

Economic Development

# **PROJECT EAGLE** QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RELOCATING EMPLOYEES

# **RFI RESPONSE**

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# CULTURE, THE ARTS, FOOD and FUN

**Arts / Museums:** As the "Smithsonian of the South," the Triangle boasts more than 35 free cultural attractions. It doesn't matter if you're in the mood for Monet, Mozart or Maroon 5, we've got you covered. The North Carolina Museums of Art, History and Natural Sciences house some of the finest collections in the nation and frequently are enriched through world-class traveling exhibits. And dozens of performing arts venues in Wake County play host to numerous local performances, Broadway shows and the always popular North Carolina Symphony.

- <u>North Carolina Museum of Art</u>
- North Carolina Museum of History
- North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
- <u>Contemporary Art Museum</u>
- Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts
- Red Hat Amphitheater
- <u>Koka Booth Amphitheater</u>
- PNC Arena
- Walnut Creek Amphitheater
- Marbles Kids Museum
- <u>The Visual Art Exchange</u>
- Durham Performing Arts Center
- <u>Artspace</u>
- The Mahler



**Outdoor / Recreation:** Wake County is blessed with an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities. Residents and visitors can enjoy more than 250 parks and 100-plus miles of paved greenway trails. In addition, there are countless miles of gravel and singletrack trails available for hikers, bikers and horseback riders. Golfers have an incredible range of local choices with 30 public and 18 private golf courses, and the world famous Pinehurst Resort is just an hour down the road. The region's moderate climate means you can enjoy the great outdoors all year round. And don't forget about the Blue Ridge Mountains just three hours west and the Atlantic Ocean only two hours east. Here's a sampling of what you can do in Wake County.



- Wake County has an abundance of large parks located across the county including Blue Jay Point Park, Lake Crabtree Park, Historic Oak View Park, Historic Yates Mill Park, Crowder District Park, American Tobacco Trail, Hemlock Bluffs and Harris Lake County Park. For more information on county parks please visit: <u>http://www.wakegov.com/PARKS/Pages/default.aspx</u>
- Wake County is home to 3 huge state parks. William B. Umstead State Park is 5,000+ acres of urban forest including creeks, waterfalls, and an extensive trail network. Falls Lake State Recreation Area is a 12,000 acre lake and 26,000 acres of woodlands. Jordan Lake State Park is a 13,940-acre lake and 46,768 acres of recreation. Within an hour's drive you can also visit Raven Rock State Park, Carver Creek State Park, Eno River State Park, and Occoneechee State Park. For more on any of these state parks, please visit <u>http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/by\_map/main.php</u>
- Greenway System: over 100 miles of connected paved greenways across Wake County http://www.trianglegreenways.org/trail-maps/trail-maps.html

- Road Races & Triathlons: Wake County is home to a host of road races and triathlons of all distances. This includes an Iron Man sanctioned event, City of Oaks Marathon, Rock & Roll Marathon, Rex Wellness Sprint Tri, North Hills Half Marathon, Raleigh Rocks Half, and many more.
- Capital Area Soccer League: home to over 20,000 players, coaches, officials, parents, volunteers and supporters.
- YMCA of the Triangle has 13 branches and 3 overnight camps. <u>http://www.ymcatriangle.org/</u>
- WakeMed Soccer Park is 150 acre major soccer complex in Cary, NC
- USA Baseball National Training Complex has four baseball fields (one Stadium Field and 3 Training Fields)
- Cary Tennis Park is one of the largest public facilities in the Southeast with 29 courts and four QuickStart Courts.

**Key Nightlife Corridors / Districts**: What kind of area ranks at the top of America's Best Places for Singles, Cities That Rock and Best Small Concert Venues? Only a place with the big-city energy yet small-town approachability of Greater Raleigh. Experience five pulsing entertainment districts in downtown Raleigh, a staggering array of live music venues and touring musicians throughout the area and world-class, live-performance facilities for the arts.

