Transit in the Research Triangle
Research Triangle - Defined

- Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill
- NC State-Duke-UNC Chapel Hill
- Wake-Orange-Durham Counties
- 1.6 Million People currently
- Projection of 2.5 Million People in 20 years
- Research Triangle as economic engine is in the center of our geography (not good)
- Currently only local bus service
- Raleigh-Durham is on High-Speed Rail route
Map of the Triangle
Transit Funding Background

Challenges
• NC State Funding Formula/Legislation
• Regional Co-operation
• Political will
North Carolina Infrastructure Funding Formula

State Equity Formula

• The equity formula was created in 1989 by the General Assembly. It requires that State Transportation Improvement Program funds be distributed equitably among regions of the state. Monetary distribution is based 50 percent on the population of a region, 25 percent on the number of miles of intrastate highways left to complete in a region and the remaining 25 percent is distributed equally among the regions for the STIP. Urban loop, congestion mitigation and air quality funds, and competitive/discretionary federal grants are exempt from the formula.
North Carolina Infrastructure Funding Formula

North Carolina Non-Home Rule/Dillon State - Means the State has control over local funding/financing

- Limited authority has been granted to local governments by passage of statutes in the state legislature. In these states, a city or county must obtain permission from the state legislature if it wishes to pass a law or ordinance which is not specifically permitted under existing state legislation.
In that context……

- In the late 1990’s Charlotte’s local leadership pushed to develop a program for transit. The State legislature ultimately passed legislation allowing Charlotte/Mecklenburg County to vote on a sales tax referendum for transit. The voters approved this measure in 1998, and Charlotte went on to build light rail (South Line), in the 2000’s.

- This legislation was only for Charlotte. In the late 2000’s the NC State legislature passed State House Bill 148 allowing for other local counties to pass sales tax initiatives to fund transportation. In August of 2009 this bill was signed into law.
In the 2000’s, the Three triangle counties – Wake, Durham, and Orange, worked together with Triangle Transit to develop a plan for transit.

- Two MPO’s (Orange-Durham County MPO/Capitol Area MPO)
- Developed a Joint 2035 Regional Long Range Transp. Plan
- $ 3.5 billion Bus/Train Network ambitions

Now the challenged was:
1. Have each county’s leadership agree to have a public referendum
2. Have the public vote FOR the sales tax initiative
Durham County

• In June 2011 – Durham County Commissioners scheduled a November 2011 referendum on a half-cent sales tax, ahead of Orange and Wake Counties.
• Significant lobbying effort on part of the government and private sector leadership
• 60% of voters approve the measure
• Will generate $18.4 million annually over the next 30 years
Orange County

- Have scheduled a November 2012 referendum on a half-cent sales tax, ahead of Wake County.
- Significant lobbying effort on part of the government and private sector leadership
- Will generate $5.1 million annually over the next 30 years
Wake County

- Have not scheduled the sales tax referendum
- Political football, current conservative leadership of county commission has not supported the vote.
- Perhaps did not have enough lobbying effort on part of the government and private sector leadership?
- If Wake County enacts this – it would generate $54 million annually, (more than double the other two counties combined).
What's Next - Opportunity

Local Governments will take the Initiative

• Orange and Durham Counties may set up an alliance
• City of Raleigh is pursuing expanded bus service
• Other local municipalities are looking to develop their own improved plans for transit.
• Back to the political well for Wake County
Transit in the Research Triangle