
1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, the City of Greenville, together with Pitt County, East Carolina University, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, contracted with Wilbur Smith Associates and its partners CB&A Research and Cherry Consulting of the Carolinas, Inc. to conduct a Regional Transit Feasibility Study in Pitt County and the surrounding region. This report presents the findings and recommendations from that study.

Four transit services operate within the county. The GREenville Area Transit (GREAT) service provides fixed route service throughout the city of Greenville. Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) operates demand responsive service throughout the county for multiple human service program participants, and supplies the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service for GREAT. East Carolina University provides transit services for its population only, predominately within Greenville. Pitt County Memorial Hospital operates a parking lot shuttle system around its campus.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to catalogue the existing services being provided and to explore the potential ways that service could be combined or coordinated within the region. To accomplish this purpose, several tasks are included:

- Inventory of existing services, including ridership, capital facilities, and finances
- Examination of county demographics to identify unserved locations
- Assessment of transit issues by interviewing stakeholders and ECU students
- Development of organizational and service alternatives
- Preparation of financial and implementation plans

The principal objectives are to identify areas in need of transit services and determine the most efficient and effective method of meeting the needs. The range of organizational structures considered range from every system operating independently, similar to the current situation, to consolidation of all services under a unified organization. The advantages and disadvantages of each structure are discussed in a later section.

STUDY AREA

The study area for the *Regional Transit Feasibility Study* is Pitt County, North Carolina, with a 2000 population of 133,798. Ten municipalities are within Pitt County, the largest of which is Greenville, the county seat, with 60,476 persons. Greenville is the only city with more than 10,000 persons; the remainder all have less than 5,000 persons.

The majority of the workforce is employed by the governmental sector, with almost 26 percent of the workforce in this sector. The other major sectors are the service sector and the retail trade sector. **Exhibit 1-1** shows the sector breakdown, and the comparison of wages in the county with the North Carolina average.

Exhibit 1-1
Workforce by Industry; 2nd Quarter 2000

	Number	Percent	Average Weekly Earnings	
			County	State
Agriculture:	1,072	1.6%	\$326.20	\$397.58
Construction:	3,638	5.5%	\$548.73	\$576.95
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate:	2,079	3.1%	\$618.63	\$859.29
Government:	17,254	25.9%	\$682.21	\$587.78
Manufacturing:	9,526	14.3%	\$691.71	\$697.70
Retail Trade:	13,704	20.6%	\$276.97	\$328.87
Wholesale Trade:	2,377	3.7%	\$568.04	\$754.72
Service:	15,400	23.1%	\$447.33	\$543.36
Transportation/Comm./Public Utilities:	1,473	2.2%	\$535.47	\$763.25
Total Work Force:	66,550	100.0%		

Source: NC Department of Commerce

According to the North Carolina Employment Security Administration, the total civilian workforce in Pitt County increased from an annual average of 54,770 in calendar year 1990 to 65,940 in calendar year 2000. This equates to a compounded annual growth rate of 1.9 percent.

STUDY PARTNER OVERVIEW

The City of Greenville is the largest of 10 cities in Pitt County, and is the county seat. In 2000, the population was 60,476, which makes Greenville the 13th largest city in North Carolina, and the third largest city east of I-95, after Wilmington and Jacksonville. The total land area for Greenville is 26.6 square miles. Greenville is operated under the council-manager form of government where the council employs a City Manager to handle the day-to-day operations. Greenville's elected officials consist of a mayor, five district councilmembers, and one at-large council member. They are elected every other year. The City has 227 employees and an operating budget of \$56 million.

Pitt County had a population in 2000 of 133,798, which makes it North Carolina's 13th most populous county. The total area is 654.8 square miles. The county has a commissioner-manager form of government, where the Board of Commissioners employs a County Manager to direct the day-to-day operations. The Board consists of nine members, six of whom represent a single district, and three of whom each represent two of the single-member districts. Commissioners are elected for staggered, four-year terms. The County has approximately 995 full-time equivalent positions, and an annual operating budget of \$139 million.

East Carolina University is the third largest of North Carolina's 53 private and public four-year colleges and universities. It is one of the 16 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina (UNC). The university is governed by a 13 member Board of Trustees consisting of eight members appointed by the UNC Board of Governors, four members appointed by the governor, and as an ex-officio member, the president of the student body. The day-to-day manager of the university is the Chancellor, who is chosen by the UNC Board of Governors on

the recommendation of the UNC President. Total enrollment in 2000 was 18,750, consisting of 15,018 undergraduates, 3,433 graduate students, and 299 medical students. There were 1,300 faculty and 2,770 staff. The total current fund expenditures were \$410 million.