- Downtown Raleigh: A vibrant destination teeming with activity day and night. Well over \$1 billion has been invested in the city center in the last decade including both public and private projects. These investments, which include major residential developments, offices, a convention center and hotel plus countless historic preservation projects, have built a momentum and excitement that is driving further residential and commercial activity.
- Glenwood South (Downtown Raleigh)
- Midtown / North Hills (North Raleigh)
- Crabtree Valley (North Raleigh)
- Brier Creek (North Raleigh)



**Names of Top Rated Restaurants:** Foodie culture is alive in Wake County with options from farm-to-table, to eastern North Carolina bar-b-que, to exquisite 5 star restaurants, to rising star chefs. In fact, Southern Living named us one of the Tastiest Towns in the South. Following are just a few examples to whet your appetite . . . pun very much intended!

# Rankings & Recognition:

# The South's Tastiest Town Awards (Southern Living)

Both <u>Raleigh</u> and <u>Durham</u>, NC have been recognized as top foodie communities for their creative and diverse cuisine, innovative takes on traditional foods, local and sustainable food practices and culinary talent.

Restaurant Week: Twice a year, residents and visitors can indulge in the areas finest foods by participating in either <u>Triangle Restaurant Week</u> or <u>Downtown Raleigh Restaurant Week</u>. Each event gives diners the opportunity to enjoy special three-course meals for a fixed price at participating restaurants.

Chef's Academy: The Chef's Academy, located in Morrisville, offers students the opportunity to become prepared and marketable graduates in the areas of Culinary Arts, Pastry Arts, and Hospitality and Restaurant Management through classroom and experimental instruction. It also has a wide selection of catering options and fantastic facilities to host events.

Ashley Christensen Restaurants: Celebrate local chef and restaurateur Ashley Christensen has gained national attention from such publications as Bon Appétit, Gourmet, The New York Times, Southern Living and Garden & Gun. She has appeared on Food Network's popular series Iron Chef America and MSNBC's Your Business. In 2014, Ashley was awarded the James Beard Award for "Best Chef: Southeast." <u>http://ac-restaurants.com</u>

- Poole's Diner
- Beasley's Chicken + Honey
- Chuck's
- Death & Taxes and AUX are set to open soon



Herons: <u>Herons</u> is the signature restaurant of the 5-star Umstead Hotel and Spa in Cary and has been the recipient of the AAA Five Diamond Award since 2011. A passion for locally grown, seasonal fruits and vegetables and farm-fresh meats and seafood is evident in the exquisite food and beverage offerings.

Empire Eats: Empire Eats is reshaping downtown Raleigh as a modern culinary destination. Their passion for great food and excellent hospitality are woven through the unique dining experiences at each of our five downtown Raleigh restaurants.

- The Pit
- Raleigh Times
- Sitti
- Gravy



La Farm Bakery: <u>La Farm Bakery</u> in Cary is a modern bakery that continues the centuries-old baking traditions and techniques and honors the ordinary yet extraordinary boulangeries that once flourished in every little town in France.

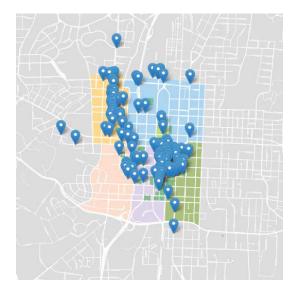
Standard Foods: Scott Crawford, three-time finalist for the James Beard Award, will open Standard Foods in downtown Raleigh in November 2014. Standard Foods is a restaurant, butchery, and top-of-the-line grocery market that will feature progressive Southern cuisine and special ingredients from the chef's pantry. Additionally, it will celebrate local foods by offering North Carolina-focused seafood and produce.

Downtown Raleigh Dining: With more than **130** restaurants and eateries, Downtown Raleigh has the highest concentration of dining options in Wake County. Culinary diversity abounds with options ranging from finedining and farm-to-fork to regional favorites and global fare.

