

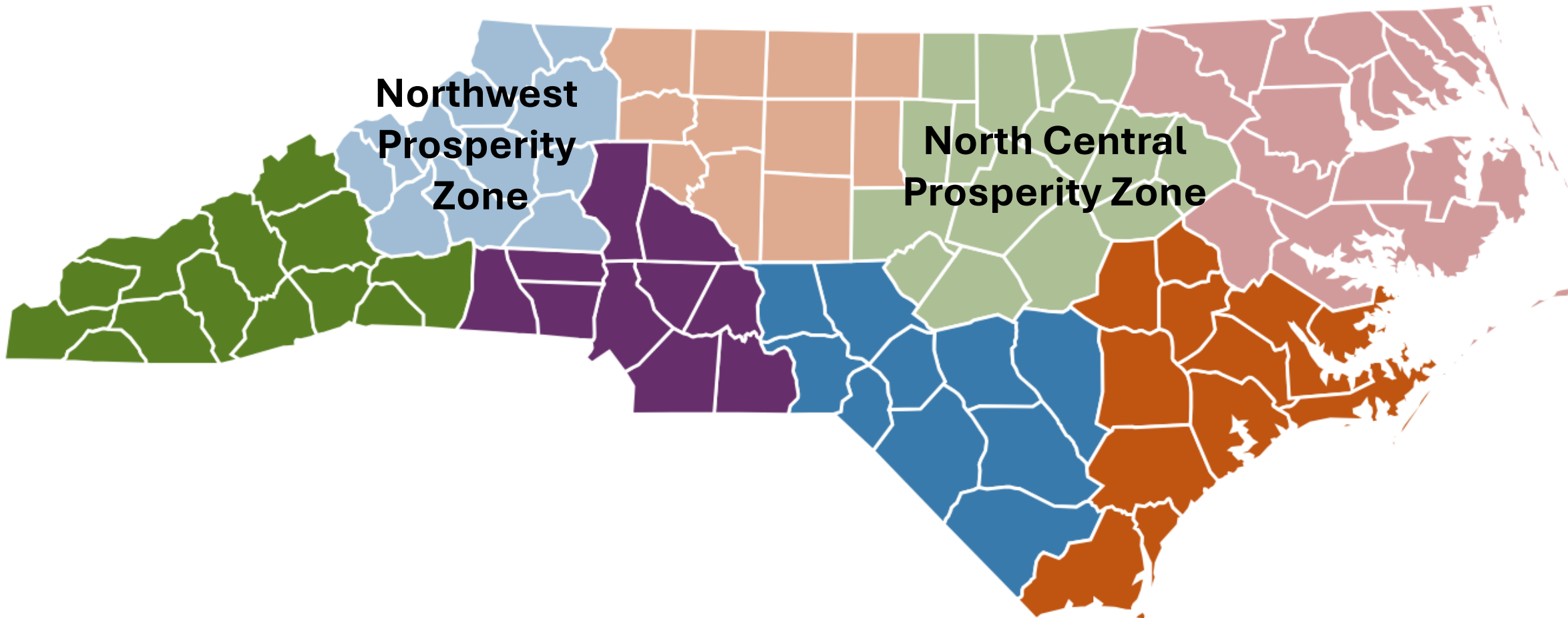
RTA REGIONAL
BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP

Vision Northwest North Carolina: Let's Get Moving

Joe Milazzo II, PE
RTA executive director

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute
Watauga Campus at Boone

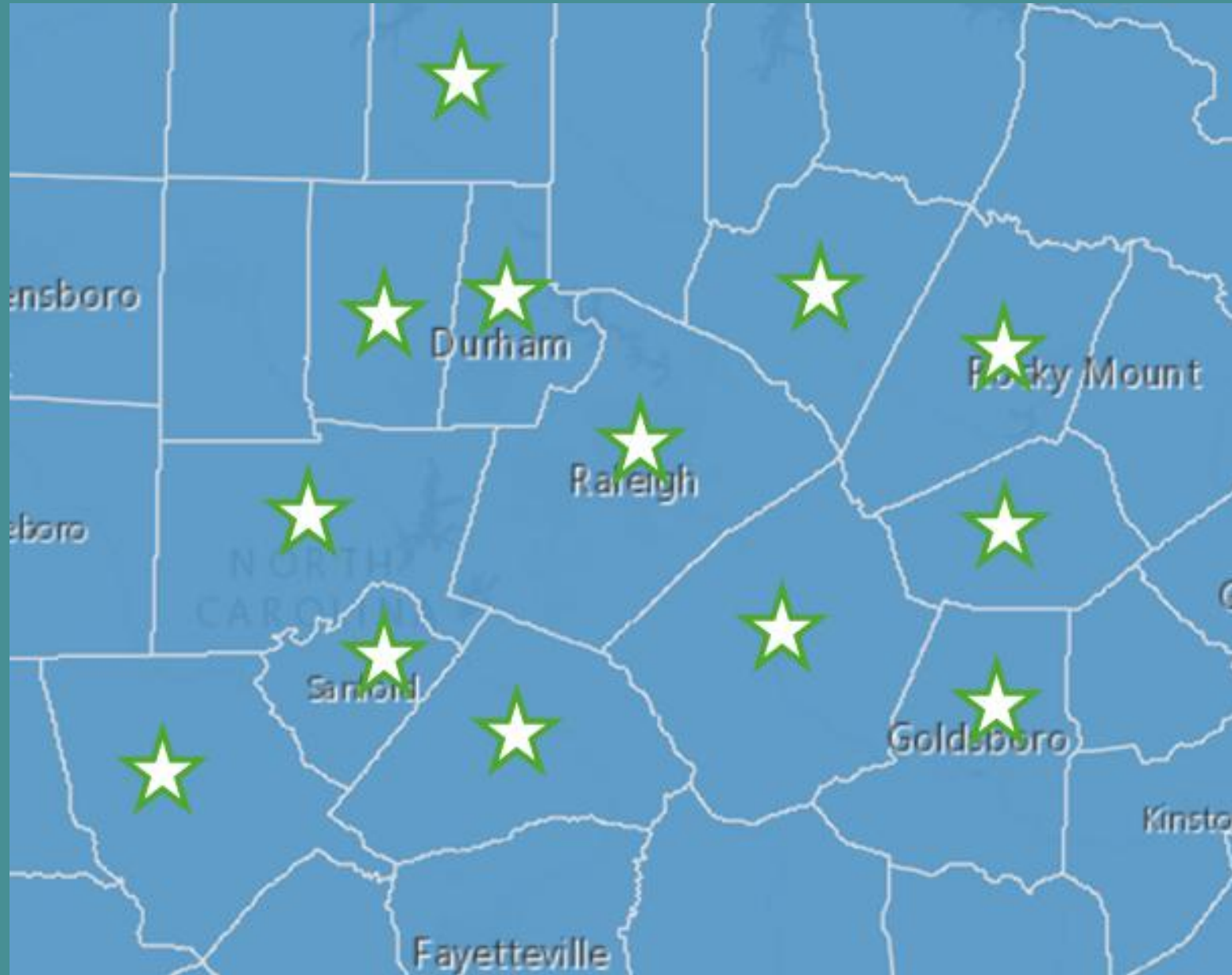


**Northwest
Prosperity
Zone**

**North Central
Prosperity Zone**

Regional Transportation Alliance

RTA has served as
the voice of the regional business community
on transportation in the metropolitan Triangle area
for more than two decades.



Agenda for this session

- RTA overview
- Our approach, key priorities
- A few data points on highway funding
- Some observations
- Interactive discussion

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RTA Perspective:

The regional business community in the Triangle believes that advancing enhanced mobility infrastructure is essential for economic development and mobility, as well as quality of place and life...

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The regional business community in the Triangle believes that advancing enhanced mobility infrastructure is essential for economic development and mobility, as well as quality of place and life...

And that applying sustained business **focus** will accelerate solutions.

RTA Mission:

Deliver business leadership
to get our region moving *faster*.

RTA Purpose:

Transportation projects will always take “forever.”

RTA works with our partners to ensure they take “less forever.”

Life Sciences

Amgen
FUJIFILIM Biotechnologies
CSL Seqirus
Merz Aesthetics
United Therapeutics
Helix Ventures
Novo Nordisk

Health Care

UNC Health
Duke Health
WakeMed Health and Hospitals

Technology

Google
IBM Corporation
Lenovo
SAS Institute

Universities / Research

Duke University
NC State University
UNC Chapel Hill
NC Central University
Wake Technical Community College
Research Triangle Foundation of NC

Real Estate and Development

Kane Realty
KDC Real Estate & Development
Chatham Park
Highwoods Properties
The Spectrum Company
York Properties

Law Firms

Smith Anderson
Poyner Spruill
Maynard Nexsen

Financial Services

First Citizens Bank
First National Bank
Pinnacle Financial Partners
Fidelity Investments
Coastal Credit Union
TowneBank
Truist
UBS

Construction / Materials

Sunrock Industries
Martin Marietta
Clancy & Theys
T.A. Loving Company
New South Construction
Gregory Poole Equipment Company

Engineering, professional services

Kimley-Horn and Associates
WSP
VHB
McAdams
HH Architecture
HDR
Wetherill Engineering
KCI Technologies
NV5
Stantec
Terracon

Energy and Utilities

Duke Energy
Enbridge Gas
AT&T

Partial list of RTA members

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RTA APPROACH

RTA works with key partners to ensure that vital projects happen, and accelerate, amidst an uncertain policy, prioritization, and funding environment.

RTA applies focus, initiates and funds research, leads public-private cooperation, synthesizes and reframes issues, lobbies for priorities, and promotes faster solutions.

2026 RTA BUSINESS PLAN

Strategic advocacy priorities

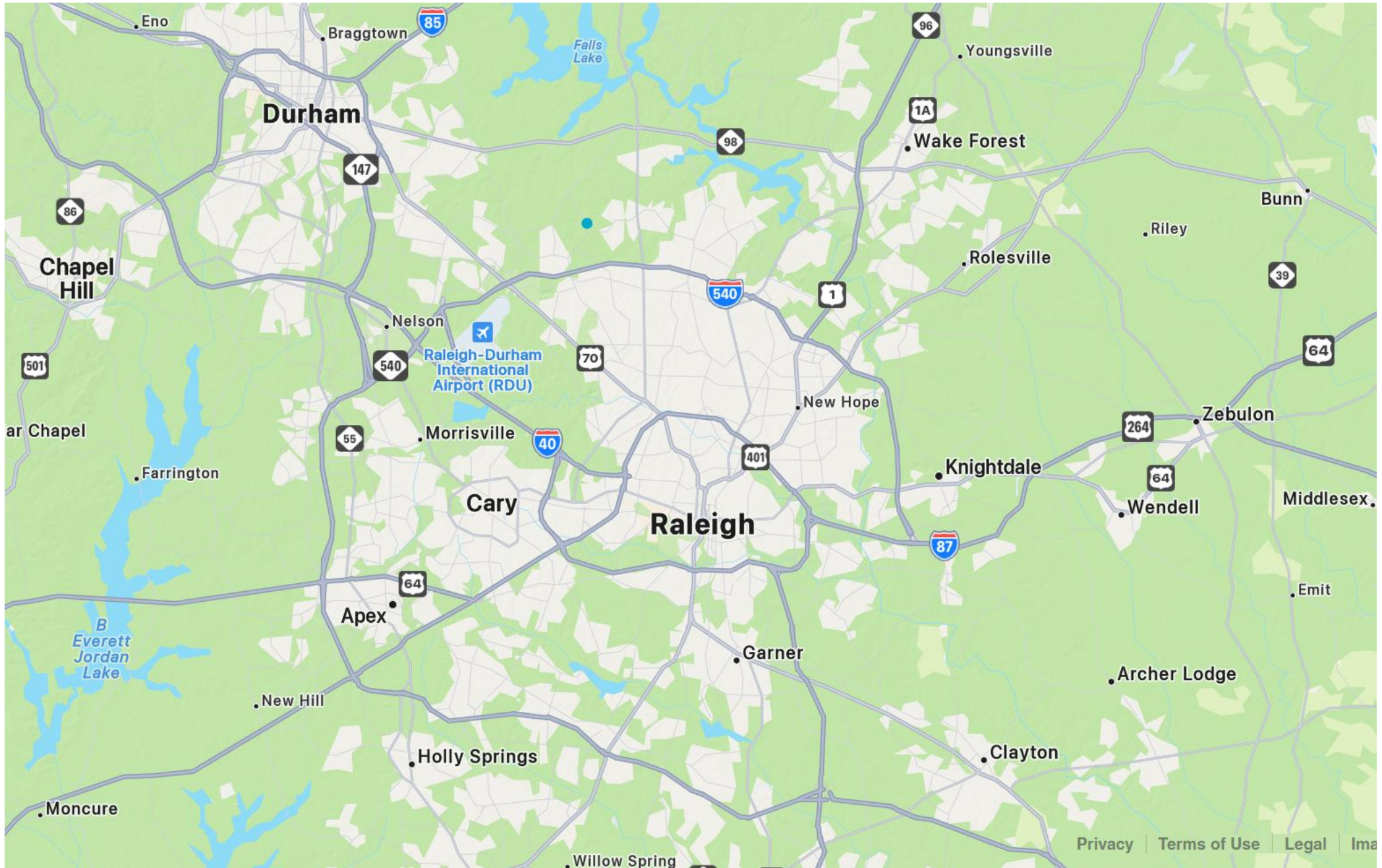
- Identify sustainable business model for RDU Airport infrastructure
- Lobby for solutions to modernize and strengthen state highway revenue
- Promote innovative, scalable funding and project delivery

