

CITY OF HIGH POINT
AGENDA ITEM



TITLE: Rail Service Update – North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division

FROM:
Greg Venable
Transportation Director

MEETING DATE:
June 1, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING:
No

ADVERTISED DATE/BY:
N/A

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Presentation

PURPOSE: North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Rail Division update.

BACKGROUND: Mr. Jason Orthner, NCDOT Rail Division Director, will provide information on the current and future status of rail services in North Carolina and locally in High Point.

BUDGET IMPACT: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION REQUESTED: For Information Only.



NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Transportation

Rail Update

High Point City Council Work Session

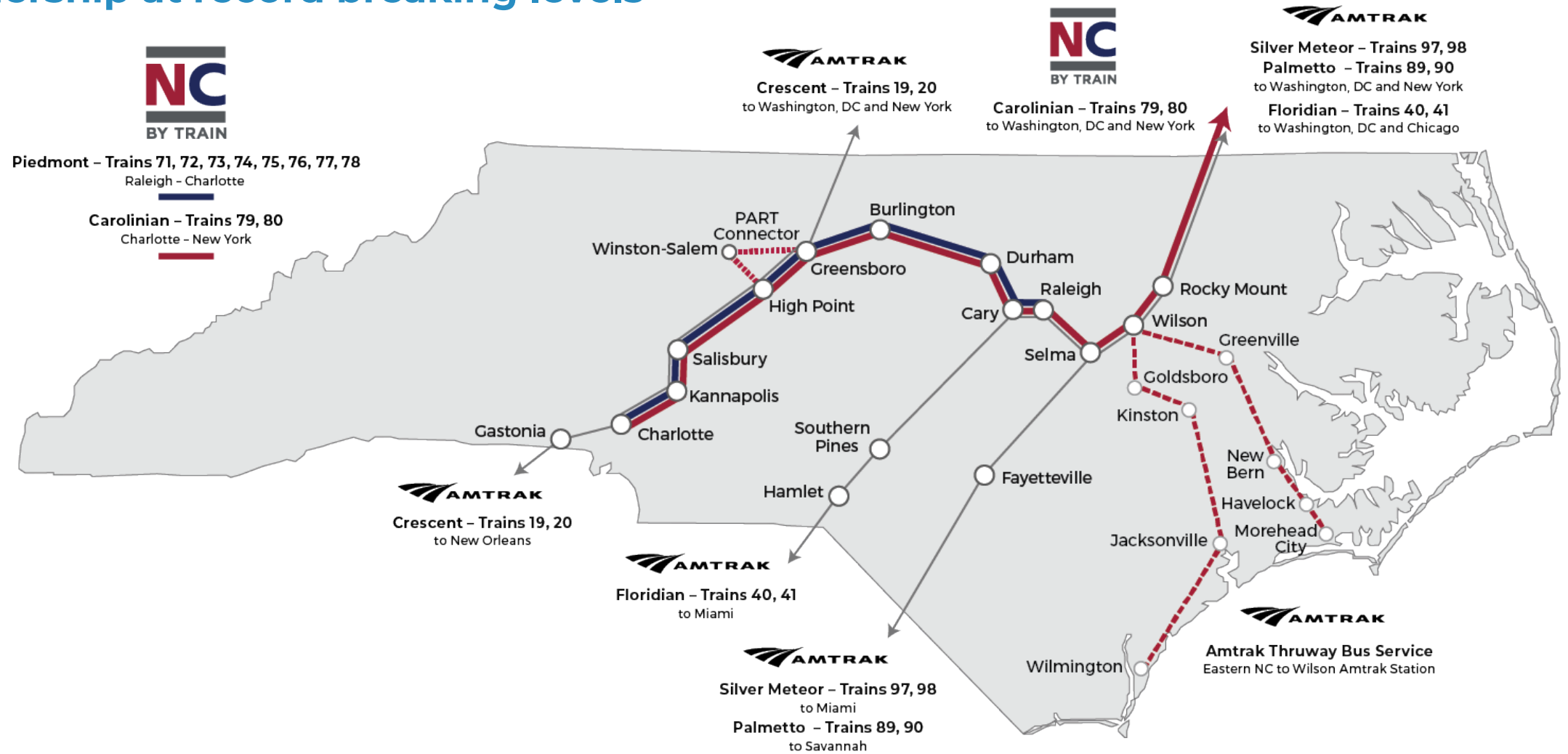
Jason Orthner
Rail Division Director

June 1, 2026

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina

NC Intercity Passenger Rail Service

Ridership at record breaking levels



Types of Passenger Rail Service

- **Intercity Passenger Rail (Typically FRA supported)**

– *NCDOT NC By Train Service operated by Amtrak in North Carolina*

- Connecting the centers of cities and towns
- Longer distances between stations
- Longer trip durations
- Baggage and food service typical

