

GREENVILLE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

REGIONAL PERSONAL RAPID TRANSIT



WVU Morgantown Personal Rapid Transit System

POPULATION: 482,000
SQUARE MILES: 785

Located about halfway between Atlanta and Charlotte on Interstate-85 in northwestern South Carolina, Greenville County is served by the Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS)—the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization. This region stretches from Greenville-Spartanburg (GSP) International Airport, 15 miles east of the City of Greenville, to Clemson University, 30 miles to the west.⁷

The 2007 GPATS long-range plan envisioned two major multimodal transit corridors: one running north-south from Travelers Rest through Greenville to Fountain Inn; and the other running east-west, from GSP to Clemson.

More recently, motivated by the Envision America Smart City Challenge and the 2016 USDOT Smart City Challenge, this vision has been expanded to promote the incorporation of smart, connected, autonomous vehicles into area transportation planning, including the development of a personal rapid transit (PRT) system.

PRT systems are electric rail systems with small, ultralight podcars that operate on-demand 24/7, rather than on a set schedule. Riders can call a car to their station and, like an elevator, a vehicle arrives momentarily to deliver them to their destination along the line. Under this vision, PRT systems could be built at three “focal” locations – GSP Airport, Downtown Greenville, and Clemson City/University.⁸ The region is currently pursuing

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these options to further explore the potential, through the following means:

- GSP, the second-busiest airport in the state with over 2 million passengers a year, has issued an RFP for the design and construction of a PRT system to transport passengers from a remote parking lot to the airport terminal. The airport chose to pursue the development of a PRT system as a less costly alternative to an at-grade shuttle and new parking deck.⁹
- The Greenville County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC), a county-affiliated board, plans to pursue a public-private partnership to implement a system over 20 miles long that will run from downtown Greenville through to GSP, connecting major sites along urban corridors. It intends to phase in the project, first testing resident usage and reaction to the PRT system at three test case sites.¹⁰
- Clemson University and the City are exploring the feasibility of developing a PRT system. Their main goal is to reduce road congestion and parking problems close to campus.¹¹

If these three systems come to fruition, they could ultimately be connected into a regional PRT system linking downtown Greenville with Clemson and the regional airport.