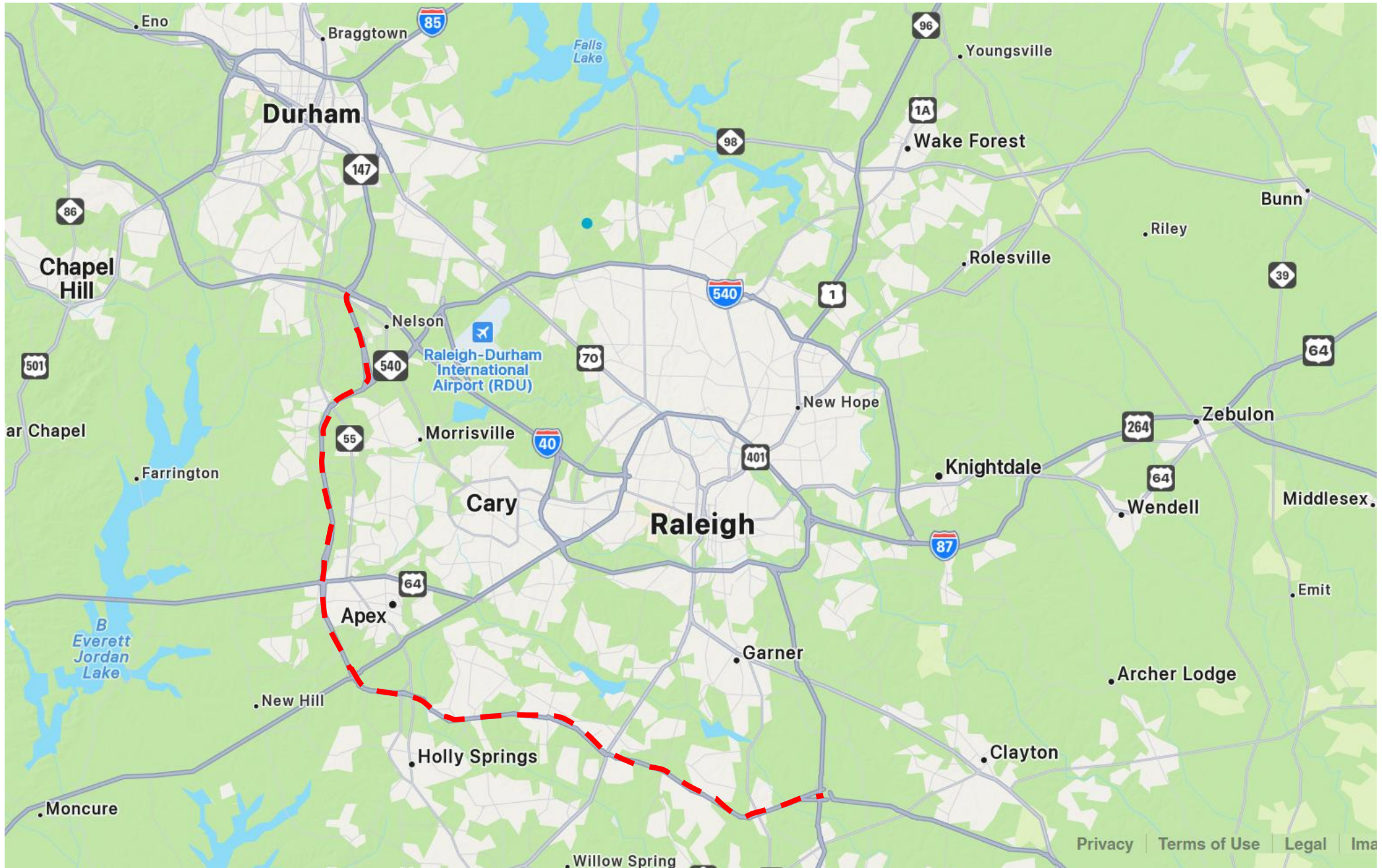
2026 RTA BUSINESS PLAN

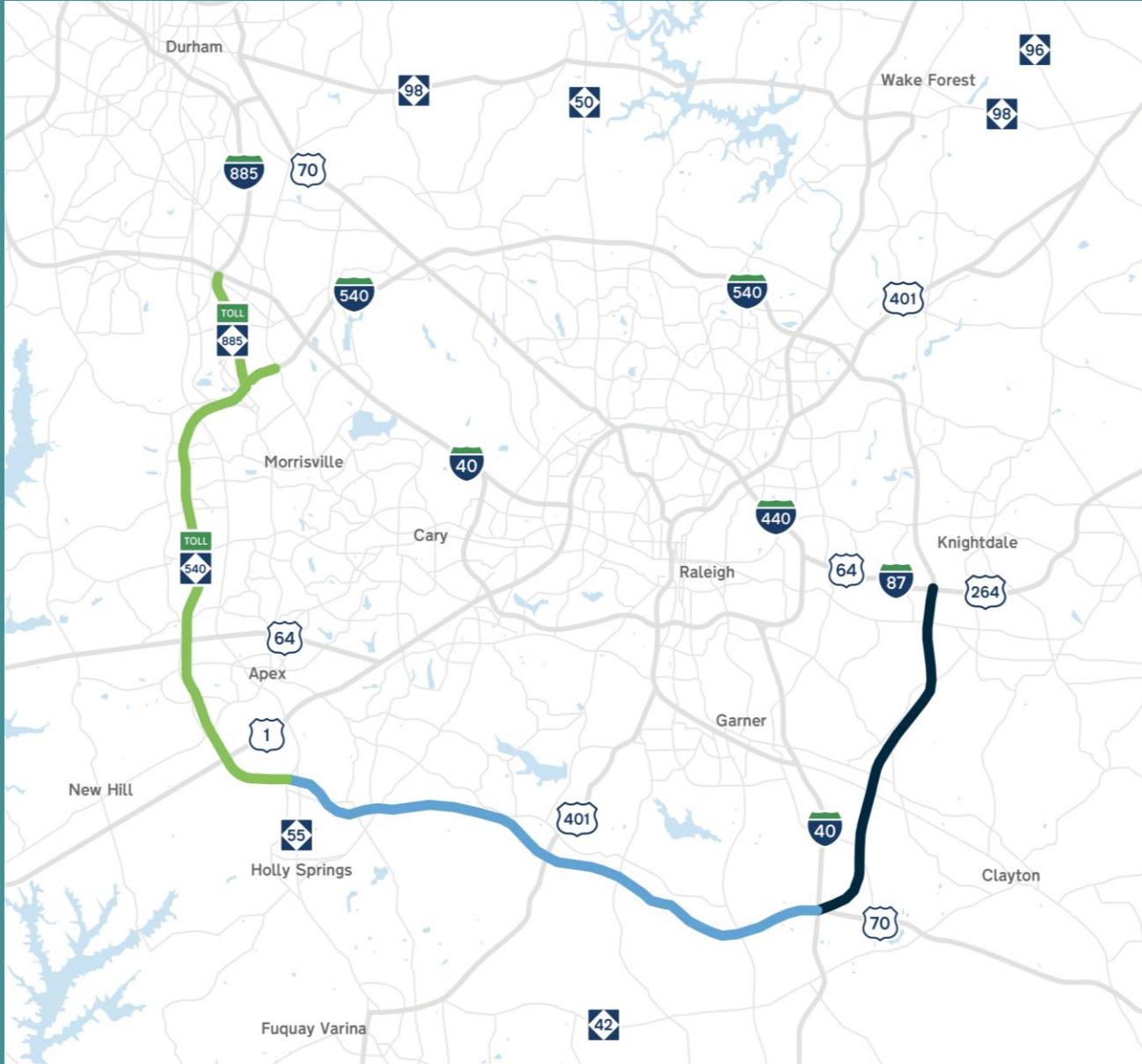
Rapid implementation initiatives

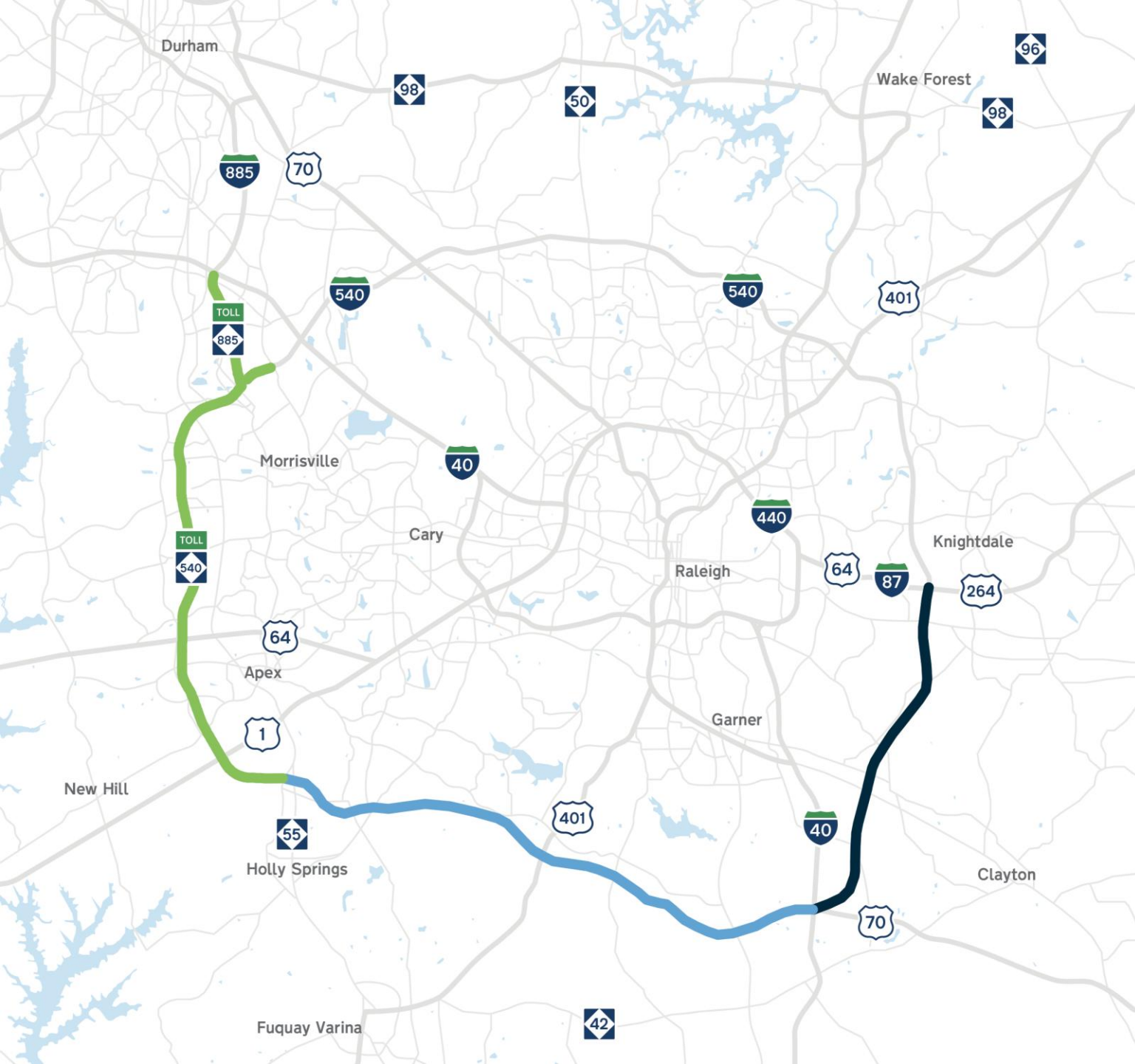
- Accelerate US 1 / Capital Boulevard freeway
- Advance construction on BRT and enhanced transit hubs
- Drive consensus and implementation of I-40 mobility and safety improvements
- Implement multiple intersection innovations

