



CONNECT Beyond 2023 Annual Report

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

CONNECT Beyond is a regional mobility plan that will transform how residents and visitors travel throughout the greater Charlotte region. CONNECT Beyond's plan includes over 120 actionable recommendations to create a robust, interconnected transportation network that will impact how our region grows and moves in the future.

Throughout 2023, the CONNECT Beyond project team and its project partners have been hard at work implementing the critical near-term plan recommendations. We are proud to share this Annual Report with you that highlights our project's achievements over the past year.

By the Numbers



120 Plan
Recommendations



47 Immediate
Term Recommendations
(0-3 years)



22
Recommendations
In Progress

CONNECT Beyond Project Priorities: 2023 Successes



Increase Economic Competitiveness

Applied for and received a \$1.75M federal implementation grant from US DOT



Enhance Public Transit

Advanced seamless CONNECTIONs to increase transit coordination for fixed route and demand response transit and created a regional transportation guide for older adults



Encourage Environmental Stewardship

Received a \$1M Climate Pollution Reduction Grant from EPA for development of a regional plan to reduce greenhouse gases and prepare projects for funding



Advance Equity

Hired a Community Equity Engagement Coordinator tasked with developing a Community Transportation Action Plan to serve as a model for replicable and scalable mobility solutions for historically disadvantaged communities across our region



Improve Transportation Choices

Received funding from NCDOT and launched development of a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan and program



Promote Sustainable Regional Growth

Launched training programs to advance education of integrating land use and transit planning for elected officials, planners and technical staff

Project Highlights

Leveraging State and Federal Funding for Implementation

Centralina received \$1.75M in funding from the USDOT's Regional Infrastructure Accelerator program that will be used to establish an **Integrated Mobility Center** and build out CONNECT Beyond project service lines for finance innovation, pipeline project facilitation and transit oriented development. Centralina Regional Council will be working closely with regional partners to launch the Center and program.



Development of a Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan and Program

Centralina Regional Council, in collaboration with North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) and regional transportation planning agencies, is developing a first of its kind regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. This regional TDM program is expected to launch in July 2024 and will:



Promote cost-effective strategies to help residents make decisions about travel



Provide education on transportation choices



Improve efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure



Enhance employers' access to workers with increased travel options

Creating Seamless CONNECTIONS

Project partners are working to increase coordination and promote seamless connections across the region by:



Advancing **transit coordination** opportunities (e.g., technology, scheduling, fares) for fixed route and demand response transit, including CATS' expansion of training and scheduling software for regional partners



Promoting regional collaboration by leveraging the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization's **Transit Provider Work Group** to optimize grant usage and educate on emerging trends



Convening the **Mobility Management Group** and ad hoc work groups to facilitate inter-agency solutions



Evaluating **microtransit** to increase efficiency, frequency and accessibility of first/last mile connections. The City of Gastonia, City of Salisbury and CATS are all currently reviewing this service and how it can benefit riders in their systems



Convening Regional Champions: Advancing the Plan Committee

CONNECT Beyond's Advancing the Plan Committee, an official ad-hoc advisory committee of Centralina's Executive Board, was established to **steward regional conversation and action that advances plan implementation**. Committee members, representing small and large communities across the region, met eight times in 2023 to begin building a foundation for a better regional transportation future. The Committee is chaired by Mayor Vi Lyles (City of Charlotte) and Mayor Darrell Hinnant (City of Kannapolis).



What's Coming up in 2024?

CONNECT Beyond is continuing to focus on project priorities, including:

- ◆ Implementation of CATS' ConCPT grant from NC DOT to improve transit coordination and create seamless transfers (Winter 2024)
- ◆ Finalize the Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan and launch the TDM Program (Spring – Summer 2024)
- ◆ Continue to expand transit education and awareness for older adults and people with disabilities (Ongoing)
- ◆ Continuation of convening of the Advancing the Plan Committee (Ongoing)
- ◆ Partner with Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization to launch a training series, Linking Transit and Land Use at the Community Scale, for its Technical Coordinating Committee (Winter 2024)
- ◆ Kick off of Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Program (Spring 2024)

How Can You Help?

Get Involved

CONNECT Beyond is a regional plan that will be implemented through both regional and local projects. Please share your projects that advance CONNECT Beyond recommendations. Reach out by signing up for our newsletter or contacting our team at connect-beyond@centralina.org.

