

North Carolina's Multimodal Stations

By Walter R. Turner

During the past three decades, North Carolina has grown from a rural to an urban state. To accommodate the resulting change in the needs of its population, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has collaborated with local and federal governments to develop urban transportation centers for the state's citizens. These centers serve as connecting points for the routes of buses, passenger trains, and other modes of transportation. Completed centers, known as "multimodal stations," have been established in Wilson, Rocky Mount, High Point, and Greensboro. Other cities in North Carolina are planning such centers. This paper will examine the current status of planning, implementation, and future prospects for multimodal stations in the state's municipalities.

Fully understanding this development requires a historical review of the state's mass transit efforts. In the state's electric streetcar era (1890s-1930s), passengers were transported from railroad stations to downtowns, neighborhoods, and entertainment/recreation parks.¹ During the 1920s-World War II era, increased intercity travel turned railroad stations and bus stations into major transportation centers. However, passenger rail traffic declined after World War II, as did intercity bus operations a few years later, while travel via automobiles and aircraft escalated. In 1970, Congress passed the Rail Passenger Service Act, which created the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) to save passenger rail travel. During the 1980s and 1990s, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) developed strong rail and public transportation divisions. These divisions provided consultation and funding to help local communities transition from private to public city bus systems, establish rural van and bus programs, and support revival of passenger and freight rail travel.

In 1991 Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), a comprehensive six-year highway/transportation bill. The ISTEA legislation, which included enhancement funds for nontraditional transportation programs, was a

¹ Walter R. Turner, "Development of Streetcar Systems in North Carolina," North Carolina Transportation Museum, 6-19.

signal that Congress wanted to strengthen the nation's non-highway programs. State DOTs administered these funds for local projects, based on an 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% local funding formula. Such funds could be used for "rail corridor preservation, historic preservation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic and landscaping."²

Although the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) offered formula funds, based on population density and amount of service, as early as the early 1980s for renovating or building bus stations, ISTEA added a discretionary fund for FTA to administer, based on the 80 percent/10 percent/10 percent division.³ Large cities began to offer examples of how such restorations could work. Major multimodal stations were created at Philadelphia's 30th Street, Boston's South Station, and Chicago's Union Station, as well as locations in Baltimore and Newark. The best known one, Union Station in Washington, D.C., had opened in 1988 with Amtrak, Metrorail, and a parking deck. To help attract passengers, upscale shops, restaurants, and a movie theater were included.

More than 85 percent of North Carolina's railroad stations have been demolished since World War II, due to the decline of passenger rail traffic. Fortunately, significant stations have survived, although they are typically in deteriorating condition. NCDOT was able to garner enhancement funds for restoring historic train stations as a result of the ISTEA legislation from 1991 –1998, and the subsequent Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, nicknamed TEA-21, from 1998-2005.⁴ Plans included restoring the buildings to their original appearance, complying with Americans for Disability (ADA) regulations, and adding works of art. NCDOT's Rail and Public Transportation divisions recognized that enhancement funds provided an opportunity to use restored railroad stations in some cities for both train and bus passengers.⁵ These first multimodal stations

²"ISTEA," Biennial Report, 1992, North Carolina Department of Transportation.

³ Formula funds were authorized by the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982.

⁴ Walter R. Turner, *Paving Tobacco Road: A Century of Progress by the North Carolina Department of Transportation* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2003), 132. Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005. Although this act continued the enhancement program option, NCDOT decided not to access enhancement funding during 2006 and 2007. Debbie Oliver Vick, e-mail to author, March 30, 2007.

⁵ For the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the Rail Division's budget included \$20.3 from the state's Highway Fund and \$5 million from Highway Trust Fund, and federal funding of \$12 million for grade crossing safety and \$2 million for high-speed planning and engineering, for a total of \$39.3 million; the division has a staff of fifty. The Public Transportation Division's budget is \$78.8 million from the Highway Fund and \$38 million in federal funds for a total of \$113.8 million; the division employs a staff of thirty. *Pat Sullivan and*

allowed passengers to change from one form of transportation to another, “overcoming the impression that downtown was dead and acting as sparkplugs to attract new business,” according to NCDOT’s Allan Paul, director of the operations and facilities branch of the Rail Division.⁶ The successful restoration and conversion of railway facilities to multimodal stations in Wilson, Rocky Mount, High Point, and Greensboro has led to planning for centers in other localities, even though new buildings will be required in metropolitan areas like Charlotte, Durham, and Raleigh. In addition, publication of *The Transit 2001 Executive Summary and Technical Report* in 1997 (advocating more transit services), the U.S. Department of Transportation’s 1998 designation of the Washington, D.C.-Charlotte corridor for high-speed rail (showing the potential of enhanced passenger service), and the formation of urban regional transportation organizations (which are planning new approaches to urban transportation programs) strengthened support for multimodal stations.⁷

Wilson

In 1924 the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) built a station on busy Nash Street in Wilson that was an extension of the downtown business district. The building, designed by Wilmington architect A.M. Griffin, featured a modified Mission style with a terra cotta roof, gables, and a long canopy by the track, along with a Railroad Express Agency (REA) building. By the late 1930s, the Wilson Bus Station in Moderne style and

Allan Paul, interview with author, Raleigh, February 6, 2007; Miriam Perry, telephone conversation with author, February 5, 2007.

⁶ Allan Paul, interview with author, Raleigh, January 12, 2007.

Allan Paul, whose parents were natives of Beaufort, N.C., was raised in Greensboro and Lumberton, N.C. He graduated from Wake Forest University in 1975 with majors in history and education. As first director of the Historic Spencer Shops (now North Carolina Transportation Museum) from 1977 to 1980, he played a major role in the establishment of the historic site. His accomplishments included the initial restoration and stabilization of its large shop buildings, and the acquisition or donation of the majority of the locomotive and railcar collection. From 1981 to 1992 he worked as a private restoration consultant, primarily regarding buildings and railroad equipment. In 1992 he joined the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Public Transportation and Rail Division, to develop and manage the state's passenger rail program. In 1996 Paul became the Assistant Director (now Director) of Operations and Facilities Branch for the NCDOT Rail Division. His major responsibilities include establishment and operation of state-supported passenger rail services, restoration of historic train stations, and development of multimodal transportation stations.

