



**NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD COMPANY  
NEWS RELEASE**

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**NC RAILROAD COMPANY STUDY DETERMINES COSTS FOR  
DEVELOPING RUSH HOUR COMMUTER RAIL IN NORTH CAROLINA**

(Raleigh, NC) The North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR) released an 11-month study today that concludes that rush-hour commuter trains can operate on NCRR tracks along with freight trains from Greensboro to Goldsboro.

As part of its Vision 2030 planning, NCRR commissioned engineering firm HNTB to determine if commuter and freight trains could coexist on NCRR tracks, and the infrastructure costs that doing so would incur. HNTB studied possible commuter trains operating in four segments between Goldsboro and Greensboro, and Chapel Hill. Commuter trains typically run in the morning and afternoon rush hours and once midday over long distances.

Total infrastructure cost for new tracks, sidings and bridges along the 141-miles would be \$650 million, and equipment and support facilities are estimated at \$350 million. Commuter rail on the NCRR could be implemented in less expensive phases according to ridership demand. Bill Kincheloe, Chairman of the NCRR Board of Directors, emphasized, "some sections could open for commuter trains faster than others," he said. "However, if communities prefer light rail on dedicated track, this would not preclude that approach. Commuter rail offers an alternative approach that could be a good first step."

If a Goldsboro-to-Greensboro commuter plan were implemented on the NCRR corridor, trains would make 29 stops in seven counties with a total population of more than 2 million, with 18 colleges and universities within two miles of the rail lines.

Detailed studies on ridership and operating cost would have to be conducted. But knowing that freight and commuter trains can coexist was a key question that had to be answered before anyone could try to establish commuter trains, Kincheloe said.

NCRR owns the 317-mile rail line between Morehead City and Charlotte. Existing freight service, operated by Norfolk Southern, already touches 24 percent of the state's economy and is projected to increase. NCRR President Scott Saylor said that based on the HNTB study, he is

optimistic that commuter and freight service could also coexist on the Greensboro to Charlotte sections of the rail line, but that further studies would be needed.

“North Carolina could become a national leader in commuter rail,” Saylor said. “This design for commuter trains could be implemented without buying new right-of-way. That’s a significant cost advantage.”

Regional organizations and local governments throughout much of the state are interested in establishing rail services.

“The NCRRT line touches many of those local efforts, but it will need to be a team effort,” said Saylor. “Connecting municipal bus systems also would be required for commuter rail to succeed.”

In recent years, NCRRT, Norfolk Southern and the NC Department of Transportation have invested nearly \$60 million straightening curves, adding tracks, and making other improvements between Goldsboro and Greensboro. Along the entire NCRRT corridor they will make \$161 million in improvements by 2012, but more tracks would be needed.

“The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Committee’s recommendations may include ways for local governments to pay for capital investments for commuter rail if they so choose,” Saylor said.

The North Carolina Railroad Company owns and manages the 317-mile rail corridor extending from Morehead City to Charlotte. Over 70 freight trains and 8 passenger trains operate daily on the NCRRT rail line. NCRRT is the state’s oldest corporation and remains at the forefront of rail improvements and partnership development to promote jobs and rail-served industry across the state.

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