- **Commuter Rail (Typically FTA supported)**

- Connecting outlying areas and urban centers
- Peak hour service is historically typical
- Closer station spacing
- Shorter trip durations

- **Light Rail (Typically FTA supported)**

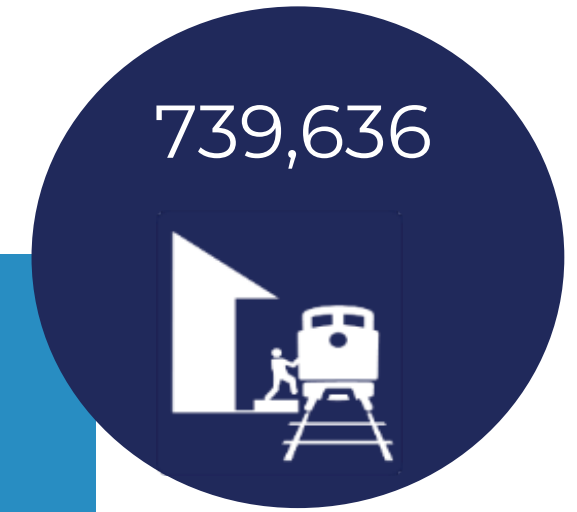
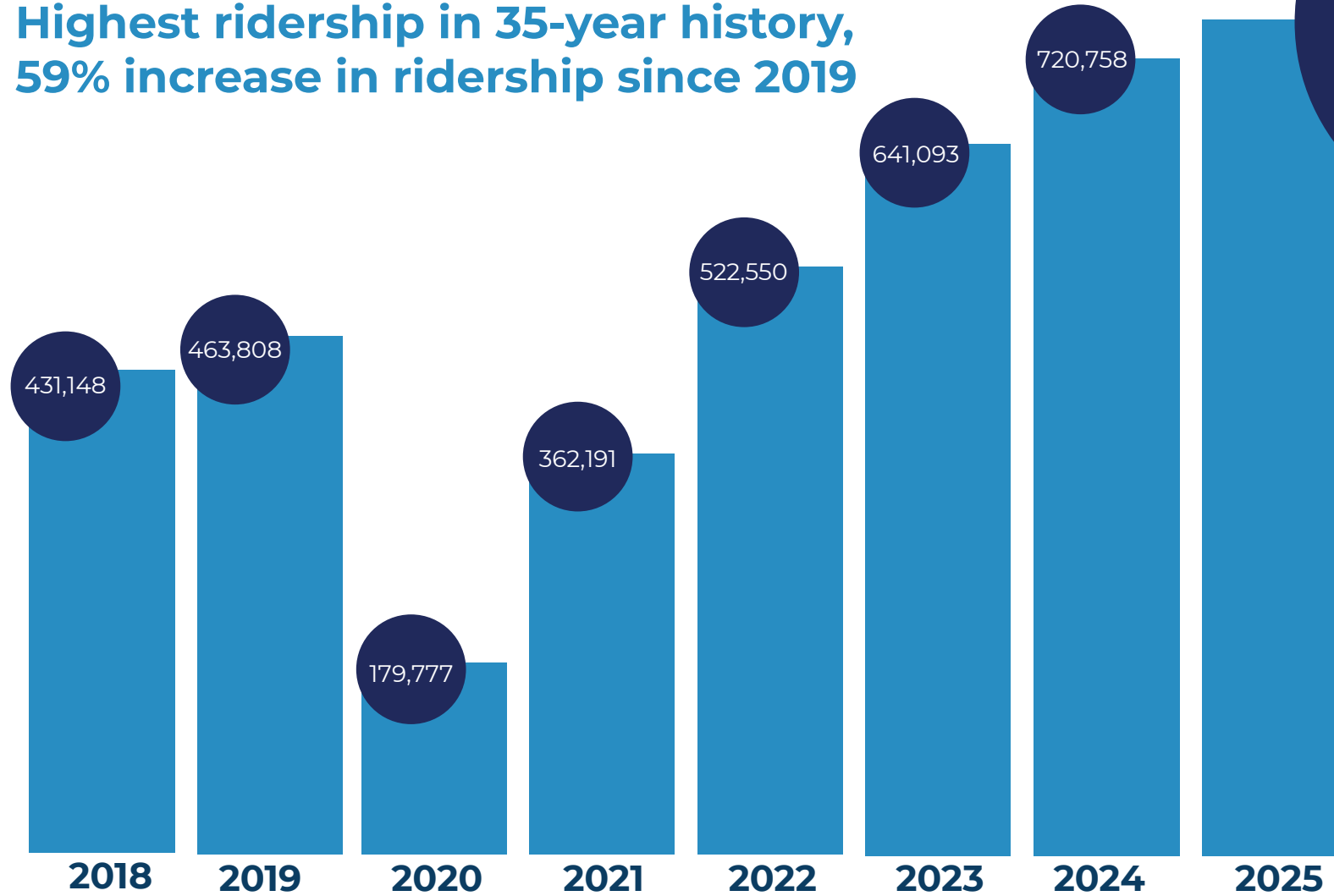
- Urban area
- Separate rail system (not part of national rail network)