⁷ The Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) in the Raleigh-Durham area was organized in 1989. Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) in the Triad was organized in 1998, and Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) in Mecklenburg County, in 1999.

the Beaux-Arts Cherry Hotel were added in this area.⁸ As passenger rail service declined, however, the area around the station became run down. Eventually, the bus station was deemed inadequate for a modern bus terminal and was torn down in 2000. A study funded primarily by NCDOT concluded that the city needed a new bus station to serve both intercity and city buses. Thus the Wilson Transportation Center opened in 1988 (the same year a new bus station opened in Raleigh). This modern, stone building, across the street from the railroad station, cost \$1 million to construct and was funded primarily by FTA and the City of Wilson. Restaurant space in the station has been utilized for the convenience of passengers for most of the years since the center opened.⁹

Passenger service to Wilson was adversely affected by the consolidation of companies. ACL merged with Seaboard Air Line Railroad to form Seaboard Coast Line Railroad in 1967. After yet more mergers, it emerged in 1986 as CSX, an all-freight railroad. In the meantime, even though Amtrak still stopped at the station, the building had deteriorated to the point that passengers had to buy tickets on board the train. In 1994, CSX sold the station and the REA building to the city for \$1, retaining ownership of the land. The most serious problems with the station involved roof deterioration, drainage problems affecting the basement and platform, and fragile walls.¹⁰ Thus far, two phases of the station's restoration have been completed with enhancement funds on an 80/10/10 basis. Phase One, starting in 1996 and costing \$1,342,000, involved restoring the station to its original appearance. This included the addition of a ticket office, replica wooden seats, and period-style lighting fixtures, restoring the terra-cotta roof, exterior improvements to the station and REA buildings, and repairing the platform and canopy. NCDOT furnished a temporary Amtrak ticket office and waiting room in a doublewide modular unit during this construction phase. When the train station reopened in 1998, it and the bus station across the street, became North Carolina's first modern, designated "multimodal station."

The second phase, during 2002 and 2003, cost \$1,150,000. It consisted of expanding the waiting room, completing interior renovation of the REA building to house

⁸ Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 342, 343.

⁹ Brenda Barnes, e-mail to author, June 19, 2007; "The Wilson Transportation Center, Dedication and open house," City of Wilson, 1988.

an onsite police substation, constructing a parking lot, and designing streetscape improvements to match the downtown's historic theme, including landscaping and period-style lighting. The station also includes two works of art: a mural of Atlantic Coast Line history by Michael Brown in the waiting room and a mosaic sculpture outside, "Ms. Rail Rose." The sculpture portrays a woman sitting on a bench, waiting for the train. Phase Three is scheduled to include painting the interior and restoring the canopy. Deborah N. Boyette, assistant director of Wilson's Public Services Administration, has coordinated each phase.¹¹

Rocky Mount

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad opened a two-story passenger station in Rocky Mount in 1903 of "deep rosy red brick, with arched windows of simplified Romanesque Revival style."¹² ACL added two second-story wings in 1911-12, and a third story in 1916, as the building became a regional headquarters for the railroad. The additions, and likely the original building, were designed by local builder D.J. Rose.¹³

By the mid-1980s, as the building continued to deteriorate, CSX abandoned its offices and nearby REA building, though passengers continued to use the station. Sam Johnson, active with a local preservation organization, Downtown Renaissance, and Bill Kincheloe, a businessman and railroad fan, were early advocates for saving the railroad station. In 1993, Peter Varney, Rocky Mount's assistant city manager, took charge of the renovation project.¹⁴ Two years later, CSX sold the 25,000 square-foot terminal, 7,000 square-foot REA building, and the two acres of land to the city for \$200,000. The

¹⁰ Deborah N. Boyette, e-mail to author, February 19, 2007.

¹¹ Basic information for the Wilson multimodal station based on: Deborah N. Boyette, interview with author, Wilson, N.C., January 22, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/iwilson.htmjl>. Boyette, raised in Nash and Wilson counties, earned a B.S. degree from North Carolina Wesleyan College. She began work with the city of Wilson in 1988 and was appointed assistant director of public services department in 1993. Deborah Boyette, email to author, June 29, 2007.

¹² *Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the Officers of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company to the Stockholders, for the Year Ending June 30th, 1903*, 14; Map 1, Rocky Mount, N.C., April 1896, Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970; Map 9, Rocky Mount, N.C., April 1907, Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970; telephone conversation with Traci Thompson, MLIS, Braswell Memorial Library, Rocky Mount, NC, April 4, 2007.

¹³ Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, 333; Allan Paul, email to author, March 7, 2007.

building's deteriorated condition included an old shingle roof (which had replaced the original slate one in the mid-1960s), open access in the attic and third-floor for pigeons, and several generations of wiring. Major challenges of the project were: restoring the train station while maintaining Amtrak operations, and filling the available office space on the second and third floors at a time when public perception was that the downtown area was unsafe.

After numerous meetings, a plan was finalized and budgeted for \$9 million; this included \$6.3 million in enhancement funds and \$630,000 in state matching funds, plus \$860,000 in city funds. The project took nearly four years, from January 1997 to December 2000. As it did in Wilson, NCDOT furnished a temporary Amtrak ticket office in a doublewide modular unit during construction. Two massive steel columns had to be inserted from the foundation to the third floor in order to stabilize the railroad station. The city also acquired additional property for a park and parking lot, requiring demolition of three buildings and substantial environmental remediation, which pushed the total project cost to \$12 million.

