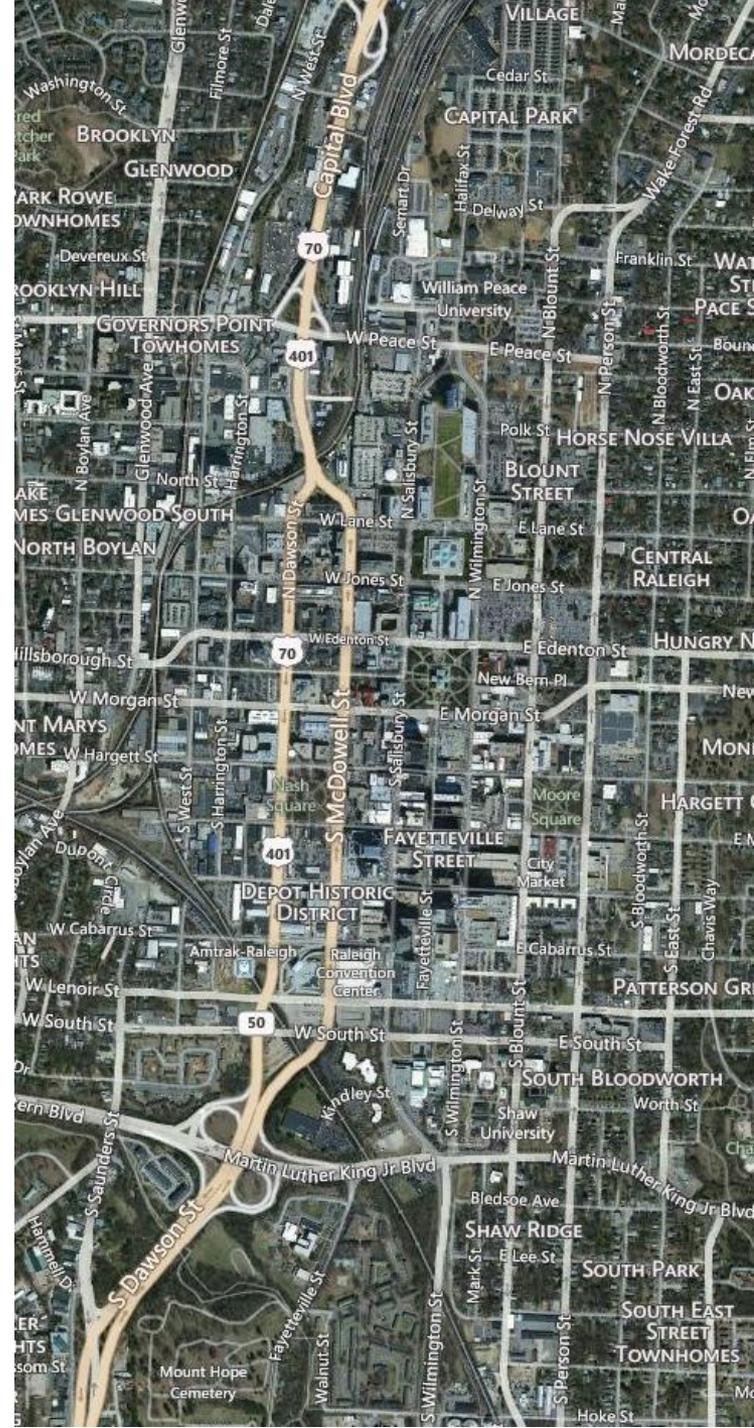


# Observations on Public Transportation Planning for Wake County and the Surrounding Region

Steven E. Polzin, Ph.D.

The observations are based on a preliminary review of the local plans and extensive experience with transit planning in U.S. cities.

The observations are my own and do not reflect the opinions of my employer or other parties.



