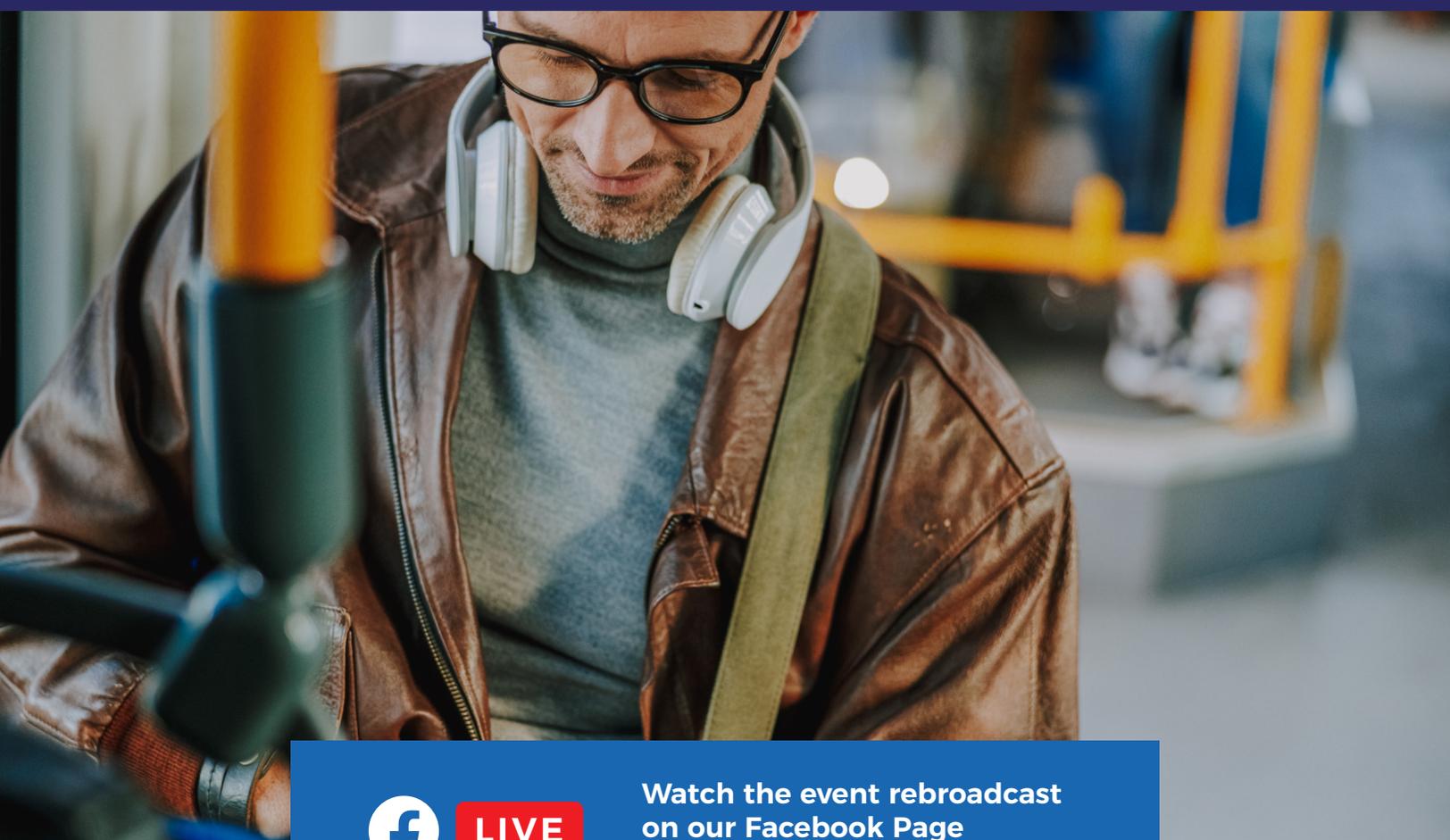




CONNECT Beyond

Building a Better Bus Network

APRIL 2021



LIVE

Watch the event rebroadcast
on our Facebook Page

@WeAreCentralina

Our region has multiple transit agencies providing transit services for our local communities. Our citizens and visitors rarely stay local – they live in one county and work, shop, attend school, recreate, visit, or attend medical appointments in another. Currently, to travel around our region using public transit, residents and visitors often must use a variety of different transit services operated by different transit providers. Traveling becomes complicated because some areas do not have transit, and for those areas that do, each transit provider has different route frequencies, fare, fare-free, hours of service, fare systems, websites, and transit amenities.

To provide enhanced public transit services that better meet the current and future transportation needs of our region, we must explore how to create an integrated regional transit system that allows our residents and visitors to travel seamlessly throughout our 12-county region – crossing municipal, county, and state lines – aboard modern, efficient, high-quality public transit services.