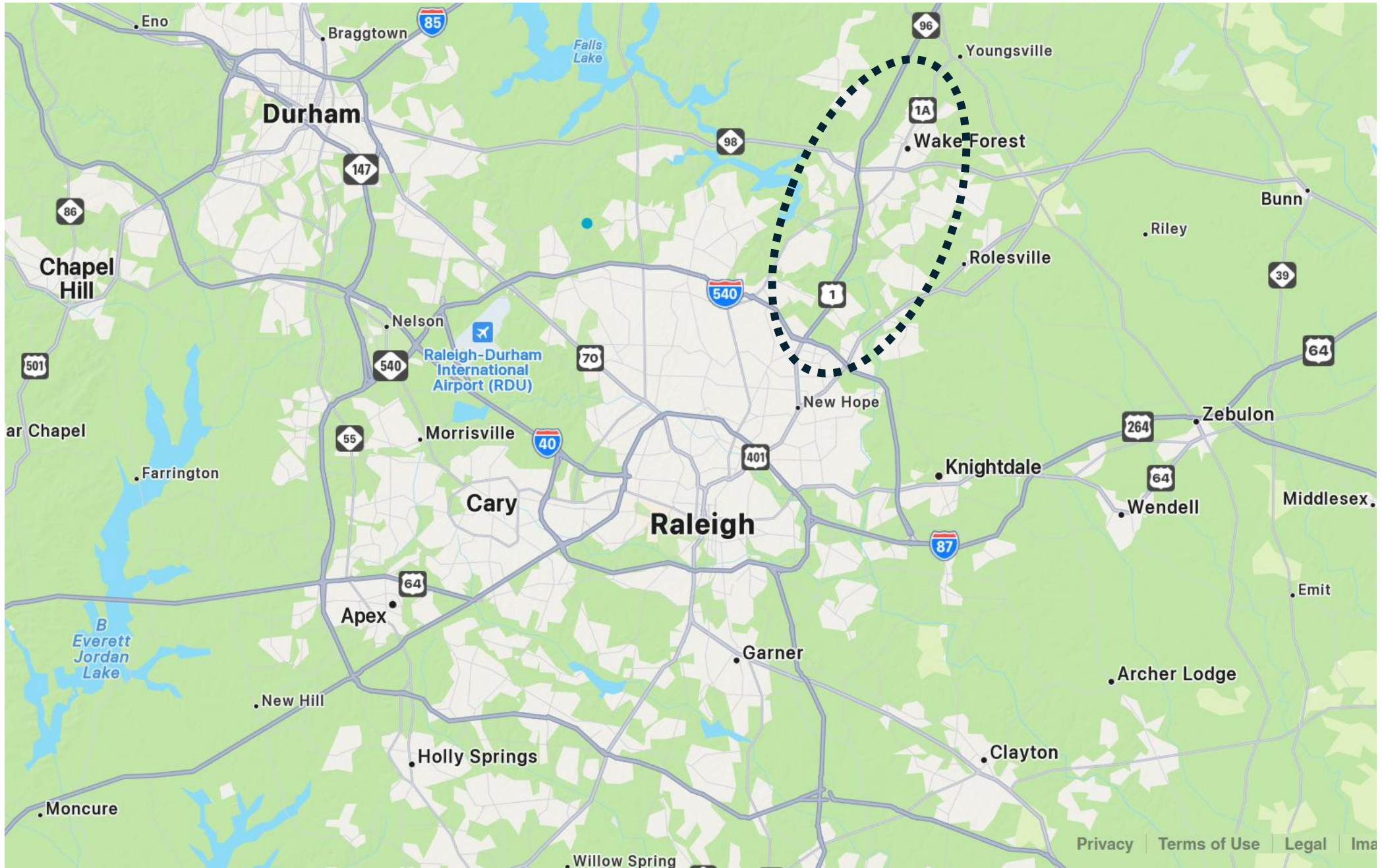
Freeways and Regional Boulevards

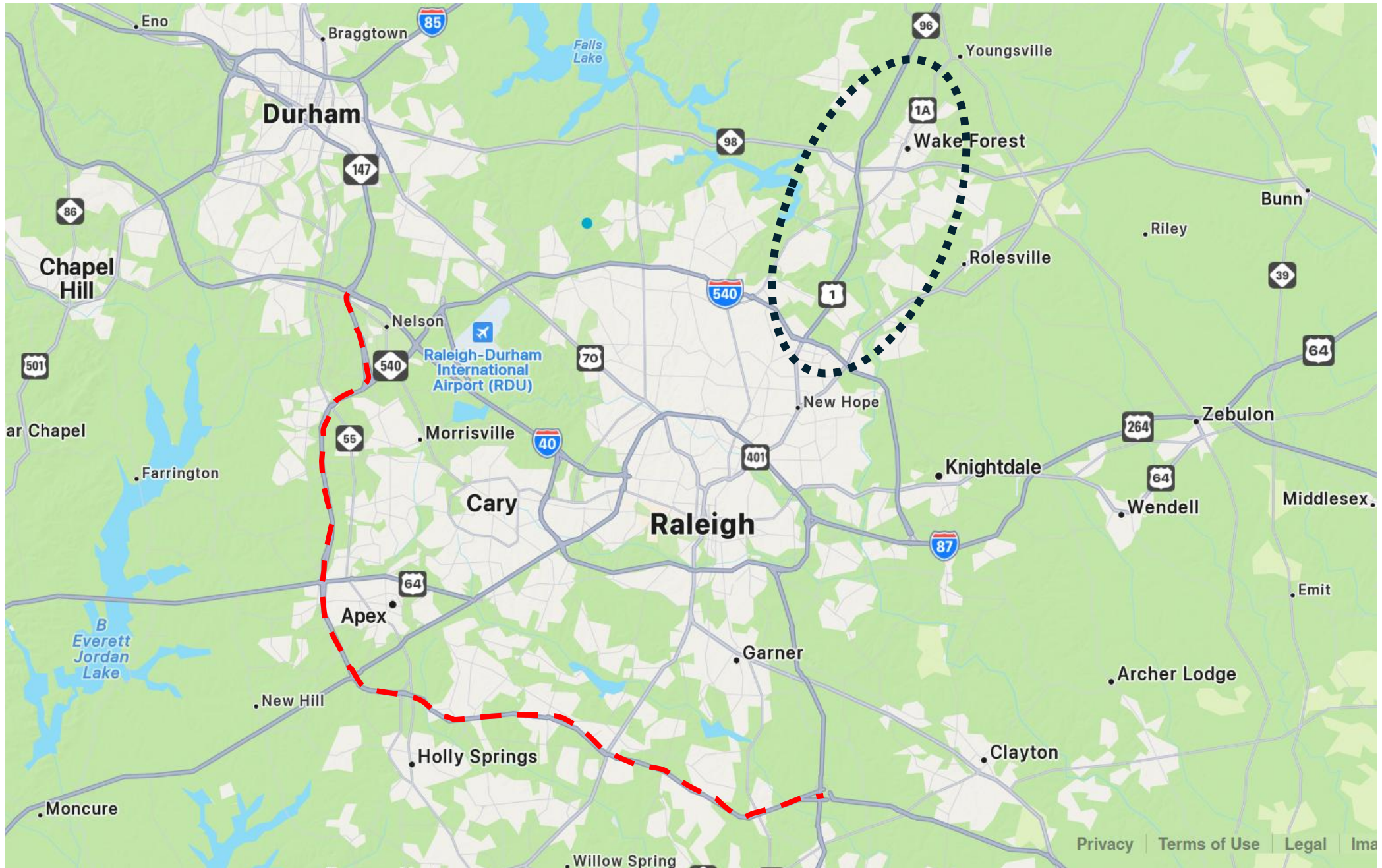


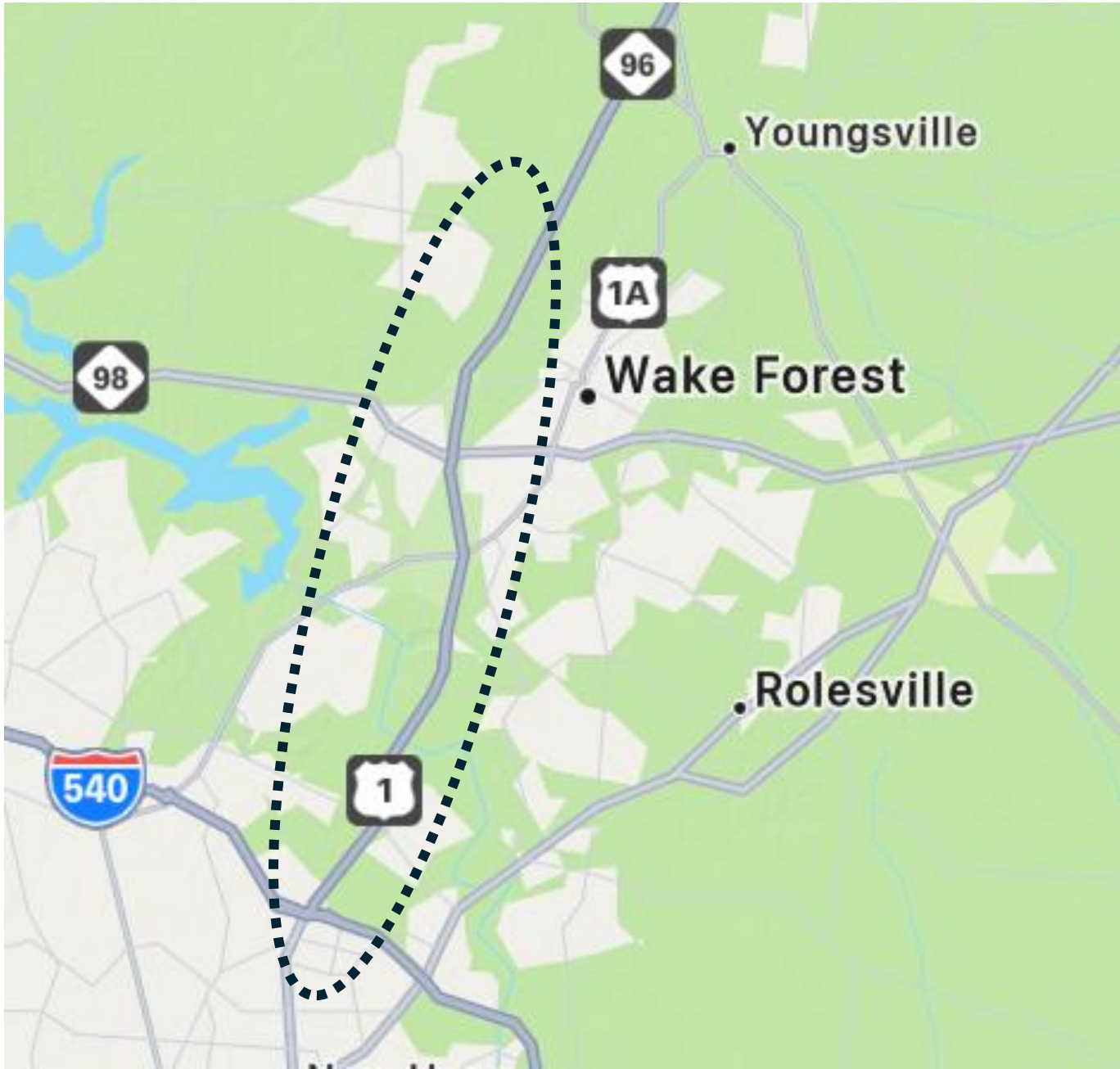












RTA has endorsed the accelerated transformation of US 1 / Capital Blvd. to a multimodal freeway from I-540 to the Wake/Franklin Co. line via dedicated toll revenue, potentially with a reduced toll rate during off-peak periods.



