

Transportation Referendum: Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ #1: Will riders and transit workers have a voice in the new transit authority?

ANSWER: Riders, workers, and everyday residents will help shape the future of our transit system. Transit system riders will be able to serve on the Authority, a point of emphasis for local leaders. The plan includes clear commitments to involve people who use the system most. There will be formal ways for riders and workers to be heard and represented.

FAQ #2: How does the plan impact everyday riders?

ANSWER: This investment directly benefits people who rely on transit every day. It means faster buses, safer stops, more shelters, and new ways to get around, like on-demand micro transit. These upgrades help people get to jobs, healthcare, and school more easily. We are making sure that affordability stays front and center.

FAQ #3: Who made the transportation plan?

ANSWER: This plan came from years of community input. Residents, local leaders, and transit users helped shape it. Elected leaders from the county, city, and towns – representing residents – worked to draft the plan and adopted resolutions in support of the plan. It is designed to improve how people move across the county.

FAQ #4: How did local leaders partner with state leaders to develop this plan?

ANSWER: The legislation gives Mecklenburg County the power to raise local funds for local needs. That puts us in a stronger position to secure state and federal dollars. It does not give the state control over how those local dollars are spent. The plan was developed locally by leaders and community members. The General Assembly overwhelmingly supported the legislation with bipartisan votes (101-5 in the House and 42-4 in the Senate).

FAQ #5: What is micro transit and what role does it play in the plan?

ANSWER: Micro transit is essentially public rideshare that is flexible and cost-effective. It is piloted in the northern towns now and accessible via an app, with rides costing \$2.20 or \$1.10 for seniors. Micro transit is being used to fill in the gaps where regular bus routes aren't practical – connecting riders to the rest of the transit system or taking them directly to their destinations. Other cities have shown that it works. We are planning ahead to make sure it stays reliable and sustainable.

FAQ #6: How does this plan address transportation needs in overlooked neighborhoods?

ANSWER: The plan prioritizes places that have been overlooked in the past. East Charlotte, North Mecklenburg, and inner-city neighborhoods are getting new investments. That includes better bus service, improved sidewalks, and safer ways to get around. Strategic investments include targeted road widenings and safer crossings and lightings in the Far East, Central Ave & Sharon Amity Rd intersection improvements, and new traffic signals at Mulberry Church Rd & Wilkinson Blvd, Gibbon Rd & Sugar Creek Rd, Beatties Ford Rd & Lakeview Rd, Sharon Amity Rd & Sudbury Rd, and Hood Rd & Robinson Church Rd.

FAQ #7: What are the REAL numbers behind the plan?

ANSWER: There is a clear plan with real data, cost breakdowns, and timelines. Details like ridership projections, cost per project, and expected impact are being shared with the public and updated as things move forward. The impact of the plan is clear. If congestion goes unaddressed by 2050, we'll miss out on 126,000 jobs and \$28 billion in economic output. For every \$100 million invested, up to 1,780 jobs can be added, and up to \$180 million in economic output can be realized.

More than \$19.4 billion will be raised over 30 years, with 40% for roads, 40% for rail, and 20% for bus and micro transit. The year one estimate is that \$345 million will be raised, with 30% being paid for by visitors and commuters from outside the county. Overall, \$7.8 billion will go to roads, \$7.8 billion to rail, and \$3.8 billion to bus and micro transit.

FAQ #8: What type of accountability can the public expect?

ANSWER: Oversight and accountability are already being strengthened. A new transit authority, made up of local residents, appointed by local leaders, will have strong checks and balances. Independent audits and better project management are part of the plan. We are doing things differently and learning from past mistakes.

FAQ #9: Who is in charge?

ANSWER: This is a shared effort. The General Assembly, including all Mecklenburg representatives and senators approved legislation (101-5 in the House and 42-4 in the Senate) authorizing the plan to go to the voters. The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners voted (8-1) to place the referendum on the ballot. A new locally appointed authority will manage the work. Local leaders across the city, towns, and county are working together to deliver real results for residents.

FAQ #10: What are the benefits for our neighborhoods?

ANSWER: Residents throughout Mecklenburg County will see benefits. Increased bus frequency, including significant increases to 15-minute frequency, will be available throughout the county. Micro transit will connect residents to the rest of the transit system, or directly to their destination for \$2.20 per ride.

We are taking steps to prevent displacement. Transportation is a catalyst for affordable housing, as most site selection prioritizes locations where transportation is accessible. The plan also aligns with right-to-return policies and community benefit agreements. Transit should help people stay in their neighborhoods, not push them out. That is the focus.

FAQ #11: What type of investment do families need to make?

ANSWER: The tax is one cent on the dollar. The average family in Mecklenburg County will pay \$240 more a year; low-income families will pay \$132. The additional one cent on the dollar will not be applied to commonly purchased items like gas, groceries, SNAP-eligible items and medicines - these items are excluded. The trade-off is significant - for a penny residents get more frequent transit service, better bus stops, faster response from police, fire and medic, as well as access to jobs, education, healthcare and meaningful opportunities. The benefits include less congestion, faster commutes, and higher quality of life.