# Outline

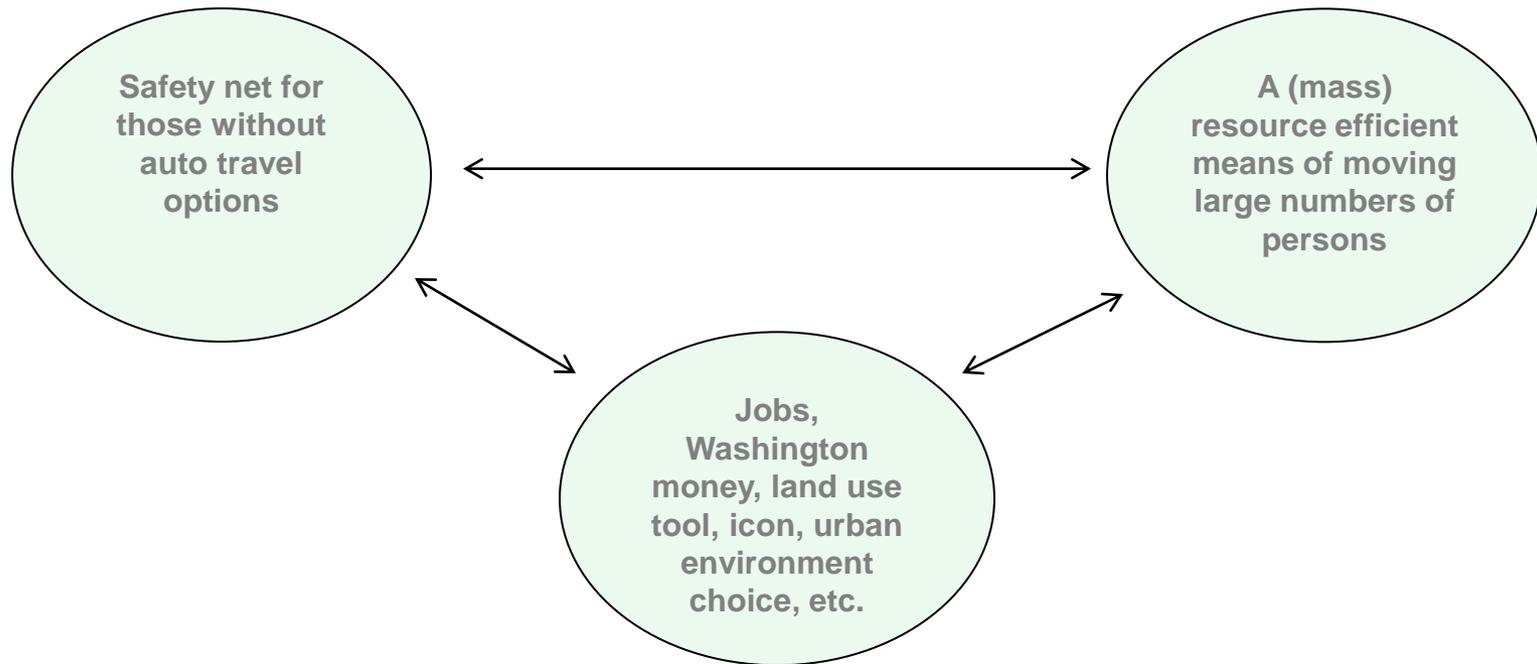
- The problem and the planning process
- The current environment for long range transit planning
- Some comments on your market

# What is the Problem?

Our understanding is that goals for transit among various segments of the community include:

- 1) relieving traffic congestion or providing travel options to avoid it;
- 2) connecting various municipalities with each other and to key employment and other travel destinations within the County including RTP;
- 3) providing travel alternatives to avoid the expense or challenge of driving;
- 4) improving existing transit service, particularly for transit-dependent users;
- 5) attracting new riders to transit;
- 6) focusing land use and future growth;
- 7) attracting and retaining talent;
- 8) enhancing economic development;
- 9) reducing environmental impacts;
- 10) providing a fiscally responsible plan that minimizes capital and operating cost risk;
- 11) maximizing the return on the County's financial investment in transit, etc.

# Goals for Transit



Transit planning can be an objective analysis of mobility challenges and opportunities recognizing the holistic nature of transportation investments. The broader the range of goals, the broader the range of solution strategies.

