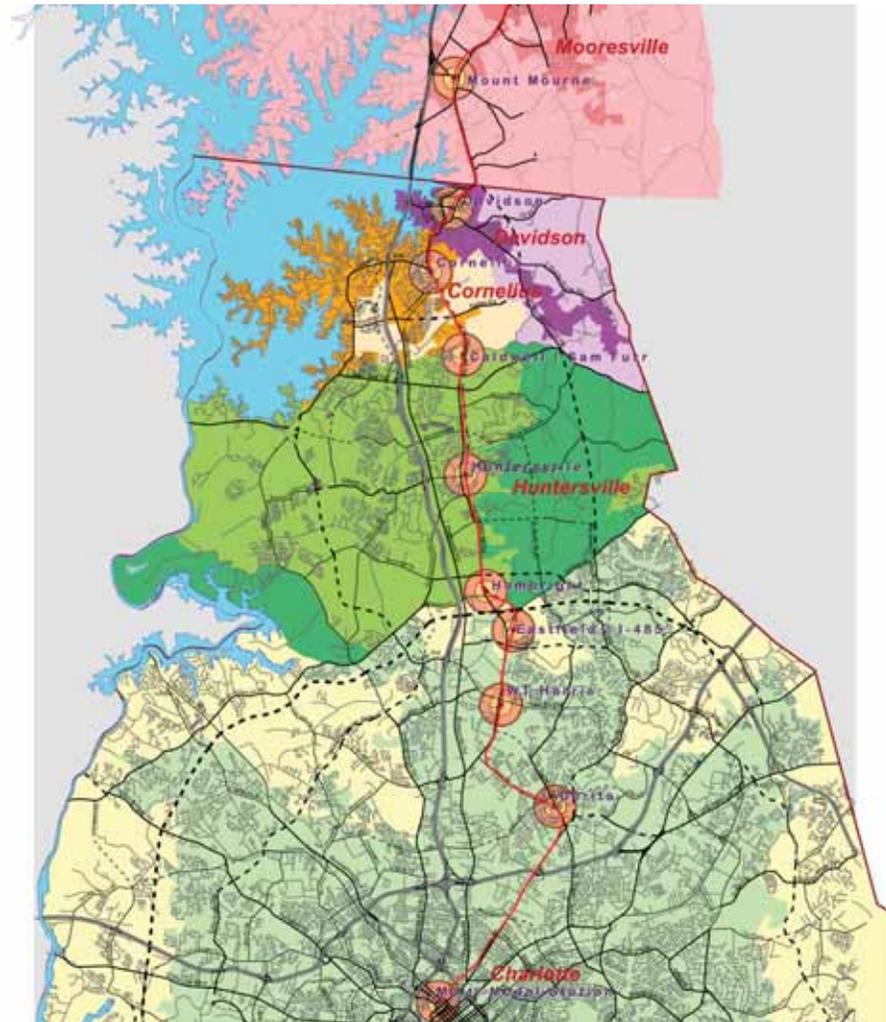


Currently Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is in the planning phase of the Corridor System Plan, a system of transit lines that will be emanating from Center City Charlotte, connecting the region. The north corridor is proposed as a commuter rail line that will run north-south to Charlotte on the Norfolk Southern "O" line. Stations may be located at Sam Furr Road, as well as downtown Davidson. At this time, planning has not yet begun on potential bus routes connecting area residents to the rail. However, in light of NC 73's role as a regional east-west corridor, NC 73 should be identified as a transit corridor, linking to the rail. The Centers along NC 73 should be thought of as transit nodes and developed as Transit Oriented Development. Their diversity of uses, density and design as walkable places will play a critical role in the larger regional transit system, contributing to a healthy ridership, or sufficient number of riders to make the system viable. Residential density and a mixture of uses are key factors in creating healthy ridership, with people walking and biking to use transit in the Centers.



Park and Ride

Developing dense Centers that help sustain healthy ridership is important. Equally as important is making transit a viable option for residents in adjacent developments. The residents will need Park and Ride Lots, transit stops where commuters can leave their cars, take an express bus to the rail station, and also have access to the retail and services such as daycare or dry cleaners that would be located in these centers. From a station design standpoint, additional commuter parking should be provided. However, parking should be situated so that commuters have access to retail and services, to contribute to their viability as well. Commuter parking should be hidden from street view, behind buildings, with passageways to the street. In the Neighborhood Centers for example, the transit stop can be at the green, with parking spaces dedicated behind buildings. In Poplar Center, the commuter parking can be located within a midblock parking structure, preferably on the blocks directly adjacent to NC 73. Based on commuter patterns, this structure is preferably located on the north side of NC 73.

Key Factors in the Success of the Centers as TODs

The Centers should be developed as Transit Oriented Development, however larger policies and the efficiency of the Transit system will affect their success. Making transit attractive requires that it be more convenient than driving. It is a question of convenience and price. Is transit comfortable, faster and cheaper than driving?

Key factors in creating viable transit will include:

- Route structure, good connections of origins and destinations. Stops located where people live and work.
- Service frequencies, time between available the buses or rail.
- Service timing, the time between connections.

Another factor is the cost of commuting. If the cost of parking at the destination cheaper than riding transit? As an incentive, free or inexpensive parking should be provided at the centers. This will require public/private partnerships to finance the construction of the parking. Creative options such as density bonuses to developers who provide additional parking can be explored.



An example of a potential future bus route which utilizes key centers as stops.



The Centers can accommodate additional commuter parking within the blocks. In the case of the Neighborhood Centers, the greens can function as the transit stops. Busses stop at the green. Goods, services and retail such as a small grocer and daycare help reduce car trips.



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