Presently, the first floor of the station houses the waiting room and Amtrak ticketing and baggage facilities for six daily trains. It also includes a plaque designating the "Peter F. Varney Passenger Lobby," a tribute to the indispensable person in creating the Rocky Mount station. The Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce "made a courageous decision," and moved from a suburban location to the entire second floor, and the city leased office spaces on the third floor to various tenants.¹⁵ The trackside canopy, replicating the original one, and platform were reconstructed. A two-story atrium with porte cochere was added on the street side, facing a new park. Two modern art sculptures were placed in the park. Across from the park, a family restored a Queen Anne house and the city converted an abandoned fire station into a museum and fire training facility. The REA building, restored for a bus station that serves city, regional, and

¹⁴ Peter F. Varney grew up in New Hampshire and earned a B.A. degree at Bowdoin College (in Maine) and a MPA from UNC at Chapel Hill. He began an administrative career for the city of Rocky Mount in 1971 and was promoted to assistant city manager in 1977. Peter Varney, e-mail to author, June 26, 2007.

¹⁵ Ed Davis, telephone conversation with author, February 2, 2007. Davis, a native of Winston-Salem, earned an architecture degree at Virginia Tech and a masters in architectural history at University of Virginia. At NCDOT he has served as architectural historian and as program manager for the Enhancement Unit. Ed Davis, e-mail to author, June 25, 2007.

Greyhound/Trailways, opened in 1997.¹⁶ It includes a snack bar open on weekdays for lunch plus a display of two historic rail cars outside. When the YMCA, located beside the REA, moved to another location in 2006, the city purchased the building and renovated it for a senior citizens center.¹⁷

High Point

Southern Railway opened a railroad station in the heart of downtown High Point in 1907. It was designed in a Richardson Romanesque architecture style with a rusticated ashlar base and tiled hip roof. As in many cities, trains at grade level began to impede growing automobile traffic. In the late 1930s, a city-state-federal project built a one-mile cut up to 35 feet deep through which the trains could travel. The retaining walls at the station included Moderne-detailed concrete. A walkway across the tracks and a passenger staircase to the platform at track level were constructed. On the west side of the tracks, a brick building was converted to an REA facility.¹⁸

In the mid-1970s, Southern leased the station to a restaurant and built a small, green metal building at the rear of the station for passengers. The REA building had been demolished. Southern Railway reached an agreement for Amtrak to take over passenger traffic in 1978. In 1981, just across the tracks, High Point opened a new city bus station, Broad Avenue Terminal, at a cost of \$130,000. It included bus slips and an 850-square-foot terminal.¹⁹

When Bill Herndon started volunteering to accommodate rail passengers at the High Point Station in 1990, he recalls that there was little lighting for evening trains, the

¹⁶ “Greyhound/Trailways” refers to the Greyhound and Trailways, which often operated from the same locations. On a national scale, Trailways operated for several decades as a series of franchise businesses. Carolina Trailways, based in Raleigh, N.C., was the designated Trailways franchise for North Carolina. In 1977 Greyhound purchased Trailways; as a result, Trailways is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Greyhound. Elvis Latiolais, General Manager, Carolina Trailways, telephone conversation with author, June 11, 2007.

¹⁷ Basic information for the Rocky Mount multimodal station based on: Peter Varney, interview with author, Rocky Mount, N.C., February 27, 2007; Peter Varney, telephone conversation with author, February 27, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/rockymount.html>.

¹⁸ Catherine W. Birhir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 342; “Historical Overview,” City of High Point, date?; Ralph Ward, *Southern Railway Depots, Volume 1, North Carolina* (Asheboro, N.C., Ralph Ward, 1991), 40.

¹⁹ Ward, *Southern Railway Depots*, 40-41; Buddy Cox, e-mail to Philip Wylie, January 24, 2004; “High Point Passenger Station Restoration Celebration,” City of High Point, November 1, 2001.

platforms were full of trash, and the restaurant in the deteriorated station was failing. In September he organized a meeting of concerned citizens and a NCDOT representative to form the “Save the Depot Committee.” Herndon then approached Jim Morgan, a former member of the North Carolina legislature, who agreed to coordinate fundraising for a restoration. Morgan and Herndon soon discovered that the city government had no interest in saving the building. “We were scared that Norfolk Southern would tear down the building,” says Herndon.²⁰

By 1993, the city government, reversing its position and seeing merit in the project, joined NCDOT in preparing a \$3 million request for enhancement funds. Morgan eventually raised \$300,000 for the required 10 percent local share. When Phil Wylie became High Point’s transportation director in 1994, he took charge of the project.²¹ The state and city hired the station architect two years later. Meanwhile, the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR), owners of the tracks from Goldsboro to Charlotte through High Point, was negotiating a new lease with Norfolk Southern. In 1998 NCRR, Norfolk Southern, City of High Point, and National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) signed a “license to renovate,” which allowed the restoration to begin.²²

Work on the \$6,823,300 project started in 2001, with the city paying the additional required local share. Part of the building’s foundation had to be rebuilt, the roof and walls shored up, and the floor replaced. Trains continued to utilize the tracks daily while the pedestrian bridge, staircase, and center island platform were replaced. To comply with the Americans for Disability Act, an elevator was also added. The station was closed to passengers for nine months before reopening in December 2003 with “a real urban train look—like one of the many northeast stations fanning out from New York City,”²³ A group of High Pointers arranged and raised money for a sculpture by local artist David Dowdy, located on the Main Street side of the station. It depicted an 1850s worker building the plank road through the city. Station parking was made

²⁰ Jim Morgan, telephone conversation with author, February 9, 2007; Bill Herndon, telephone conversation with author, February 20, 2007.

²¹ Phillip Wylie, a native of Marion, N.C., earned B.S. and masters degrees in civil engineering at N.C. State University. He began work with the City of High Point in 1971 and became director of transportation in 1974. Phillip Wylie, e-mail to author, June 20, 2007.

²² NCRR has a copy of this 66-page document with attachments, signed on April 30, 1998. Keri Towery Petersen, Archivist, NCRR, e-mails to author, June 21, 2007.

²³ Ed Davis, e-mail to author, June 25, 2007.

available in a parking garage one block away, with plans by the city to create more on-street parking.