Other studies are more focused on efforts to rationalize or justify favored projects. More akin to feasibility analyses.

# ENR

Engineering News-Record

95 A Publication of The McGraw-Hill Companies FEBRUARY 14, 2000

► **BUDGET:** Record highway funding, sharp increases for prisons and federal buildings highlight FY2001 plan

► **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Cost of Boston's Central Artery may reach \$12.2 billion

Light Rail

## BOON OR BOONDOGGLE?

125

## Rail Transportation: Panacea or Placebo

A rail system can be the largest infrastructure project a region undertakes, spanning decades and impacting every aspect of urban life.

It can also be one of the most contentious.

# Battleground of Sound Bites Not Always Facts

- Its Multimodal
- It will shape land use
- Get our fair share of federal dollars
- Every world class city has one
- “What’s the alternative?”
- It’s Visionary
- I don’t want to be the next LA!
- Global Warming
- Sustainability
- Progressive
- Smart Growth
- Livability
- Chicken or egg dilemma - we need to start sometime
- Balanced transportation
- Offers choice
- Do it for our kids
- But the public wants it
- The critics work for the highway lobby
- The media editorials support it
- Time to stop studying and start building
- Not moving ahead it is a sign of dysfunctional government

*Symptom of Groupthink or Railigion*

*“Rail” Spelled backwards is “Liar”*

*It won’t pay for itself*

*With automated cars we won’t need it.*

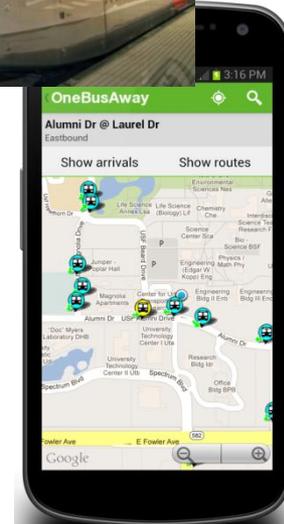
*More Big Government*

# It is a Different World

- Pace of demographic, economic and travel growth – the new normal?
- Communication substitution for travel
- Millennial travel behaviors
- The nature of job location choices
- Federal funding availability/competitiveness
- Project costs

# It is a Different World

- Impact of Autonomous/connected vehicles
- Changing competitiveness of auto and transit re energy and environmental considerations
- Evolution of transit modes including Bus Rapid Transit, transit on managed lanes, evolving rail technologies
- The power of digital information will reduce the significance of physical presence for transit