NC Intercity Passenger Rail Service – Amtrak Piedmont and Carolinian services

Highest ridership in 35-year history, 59% increase in ridership since 2019



North Carolina Intercity Rail Expansion Opportunities

Seven Corridors in FRA CID Program

- ✓ Charlotte to Washington, DC
- ✓ Salisbury to Asheville
- ✓ Raleigh to Wilmington
- ✓ Charlotte to Kings Mountain
- ✓ Raleigh to Fayetteville
- ✓ Raleigh to Winston-Salem
- ✓ Charlotte to Atlanta

Future CID Applications:

- Raleigh to Greenville
- Raleigh to Hamlet
- Raleigh to Morehead City
- Winston-Salem to Charlotte
- Raleigh to Weldon



Towns shown are for geographical reference only and do not represent station locations.

High Point Focus

- Record Ridership in High Point
- Collaboration with PART
- Collaboration with Visit High Point
- Partner with High Point Rockers and Carolina Core FC
- Earned media on Little Sally (Thomas Dambo troll)
- Ale Trail By Rail - Brown Truck Brewery with NC Beer
- Stop on Amtrak Long Distance Crescent (New Orleans to New York)

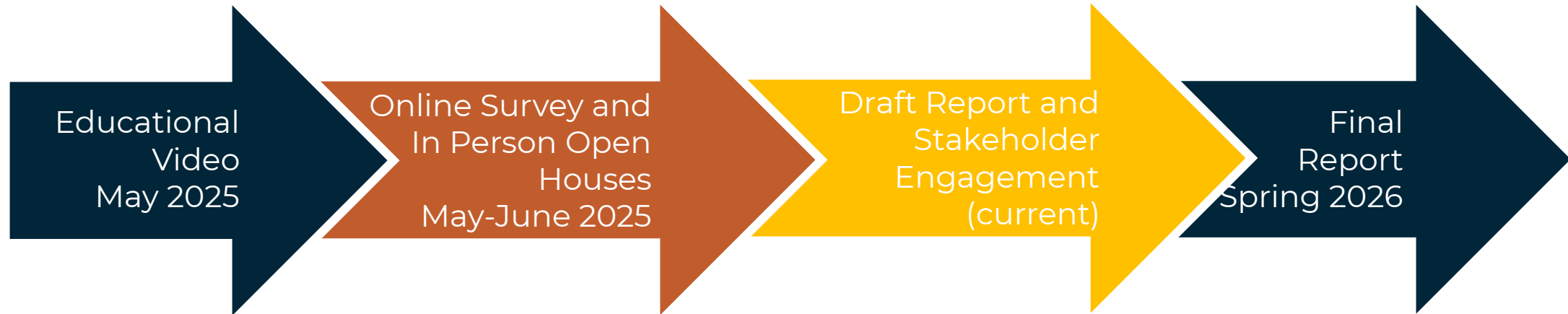


2025 Public Engagement Goals

- Planning for future service expansion and schedule changes
- Understanding customer needs and wants
- Understanding stakeholder needs and wants
- Improve collaboration



Elements of Piedmont Service Expansion Engagement



Who Answered the Survey?