Of the six daily trains at the station, two are clustered in the early morning and two in early evening. For the past three years, the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) has furnished shuttle bus service between downtown Winston-Salem and the station to meet those trains. Broad Avenue Bus Terminal now serves PART's regional buses as well as city buses. Greyhound/Trailways, which operates from an aging station in an unsafe area three blocks away, has in recent years requested participation in the multimodal arrangement.²⁴ However, the city concluded that neither the bus terminal nor the railroad station have sufficient space available to accommodate intercity buses.²⁵

On May 16, 2007, the City of High Point organized an event honoring the 100th anniversary of the station. Jim Morgan presided and concluded the event by stating: "Today we celebrate the past which gives us great hope for the future, knowing that rail service will continue to be important for all of us."²⁶

Greensboro

Greensboro had a series of railway stations, including a three-story brick structure that opened on South Elm Street in 1899; two of its stories have survived. By the late 1920s, Southern Railway operated forty-two passenger trains daily through the city and a regional office, so a larger station was needed. On April 20, 1927, Southern Railway opened a new passenger station on downtown's Washington Street, facing Church Street. This 56,000 square foot building, costing Southern \$1 million to construct, was the largest railway station ever built in North Carolina. It was designed in Beaux Arts classical style by the architectural firm of Fellheimer and Wagner, who had earlier helped design New York City's Grand Central Terminal. The building includes an exterior of red brick and pale stone and a main entrance of six Ionic columns topped by a balustrade. The entrance's arched vestibule leads to a two-story main hall/concourse, which served

²⁴ Elvis Latiolais, interview with author, Raleigh, N.C., June 18, 2007.

²⁵ Basic information for the High Point multimodal station section based on: Philip Wylie, interview with author, High Point, N.C., January 24, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/ihighpoint.html>.

²⁶ Jim Morgan, e-mail to author, May 17, 2007.

as a waiting room for white passengers. It had rounded windows on the upper level and a lighted map of the Southern route system. An additional entrance on the west side led to the segregated or “colored” waiting room. On the main level, the station also included a dining room, newsstand, drug store, shoeshine stand, barber shop, and Travelers Aid office. Passengers used a subway passage to access three platforms. The second level included offices, baggage handling, and the REA building. In a complementary development in 1927, the city and Southern Railway spent another \$1 million to build several bridges so that train traffic could be separated from car traffic.²⁷

The military operated a large army training base in Greensboro during World War II. Consequently, it was a hectic period for the station. Passenger traffic declined after the war, dropping to sixteen passenger trains daily by 1963 and only two by 1977. This decline led Southern to close the grand station in 1979 and move passengers and freight to a small, new station four miles away. Fortunately, Southern donated the station to the City of Greensboro in 1980. Although Southern removed the train platforms, they left the wooden benches from the waiting rooms.²⁸ The old station, which most persons called the “Depot,” was used for different activities during the 1980s and 1990s.²⁹ At one time, the concourse served as a dance hall for teenagers. The Carolina Model Railroad opened a model railroad display in the Depot in 1977 and operated it until 2001, when they began relocation to the REA building. Betty Cone, a community activist, organized Friends of the Depot, which sponsored community meetings and activities during the 1990s that attracted more than 50,000 persons annually. Their most popular event was “Friday at Five,” when large crowds gathered outside the station to socialize and hear bands. Architectural Salvage of Greensboro, an organization that sold parts of

²⁷ Ralph Ward, *Southern Railway Depots, Volume I*, North Carolina (Asheboro, N.C., Ralph Ward, 1991), 32-38; Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to Historic Architectural of Piedmont North Carolina*, 329; Marvin A. Brown, *Greensboro, An Architectural Record* (Greensboro, N.C.: Preservation Greensboro, Junior League of Greensboro, City of Greensboro, 1995), 61, 119, 147. Bishir and Southern describe the architecture as “Beaux Arts classical,” whereas Brown (*An Architectural Record*, 61) concludes it is “Neoclassical.”

²⁸ Allan Paul, then director of Historic Spencer Shops, facilitated the gift. Simmons and Paul interview, February 6, 2007.

²⁹ Though passenger stations are sometimes referred to as a “depot,” the definition of “depot” is a facility that combines passenger and freight services under one roof. Allan Paul, e-mail to author, June 4, 2007.

demolished houses, such as doors, windows, and bathroom fixtures, operated from the second level on selected weekends during the early 1990s.³⁰

By 1997 the city began finalizing a plan costing in the \$16 to \$20 million range to restore the depot as a multimodal station. Supporters nervously waited to see if Congress would continue the enhancement program in the new federal, six-year transportation bill. Debate ensued over several issues, including which non-transportation organizations should be included in the station and whether to retain or tear down the Crane Plumbing building that stood on city property near the station.³¹ “Greensboro’s project was the state’s biggest multimodal station, took the longest to complete, and had the most players,” recalls David King, NCDOT’s former deputy secretary.³² When Congress finally passed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998, continuing the enhancement component, completion of the Greensboro project was assured.

Richard Atkins, Greensboro DOT director, and John Beaman, project manager, represented the city in early planning. When they retired, Jim Westmoreland was appointed as City DOT director in 1999 and the next year, Tony Kozuch became project manager. Kozuch discovered the Depot had received only superficial maintenance in the later years of train operations. Although the building was structurally sound, much work needed to be completed. The top two-thirds of the tall octagonal chimney needed to be replaced. The roof of the passenger tunnel under the tracks required more substantial supports, because modern trains passing overhead had become heavier than their predecessors. Water runoff from the rail yard, located on the same level as the Depot’s second story, caused a series of problems that affected both the track area and the building.³³

³⁰ Betty Cone, telephone conversation with author, June 19, 2007; Calvin Reynolds, e-mails to author, June 21 and 22, 2007.

³¹ Walter R. Turner, “All aboard: Changes planned for Depot,” *News & Record*, September 12, 1997.

³² David King, interview with author, Research Triangle Park, N.C., February 6, 2007. King, a Lumberton native, graduated from Davidson College and earned an M.B.A. from UNC at Chapel Hill. After serving two years in the army, he joined the NCDOT in 1973, working as director of the public transportation division and as deputy secretary for transit, rail, and aviation. He retired from NCDOT in 2006 and is now general manager for Triangle Transit Authority. Turner, *Paving Tobacco Road*, 111.

³³ Tony Kozuch, telephone conversation with author, February 28, 2007.