Pitt County Memorial Hospital is a 731-bed, non-profit tertiary hospital with primary responsibility for a 29-county area of eastern North Carolina. It is the flagship hospital of the University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, and serves as the teaching hospital for the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. The clinical training covers more than 1,300 health science students, including 250 medical residents and 300 medical students. It is one of four academic medical teaching centers in the state. It is governed by an independent 20-member Board of Trustees, 11 of whom are appointed by the Pitt County Board of Commissioners. Approximately 5,000 persons are employed at the hospital. The clinical staff includes more than 500 physicians and 1,200 nurses. Projected operating budget for 2003 is \$750 million.

STUDY COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

To ensure the goals and recommendations of the *Regional Transit Feasibility Study* reflect the interests and considerations of all persons throughout Pitt County, there was considerable effort to incorporate the input of public officials, representatives of key civic organizations and public agencies, and the general public. Participants in the study process include the groups listed below, as well as the general public who were provided the opportunity to participate in the transit study through advertised public meetings. Further information on the public involvement can be found in Chapter 2.

Identified Stakeholders

Several groups of elected officials, staff, and civic leaders were interviewed as part of the study to gain insights on the perspectives of public transit service and the potential for service coordination and consolidation. The individuals listed below provided their insights into the public transit needs.

City of Greenville

Nancy Jenkins	Mayor
Chuck Autry	Councilmember
Inez Fridley	Councilmember
Blanche Forbes	Councilmember
Mildred Council	Councilmember
Rose Glover	Councilmember
Arielle Morris	Councilmember
Marvin Davis	City Manager

Pitt County

Glenn Bowen	Vice-Chairman of the Board
Tom Johnson	Boardmember
Terry Shank	Boardmember (by phone)

Tom Robinson

County Manager

East Carolina University

Richard Eakin

Chancellor

Garrie Moore

Vice Chancellor for Student Experiences

Bill Clutter

Vice Chancellor for University Unions

Richard Brown

Vice Chancellor for Admin. & Finance

Brian Bradshaw

Transit Boardmember

Robert White

General Manager, ECU Transit

Pitt County Memorial Hospital

Joel Butler

Vice President, Community Relations

Preston Comeaux

Vice President, Support Services

Diane Poole

Vice President, Planning

Linda Hughes

Nurse Case Manager, Social Services

Linda Peele

Nurse Case Manager, Social Services

Smaller Municipalities

Ed Booth

Ayden Town Manager

John Connet

Winterville Town Manager

Community Leaders

Daneel LeRoux

Eastern Carolina Vocational Center (ECVC)

Donald Spell

Pitt Community College (PCC)

John Chaffee

Pitt County Development Commission

Study Steering Committee

The work of the study was guided by a steering committee composed of representatives of the major groups above. The study would not have been possible without the long hours and dedication shown by these individuals.

Tom Tysinger

Greenville Public Works Director

Nancy Harrington

Greenville Transit Manager

John Bulow

Pitt County Asst. Manager and PATS Chair

Wayne Reed

ECU Assoc. Vice-Chancellor for Admin. & Finance

David Santa Ana

ECU Transportation Director, Parking

Scott Alford

ECU Transit Advisor

Charles Mayo

PCMH Administrator of Transportation

Jeff Crouchley

NCDOT Transportation Program Consultant

Louise Duncan

Public Transportation & Parking Comm.

Richard Barnes

Public Transportation and Parking Comm.

Geraldine Teel

Steering Committee Secretary

Public Transportation and Parking Commission

Along with the study Steering Committee, regular briefings were held with the Greenville Public Transportation and Parking Commission. Two members of this commission also served on the Steering Committee. The members of this commission are listed below.

Jean Wilkerson

Louise Duncan

Thomas Moye, Sr.

Ellen Taylor Flanagan

Richard Barnes

Charles Thomas

John Bunting, III

Steve Krpata

Chuck Autry

Council Liaison

Consulting Team

The work of the study was conducted by a consulting team lead by Wilbur Smith Associates. Principal members of the consulting are listed below.

Wilbur Smith Associates

Robert Bush – Project Manager

Anuja Koilara

CB&A Research

Diane Philyaw

Cherry Consultants of the Carolina

Rebecca Cherry