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Toll debate at center of Capital Boulevard expansion project

"It's taking a toll on our sanity."

1 hour ago



WAKE COUNTY

NC House moves to prevent tolls on Capital Boulevard to finance highway project



NCDOT Set to Upgrade US 401 in Garner, Adding Lanes and Safety Improvements



This is U.S. 401 in Garner.

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Transportation is upgrading more than one mile of U.S. 401 (Fayetteville Road) from south of Old Stage Road to south of Mechanical Boulevard thanks to a nearly \$ 26 million contract to Conti Civil LLC.

The project will create a six-lane, median-divided roadway with turn lanes at intersections as needed, Reduced Conflict Intersections and synchronized traffic signals to improve traffic flow.

Constructing a synchronized street removes left-hand turns from side streets, reducing both the risks of accidents and traffic delays. This design improves overall traffic safety and flow; for more information, please refer to NCDOT's fact sheet on synchronized streets. To further

Published Date:

4/27/2026

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Synchronized Streets

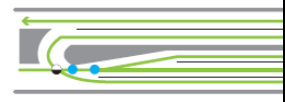
Safety and Conflict Points

A conventional intersection has 32 conflict points, while a synchronized street has significantly fewer conflict points in a

Conventional Intersection
32 points of conflict



Synchronized Street
14 points of conflict



What is a Synchronized Street?

Formerly called a superstreet, a Synchronized Street provides for reduced delay and simultaneous coordination of both main street travel directions at all times of day.

While main street travelers may turn left, right or travel straight through — just like at a conventional intersection — side-street travelers who want to cross or turn left at a Synchronized Street intersection must first turn right and then make a U-turn to return to their desired route.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation evaluates traffic volumes and the number of crashes and collisions at an intersection. This helps to determine if Synchronized Streets are the most effective solution for the area.

A Synchronized Street is also referred to in other states and by the Federal Highway Administration as a J-turn or as a restricted crossing U-turn (RCUT).

Benefits of Synchronized Streets

Synchronized Streets can help alleviate congestion while increasing travel capacity and reducing the number of collisions at intersections.

Improved traffic flow is possible by simplifying traffic signal phasing (e.g., eliminating the need for left-turn signals or cutting down on the time spent at a traffic light) and allowing both directions of traffic to move simultaneously.

Redirecting traffic to avoid high-risk movements, such as through movements, reduces the number of conflict points — places in intersections where collisions might occur.

Synchronized Streets are also cost effective because they fit within the existing right of way. Interchanges, by comparison, are more costly because they can require further land acquisition and/or bridges, underpasses or access ramps to fully separate the two roads.

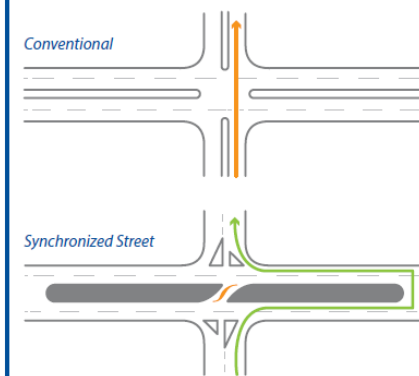
Side Street Left-Turn:

In a conventional intersection, drivers turning left from a side street create more delay and conflicts. At a Synchronized Street, they first join the main street flow, reducing wait times and conflicts.



Side Street Cross-Traffic:

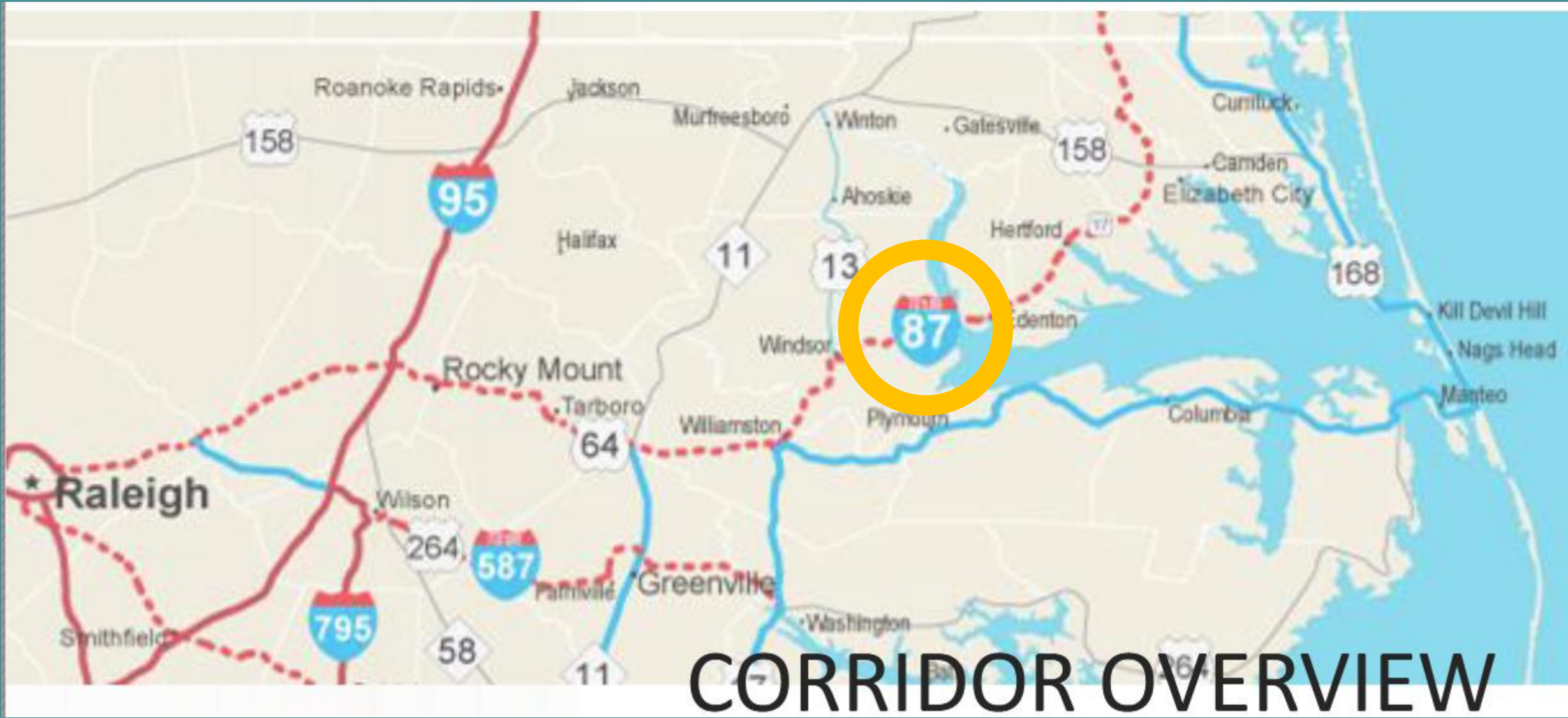
In a conventional intersection, drivers crossing the main street create more delay and conflicts. At a Synchronized Street, they first join the main street flow, reducing wait times and conflicts.



At a Synchronized Street intersection, instead of going straight or turning left, side-street drivers first turn right and then make a U-turn (usually 600 to 1,000 feet from the intersection).

For more information, contact Transportation Mobility and Safety at (919) 773-2800, or visit NCDOT.gov.

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CORRIDOR OVERVIEW

Project to connect Raleigh and Hampton Roads gets I-87 designation



David Corliss reports.

WNCN 17/20 AM, Jun 16, 2016 and last updated 5:00 PM, Jun 16, 2016

Elizabeth City, N.C. (WTKR)- A long planned highway project to connect Raleigh to Hampton Roads now has a name: Interstate 87.

The American Association of State and Transportation Officials approved I-87 for the U.S. 64/17 corridor between Raleigh and the Virginia state line.

North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory commented on the news, which also included a designation of I-42 for the U.S. 70 corridor.

"These connections are an integral part of my 25-Year Vision for North Carolina to improve the state's infrastructure, expand economic opportunities and create jobs," McCrory said. "They bring a much-needed interstate corridor to the Hampton Roads area, stronger connections between our important military bases, and enhance economic development through faster shipment of freight for our ports and Global TransPark."

The Regional Transportation Alliance in Raleigh has advocated for the project.

According to the RTA:

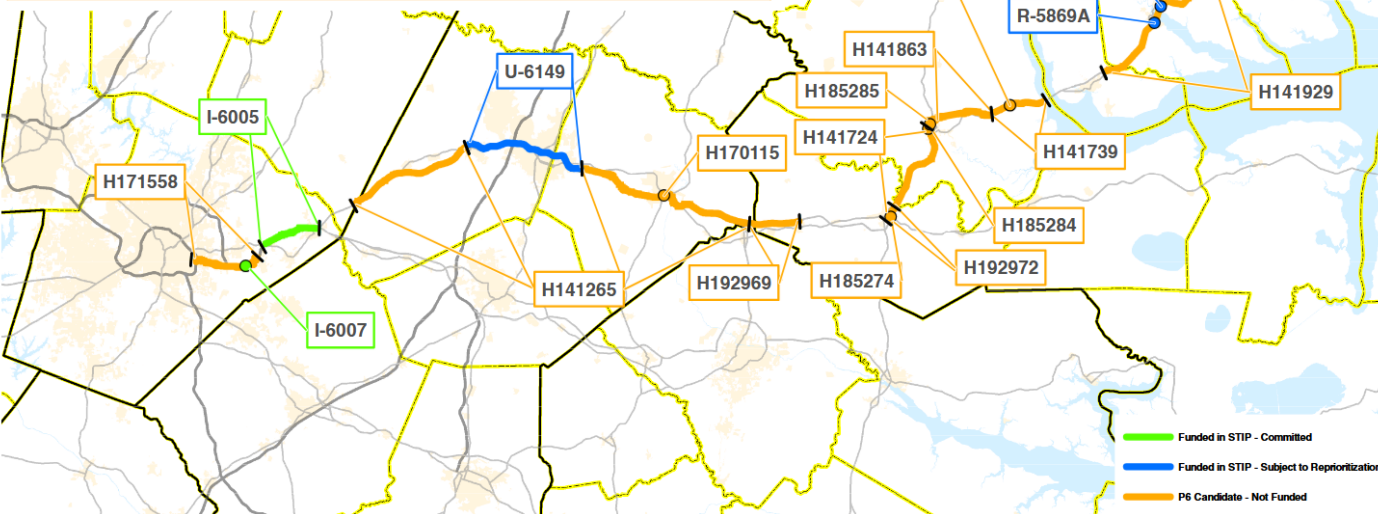
The corridor would follow the I-495 and Future I-495 freeway corridor from I-40/I-440 at Raleigh east to I-95 at Rocky Mount. It would continue east along the US 64 freeway towards Tarboro and Williamston, NC and then travel the US 17 corridor via Elizabeth City, NC, and then connect to the cities of Chesapeake and Norfolk, Virginia in the Hampton Roads region. While all of I-495/US 64 between Raleigh and Williamston is freeway, many segments of US 17 from Williamston to I-64 in Hampton Roads are not freeway and would need expansion, upgrade, or new location.