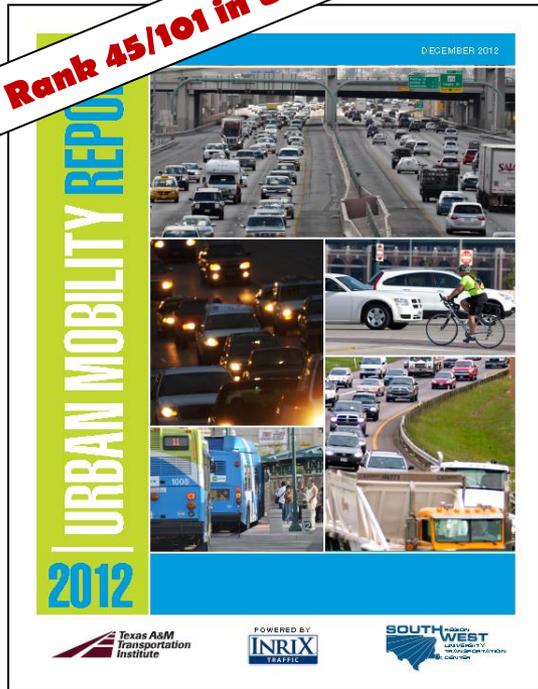


# You Don't Have a Transportation Crisis, You Do Have a Transit Opportunity

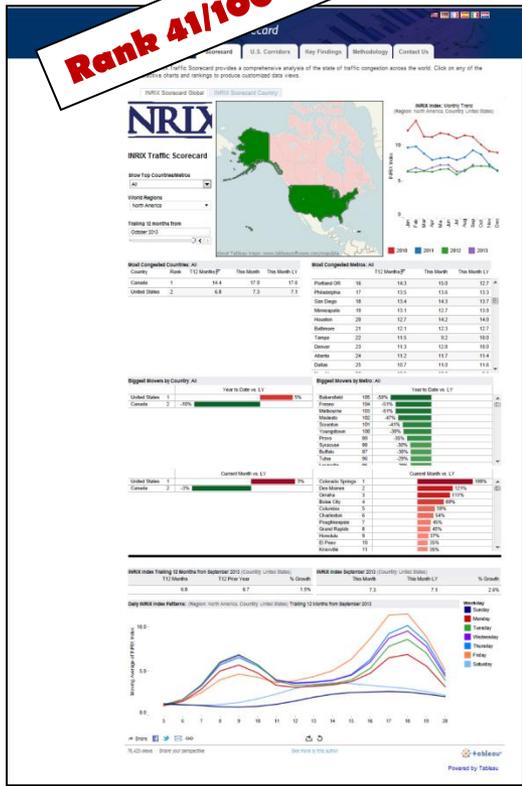
- By most measures of mobility your transportation system is performing well.
- Transit use is modest – very modest relative to other communities that have initiated new rail projects.
- Efficient utilization of capital intensive new transit would require perhaps unprecedented changes in transit use in the communities. Doubling transit use requires ~ quintupling ridership by choice riders.

