



Chapter 1.0

1.0 OVERVIEW

The **City of High Point Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)** presents a five-year vision and action agenda that provides a foundational framework for the delivery of public transportation services and programs in the City of High Point. The SRTP addresses the current challenges and needs facing the City's public transportation system, the High Point Transit System, and proposes fiscally-responsible recommendations for improved public transportation services.

The plan seeks to prioritize future operating and capital investments for both fixed-route and demand-responsive transit services, and is structured to monitor progress

toward achieving the recommended actions and programs. Further, as a community planning effort, the SRTP is also intended to advance the City's long-term goals for transportation and community development in effort to establish a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system serving the City of High Point.

1.1 SRTP Goals and Objectives

During the course of the SRTP's development, several critical issues and questions were raised that required careful consideration. These questions included (but were not limited to) the following examples:

- » How can the High Point Transit System serve the most people as efficiently as possible?
- » Where are potential new markets? Where are unserved/underserved areas of the community, and where is growth occurring (both residential and employment)? Are there areas of the High Point community that are over-served by transit currently?
- » What emphasis should be placed on attracting choice riders versus improving the quality of service for current riders who have no other transportation alternatives?
- » What is the right balance between frequency, span of service and geographic coverage in service design?
- » What capital and operating requirements are necessary for High Point Transit System to achieve its operating mission and meet the community's expectations and desires for service?



High Point Transit System

High Point Transit System's mission is to provide a safe, reliable, economical, and customer-oriented public service that meets the mobility needs of the residents and visitors of the City of High Point.



High Point Transit System strives to provide the most cost-effective and efficient public transportation services as funding allows.

The High Point Transit System is an agency with both a mission and a vision. In broad terms, the agency's mission is to provide a safe, reliable, economical, and customer-oriented public service that meets the mobility needs of the residents and visitors of the City of High Point. As such, the High Point Transit System strives to provide the most cost-effective and efficient public transportation services as funding allows. As with any public transportation provider, the High Point Transit System seeks to provide practical and attractive transit services that satisfy the goals of increasing system usage, advancing regional mobility, and improving access to destinations within High Point and the greater Triad Region to further strengthen the area's livability. This mission and vision are echoed in the goals and objectives specified in several local and regional transportation plans recently adopted by the City of High Point and the High Point Metropolitan Planning Organization, among other governmental entities.

In consideration of the mission, strategic goals, objectives, and critical issues facing the High Point Transit System, the SRTP was intended to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Establish a coordinated blueprint for future public transportation services in the City of High Point.
2. Create an activity center-focused transit plan that identifies transit priority corridors and connects High Point residents with important community facilities and services.
3. Develop fiscally-responsible service recommendations that may be incorporated as part of local, regional, and long-range transportation plans for the greater Piedmont-Triad Region.

4. Outline a foundation for future service expansion by developing system level service concepts, design guidelines, and performance measurement techniques.

In consultation with High Point Transit System staff and members of the Steering Committee and Sounding Board (discussed below), specific goals for future transit service in High Point were identified. These included:

- » Establish service in the Palladium/Deep River region of High Point.
- » Improve coordination with the regional transit provider (PART) and municipal transit agencies in the near-by Triad cities of Greensboro (GTA) and Winston-Salem (WSTA).
- » Enhance service frequency, coverage, and the hours during which service is available.
- » Identify opportunities to maximize efficiencies while reducing operational costs.
- » Reinvest cost savings and new revenues into service operations and capital facilities as available.
- » Encourage the use of fixed-route service by persons eligible for non-ADA demand-responsive service.



At times, certain goals may conflict with one another. The planning approach developed and implemented for the SRTP was designed to empower project stakeholders and the public with objective analytic information to weigh the benefits and costs associated with each alternative service scenario and craft a plan that most accurately reflects the community's needs and desires for the future High Point Transit System service network.

1.2 Planning Approach and Methods

The development of the SRTP generally followed a three-phased planning approach that incorporated multiple steps in each phase. The three phases are outlined below:



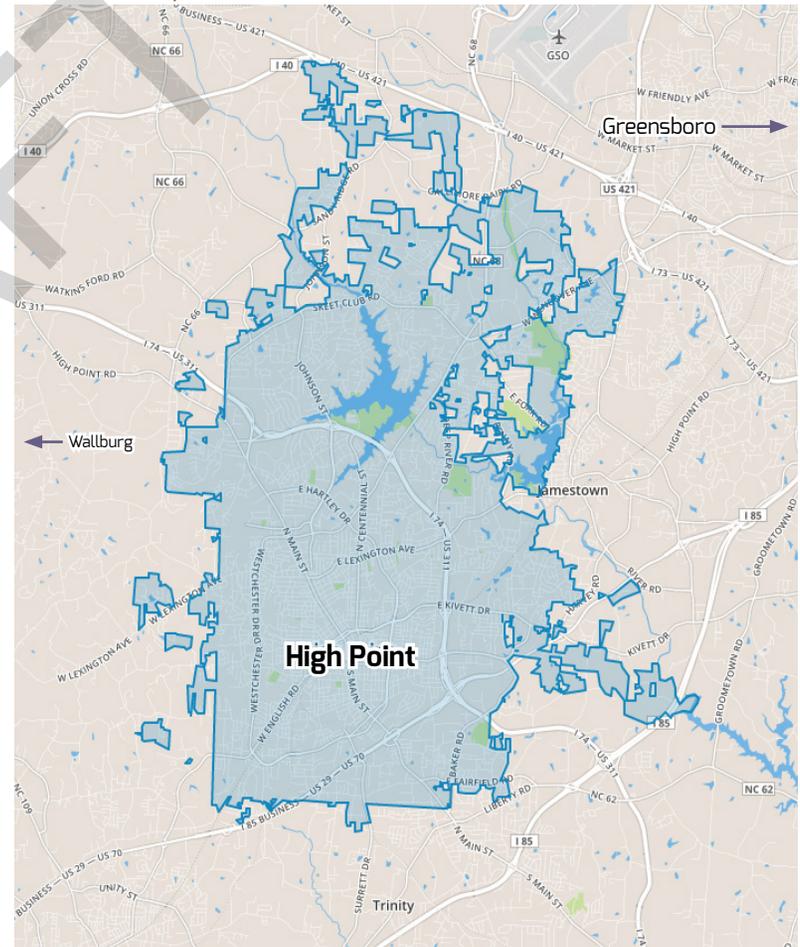
Throughout each of the planning phases identified above, public and stakeholder involvement played a critical role in the development of the SRTP.

1.2.1 The Study Area

The planning study area for the SRTP is principally the City of High Point. Some High Point Transit System fixed-route services extend beyond the City's boundary to connect key regional destinations, such as the Guilford Technical Community College campus in Jamestown, and provide links to other public transportation services in the greater Piedmont Triad region.

However, the majority of service miles operated by High Point Transit System are within the boundaries of the City of High Point.

Exhibit 1. Study Area



1.2.2 Evaluation of Existing Conditions

An initial task of the SRTP planning effort was to conduct an inventory and performance evaluation of the High Point Transit System's existing services in effort to understand the environment in which the agency operates. This process involved a review of recent trends in population and employment characteristics, assessment of population and employment densities, and analysis of the size and distribution of population groups that have a demonstrated need for public transportation services as a means of basic mobility. In addition to population characteristics, a comprehensive review of current performance data was



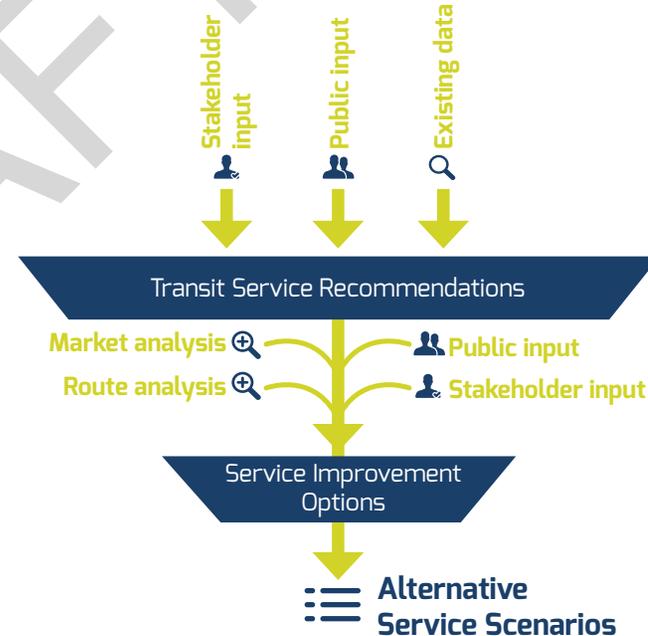
conducted on both a system-wide and individual route basis, along with a review of available stop-level boarding and alighting data. The objective was to identify under- or over-served markets in the system, distinguish new and emerging transit markets, and identify where efficiencies could be gained. The existing conditions work also included a peer review that involved researching similarly sized transit agencies to understand how the High Point Transit System compares with these agencies relative to strengths and weaknesses in operation. A series of technical memos, statistical analyses, and PowerPoint presentations were produced during the study. These documents included¹:

- » Initial Findings Report
- » Peer Review
- » On-Board Rider Survey

1.2.3 Development of Alternative Service Scenarios

Based on the input received from project stakeholders and the public at-large, and with direction from the project Steering Committee and High Point Transit System staff, the project team was tasked with the development of a series of recommendations that could be implemented over the course of the SRTP's lifecycle to position the High Point Transit System to provide the best and most efficient transit service possible.

Input and analysis collected through the market analysis, stakeholder and public input and route level analysis led to the development of service improvement options. The project team worked closely with High Point Transit System staff to develop and evaluate a variety of alternative service scenarios that offered a new approach to the organization of the High Point Transit System's current fixed-route bus service.



Creation of a Five-Year Action Plan

Following the extensive evaluation of alternative service scenarios, a preferred service scenario was identified that best matched the community's expressed desires for the future transit network service High Point. This service scenario forms the basis of the investment recommendations made in the SRTP with regard to transit services operated and facility needs.