Current train rider?	#	%
No	952	46%
Yes	1,116	54%
Grand Total	2,068	100%

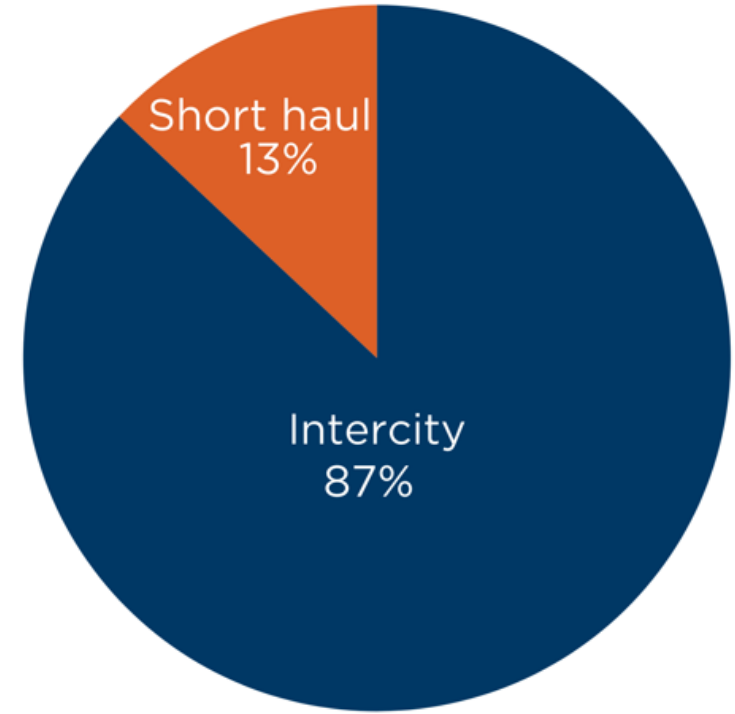
- In-person event held in Burlington on date May 27, 2025
- Invitations sent May 9-14, via direct email, NCDOT press release, and social media.



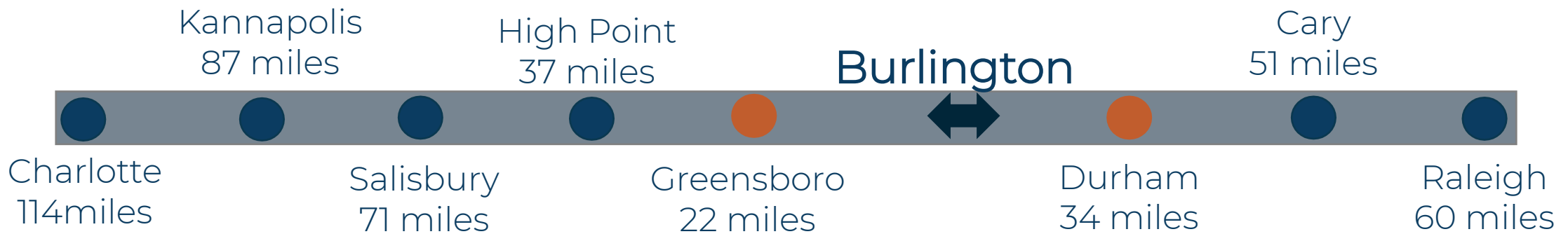
How Far Are People Riding?

