation a travel mode of choice.

Short-term (1 - 2 years)

- Begin to expand and enhance coordination of rural and urban transit services: coverage, frequency and integration.
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- Implement demonstration programs for new service design, technology and private-sector initiatives.
- Pass enabling legislation for regional authorities.
- Build improved partnerships with metropolitan planning organizations.
- Begin multimodal regional system plan updates.
- Preserve corridors necessary for future rail passenger services.

Mid to long-term (3 - 10 years)

In the mid to long-term, the state should expand on demonstration initiatives: service design, technology and private-sector participation. It should conclude the updates of regional system plans and facilitate creation of regional transit authorities.



Busways for Charlotte.

Community planning and development

Enhanced public transportation and new patterns of development will work together to provide us with more choices in how we travel and live.

Short-term (1 - 2 years)

- Assemble a "tool kit" of new planning practices.
- Develop a program that provides incentives for "best practice" planning.



Progress toward two-hour rail passenger service between Raleigh and Charlotte, via Greensboro.

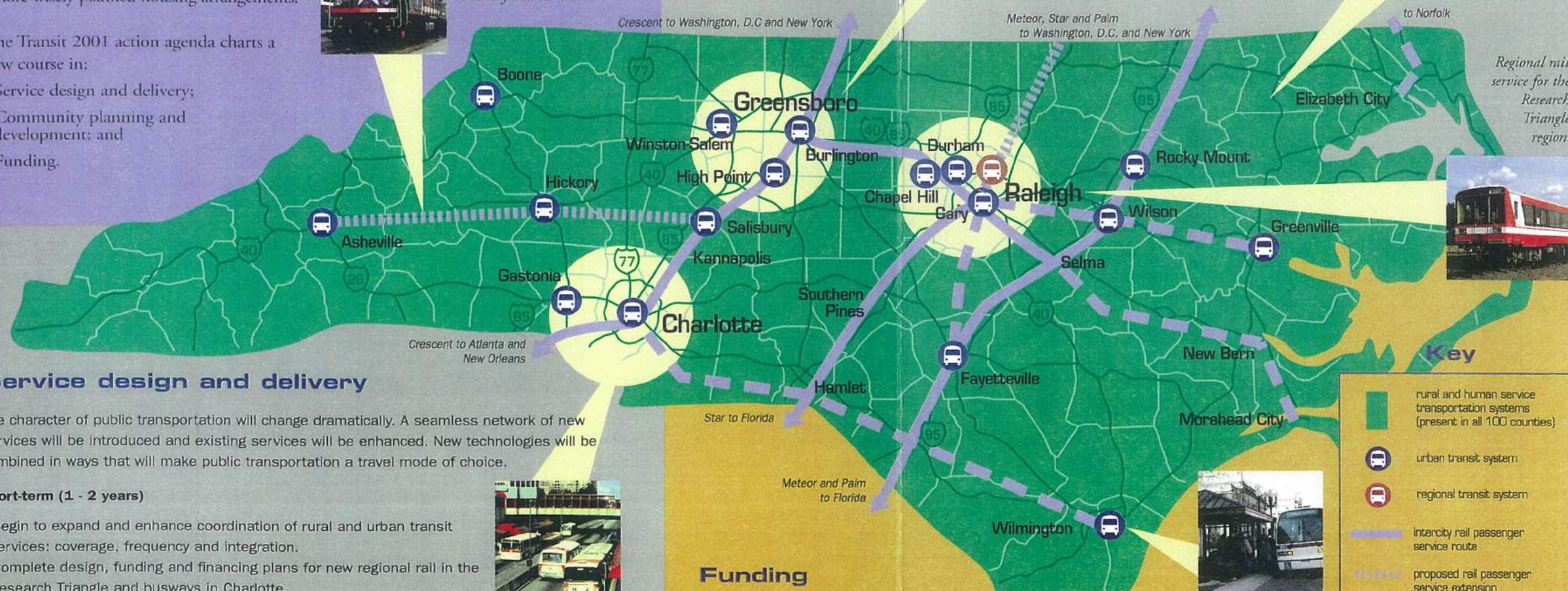
- Improve capacity to analyze key impacts.
- Update planning processes to make them more responsive.
- Update legislation that authorizes key planning concepts such as transportation demand management.

Mid to long-term (3 - 10 years)

In the mid to long-term, the state should facilitate the application of new planning practices, update its planning "tool kit" and expand analyses of planning practices and transit impacts.



Serve 40 percent more rural residents through community transportation programs for all 100 counties.



Funding

Total investment in public transportation from all sources should increase from the current level of \$108 million per year to \$265 million per year. State support should increase by \$75 million per year.

Short-term (1 - 2 years)

- Intensify advocacy for increased federal funds for rural and human service transportation, urban and regional transit and intercity rail.
- Increase percentage of the state's gas taxes that are returned to N.C. from the federal government (end N.C.'s "donor" status).
- Provide proposals to the General Assembly which increase state transit funding.



Increase frequency and improve comfort and convenience of transit service in all urban areas.

- Pass legislative proposals to expand local authority to raise and use revenue for transit.
- Form local/regional transit coalitions.
- Form multi-state, high-speed rail coalition.

Mid to long-term (3 - 10 years)

- Obtain federal funding for regional rail and intercity rail.
- Enact local funding initiatives.

Regional rail service for the Research Triangle region.



