

Executive Summary

Founded in 1959, Research Triangle Park (RTP) is a national and regional trend setter. The Park continues to evolve and transform to meet the changing demand of innovative, technology-based research and development companies. The Park is home to such innovators as IBM, GlaxoSmithKline, and Cisco and is affiliated with nationally recognized educational institutions such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University and North Carolina State University. However, despite collaboration with Triangle Transit and notable efforts by RTF staff to promote SmartCommute@RTP, the Park has yet to apply its trademark innovation to create a sustainable transportation solution.

Purpose

This report suggests ways that RTP can apply its renowned creativity to smart transportation solutions for its workers. The purpose of the report is to identify measures to improve employee access to the Park using modes of transportation other than driving alone. The strategies to achieve the goals described in this report involve improvements to transit facilities and service, improvements to information dissemination, and increased incentives to encourage employees to use alternative modes of transportation and coordinated land use decisions around the Park.

Existing Conditions

This report investigated the Park's current transportation services and employee travel behavior, the amenities for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists, the surrounding land use patterns of municipalities and counties, and the available information and incentives offered to RTP employees. Seven objectives emerged from this investigation to guide our recommendations for increasing the share of RTP employees commuting to work by an alternative mode.

Goals and Objectives

The intent of this report is to present recommendations and demonstration projects that work towards Triangle Transit's mission, but are specific to RTP:

To provide employees in the Research Triangle Park with reliable, safe, and easy-to-use travel choices that reduce congestion and energy use, save money, and promote sustainability, healthier lifestyles, and a more environmentally responsible community.

The seven objectives identified through the investigation of the Park's existing conditions are:

1. Provide Incentives for Employees
2. Improve Access to Information
3. Increase Employer Participation
4. Expand Non-single Occupancy Vehicle Options
5. Improve Transit Service
6. Improve the Built Environment
7. Improve Land Use to Support Alternative Transportation Modes

Recommendations

These recommendations aim to support Triangle Transit's mission with a specific focus on employees working in RTP. Detailed information for each recommendation is included in the full report.

Information Recommendations

Information and Incentives Recommendation	Objective achieved	Time frame	Responsible party	Cost	Funding source
I-1: Subsidize alternative transportation	1, 3	Short-term	RTP employers	Free bus passes: \$10/pax/wk Vanpool subsidy: \$58/pax/wk Bike commuter reimbursement: \$20/cyclist/month	RTP employers and employees; cost savings can be realized through IRS nontaxable fringe benefits program
I-2: Allow telecommuting opportunities	1	Short-term	RTP employers	Low	RTP employers
I-3: Improve visibility and accessibility of transportation link on RTP website	2	Short-term	RTF	Low	RTF
I-4: Increase visibility of alternative transportation choices	2, 3	Short-term	SmartCommute@rtp; RTP employers	Low	SmartCommute@rtp; RTP employers
I-5: Diversify forms of communication	2, 3	Short-term	SmartCommute@rtp and participating companies	Low	SmartCommute@rtp and participating companies
I-6: Create a SmartCommute Challenge RTP company competition	1, 2, 3	Short-term	SmartCommute@rtp and participating companies	Low	SmartCommute@rtp and participating companies



Transportation Recommendations

Recommendation	Objective achieved	Time frame	Responsible party	Cost	Funding source
T-1: Triangle Transit contracts with private vanpool companies	4	Short-term	Triangle Transit	Low cost (comparable to existing vanpool service): \$48/pax/wk	<i>Administrative costs:</i> Triangle Transit <i>Operating and capital costs:</i> FTA (via Triangle Transit); RTP employers and employees
T-2: Provide Carsharing Opportunities on campuses	4, 5	Short-term	<i>Option 1:</i> RTP employer <i>Option 2:</i> RTF <i>Option 3:</i> RTP employers and RTF	Costs vary	<i>Administrative costs:</i> Absorbed by lead agency (any revenue will be shared by administrator and ZipCar) <i>Operating costs:</i> RTP employers and employees
T-3: Direct transit routes from North Raleigh and Cary to RTP employers	4, 5	Short-term	<i>Option 1:</i> Triangle Transit <i>Option 2:</i> RTP employers	Medium to high cost	<i>Option 1:</i> Public-private partnership <i>Option 2:</i> RTP employers
T-4: Privately operated shuttle from RTC to offices	4, 5	Short-term	RTP employers and SmartCommute@rtp	Medium cost: Approximately \$20,000 per shuttle	RTP employers
T-5: Re-routing 201 through RTP	4, 5	Short-term	Triangle Transit	No additional costs	Triangle Transit, service change for 201 is allocated in Short Range Transportation Plan