There's no timeline for when I-87 could become a reality, nor has it been funded yet.



Proposed I-87 Corridor Projects

Project ID	Route	From/Cross Street	To	Description of Work
Funded in STIP - Committed				
I-6007	I-87 / US 64 / US 264	SR 2233 (Smithfield Rd)		Convert Interchange to Diverging Diamond
I-6005	I-87 / US 64 / US 264	US 64 Bus. (Wendell Blvd)	US 264	Widen to 6 Lanes
Funded in STIP - Subject to Reprioritization				
U-6149	US 64	NC 58 (Washington St)	SR 1233 (Thomas Rd) Overpass	Upgrade to Interstate Standards
R-5869A	US 17	SR 1336 (Harvey Point Rd), SR 1338 (Wayne Fork Rd)		Convert At-Grade Intersection to Interchange
R-5869B	US 17	SR 1300 (New Hope Rd)		Convert At-Grade Intersection to Interchange
P6 Candidate - Not Funded				
H171558	I-87, US 64	I-40	US 64 BUS Wendell Blvd	Widen Existing Roadway
H141265	I-87, US 64	SR 1250 (Tant Rd)/NC 58	SR 1000 (Thomas Rd)/Martin Co Ln	Upgrade Freeway to Interstate Standards
H170115	I-87, US 64	US 258 (Western Blvd), US 64 Alt		Improve Interchange
H192969	US 64, I-87	US 13/NC 11	NC 903	Upgrade Freeway to Interstate Standards
H185274	US 17	US 64		Upgrade At-grade Intersection to Interchange
H192972	US 17, I-87	US 64	Roanoke River Bridge	Upgrade Arterial to Freeway/Expressway
H141724	US 17, I-87	US 64 at Williamston	US 13 North at Windsor	Upgrade Arterial to Freeway/Expressway
H185284	NC 1100 (Grabtown Road)	US 17		Upgrade At-grade Intersection to Interchange
H185285	NC 308 (Sterlingworth Street)	US 17		Upgrade At-grade Intersection to Interchange
H141863	I-87, US 17 (Windsor Byp)	US 13 North at Windsor	US 17A East of Windsor	Upgrade Freeway to Interstate Standards
H185289	NC 45	US 17		Upgrade At-grade Intersection to Interchange
H141739	I-87, US 17	US 17A East of Windsor	South end of Chowan River Bridge	Upgrade Freeway to Interstate Standards
H141929	I-87, US 17	US 17 Business (Broad St)	SR 1100 / 1140 (Okisko Road)	Upgrade Arterial to Freeway/Expressway
H141880	I-87, US 17 (Elizabeth City Byp)	SR 1100 / 1140 (Okisko Road)	US 17/158 north of Elizabeth City	Upgrade Freeway to Interstate Standards
H141931	I-87, US 17	US 17/158 (North Road St)	Virginia State Line	Upgrade Arterial to Freeway/Expressway



BRT

BRT is a way to build quality transit *faster*.

BRT = Bus Rapid Transit

BRT is a time efficient, cost-effective, high quality, and inherently scalable regional rapid transit solution.

BRT is a way to build quality transit *faster*.

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BRT is a way to build quality transit *faster*.

BRT = **B**us **R**apid **T**ransit

BRT = **B**uses **R**esembling **T**rains

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BRT = **B**us **R**apid **T**ransit

BRT = **B**uses **R**esembling **T**rains

BRT = **B**uilding **R**oads for **T**ransit



[Redacted]

DEDICATED LANES

DEDICATED LANES

SOLAR PANELS

HIGH-VISIBILITY
CROSSWALK

MULTI-USE PATH



Metropolitan Triangle local option sales taxes dedicated to transit

Durham Co. (Durham, since 2011)

Orange Co. (Chapel Hill, since 2012)

Wake Co. (Raleigh, Cary, since 2016)

Regional business support for BRT and enhanced transit:

- It will create new travel options for associates and customers, support economic development and tourism, expand accessibility, increase opportunity, and improve economic mobility and sustainability.

Benefit of BRT-based transit network

Build more transit

... for more people ...

... faster ...

... with more scalability, and less risk.













RED transit lanes





RED transit lanes

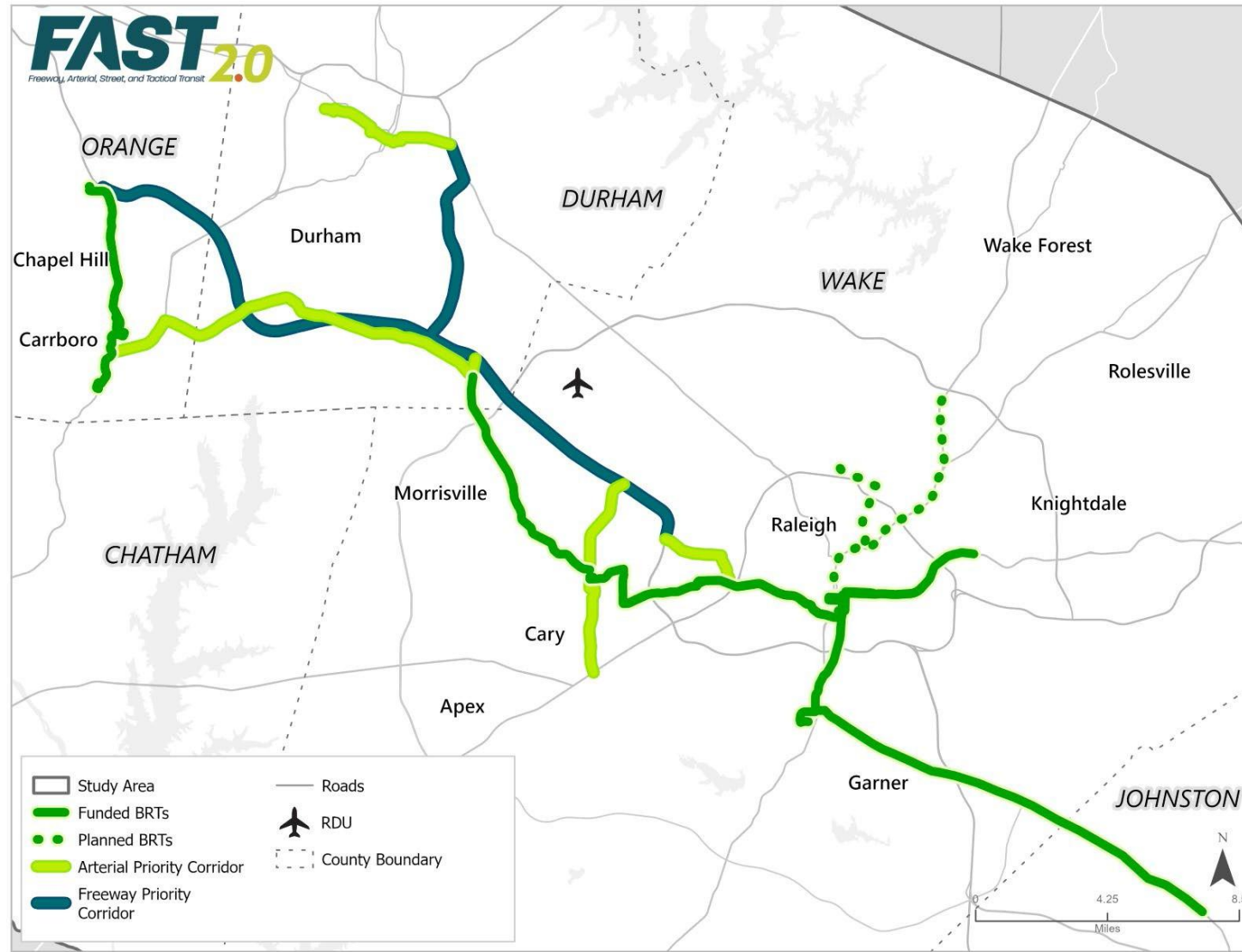
R = Right turns

E = Emergency vehicles

D = Driveway access

Regional Priority Corridors and Regional Mobility Hubs

- Wake BRT + core 4 corridors (E, S, W, N)
- Wake BRT + 2 extensions (SE, NW)
- Central Durham
- Chapel Hill – North-South
- Cary – North-South
- W Raleigh – Trinity/Blue Ridge
- Freeway BRT – I-40, I-885, NC 54
- GoTriangle Mobility Hub
- I-40 Airport platform exchange station