Transit Services In Our Region

12 Counties

6 Fixed-Route Providers

11 Community Transportation Providers

24.4M+ Total Transit Trips

All Agencies (2018)*

200M+ in Total Operating Costs

All Agencies (2018)*

*Note: Does not include Rock Hill MyRide in FY2020. MyRide had about 200K riders and \$175M operating budget

Cleveland



Lincoln



Gaston



GASTON COUNTY ACCESS CENTRAL TRANSPORTATION

Iredell



Mecklenburg



MECKLENBURG TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (MTS)

Cabarrus



Rowan



Iredell

Rowan

Lincoln

Cabarrus

Cleveland

Gaston

Stanly

Mecklenburg

York

Union

Anson

Lancaster

York



Union



Anson



Lancaster



Stanly

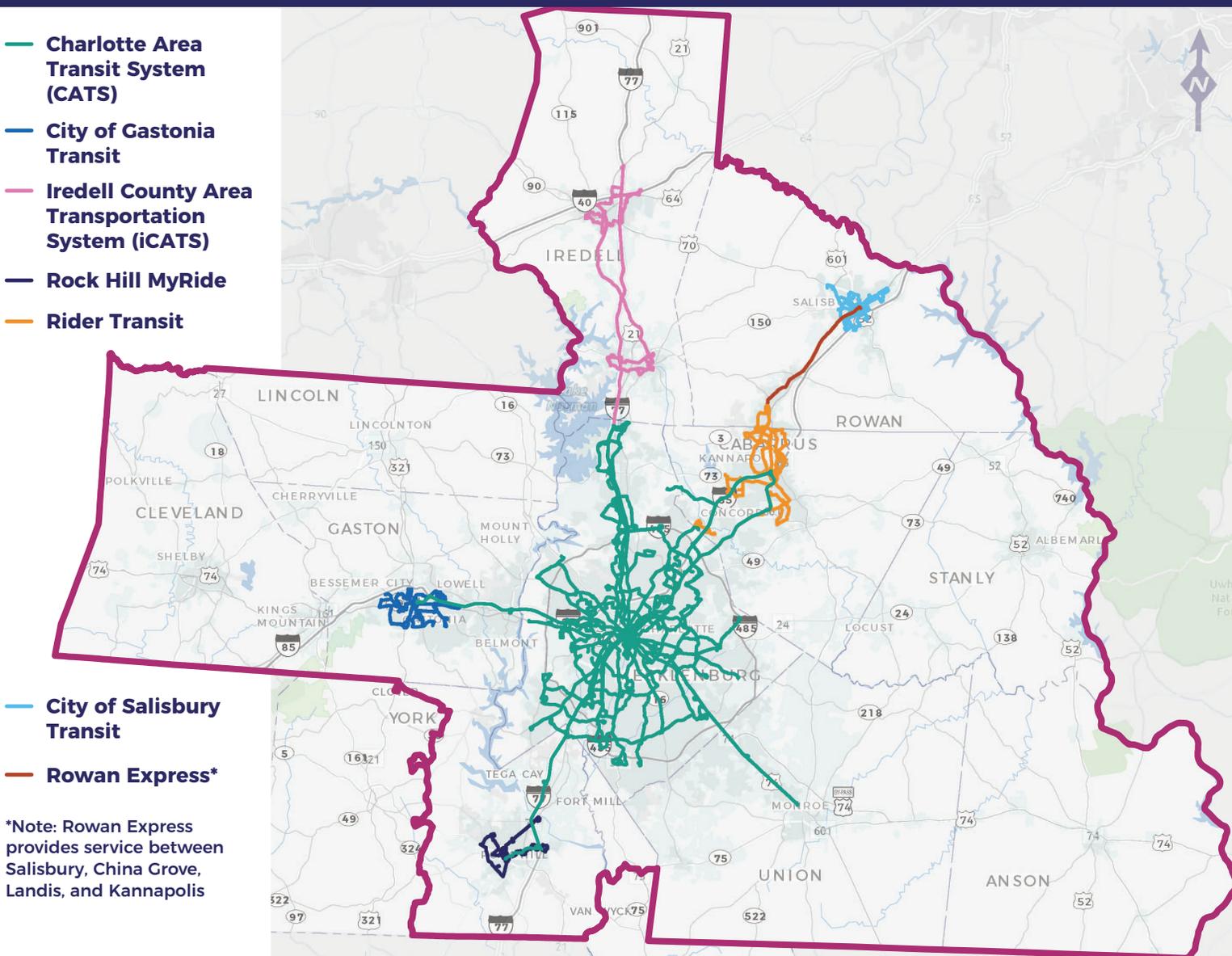


Building a Better Bus Network Strategies

As part of CONNECT Beyond, our Team along with our stakeholders, is working to build a better and regional bus network and by identifying strategies for urban transit service providers in our region to better coordinate local and regional bus services between urban transit providers. The urban transit providers included in the Building a Better Bus Network Strategies are:

