



# Reflecting Raleigh

THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Raleigh  
Planning

## A City in Motion: Traffic and Transportation Solutions

### Community Conversation Summary

This report consolidates key discussions, themes, and action points from all the tables at the Transportation Community Conversation event on February 26, 2025 at Chavis Community Center. The event was the second of two public engagements on transportation, hosted by Raleigh Transportation, Planning and Development, and Community Engagement staff for Reflecting Raleigh: The Next Comprehensive Plan.

The conversation portion of the event followed a presentation from Raleigh's BRT Program Supervisor, Het Patel, and a panel discussion featuring city and regional transportation and sustainability staff. Event attendees were randomly assigned to one of twelve tables for three rounds of facilitated discussion.

#### Volunteer table hosts asked participants to following questions:

- **Round 1:** As Raleigh expands outward, how do you think we should get people where they need to go?
- **Round 2:** Think about a trip you made today- to the store, to your kid's school, to work to this meeting. How did you travel? What made your trip easy? What made it challenging?
- **Round 3:** Have you heard of transportation solutions in other cities that you think could work in Raleigh? What partnerships should Raleigh pursue to improve or expand existing programs?

### Key Themes

#### Multimodal Transportation & Accessibility

Participants highlighted the importance of providing multiple transportation options to reduce reliance on personal cars and improve accessibility for all residents. Key discussion points included:

- **Expanding transportation choices:** There is a need for a variety of options beyond driving, including better support for biking, walking, public transit, and park-and-ride facilities.

- **First/last-mile connectivity:** Getting to and from transit is a challenge. Gaps in sidewalks, bike paths, and other connections make it hard for people to reach transit stops, which remains a major barrier to using public transportation.
- **Barriers to alternative modes:** Factors such as weather, travel distance, and lack of safe routes often discourage people from walking, biking, or taking transit for daily trips.

### Recommended Actions:

- **Improve first/last-mile links:** Enhance connections to transit through measures like completing sidewalk networks, adding bike paths, and introducing neighborhood shuttle services, so that people can easily reach bus or train stops from their homes and workplaces.
- **Expand accessible transit services:** Strengthen paratransit and on-demand shuttle programs (with user-friendly reservation systems) to better serve seniors and people with disabilities, ensuring everyone can use transit or other alternatives comfortably.

## Urban Density & Land Use Planning

Discussions underscored that how the city grows will directly impact transportation. Participants felt that strategic land use decisions can make it easier to get around without a car. Key points included:

- **Increasing density and walkability:** Encouraging more compact, higher-density development (especially in existing urban areas) was seen as crucial to reduce reliance on personal vehicles. Walkable neighborhoods make public transit more effective and put daily needs within reach.
- **Mixed-use development:** By planning for mixed-use neighborhoods (with housing, jobs, and shopping in the same area), the city can shorten travel distances and reduce the need for long commutes.
- **Infill over sprawl:** Many urged the City of Raleigh to prioritize infill development (building within the existing urban footprint) rather than outward sprawl. Focusing growth in established areas supports transit use and makes better use of existing infrastructure.
- **Housing affordability and access:** Participants noted that affordable housing policies should encourage walkable, transit-friendly communities, allowing more people to live close to work and essential services.

### Recommended Actions:

- **Implement "10-minute city" principles:** Plan neighborhoods so that most essential services and amenities are within a 10-minute walk or bike ride of where people live. This approach would promote walking and biking by design.
- **Maintain transit-oriented commitments:** Ensure that areas designated for transit-oriented development (such as Transit Overlay Districts) are backed by long-term commitments to provide quality transit service and infrastructure. New development in these zones should be closely coordinated with transit planning.
- **Integrate housing and transit planning:** Align land use and transportation policies by encouraging development of affordable housing near transit corridors and in walkable areas. Coordinating transit investments with housing growth will create inclusive neighborhoods where residents can rely less on cars.

## Public Transit Efficiency & Innovation

Participants shared many ideas for improving the public transit system's reach and appeal, balancing the expansion of service with enhancements to existing routes. Key discussion points included:

- **Coverage vs. frequency:** A common debate was whether to extend transit service to more areas or to increase frequency on current routes. Some emphasized the importance of covering underserved parts of the city as Raleigh grows, while others stressed that buses and trains need to run more often and more reliably to attract riders.
- **Investing in rapid transit:** There was strong support for expanding Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines and adding express bus routes. Faster, more frequent service – especially connecting key hubs and suburban areas – was seen as essential to make transit a viable alternative to driving and to reduce congestion.
- **Park-and-ride solutions:** Many suggested establishing park-and-ride facilities on the city's outskirts and in suburban areas. This would allow commuters to drive from home to a nearby transit hub, then take transit into the city, easing traffic in central Raleigh.
- **Partnerships and innovation:** Attendees proposed partnering with the private sector and community organizations to improve transit. Ideas included working with major employers on commuter shuttles or incentive programs and collaborating with tech companies or ride-share services to offer first-mile/last-mile solutions.
- **Public awareness and perception:** It was noted that public transit in Raleigh needs stronger community support. Better marketing, education, and even rebranding of the transit system could improve its image and boost ridership by highlighting the convenience and benefits of using buses and trains.