By 2001, construction began on the first enhancement phase at a cost of \$19.2 million.³⁴ The objectives included stabilization of the entire building, creation of a bus station on the upper level, and construction of a parking lot and supportive structures. Stabilization consisted of repointing (tuckpointing) the brick; installing new electric wiring, piping, heating and air systems; replacing all the glass; rebuilding the walls; installing a new roof; and repainting the interior to original colors. The Crane building was demolished. Outside work included an exterior elevator and landscaped parking lots. Creating the bus station required building a circular road to the second level; constructing fifteen bus slips for the city, one for PART, and four for Greyhound/Trailways; and converting former storage areas to a city and PART bus waiting room and REA's first floor for the intercity bus waiting room. This phase was completed in August 2003, when the bus transit portion of the station opened. Since that time, two more bus slips have been opened for the city's Higher Education Area Transit service, which connects all the city's institutions of higher learning.

The depot's second phase made the station available for intercity passenger rail service and future commuter rail operations and consisted of extensive track upgrading; reconstructing and extending the passenger tunnel; constructing a new baggage tunnel, passenger platforms and canopies for both north-south and east-west traffic, and completing related interior work for Amtrak services. This enhancement cost was \$11,620,000.³⁵ The depot included space for the Disabled American Veterans. At a 2005 ceremony to dedicate the building and resume passenger rail service, city leaders named the multimodal station the "J. Douglas Galyon Depot" in honor of the Greensboro resident and chairman of the NCDOT board since 2003. Passengers lined up to board trains.

Phase Three, initiated in 2006, is costing \$1.6 million—\$1.2 million left over from Phase One and \$400,000 in city bond funds. This phase includes expanding and enhancing the city/PART bus waiting area, upgrading areas of the building still to be leased, providing a city police bicycle presence, and constructing a high-tech visitors center. Upon completion, the depot will offer 15,000 square feet of leased space,

³⁴ The City of Greensboro's share consisted of \$1.3 million (appraised value of Depot) and \$620,000 cash. Jim Westmoreland, e-mail to author, February 16, 2007.

including two large areas on the main level facing Washington Street and two areas on the upper level. The total cost of all three phases of the restoration is \$31,220,000.³⁶

Durham

During the early 1990s, a period when Amtrak did not have a station in Durham and Greyhound and Trailways operated from a temporary building, the city purchased the local bus system from Duke Power Company. During that same time, Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) began developing a regional rail plan. With guidance from Mark Ahrendsen, Durham DOT Director, the city began focusing on developing a multimodal station. In 1996, city voters authorized \$5 million in bonds to build one.³⁷ The city, TTA, and NCDOT worked together on a plan. A bus station for city, TTA, and Greyhound/Trailways buses would be built south of the east-west track (used by Amtrak and freight trains) at the Heart of Durham hotel site bordered by Pettigrew and Chapel Hill streets. To the west, across Chapel Hill Street, site of a temporary Amtrak station in a doublewide modular unit, TTA would create a commuter rail station. Just across the track, to the north, an Amtrak station would be relocated to a renovated Walker Warehouse building. Construction is scheduled to begin on the local transit component, called “Durham Transportation Center,” in late 2007. This \$17.6 million project will be financed by the City’s bond funds (\$5,165,000), NCDOT (\$4,460,000), and \$7,960,000 (FTA) and built on a six-acre site. The deteriorated Heart of Durham hotel has been demolished. The site will include seventeen covered bus slips for city and TTA buses and four for Greyhound/Trailways. The station will include a two-story waiting and ticketing room for all bus passengers, who will be able to park their cars in an existing garage located on the east side of the site.

The Walker Warehouse site for the Amtrak station is located on the former campus of the Liggett & Myers tobacco company. Blue Devil Ventures, an organization established by former Duke University basketball players, is renovating the buildings on

³⁵ The approximate divisions are: federal, \$8.4 million; NC, \$2.1 million; Greensboro, \$1,120,000.

³⁶ Basic information for the Greensboro multimodal station based on: Jim Westmoreland, interview with author, Greensboro, N.C., January 30, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/igreensboro.html>.

³⁷ After growing up on an Iowa farm, Mark Ahrendsen earned undergraduate and masters degrees in industrial engineering from the University of Iowa. He worked for a company managing transit systems. In

Main Street, north of the track, for residential, entertainment, and office use.³⁸ One-third of the Walker Warehouse closest to the track will be used by Amtrak. Instead of using enhancement funds for the project, the company plans to renovate the space and then lease it to NCDOT. However, progress on the Amtrak and TTA stations are now on hold. In December 2005, FTA turned down TTA's plans to build a \$810 million regional commuter rail system between Durham and Raleigh that would have included twelve stations.³⁹ In June 2006, Secretary Lyndo Tippettt discontinued NCDOT's planning role with the Amtrak station, primarily due to TTA's uncertain future. Nevertheless, the city of Durham remains committed to the multimodal plan, optimistic "that the Amtrak station will be created in Walker Warehouse and that TTA will eventually operate regional rail from its own commuter station."⁴⁰ In the meantime, Amtrak continues to operate from its present, temporary location, on land still owned by TTA.⁴¹

Raleigh

Establishing a plan to build a Raleigh multimodal station has been challenging. In two early intermodal (multimodal) transportation studies, the city, NCDOT, and TTA could not agree on a station location and other details. By 2007, finalizing a plan had become more complicated with the uncertainties about whether TTA will someday build a commuter rail system. There is consensus that a station should be placed in the "warehouse area" on the western edge of downtown. This is an area containing both occupied and vacant warehouses, offices, restaurants, clubs, and studios for artists and designers. Raleigh is experiencing explosive growth in the downtown area, leading to demand for more housing. The boundaries of the warehouse district area are Dawson Street on the east, Morgan Street northward, Lenior Street to the south, and the rail lines along the west side.

1988 he joined the city of Durham and currently serves as manager of the transportation division of Public Works Department. Mark Ahrendsen, email to author, June 29, 2007.

³⁸ Renee Wright, "Reinventing Durham," *North Carolina* 65, (February 2007): 40.