Urban/Fixed Route Transit Provider	County
City of Salisbury Transit	Rowan
Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS)	Iredell
Rider Transit	Cabarrus
Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)	Mecklenburg - York - Gaston - Union
Rock Hill MyRide	York
City of Gastonia Transit	Gaston

Existing Urban/Fixed Route Services



Evaluation Process



1

Evaluate the Existing Systems

The first step in developing Building a Better Bus Network Strategies was to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the region's existing urban transit services. This evaluation helped our Team understand the existing conditions of the region's urban transit service and allowed us to conduct a system-wide performance analysis of the region's transit services. During the system-wide performance analysis, our team compared key metrics from our urban transit services evaluation against national benchmarks and transit systems from peer regions.

2

Transit Provider Workshops

The second step in developing Integrated Bus Service Strategies was to host three workshops with the urban transit providers to get their input on the current transit service gaps and future transit needs for the CONNECT Beyond region. From these workshops, six key themes emerged that our Team will use to guide the creation of CONNECT Beyond's Building a Better Bus Network Strategies.



POLICY



TECHNOLOGY



OPERATIONAL



FINANCIAL



INTERAGENCY
COORDINATION



EDUCATION
& OUTREACH

3

Committee Feedback

The third step in developing Building a Better Bus Network Strategies is to present our findings to the CONNECT Beyond Policy, Technical, and Community Advisory Committees to seek their insights and input. Our Team will use the input received from our Advisory Committees to develop the recommended strategies for Integrated Bus Service.

4

Develop the Strategies

The final step is to use the information from our transit services evaluation and system-wide performance analysis, along with the insights provided by the urban transit providers and Advisory Committee members to develop recommended strategies for Integrated Bus Services. These action-oriented strategies will be included in the final CONNECT Beyond regional transit plan and will help the region's urban transit providers to better coordinate transit services.

Preliminary Concepts



The message is clear, we need to strive for a robust, regionally connected, and customer-centric fixed route bus system that connects to future high capacity transit lines, connect to key regional mobility corridors, connects local communities, connects adjacent communities, connects other areas of our region, connects to community transportation services, is a transportation demand management option for all travelers. In essence, a fixed route system that is part of a Total Transit Network. The CONNECT Beyond team, our stakeholders and advisory committees have identified the following list of key concepts to build a better bus network as part of a Total Transit Network:

Policy Concepts

- Develop an integrated fare system for the region
- Review policies and remove operating barriers to allow for cross-jurisdictional travel
- Develop regional service standards
- Adopt consistent service change periods
- ADA certification process standardization and reciprocity
- Update zoning ordinance to include transit amenities as part of the development approval process

What does this mean for you?
Seamless access to more places in our region.

Technology Concepts

- Coordinated fare collection technology (software and hardware)
- Leverage technology across the region to improve service delivery
 - Share positive technical experiences and adopt regionally
- Consistently record ridership at the stop level to help inform future service adjustments
- Create a regional transit website and trip planning tool

What does this mean for you?
One stop shop to plan your trip.

Operational Concepts

- Develop regional service standards
- Create a service planning working group
- Adopt consistent service change periods
- Coordination for strategic transfer points
- Coordinated amenities to improve the user experience

What does this mean for you?
Being in the know when transit services change anywhere in our region.

Preliminary Concepts



What does this mean for you?
More services and travel options.

Financial Concepts

- Make funding available for new operational and administration staff
- Implement pilot projects to demonstrate the benefits of emerging technologies and improvements to our mobility system
- Develop regional plan to collectively purchase transit capital (stronger purchasing power)
- Explore public-private partnerships (P3s)
 - Potential opportunity with medical facilities and healthcare providers
- Reserve funding within each agency for regionally coordinated topics
- Develop a strategy to supplement state and federal funding



What does this mean for you?
Improved transfers and connections for your travel needs.

Interagency Coordination Concepts

- Create a regional service planning working group
- Create a regional transit coordination entity
- Stronger transit coordination with MPOs
 - Develop a ~5 year regional transit plan to forecast changes and capital needs
- Regional training programs to improve data collection and reporting
 - Develop regional reporting manual
- Cooperative purchasing agreements for transit capital (stronger purchasing power)
- Coordinate policy development across the region



What does this mean for you?
Know your transit options and help attract more jobs to the region.

Education & Outreach Concepts

- Implement pilot projects to demonstrate the benefits of transit investments
- Regional marketing campaign on why transit is important to a community and benefits the entire region
 - Highlight what we do today, what we could do today and in the future
- Demonstrate how transit supports overarching community goals such as land use planning, economic development, sustainability (clean air), etc.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate transit in other planning efforts
 - Example: Update zoning ordinance to include transit amenities as part of the development approval process