# Congestion Rankings

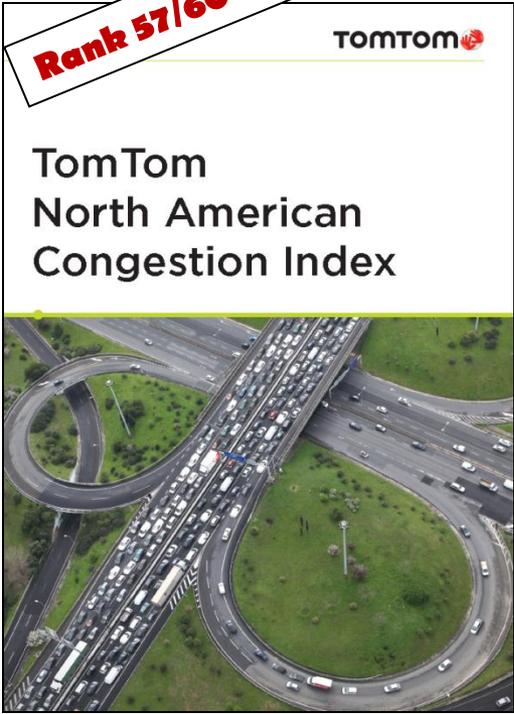
**Rank 45/101 in U.S.**



**Rank 41/100 in U.S.**



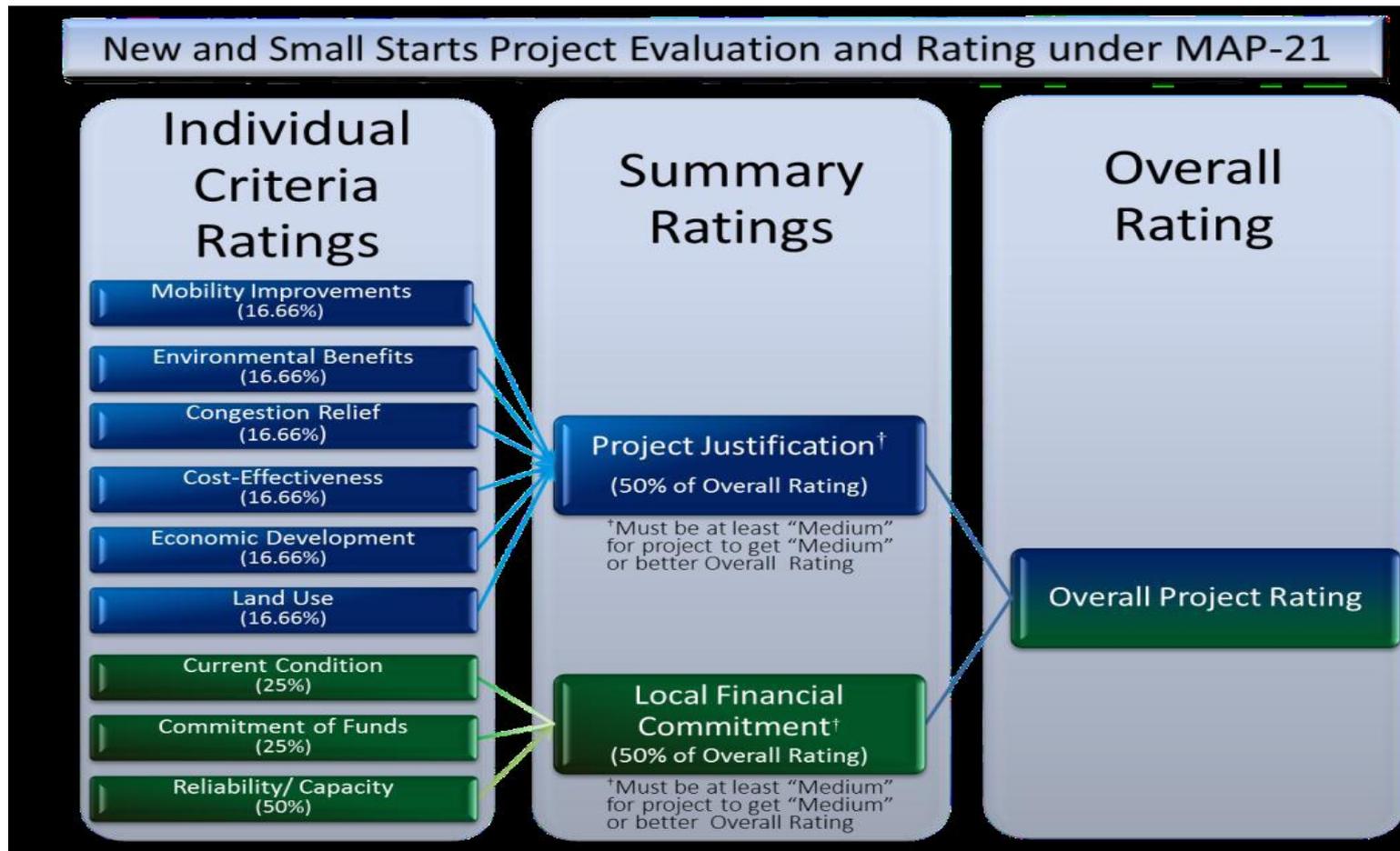
**Rank 57/60 in N.A.**



**Congestion is the situation where someone with the freedom, resources, and desire to travel gets in the way of someone else with the freedom, resources, and desire to travel.**

**Be careful how you solve this problem.**

# The Increased Focus on Current Conditions Makes Competitiveness for Federal Funds More Challenging



# Principles for Moving Ahead

- Raleigh isn't Dallas, Phoenix, Charlotte, Portland or Salt Lake City. Learn from others' successes and disappointments.
- Credibility will require an objective analysis of bus and BRT options - well designed by objective professionals.
- Doing something now and more later is a prudent option that merits consideration.
- Disciplined service expansion provides geographic equity and opportunities to show progress and develop markets.

# Principles for Moving Ahead

- Any plan should have innovative elements that the community can get excited about.
- The degree of uncertainty needs to be acknowledged in plan development and implementation.
- The challenge isn't selling the community a plan. The challenge is finding a plan worth selling to the community.

# Principles for Moving Ahead

- The cost of reaching regional consensus and constituencies can be very high. Regional coordination is important, but the cost of ensuring equity can cripple good intentions.
- If you want to change the land use pattern, do it. Don't expect transit to do it for you.



**Tough  
Decisions  
Ahead**

**Tough  
Decisions  
Ahead**

**Thank**

**You**