³⁹ Bruce Siceloff, "Triangle gets bad news on rail," *News & Observer*, December 15, 2005.

⁴⁰ Mark Ahrendsen, telephone conversation with author, March 1, 2007.

⁴¹ Basic information for the Durham multimodal station based on: Mark Ahrendsen, telephone conversations, February 16 and March 1, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/idurham.html>; Allan Paul, e-mail to author, February 22, 2007.

Mitchell Silver, experienced with large cities in the Northeast, became Raleigh's planning director in 2005. He is launching two major planning studies simultaneously. One has an multimodal transportation focus and the other examines the entire warehouse area. "The intermodal study will deal with several engineering and aesthetic issues, such as bridges that will be necessary for increased train traffic," says Mike Kozak of NCDOT's Public Transportation Division.⁴² Another key issue is how to handle the city/TTA/Greyhound/Trailways bus systems. Should the bus systems continue to operate from downtown's Moore Square Bus Station, move bus operations to the multimodal station, or use both locations?⁴³ TTA owns nine acres just west of the warehouse area in the Boylan Heights neighborhood. Since Cherokee Investment Partners, a development company based in Raleigh, would like to develop land around TTA's proposed twelve commuter station locations, it may be a player in the final plan.⁴⁴ Any multimodal station will likely be a public/private project.⁴⁵

Charlotte

For more than half a century, the Southern Railway's handsome Mediterranean-style station on West Trade Street near center-city was a popular destination.⁴⁶ The local streetcar system stopped at the station until 1938; the Piedmont and Northern main interurban station was located two blocks away during the 1912-1948 period.⁴⁷ Because of a decline in passenger traffic, the Southern station was torn down in 1962. In the following decade, Amtrak trains began stopping at a new station two miles north of downtown on the edge of a freight yard.

Since the 1980s, NCDOT has worked with Amtrak to increase passenger train traffic in the state. The Carolinian started daily roundtrips between Charlotte and New

⁴² Mike Kozak, telephone conversation with author, March 2, 2007.

⁴³ Moore Square Bus Station, which opened in 1988 with 16 slips for city and Greyhound buses (TTA was added soon thereafter), is bounded by Hargett, Martin, Wilmington, and Blount streets. Mike Kennon, e-mail to author, February 16, 2007.

⁴⁴ David Ranii, "Cleanup Expert's New Venture:Rail," *News & Observer*, September 6, 2006.

⁴⁵ Basic information for the Raleigh multimodal station based on: Mitchell Silver, telephone conversation, February 5, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/iraleigh.html>.

⁴⁶ The station, designed by Frank Milburn, opened in 1905. Milburn also designed Salisbury's Spanish Mission style station, which opened in 1908, was renovated by the early 1990s, and presently serves Amtrak.

York City in 1990 and the Piedmont began daily roundtrips between Raleigh and Charlotte in 1995. Consequently, the number of annual passengers in the Queen City jumped from 36,000 in 1990 to 123,000 in 2000. In light of this growing traffic, Charlotte and NCDOT agreed by the late 1990s that West Trade Street was the best location for a new rail station because of its downtown location. On behalf of NCDOT, Allan Paul, Assistant Director of the agency's Rail Division, started buying the necessary land and negotiating with the railroads to separate the Norfolk Southern's main north-south line (just north of where the station would be located) from the CSX's east-west line.⁴⁸

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) was organized in 1999 with Ron Tober as its CEO.⁴⁹ By 2002, CATS finalized a strategic plan to create five new transit corridors utilizing a variety of modes: light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and streetcars. The ten-mile light rail line for the south corridor is scheduled to open in late 2007. The north corridor plan, a commuter rail line from uptown Charlotte to Mooresville, would include a new Queen City multimodal station focused on Amtrak, Greyhound/Trailways and city buses, and also, if funded, streetcar service and commuter rail. NCDOT's Rail Division identified \$32 million from its budget plus special legislative earmarks during 1998-2004 to purchase twenty-seven acres for the future station on West Trade Street. This involved land extending along the tracks for nearly one mile. Only about three more acres need to be purchased for the planned station.⁵⁰

In 2004 CATS and NCDOT signed a memorandum of understanding to create the multimodal center. The following year, FTA agreed to fund \$23 million to NCDOT and CATS over four years to construct the bus portions of the center. In 2006 the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the board that oversees operation of CATS, approved creation of Gateway Station. Though conceptional, the plan is nevertheless an ambitious, public-private blueprint that anticipates transformation of the western side of Charlotte's

⁴⁷ Walter R. Turner, "Development of Streetcar Systems in North Carolina," 2002, North Carolina Historic Sites, 9-11.

⁴⁸ Simmons and Paul interview, February 6, 2007.

⁴⁹ Ronald J. Tober grew up in Cleveland and earned a B.S. from Cornell University and a master of science degree from Case Western Reserve University. His experience with transit systems included positions in Miami, Seattle, and as General Manager for Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

⁵⁰ Brian Nadolny, interview with author, Charlotte, N.C., February 12, 2007; Allen Paul, e-mail to author, February 13, 2007.

downtown. The proposed location is in the same block where the Southern Railway station stood on West Trade Street. The site plan includes a transit and rail station with facilities for Amtrak and commuter rail passengers, twelve slips for city buses on a subterranean level, and a civic plaza area at street level. A privately funded office and residential building and Greyhound/Trailways station with twelve to sixteen slips for buses and a parking deck on top would stand separate but nearby. Other possibilities for the area include a city park and a minor league baseball stadium. Additional funding will be required for the up to seven tracks the station will need, wider railroad bridges over five city streets, and complex track realignments.⁵¹