Survey Responses for Desired Trips

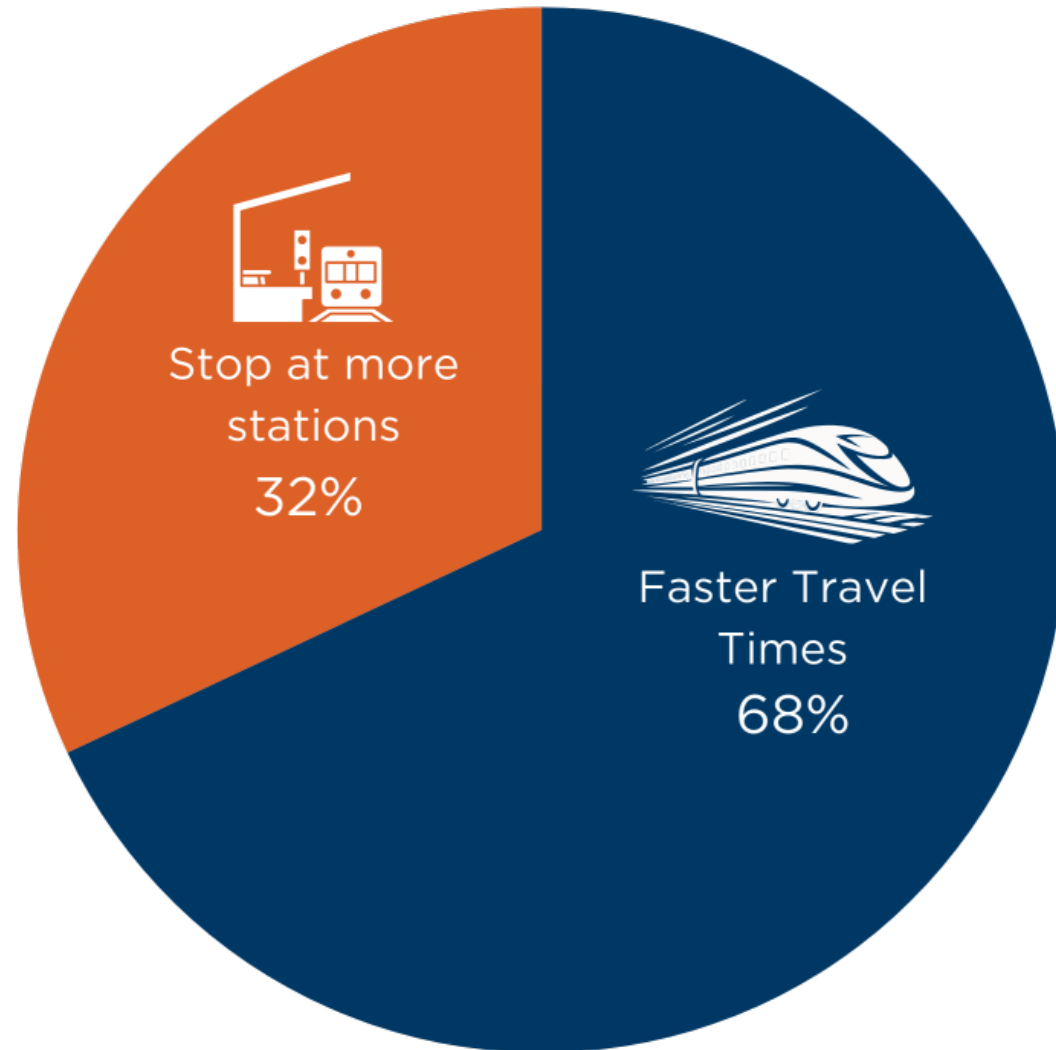
- Intercity (35 miles and longer)
- Short haul (35 miles or less)



