

Transit Planning in the City

Regional Transit Partnership

April 24, 2025

City plays two roles in regional transit

Jurisdictional Partner

- Member of CARTA
- Member of RTP
- Member of Jaunt
- Provides local funding for operations and capital
- Will be developing a citywide transportation plan that includes transit

Transit Agency

- Owns and operates CAT
 - Employs large workforce
 - Owns and maintains a fleet of vehicles
 - Owns and maintains a large facility
 - Operates in City and County and receives operating funding from both, as well as state and federal sources
- Working on implementing its Transit Strategic Plan

Lots of planning needs in the next 8-12 months for transit, under both roles

Jurisdictional Partner

- CARTA Priorities Identification
- CARTA Funding Model
- CARTA Legislative Package
- Citywide Transportation Plan Scoping

Transit Agency

- FY 2027 Expansion Plans and Budget Prep
- Alternative Fuel Transition Plan Implementation
 - Vehicle Transition and Expansion
 - Facility Expansion (Capital Needs Assessment, NEPA)
- Bus Stop Inventory and Amenities Expansion
- School Bus Fleet Transition
- School Bus Route Re-Alignment due to Rezoning

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FY 2027 Expansion Plans and Budget Prep

- During adoption of the City's FY2026 budget, Council emphasized a need to get started early in the next budget cycle process to prioritize expanding transit service
 - City staff met the day after the budget was passed to kick off this effort
- Initially modeling different expansion scenarios of options from the CAT Transit Strategic Plan, including: Sunday service, night services, 30-minute weekday service systemwide, improved Saturday services, and higher frequency services on high ridership routes
- Modeling of these options will estimate costs associated with additional drivers, mechanics, and other staff, as well as any additional capital needs
- City intends to use this data-based approach to inform budget decision-making and discussions with Albemarle County partners

CARTA Priorities Identification

- This study will take recommendations from previous Regional Transit Vision Plan, along with other existing transit agency plans, and identify the “regionally significant” network where the region wants to make more investments
- Will look at a wider range of transit opportunities, not just fixed route local service
- Will help inform the scope and scale of the funding/legislative request in January 2026
- Good news! Study currently recommended for funding through DRPT technical assistance grant
- Not so great news! DRPT funding wouldn’t be available until after July, timing is not great for the January 2026 target
- City and TJPDC staff are beginning scoping ahead of award and will begin initial work plan items prior to consultant support being brought on

CARTA Funding Model/Legislative Package

- Aiming to get changes to CARTA legislation in the anticipated January 2026 omnibus bill
- Beginning work with legislature to understand where the best opportunities are
- Time to begin the discussion over where this dedicated funding is coming from with City/County finance and budget staff
- Need to understand what size pool of funding, which will inform prioritization for CARTA and capital funding strategies for the transit agencies
- Need to confirm what mechanism is being used to raise funding

Thanks!

(And please say hi to our new transit planner Zoë, she's going to be very busy working on all of this)