### Recommended Actions:

- **Increase transit frequency and speed:** Boost bus service frequency on busy routes and introduce more rapid/express service. This includes extending planned BRT lines or creating express bus routes to key suburban hubs so that transit travel times become more competitive with driving.
- **Establish park-and-ride hubs:** Implement a network of park-and-ride lots in strategic locations outside the downtown core. These facilities should be well-marked and integrated with transit schedules, making it easy for drivers to switch to transit for the remainder of their trip.
- **Forge public-private partnerships:** Work with employers and private companies to expand transit options. For example, develop employer-sponsored commuter programs, create corporate transit pass incentives, or pilot on-demand shuttles in collaboration with tech firms to serve areas or times that traditional transit doesn't cover well.
- **Leverage technology for riders:** Partner with technology providers to improve the transit user experience with real-time information and navigation tools. Easy-to-use mobile apps for trip planning and live bus tracking can make the system more user-friendly and predictable.
- **Market and rebrand transit:** Launch outreach and marketing campaigns to improve the public perception of transit. By highlighting success stories and conveniences (e.g. modern buses with Wi-Fi or the environmental benefits of riding transit), the city can improve the system's image and attract a broader range of riders.
- **Advocate for regional transit connections:** Collaborate at the regional and state level to pursue high-speed or regional express transit options (such as high-speed rail linking major North Carolina cities). Participants saw regional connectivity as a long-term goal that would expand travel choices and support economic growth.

## Infrastructure & Safety Improvements

Ensuring the safety and comfort of those walking, biking, or taking transit was a recurring theme. Participants pointed out specific infrastructure improvements that would make non-car transportation more viable. Key points included:

- **Connected bike and pedestrian networks:** Residents want more continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, greenways, and protected bike lanes. Filling gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network is needed so people can safely walk or bike to destinations without worrying about missing links or dangerous segments.
- **Safety features and lighting:** Basic safety infrastructure is often lacking. Better street lighting, clearly marked bike lanes (preferably separated from traffic), and traffic-calming measures would make walking and biking safer, especially at night or in high-traffic areas. Even amenities like weather-proof bike storage at key locations can encourage cycling by addressing practical concerns.
- **Speed management:** Speeding was widely cited as a threat to pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in denser neighborhoods. Participants emphasized that lowering speed limits (and enforcing them) in pedestrian-heavy areas would greatly improve safety for everyone on the road.
- **Accessible infrastructure for all:** Attendees stressed the importance of designing streets and sidewalks for people of all ages and abilities. This includes fixing uneven or missing sidewalks, adding curb ramps, and ensuring intersections are ADA-compliant so that those with wheelchairs, strollers, or visual impairments can travel safely.
- **Safe transit stops:** The condition of bus stops and transit stations was also discussed. Poorly lit or uncomfortable bus stops can deter riders. Participants want transit stops with adequate lighting, seating, shelter from weather, and other measures that make waiting for transit more secure and comfortable, especially after dark.

### Recommended Actions:

- **Expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure:** Invest in building out a more complete network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and protected bike lanes. Prioritize projects that connect existing fragments into a continuous system, allowing safe travel by foot or bike across the city.
- **Enhance safety in street design:** Incorporate features like lower neighborhood speed limits, traffic calming (e.g. speed humps, curb bump-outs), and clearly delineated bike lanes to slow down traffic and reduce conflicts between cars and vulnerable road users.
- **Improve lighting and amenities:** Ensure streets and transit areas are well-lit and equipped with helpful amenities. This includes installing better lighting along key walking and biking routes, providing covered bike parking, and adding wayfinding signage so people feel safe and confident using these modes day or night.
- **Ensure ADA compliance and accessibility:** Regularly upgrade infrastructure to meet ADA standards, such as adding or repairing curb ramps, tactile crossing indicators, and smooth surfaces. An emphasis on universal design will make sidewalks and transit access usable for seniors, wheelchair users, and others with mobility challenges.
- **Upgrade transit stop facilities:** Make waiting for transit safer and more comfortable by improving bus stops. Add shelters, benches, lighting, and security features (e.g. emergency call boxes or cameras) at bus stops and transit centers. Well-maintained, visible stops will increase riders' sense of safety while using public transportation.

## Consolidated Recommendations with References

Recommendation	Tables
Improve bus frequency and express transit options.	Tables 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11
Invest in safety improvements for cyclists and pedestrians.	Tables 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10
Promote mixed-use development to reduce reliance on cars.	Tables 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11
Develop high-speed rail or regional express transit options.	Tables 5, 6, 9, 11
Rebrand public transit to attract a wider audience.	Tables 4, 6, 10
Implement park-and-ride systems in suburban areas.	Tables 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11
Encourage public-private partnerships to support transit initiatives.	Tables 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11