Land Use Recommendations

Recommendation	Objective achieved	Time frame	Responsible party	Cost	Funding source
LU-1: Joint planning committee and creation of a joint land use and transportation plan	7	Medium-term	RTF	Low to medium cost	RTP Tax District and Municipal Jurisdictions surrounding RTP
LU-2: Stripe new crosswalks in RTP	6	Short-term	Triangle Transit, RTF, NCDOT	Low cost	RTP Tax District, NCDOT
LU-3: Locate multi-use trails in public/private easements and other right-of-ways	4, 6	Medium-term	RTF, Durham, Cary, Morrisville, utility companies, NCDOT, Triangle Land Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands	Costs vary depending on construction and length of trail	RTP Tax District, Municipal Jurisdictions
LU-5: Increase RTP property tax fees to fund recommendations	3, 4, 5	Short-term	RTF	Costs for RTP employers will vary; costs to RTF will be low	RTP employers

Demonstration Projects

The demonstration projects are intended to be implemented for a trial period to gauge the reaction and response of RTP employees prior to a full program. Details are included in the full report.

Direct Triangle Transit route from North Raleigh to central-east RTP

The purpose of this demonstration project is to increase transit ridership from North Raleigh to RTP by reducing travel time for commuters. The 27613 zip code in North Raleigh contains a high concentration of RTP employees, making it an ideal origin from which to launch this service. It is recommended that the shuttle be a direct route beginning at a park-and-ride location in the zip code 27613 and stopping at three to four employer locations in RTP. Zip code 27613 is west of Creedmoor Rd., stretches from Glenwood Ave. in the south to Durham Rd. in the north, and is bisected by I-540.

Wireless Internet Service on a Triangle Transit Bus Route and Vanpool

Triangle Transit should outfit route 311 with wireless internet. The purpose of this demonstration project is to attract new riders by increasing the quality of the commute from Cary and Apex to RTP. Employers along this route, such as the U.S. EPA, should be asked to help support the project with marketing assistance and by allowing employees to claim commuting time as work time due to the presence of the internet. Since the primary form of alternative transportation to RTP is ridesharing, Triangle Transit should also consider offering wireless internet on one or more of their vanpools. This aspect of the project will allow Triangle Transit to gauge the technology's effectiveness in smaller commuter vehicles.

Bus Stop Design Competition and Public Art Display

RTP should hold a public art competition to design and decorate Triangle Transit bus shelters inside the Park. The purpose of adding an artistic component to the bus

shelters is to encourage more RTP business commuters to consider Triangle Transit as an alternative means of transportation. The public art display will raise awareness of Triangle Transit facilities in RTP.

Host an Alternative Transportation Awareness Fair

Triangle Transit along with RTF and employers should host a moving exhibition and demonstration of transportation alternatives that would go to RTP companies. The Awareness Fair should provide information, personal assistance, and hands-on demonstrations of alternative transportation methods, including public transit, carpooling/vanpooling, cycling, and walking. A Triangle Transit bus should be used to demonstrate bus features, and how to safely ride and wait for the bus.

Conclusion

Shifting the transportation culture in a low-density, automobile-dominated setting like RTP will require a new vision for the Park's future. This report lays out a range of transportation and land use solutions that could have a significant impact on travel behavior of commuters to the Research Triangle Park. We hope this report will serve as a catalyst for the creation of that vision, and the collaboration necessary between Triangle Transit, the Research Triangle Foundation, and the Park's employers. With imagination and innovation –which have always come naturally to RTP – the Park can become a leader in sustainable transportation solutions and unmatched quality of life for its employees.