



FROM THE CAB – DECEMBER 2, 2025

Raleigh-Greensboro Rail Upgrade About to Begin

The long awaited improvement project to increase capacity for freight and passenger trains and speed up passenger trains is to begin soon. The \$170 million project is expected to take about 5 years to complete. Federal funds through the CRISI program in the amount of \$105 million are being supplemented by \$65 million provided by the North Carolina Railroad (NCR), Norfolk Southern, and the North Carolina DOT Rail Division. 69 miles of the corridor will be replaced by new 136 pound welded rail, and a curve will be improved near the site of the proposed Hillsborough passenger train station. A siding extension of four and a half miles will be constructed between Nelson and Clegg, and capacity improvements will be made between Durham and Morrisville to allow passenger trains to pass each other at speed. Also included is a grade separation at Cornwallis Road in Durham, and a short siding in Elon. The work is expected to shave running time for the Carolinian and Piedmont passenger trains. The North Carolina Railroad which owns the tracks will be providing flagging services for the project. It is in the process of hiring more flaggers to beef up its flagging services for Norfolk Southern and other railroads in 11 states.

The NCR leases to Norfolk Southern its right of way between Charlotte and Morehead City to NS which will last until 2044. Its entire length is 317 miles and includes Amtrak train routes between Charlotte and Selma. The Selma to Goldsboro, and Goldsboro to Morehead City segments are eyed for future rail passenger services being studied by the NC DOT Rail Division. Selma to Goldsboro is also part of plan to run passenger service between Raleigh and Wilmington, NC.

North Carolina Rail Plan

The NC Department of Transportation is nearing completion of the updated State Rail Plan that will set the vision for North Carolina's rail system while supporting the state's goals and policies. The plan considers strategic freight, passenger, and rail safety improvements designed to provide safe and reliable transportation services. Another goal is to spur economic development across the state. The last approved and adopted plan was completed in 2015. The plan's development is guided by the [U.S. Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act](#)

To comment on the draft plan go to the website and provide your input on potential investments to the state's rail system over the next 30 years. Make any comments before the December 10th deadline. All Aboard Carolinas will be following this through the approval process which ends in 2026. [NC State Rail Plan - PublicInput](#)

South Carolina completed its State Rail Plan in 2024 which recommended potential new rail passenger services from Columbia to Charlotte, and Columbia to Raleigh be considered for the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor ID Program. The plan also includes upgrades to the state's rail freight network, including completion of the rail terminal at the State Ports facility in North Charleston.

Charlotte Transportation Authority Update (MPTA)

Most of the appointments for the new authority are now filled, with the Mecklenburg County Commission expected to make it's 6 selections in the coming days. Three seats are allocated for state-level appointments filled by the NC Senate President Pro Tem, the NC House Speaker, and the Governor. The board will also have members appointed by the City of Charlotte (12 seats), Mecklenburg County (6 seats), and the six towns in the county (1 seat each).The total board will have 27 members.

Here is a list of persons approved to date:

Charlotte:

From the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance: Wyatt Dixon, Lucia Zapata-Griffith

From the Foundation for the Carolinas: Peter Pappas

From the Mayor's office: Charles Bowman, Christy Long

Additional Charlotte appointments: Corine Mack, Frank Emory, Jocelyn Jones-Nalley, Katrina Young, Todd Collins, and David Howard were also approved for the board.

Other towns:

- **Cornelius:** Bob Menzel
- **Huntersville:** T. Anthony Lindsey
- **Matthews:** Dana Stoogenke
- **Pineville:** Jeffrey Robbins

North Carolina General Assembly: David Longo, Ned Curran

Davidson and **Mint Hill** have not announced selections as yet. Also, **NC Governor Josh Stein** is to make a selection.

All Aboard Carolinas' President Martin Wheeler applied for both Charlotte and Mecklenburg County appointments and failed to make the final lists. Wheeler had 15 years of operating experience with Charlotte's light rail system from 2007-2022. To date, no appointments have actual rail transit operating experience.

FROM THE CAB is published by CAPT with business components of All Aboard Carolinas and All Aboard Charlotte. Please contact Martin Wheeler at mwheeler@att.net for additional information.