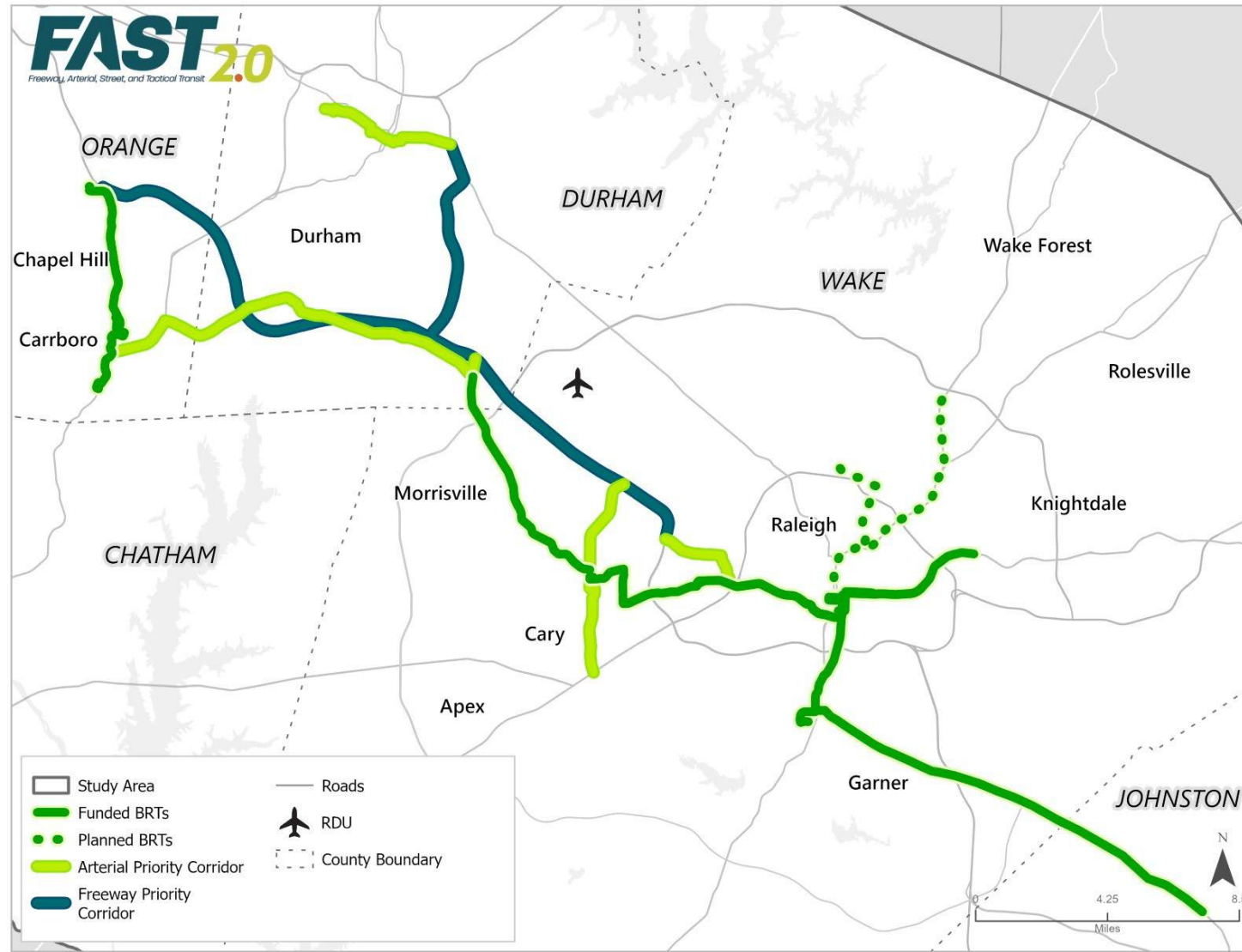


Ongoing regional BRT / linkages study

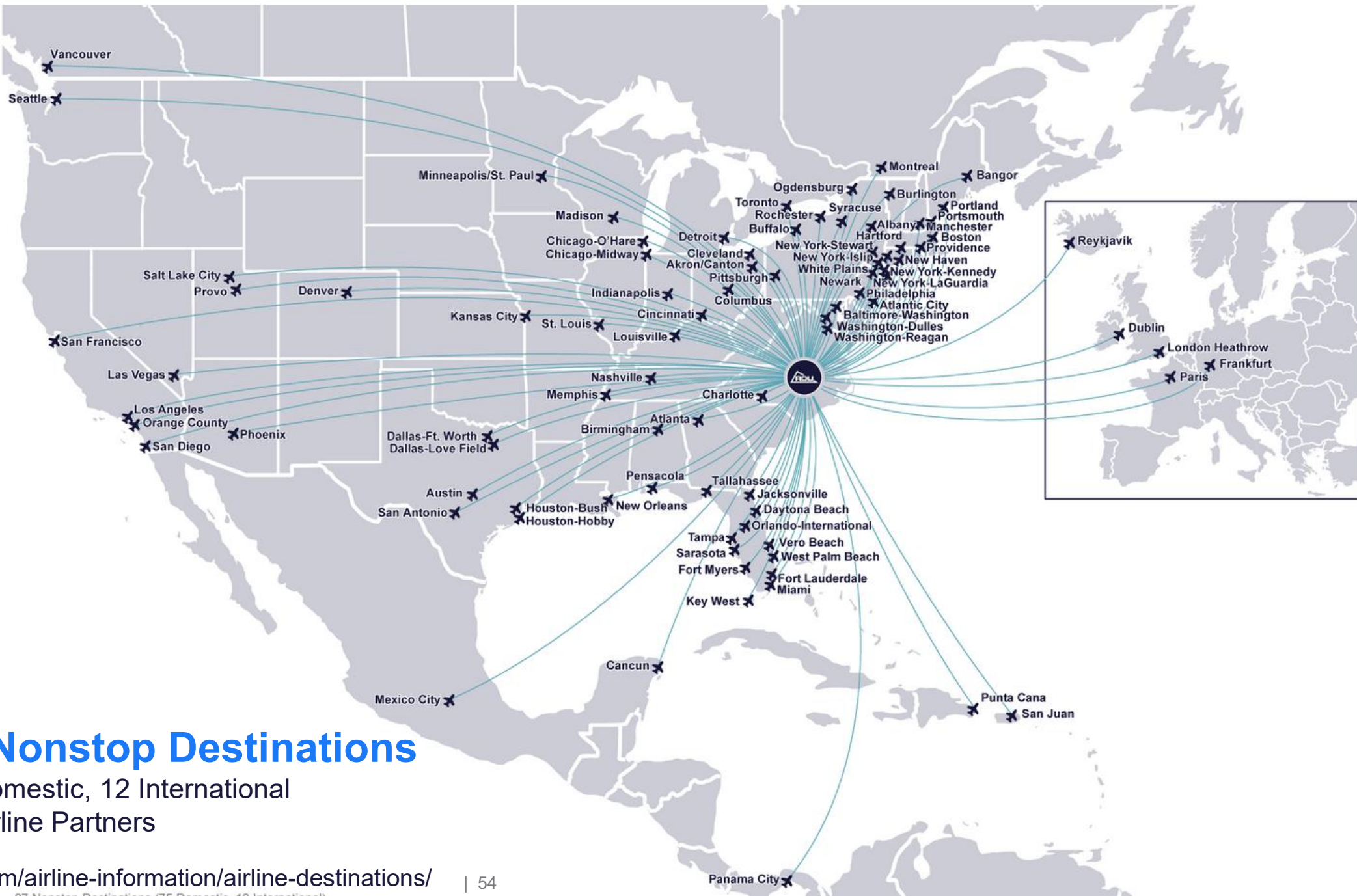
- RTA
- Research Triangle Foundation of NC
- CAMPO
- TriangleWest
- GoTriangle
- Raleigh
- Durham
- Cary
- Chapel Hill
- Wake Co
- Durham Co
- Orange Co
- Johnston Co
- Chatham Co
- Central Pines Regional Council

NCDOT managing study

– results at RTA brunch on August 8



RDU Airport



87 Nonstop Destinations

75 Domestic, 12 International

17 Airline Partners



Vision 2040 Phase 1

Four major projects planned for next 10 years:

- New 5L-23R Runway: \$1.08 billion
- Terminal 2 Landside Expansion: \$775 million
- Park Economy 3 Expansion: \$164 million
- Airport Ring Road Expansion: \$175 million

Total cost of these and others: \$2.5 billion

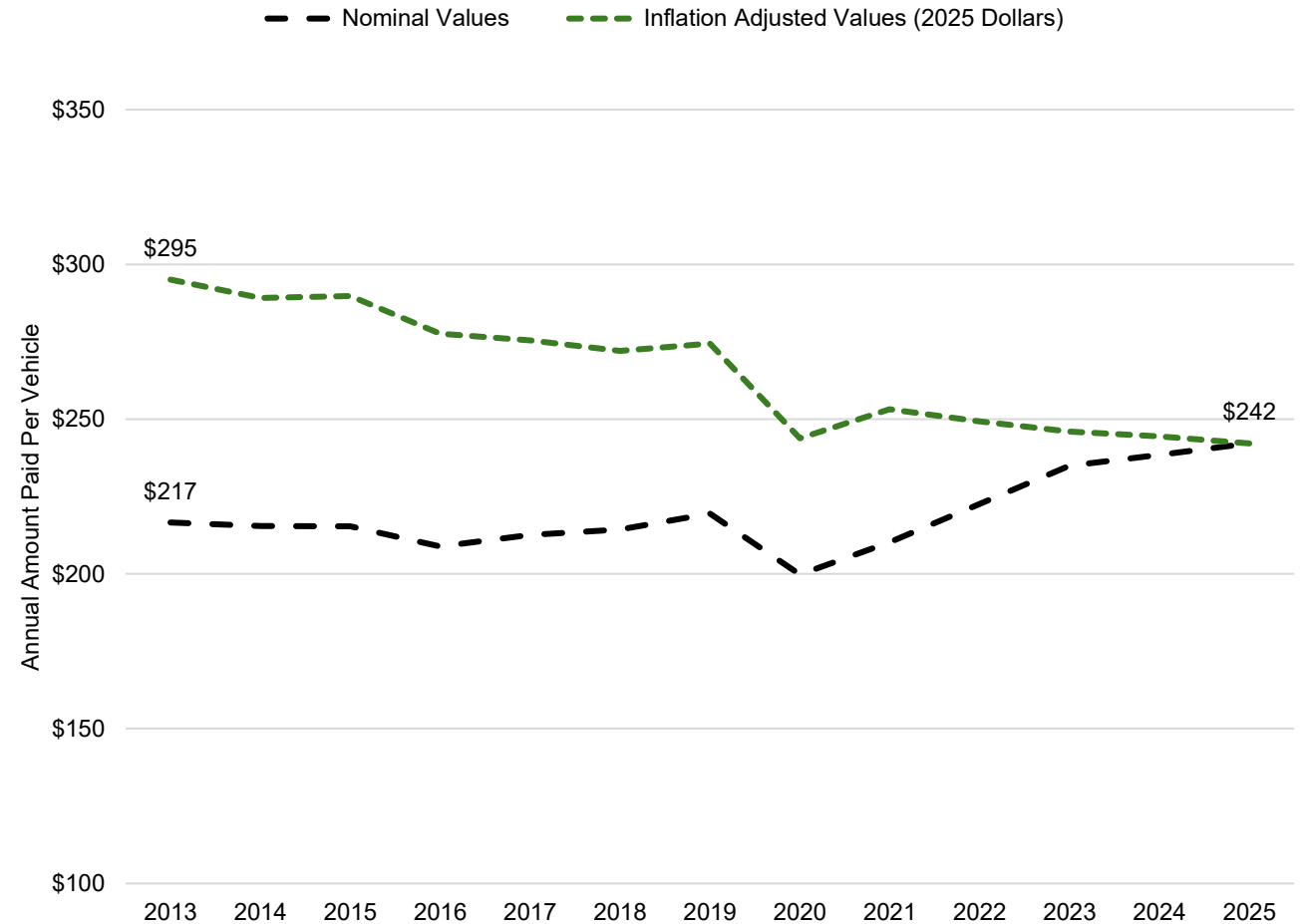
State Highway Funding

The Challenge: Gas Tax Revenue Slowdown

State data and forecasts show steady gas tax revenue growth, but at a slower pace than inflation or road maintenance costs.

- Inflation adjusted, gas tax revenue per car down **18%**
- Gas tax provides **35%** of state funding, down from **48%** in 2014.
- Inflation, fuel efficiency, EV adoption, and external shocks present risks to gas tax stability