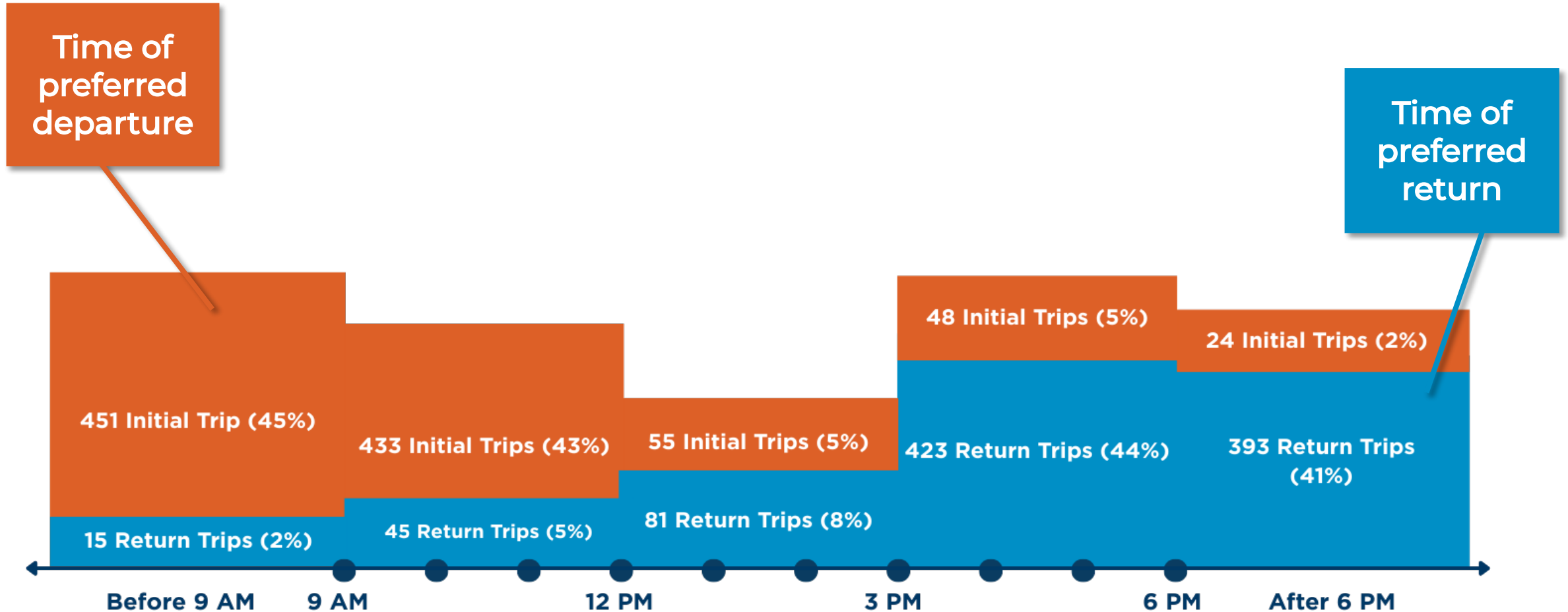
Actual Average Trip Length: 116 miles



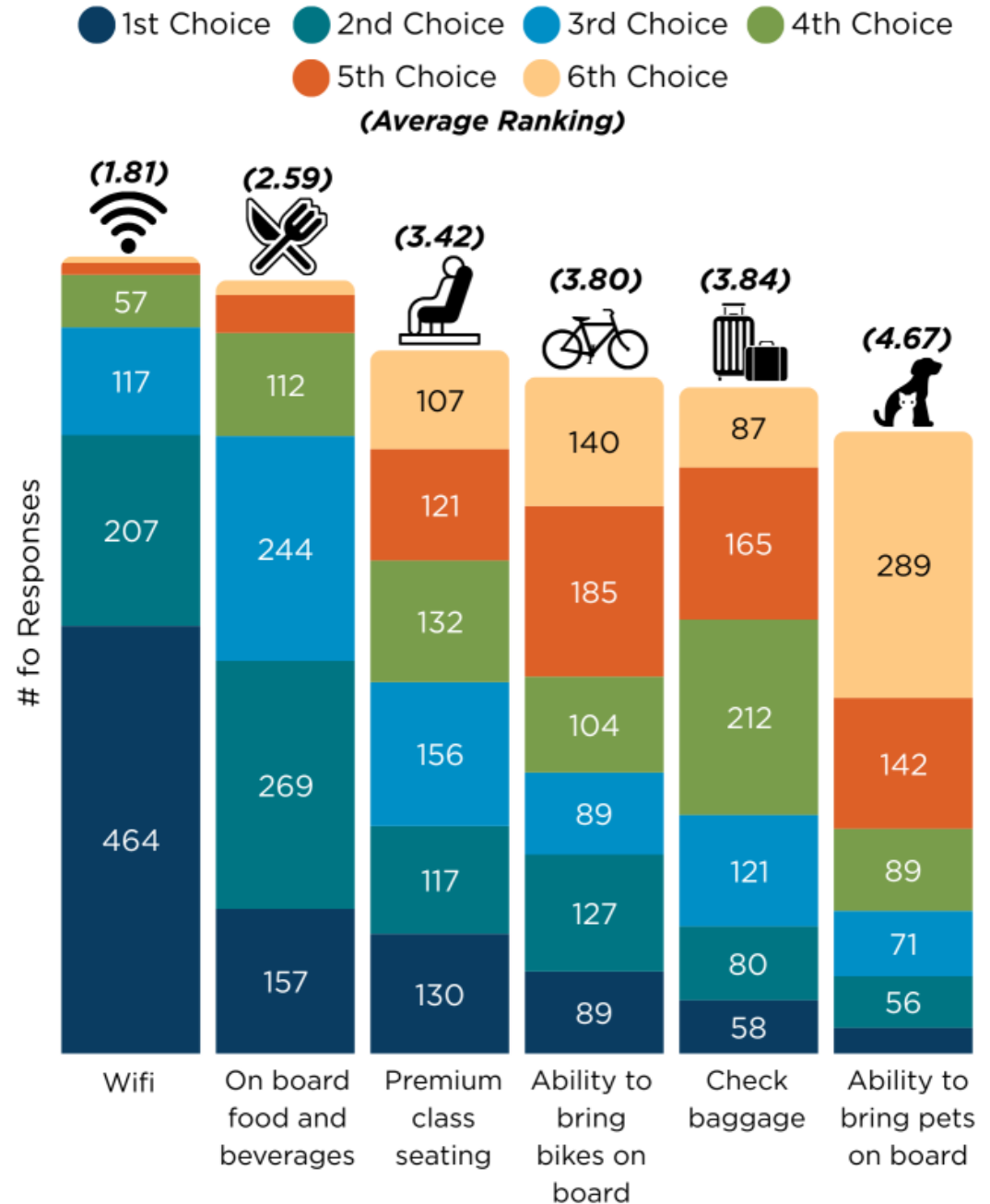
Are People More Interested in Traveling Quickly or Stopping at More Stations?