Winston-Salem

In the 1920s, Southern, Norfolk & Western, and Winston-Salem Southbound railroads collaborated to build the Winston-Salem Union Station on the southeastern edge of the city's downtown, one mile from its center. The "Beaux Arts station of steel and concrete faced in Flemish-bond brick and limestone, with a Corinthian portico," opened in 1926.⁵² The three-story station included 36,000 square feet of space and features similar to, but smaller than the Greensboro station designed by the same Fellheimer and Wagner architectural firm. From street level, passengers entered a stately concourse that included terrazzo floors with ticketing services along an attractive wall of marble and wood, with waiting rooms and lengthy wooden seats on the opposite side. The concourse led to an overhead walkway with staircases that went down two levels to two platforms. The station had served twenty trains daily at its peak, but Norfolk & Western had discontinued service by the early 1960s and Southern by 1970.⁵³ Southern tore down the concourse that crossed the tracks. In 1975 Harvey Davis bought the station and 2.5-acre site. After major rewiring and replumbing and replacing glass in the windows, he

⁵¹ Nadolny interview, February 12, 2007; Brian Nadolny e-mails to author, February 16 and 20, 2007; "Charlotte Gateway Station Program, Design Update & Office Space Option, August 24, 2005; "Charlotte Multi Modal Station Project Timeline," February 15, 2007; <http://www.bytrain.org/istation/icharlotte.html>; Paul, e-mail to author, February 13, 2007.

⁵² Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*, 388.

⁵³ Ward, *Southern Railway Depots, Volume I*, 66-68.

installed rollup doors to convert the top floor into an automobile garage that still operates.⁵⁴

In the mid-1980s, Winston-Salem began planning for a bus station to serve city and intercity passengers. The Winston-Salem Transportation Center opened in 1997 with a station and sixteen slips for city buses at a cost of \$14 million, financed by FTA and matching funds. It is located downtown, on Fifth Street between Liberty and Trade streets. PART regional buses began using the center in 2002. After a long period of passenger decline, Greyhound/Trailways agreed to relocate to the city's bus station in a 2005 agreement in which the city acquired the Greyhound station site near US 52 and Business I-40.⁵⁵

With the bus station completed, the Twin City, the largest city in the state without Amtrak service, began to focus on restoring passenger train traffic. Brent McKinney, who had served several years as Winston-Salem's DOT director, became executive director of PART in 2001.⁵⁶ Also that year, USDOT expanded the Washington-Charlotte high-speed rail plan to include a Greensboro-Winston-Salem-Lexington "elbow" so that the Twin City would acquire passenger service. Discussions with Harvey Davis about selling Union Station began, so that it could be restored for rail service and also provide office space for its neighbor, Winston-Salem State University. PART's subsequent studies about the potential for commuter rail service between Winston-Salem and Greensboro added interest. Davis, who has not removed the building's architectural features, is unwilling to sell the station. However, he is working with Excelsior Street Development Company, a private developer, as well as the City, PART, NCDOT, and Winston-Salem State University, for a long-term lease to rehabilitate the historic station and build a seventeen-story retail/office/residential/parking deck structure next to it. Under this plan, the city would lease the old station's street level for future intercity and commuter rail services. City and PART bus service would utilize a curbside drop off

⁵⁴ Harvey Davis, telephone conversation with author, April 16, 2007.

⁵⁵ Brent McKinney, telephone conversation with author, March 1, 2007.

⁵⁶ Brent McKinney, who grew up in rural Surry County, earned civil engineering degrees from N.C State University (B.S.) and Perdue University (masters). After eight years with NCDOT's Highway Division, he joined the Winston-Salem DOT in 1979 and became its director three years later. In 2001 he was appointed executive director of PART. Brent McKinney, telephone conversation with author, June 29, 2007.

area at the station entrance. Though NCDOT is optimistic about the success of this partnership, McKinney is concerned that “the project is unlikely to go forward with the proposed management structure.”⁵⁷

In 2006 NCDOT (\$2.3 million) and PART (\$400,000) purchased a two-mile, former Norfolk Western rail line that runs through the eastern portion of the city for possible freight use. This action protects for passenger service the Norfolk Southern rail line that is closer to downtown and passes Reynolds High School and Stratford Road on the way to Clemmons and Mocksville. If PART succeeds in creating a commuter rail system, it could utilize that line and build a commuter station near downtown’s Third and Fifth Streets, within a few blocks of the bus station.⁵⁸

Other cities

NCDOT would like to extend Amtrak service to additional cities in North Carolina. In 2001 the agency completed a feasibility study for providing passenger rail service between Salisbury and Asheville. Two years later, NCDOT recommended that two routes be considered for Raleigh-to-Wilmington service. One would pass through Selma, Goldsboro and Warsaw. The other would include Selma, Fayetteville, Pembroke, and Lumberton. This action has led to discussions about creating multimodal stations on these routes.

For years, Wilmington had plans to create a multimodal station in a former Atlantic Coast Line headquarters building located on the northern edge of downtown. This location is near the beginning of the historic Wilmington & Weldon rail corridor. However, the nearby Cape Fear Community College secured the site for an expansion of their campus. Wilmington has now finalized plans for a seven-acre site between Third and Fourth Streets. In 2007 FTA agreed to provide \$10 million in matching funds to buy the property. The new station will open with a facility for city and Greyhound/Trailways buses and enough land available to add rail later. Wilmington has also secured \$2.7

⁵⁷ McKinney conversation; Brent McKinney, e-mail to author, April 3, 2007; Davis conversation.

⁵⁸ Stan Polanis, telephone conversation with author, February 9, 2007; Allen Paul, e-mail to author, March 15, 2007.

million in FTA funds to buy land for a bus maintenance facility as well as a bus transfer point in the eastern part of the city⁵⁹

The Goldsboro Union Station opened in 1909 to serve Atlantic Coast Line, Southern, and the Atlantic and North Carolina railroads. “The eclectic, 2-story red brick structure, seven bays wide with flanking wings, features curvilinear gables on three sides.”⁶⁰ The city’s electric streetcar system served the station during the 1910-1920 decade.⁶¹ As in Wilmington, NCDOT will acquire the station for bus operation initially, with the option of adding rail if that becomes feasible. If the station is developed, the city will upgrade the street from the station to downtown.⁶²

The ACL opened a Dutch Colonial Revival-style station on Hay Street in Fayetteville in 1911. During the late 1980s, the station was restored for Amtrak service.⁶³ The City of Fayetteville is studying the possibility of adding a bus facility nearby.