Average Gasoline Tax Paid per Vehicle in North Carolina: 2013-2025

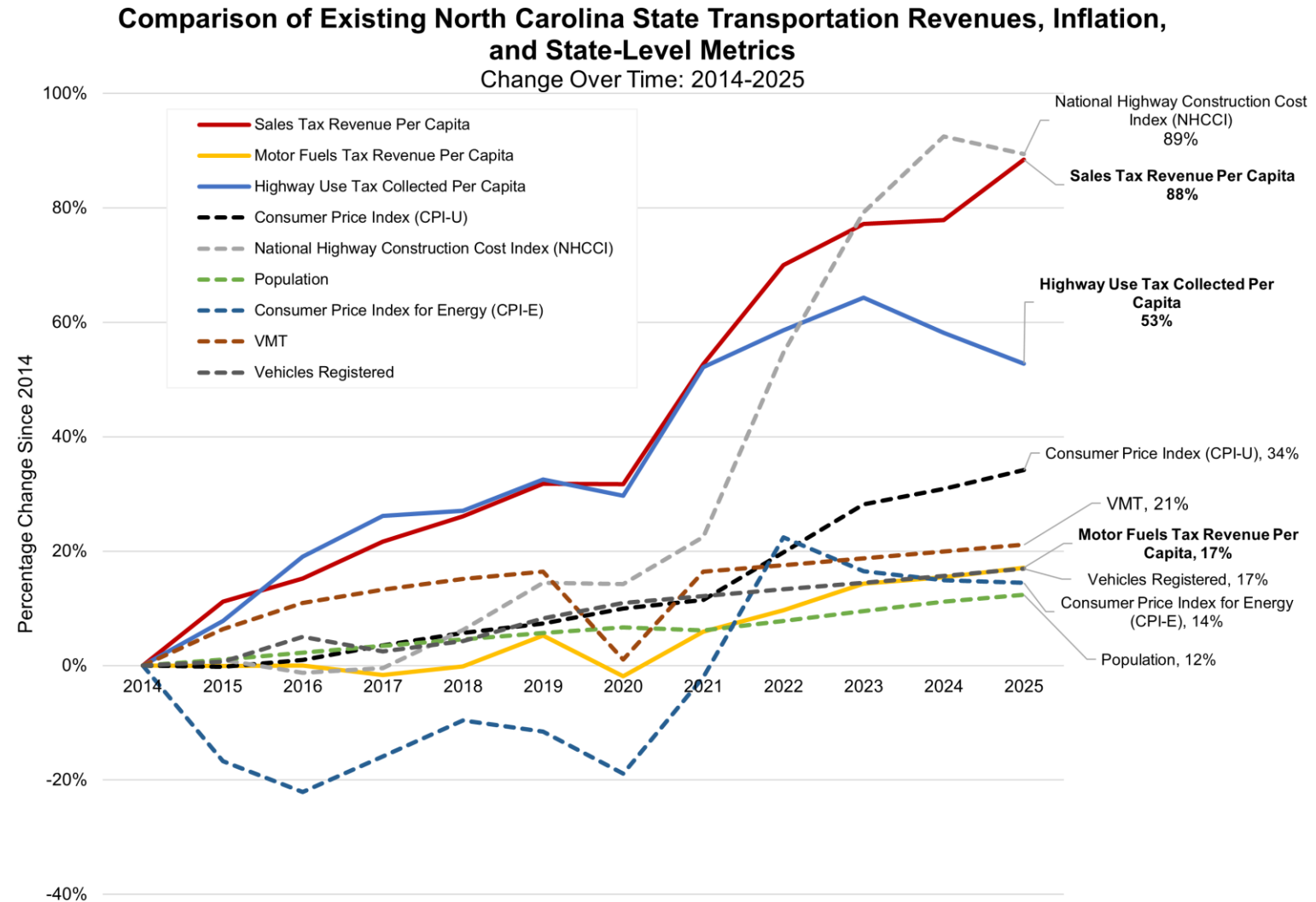


Inflation Consistently Outpaces Gas Tax Revenue Growth

Divergence in rates of gas tax revenue, over the last 10 years growth rates of,

- **17%** gas tax per capita
- **34%** CPI and
- **89%** Highway Construction Cost

Other state revenue sources (sales tax, highway use tax) have been more responsive to inflation



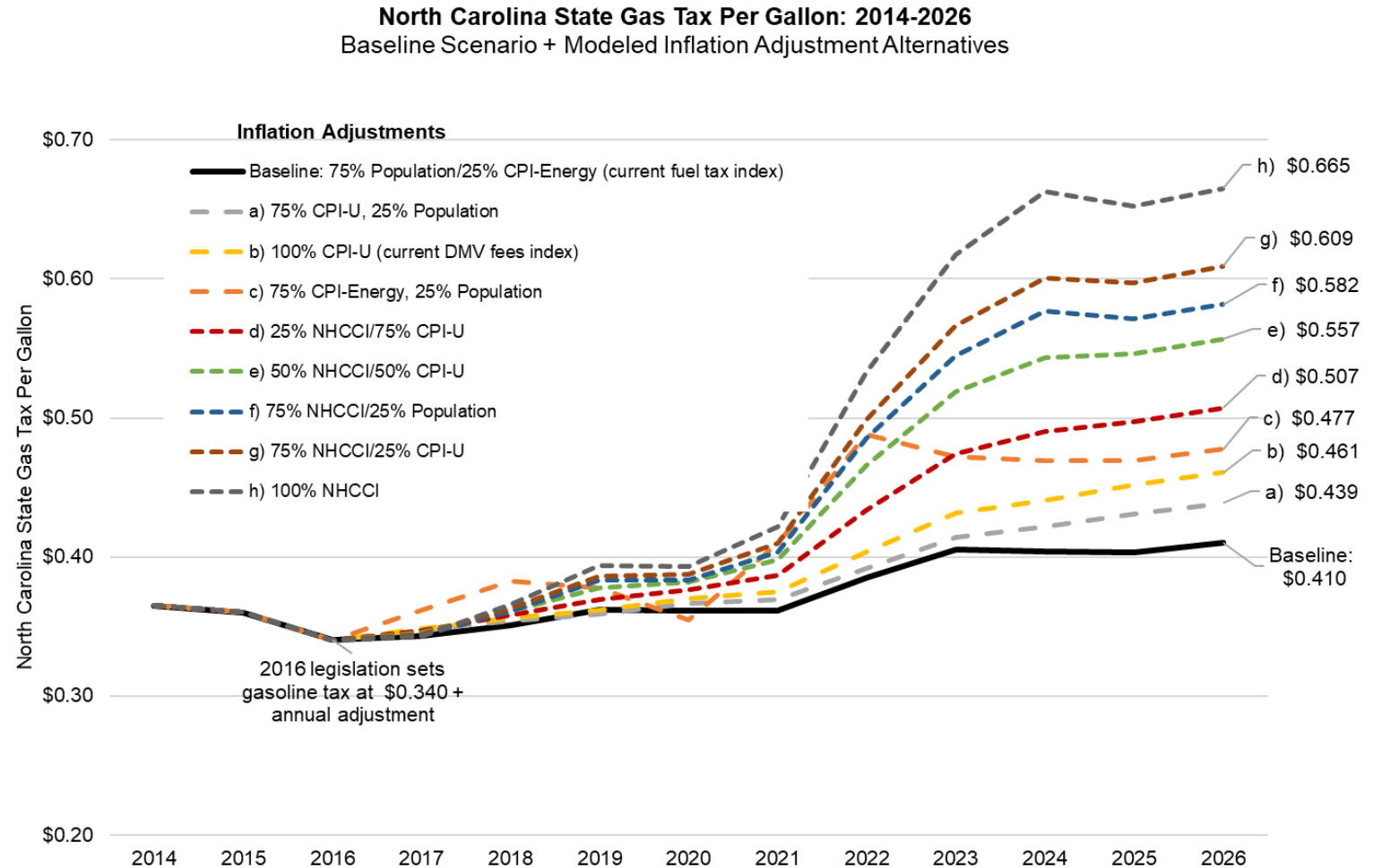
Data from NCDOR, NCDOT, Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI), FHWA National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI).
Produced by RTI, January 2026

Alternatives to address inflation result in higher gas tax

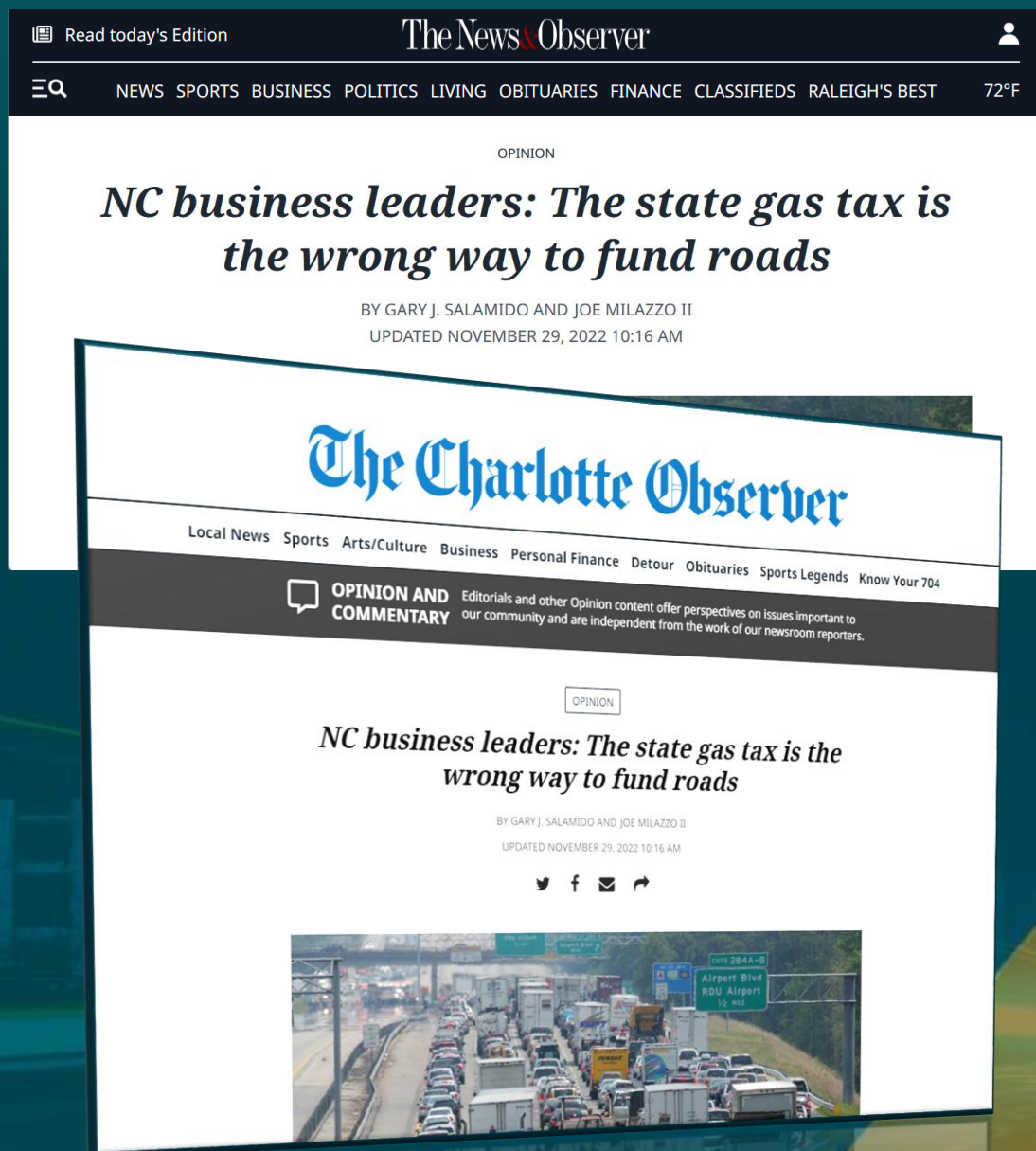
Current **41¢** / gal state gas tax, based on population and CPI-energy growth formula

Hypothetical alt. formulas based on inflation and construction costs could range from **44¢** to **66¢** / gal

State gas tax revenue would increase, by 5% to over 30%



Data from NCDOR, Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI), FHWA National Highway Construction Cost Index
Based on date of updated NC gas tax formula in 2016, status quo of 75% population growth and 25% consumer price index for energy. Produced by RTI, February 2026



The Access User Fee Opportunity

An access user fee applies a consistent price for all registered vehicles, regardless of individual usage.

The state gas tax would be simultaneously repealed upon full access fee implementation.