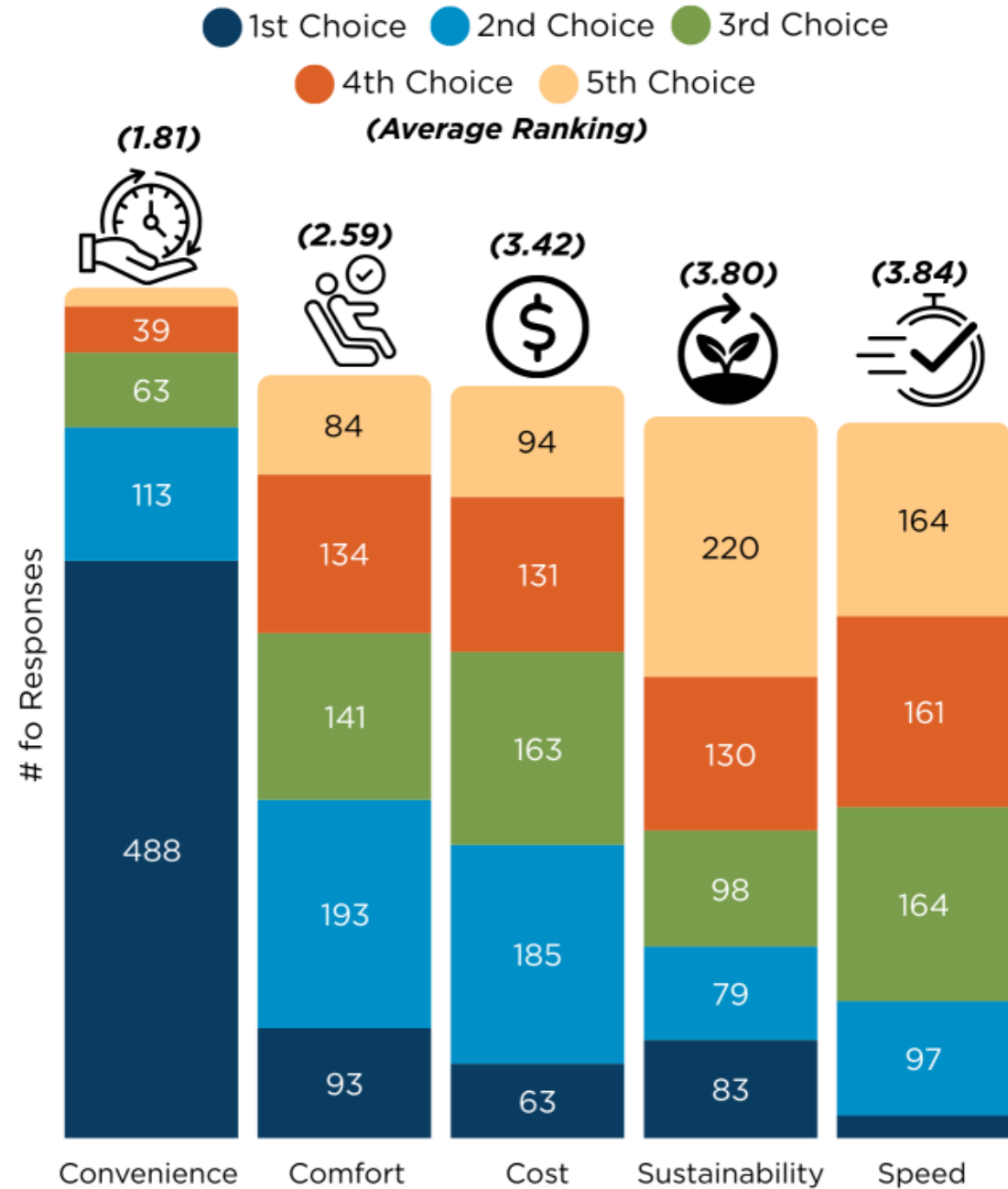
When do People Want to Travel?