Conclusion

Multimodal stations are now operational at Wilson, Rocky Mount, High Point, and Greensboro, prepared for an escalating number of passengers in the years to come. In each location, railroad stations and related facilities of historic and architectural significance have been restored to excellent condition. All of the stations have long wooden seats, historically correct paint colors, and exterior roofs and windows that are either original or replicas. Where needed, physical modifications have been tastefully developed. At the Wilson station, for example, historic streetscaping was added that blends with the downtown area. In Rocky Mount, an atrium, large porte cochere, and park were built appropriate to the station’s massive size, making the station as inviting on its downtown side as on the side facing the tracks. To enhance the classical Greensboro station, growing bus operations were placed on the backside, where they are visually unobtrusive, and a landscaped parking area was constructed at street level. When the

⁵⁹ Mike Kozlosky, telephone conversation with author, March 6, 2007.

⁶⁰ Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, 379.

⁶¹ Turner, “Development of Streetcar Systems in North Carolina,” 22-23.

⁶² Mike Kozak, telephone conversation with author, March 2, 2007.

⁶³ Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, 402; Kozak telephone conversation with author, March 2, 2007.

walkway connecting High Point's rail and bus stations was rebuilt, its roof and colors were visually linked to the railway station. In each city, bus facilities are near to but do not distract from the architecture of the rail stations. The result is an attractive historical look combined with the practical facilities of a multimodal station. Similar potential exists in Goldsboro and Fayetteville, if they can accommodate both passenger rail and bus service at or near their historic stations.

Other cities now planning multimodal stations face a different set of challenges. Charlotte and Raleigh hope to build stations that will help transform and revitalize their downtowns. In each case, the future of commuter rail, as yet undetermined, will play a key role in the development of the projects. If these cities are able to at least accommodate Amtrak along with city, regional, and Greyhound/Trailways buses in one location, it will be noteworthy. Charlotte has created an impressive public/private plan that could be implemented in stages, as funding becomes available. Raleigh, as it begins important planning studies, has the potential for a similar strategy. Durham is taking a big step in 2007 by construction of a transit center. Winston-Salem has established a fine bus station, but its biggest challenge is acquiring passenger rail service.

Allan Paul of NCDOT's Rail Division is the visionary leader of multimodal station development in North Carolina. He joined the agency just when the enhancement program was beginning, and he saw that program as an opportunity to strengthen rail stations and related facilities, thereby providing more passenger services.⁶⁴ David King, who provided administrative muscle as former NCDOT deputy secretary for the agency's non-highway programs, credits Paul's initiatives and "sheer doggedness."⁶⁵ Pat Simmons, director, Rail Division, is a vigorous advocate as well.⁶⁶ Mike Kozak, assistant director for metropolitan transportation in the Public Transportation Division, is an expert on policies and financing of transit operations.⁶⁷ NCDOT collaborated with dedicated

⁶⁴ See footnote #5 for Paul's biographical information.

⁶⁵ David King, email to author, June 27, 2007. See footnote #32 for King's biographical information.

⁶⁶ A North Carolina native, Simmons earned degrees in psychology and marine biology at UNC-Wilmington. He joined NCDOT in 1981, working in rural and urban programs, and has headed the Rail Division since 1994. Turner, *Paving Tobacco Road*, 142.

⁶⁷ Kozak earned a sociology degree at the University of Albany (N.Y.), and worked for the New York State DOT for twenty years as urban transportation planner and heading the rural public transit program. He joined NCDOT in 1991 as a program consultant, and is now assistant director for metropolitan transportation.

city leaders to create the state's present system, which is basically designed to accommodate future passenger growth.

In the movie, "Field of Dreams," a farmer built a baseball park in the middle of a cornfield in Iowa. "Build it and they will come," he predicted. But is the same idea true for multimodal stations? While four multimodal stations have now been completed in the state, the number of passengers has not grown significantly. What needs to happen? What, if anything, will convince more North Carolinians to leave their cars and use rail and mass transit in large numbers?

First, it is important for high-speed rail and mass transit to succeed. The United States Department of Transportation concluded that high-speed plans for the Washington-Charlotte rail corridor are a priority. The agency has already chosen the route, which would pass directly from Petersburg to Raleigh over new tracks and continue to Charlotte via Greensboro. Expanding existing track is similar to converting a two-lane highway to four lanes—obstructions must be eliminated and the route upgraded while accommodating busy traffic. The biggest challenge is funding the construction, estimated to require as much as \$2.6 billion.⁶⁸ Along with high-speed rail, the state's urban areas need to succeed in building innovative mass transit systems. While Raleigh-Durham's initial commuter rail plan was turned down, Charlotte's ten-mile, light-rail line for the south corridor will open in late November 2007. However, the multimodal Gateway Station on the city's west side will be difficult to justify, unless the commuter line for the north corridor is also built. If Charlotte's mass transit system succeeds, it will encourage regional rail in the Triangle and Triad as well. High-speed Amtrak and mass transit rail systems will bring crowds to the stations between Charlotte and Raleigh, and could lead to extension of passenger rail to the mountains and coast.

Secondly, businesses and private sector involvement will become increasingly important for multimodal stations. Washington's Union Station is successful not only because of the building's attractive restoration and transportation options offered, but also because of its restaurants, movie theater complex, and upscale stores. When CATS led

⁶⁸ This estimate is based on an initial program level analysis of a \$5.5 million per mile cost for 468 miles of track, which would include the Winston-Salem connection. A more detailed engineering estimate will be available in fall 2008. NCDOT hopes that the funding match will be 80% federal/20% state. David B. Foster, NCDOT Rail Division, emails to author, July 10, 2007.

the planning process for Gateway Station, it got the entire community involved with a plan that would transform the west side of downtown. That facility cannot be built, however, without public/private funding. A similar strategy is needed in Raleigh. The challenge for Greensboro's station, which has choice space available for leasing, is: can the station attract businesses like restaurants or stores that will help bring crowds to the location?

Multimodal stations are a key to the quality of North Carolina's continued urban growth. In the words of English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," the state must continue "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

*Walter R. Turner is historian at the North Carolina Transportation Museum
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