Access User Fee – overview

- Goal - provide a simple, fair, and resilient method of stabilizing revenue
- An access user fee activated in 2026 would be around \$250 per year, or about \$21 per month
- Current partial access user fees: electric (\$214.50), hybrid (\$107.25/year)
- Drivers pay the same amount, regardless of travel
- Gas tax would be completely repealed; diesel tax would remain
- Since it is a user fee, rather than a usage fee, there will be no need to track or report mileage, etc.
- Keep highway projects across North Carolina moving

Highway Funding Options

- State gas tax, perhaps with simplified and aligned indexing
- Access user fee
- Highway use tax
- Sales tax dedication

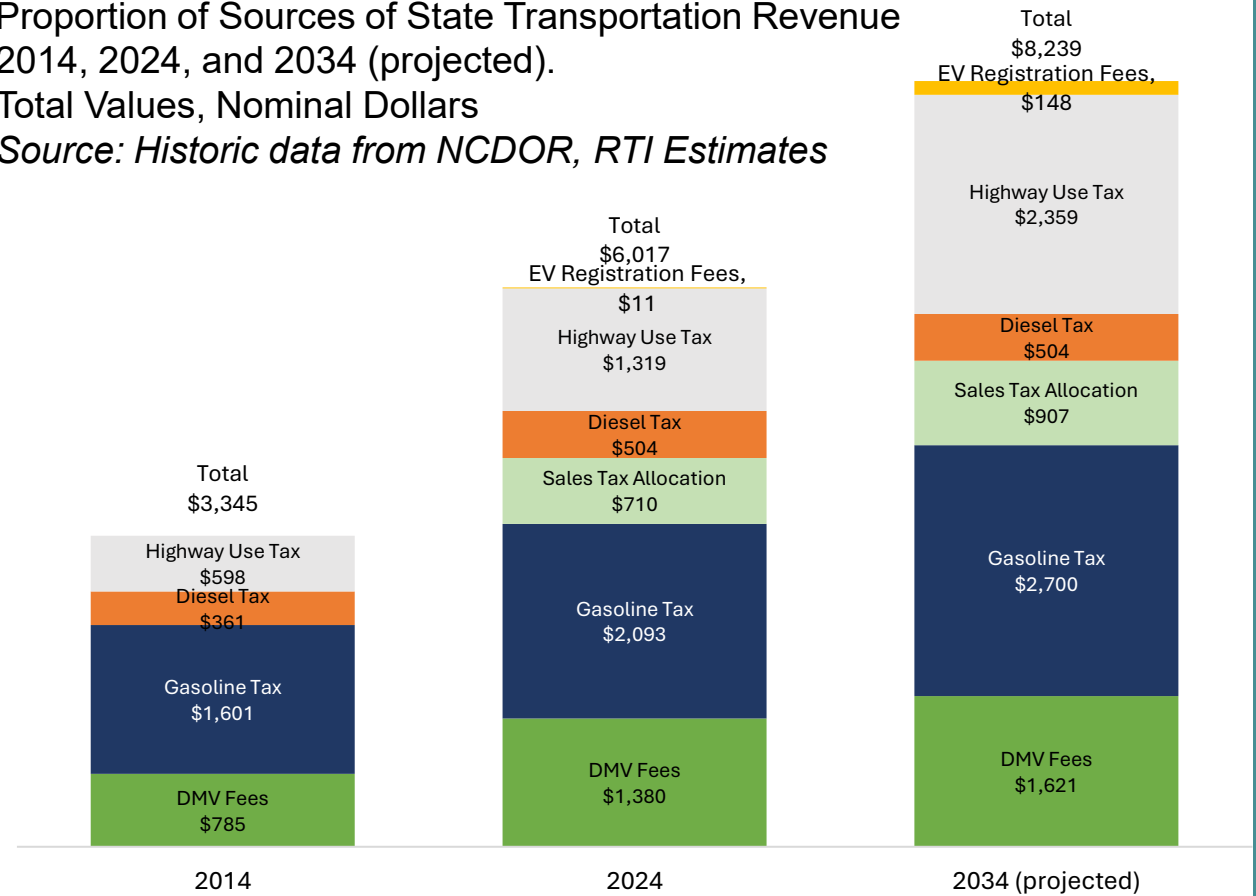
Highway Funding Options

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Proportion of Sources of State Transportation Revenue
2014, 2024, and 2034 (projected).

Total Values, Nominal Dollars

Source: Historic data from NCDOR, RTI Estimates



Highway Funding Options

- State gas tax, perhaps with simplified and aligned indexing
- Access user fee
- Highway use tax
- Sales tax dedication

Criteria for evaluation and success

- How easy they are to collect / avoid. Enforcement, propulsion, live in NC or not, gas tax “holiday”, etc.
- Whether they are tied to road use
- How well they address inflation, or economic and other “shocks”
- How “fair” and accepted they are

Highway Funding Options

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- Access user fee
- Highway use tax
- Sales tax dedication

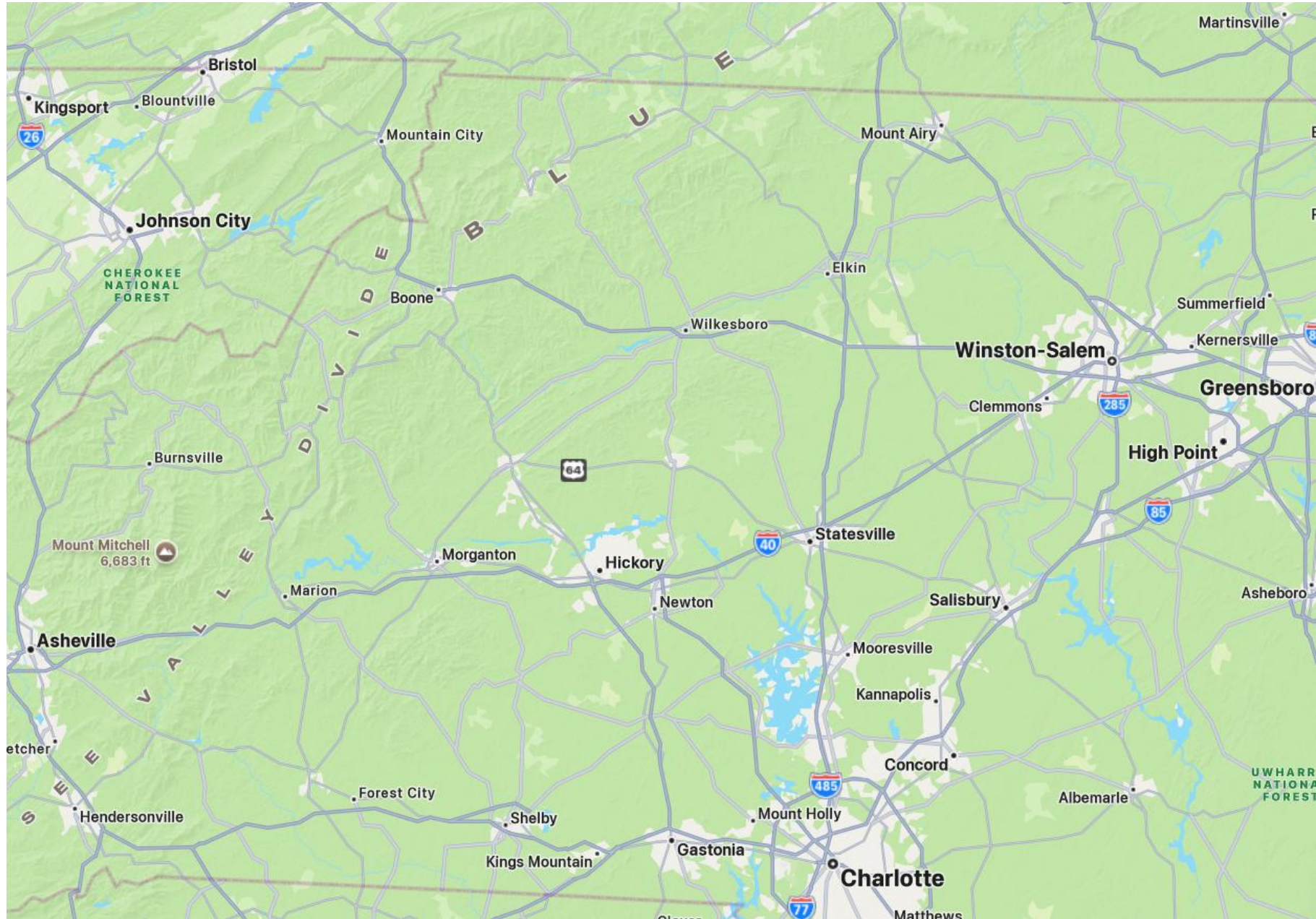
Proposed Federal EV / hybrid fees (BUILD America 250)
\$130 (EV), \$35 (plug-in hybrid); +\$5/2 years; max \$150, \$50

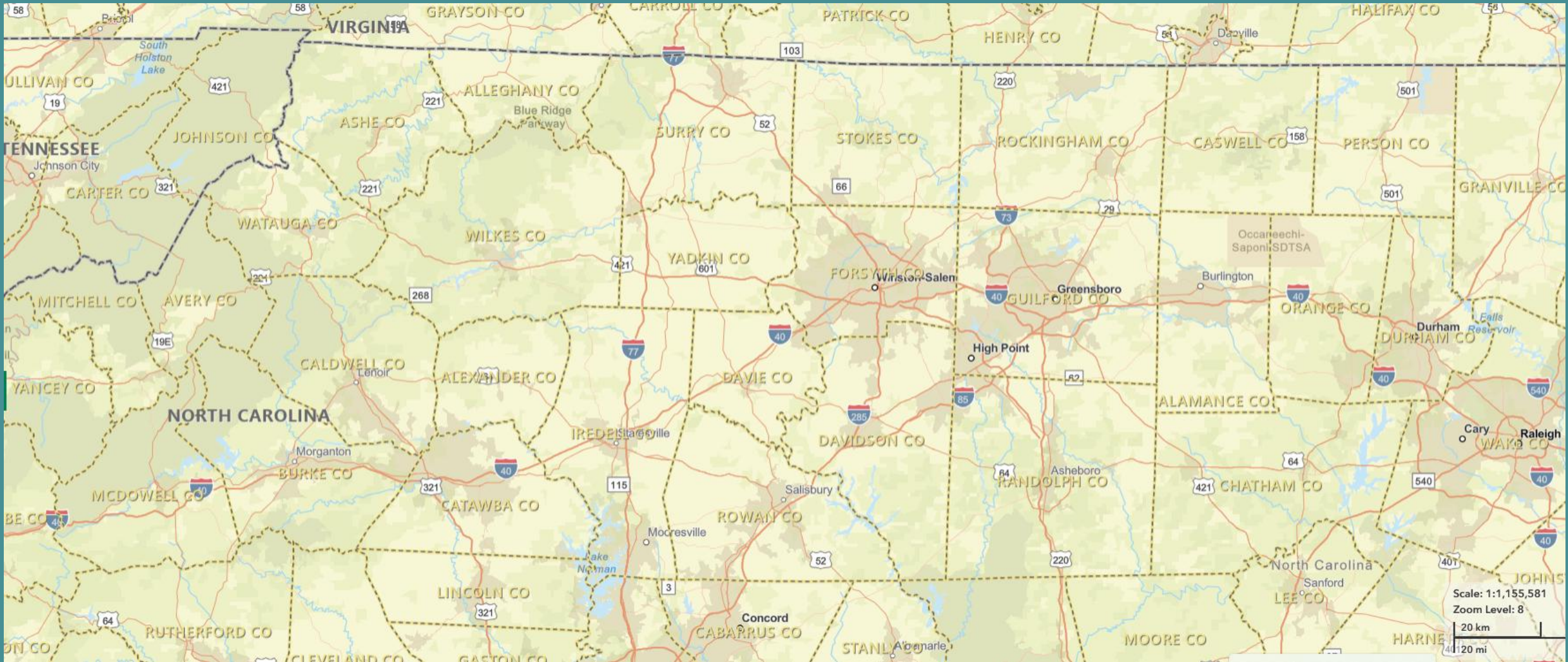
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A few observations

In a rural (or suburban) area, the most important project for your economic future may not be in your town, county, or highway division at all.





Simplify your projects.

Simplify your communications.

Support your elected officials.

And ask them to support your projects.

Expect things to go wrong and “take forever.”

Commit to working together, so they take "less forever."

If you want to make a mistake, go too fast.

If you want to make more mistakes,
and build nothing, go too slow.

You should never be amazed
at how long projects take to get constructed...

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Vision Northwest North Carolina: Let's Get Moving

**Joe Milazzo II, PE
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