What On-Board Amenities Do People Like?



What Service Preferences Did People Share?



What Else Do People Want?

870 Open-Ended Comments

- Increase Train Frequency and Improve the Schedule (572)



- Enhance Train Speed and Improve On-Time Performance (120)



- Enhance Connectivity with Local Transit (91)
- Stop at All Stations (80)
- Build Charlotte Gateway Station (72)
- Keep Prices Affordable (62)

Future Service Changes

- Build Carolinian and Piedmont Passenger and Freight Improvements (CAPPFI) projects.
 - ✓ Adds Greensboro to Cary Capacity
- Capacity Modeling and Railroad Agreements:
 - ✓ What other projects must be built before more round trips are possible?
 - ✓ Corridor ID for more trains to more places
- Stakeholder outreach before schedules are finalized.
- Continuous improvement
 - ✓ On board services
 - ✓ Equipment upgrades
- New Airo equipment for NC by Train services coming
 - ✓ Carolinian and Piedmont – 2027-2032

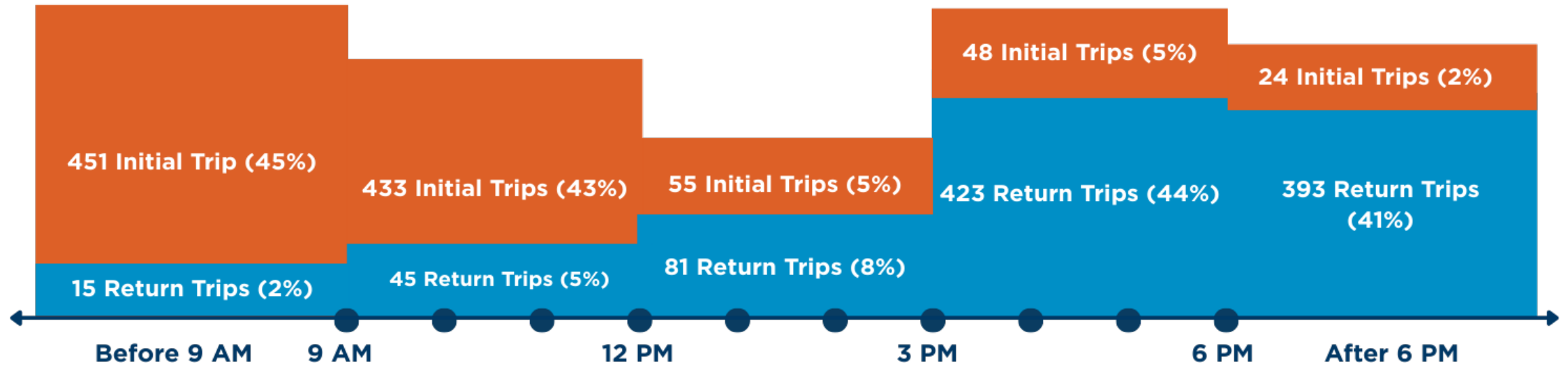


Amtrak Airo Trainset

Train Schedule Insights

Potential Future Schedules with Additional Round Trip

- Start two trains from Charlotte in morning, the Carolinian and a Piedmont
- More morning options in both directions
- Late evening southbound from Raleigh
- More even spacing of midday trains



** Schedule subject to change. Not approved by railroads.*

Thank you!

Contact Us

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CITY OF HIGH POINT

AGENDA ITEM



TITLE: Closed Session - Attorney-Client Privilege and Personnel

FROM:
Mayor Jefferson

MEETING DATE:
June 1, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING: No

ADVERTISED DATE/BY:
N/A

ATTACHMENTS:
None

PURPOSE: City Council is requested to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(3) for Attorney-Client privilege and N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) for Personnel.

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BUDGET IMPACT: None

RECOMMENDED ACTION REQUESTED: City Council is requested to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(3) for Attorney-Client privilege and N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) for Personnel.