1.3 Public and Agency Involvement

To ensure the goals and recommendations of the SRTP reflect the desires and interests of the citizens of High Point, considerable effort was made to incorporate the input of public officials, representatives of key civic organizations, businesses, public agencies, and the public at-large. Ample opportunities to provide comment on the planning process and findings were provided.

Outreach efforts included development of a project website and contacts database, interviews with project stakeholders representing government agencies, businesses, and civic organizations, on-board surveys of current riders, presentations at public meetings and events, meetings

with High Point Transit System staff and drivers, and public comment opportunities on the SRTP document. A listing of the outreach activities undertaken as part of the SRTP are shown in Appendix A.

1.3.1 Steering Committee and Sounding Board

The work completed during the course of this study was guided by a project Steering Committee composed of local elected officials and representatives of participating public agencies and civic organizations. The project Steering Committee provided policy guidance was comprised of the individuals identified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2. Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee Member	Affiliation
 The Honorable Becky Smothers	City of High Point Council (Chairperson)
 The Honorable Britt Moore	City of High Point Council
 Keith Lipscomb	Guilford County Workforce Development Board
 Angela McGill	City of High Point Housing Authority (Executive Director)
 Bob Callicut	Carolina Bank

Staff support was provided by the following individuals:

Support Staff	Department
 Angela Wynes	City of High Point (High Point Transit System Transit Manager)
 Mark McDonald, PE	City of High Point (Transportation Director)
 Randy McCaslin	City of High Point (Assistant City Manager)

In addition to the Steering Committee, a project Sounding Board was established to represent a broader array of community perspectives and stakeholders. The Sounding Board, chaired by The Honorable Judy Mendenhall of the City Council, was comprised of a cross-section of stakeholders including representatives from the High Point City Council (The Honorable Jeff Golden), the High Point Chamber of Commerce, Guilford Technical Community College, High Point University, and various social service agencies such as housing and workforce development.

The Sounding Board also included community advocacy groups, public health and welfare organizations, and community members interested

in transit issues. During the course of the STRP planning process, joint meetings of the Steering Committee and Sounding Board were convened to represent the collective interests of the residents of High Point.

1.3.2 Consultant Team

The consulting team for this study was led by HDR of the Carolinas, Inc. with assistance from the firms of TJR Advisors, AJM Consulting, and Simon Resources. The following were the principal team members on this project:

Exhibit 3. Members of the Project Team

Consultant Staff	Affiliation and Role
 Kirk Stull, PE	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Project Manager)
 Alec More, AICP	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Principal Planner)
 Cavan Noone	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Transit Planner)
 Kelly Spitzley	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Graphic Design)
 Hannah Baweja	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Transit Planner)
 Krista VanAuken	HDR Engineering, Inc. (Public Involvement)
 Theodore Reich	TJR Advisors (Transit Planner)
 Andrew Mundew	AJM Consulting (Traveler Survey)
 Karen Simon	Simon Resources (Public Involvement)
 Amy Hubbard	Simon Resources (Public Involvement)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

1.4 Report Organization

The SRTP is organized into six chapters.

Chapter 1:

This chapter introduces the SRTP document.

Chapter 2:

The evaluation of existing conditions begins with an overview of the High Point Transit System and existing transit services in the second chapter of the SRTP. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the High Point Transit System's governance structure, the agency's mission, vision, goals, and objectives, and discusses specific features of the operating program such as fixed facilities, vehicle fleet characteristics, and sources of agency funds for capital projects and operations.

Chapter 3:

The third chapter builds on the agency overview by addressing current service performance, discussing transit markets served, challenges confronted and emerging opportunities, and system needs.

Chapter 4:

Chapter Four of this plan discusses the alternative service scenarios considered and the process used in the development of each service scenario.

Chapter 5:

Chapter Five outlines the recommendations for future fixed-route services and programmatic changes for demand-responsive transportation services.

Chapter 6:

Finally, Chapter Six addresses the capital needs and costs associated with implementation of the SRTP.

The recommendations and specific projects, initiatives, or programs identified in this plan are intended as both an action agenda and as milestones for progress. Short-term recommendations are more specific in their details, while longer-term recommendations are more general. While the SRTP outlines a future vision for transit services in High



The goal of the SRTP is to have a coherent set of short-term actions that collectively build toward an enhanced future system, making the optimal use of available resources under fiscally constrained conditions.

Point, it is intentionally designed to allow flexibility in the implementation of the recommendations made, given the inherent uncertainty in community growth and available funding over the plan's timeframe. The goal is to have a coherent set of short-term actions that collectively build toward an enhanced future system, making the optimal use of available resources under fiscally constrained conditions.

In addition to the SRTP final report, a series of technical memos and presentations were produced during the course of the study. As discussed, the final report contains the most relevant findings from the earlier analyses, but does not reproduce any document in its entirety. In certain cases, reports are included as an appendix to the plan.

¹This document contains the most relevant findings from analyses completed as part of this project, but does not reproduce any document in its entirety.