- Fiction Kitchen
- Big Ed's
- PieBird
- Irregardless Café

- <u>Humble Pie</u>
- <u>42<sup>nd</sup> Street Oyster Bar</u>
- Caffé Luna
- <u>Second Empire</u>

For an interactive map and complete list of downtown Raleigh restaurant and dining by cuisine, visit: <a href="http://www.godowntownraleigh.com/explore/dining">http://www.godowntownraleigh.com/explore/dining</a>





Midtown Raleigh Dining:

- <u>Coquette</u>
- <u>Cowfish</u>
- <u>Vivace</u>
- <u>Midtown Grille</u>

# Great dining options abound across Wake County:

The Angus Barn Iris Dean's Peak City Grill Glenwood Grill • <u>Mura</u>

- World of Beer
- Black Cat Café

Durham Dining: There is also thriving foodie scene in our sister city and neighboring county of Durham, NC. Due to nearly 40 Durham restaurants and chefs have earned recognition from high profile media sources such as Bon Appetite, Gourmet, The New York Times, and Food & Wine, Durham was named the #1 Tastiest Town in the South in 2013. Check out a few of Durham's hottest restaurants and eateries:

- Mateo Tapas Bar
- <u>Nana's</u>
- <u>Scratch Bakery</u>
- <u>Pizzeria Toro</u>

- Monuts Donuts
- Geer Street Garden
- Fullsteam Brewery & Tavern
- Dames Chicken & Waffles

Local Breweries: What's a great meal without a great beer! Wake County alone is home to 17 breweries and counting. Use the Greater Raleigh Beer Trail map to guide you to each brewery. The growth in the craft brewery scene is further evidence of our great food culture, one that values local ingredients and local flavors. http://www.visitraleigh.com/includes/content/docs/media/Beer-trail-map.pdf



**Professional Sports Teams:** Sports Travel magazine has rated Raleigh as one of the "hottest sports cities" in the country. There are four professional sports teams; most notably the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes which play at a state-of-the-art arena seating more than 20,000 screaming fans. Baseball lovers have two choices—the Carolina Mudcats and the Durham Bulls. And for soccer enthusiasts, there's the Carolina Railhawks. However, when you get to the heart of the matter, the region is best known for its collegiate sports teams including ACC legends NC State Wolfpack, UNC Tar Heels and Duke Blue Devils.

- NHL Carolina Hurricanes (2006 Stanley Cup Champions) Raleigh
- Carolina Railhawks of the North American Soccer League (Wake Med Soccer Park) Cary, NC
- Carolina Mudcats (Class AA affiliate of the Cleveland Indians) Zebulon, NC
- Durham Bulls (Triple AAA affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays) Durham NC

Festivals / Annual Events: Festivals of all types can be found in Wake County. Here's just a brief sample:

- Hopscotch Music + Design
- Innovate Raleigh Summit
- <u>African American Festival of Raleigh &</u> <u>Wake County</u>
- Beer & Bourbon Festival
- North Carolina State Fair

- <u>IBMA's World of Bluegrass Festival</u>
  La Fiesta de Pueblo
- Lazy Daze Arts and Crafts Festival
- <u>SPARKcon</u>
- International Festival of Raleigh













# Other amenities or cultural opportunities that help define your city

- <u>NC State Farmers Market</u>
- <u>Raleigh Downtown Farmers Market</u>
- <u>Midtown Farmers Market</u>
- First Friday Gallery Walk Downtown Raleigh
- Rock-N-Roll Marathon
- Iron Man Triathlon Raleigh
- <u>NOG Run Club</u> The nOg Run Club, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is dedicated to promoting charity and charitable awareness among runners and walkers of all abilities in the Triangle.
- <u>Band Together</u> Using live music as a platform for social change. Has raised nearly \$3 million to benefit the Triangle community since 2001.
- Outdoor Music & Events
  - o Midtown Beach Music Series
  - o Oak City 7
  - o North Carolina Museum of Art Concert and Movie Series
  - o <u>Koka Booth</u>
  - o Pullen Park Summer in the Park Concert Series
  - o Jimmy V Celebrity Golf Classic
  - o <u>Winterfest</u>



# HOUSING

Wake County is consistently rated as one of the best places in the nation to raise a family, get a great education, access first-rate healthcare, live the single life, enjoy the great outdoors, and much more. Compared to our competitors, the Raleigh Metro and Wake County have a definite advantage when it comes to housing costs.

#1 Best Large Metro for Homeownership#1 City for Biggest Gains in Home Sales in 2012#1 Real Estate Market to Watch in 2012

#5 Most Stable Housing Market in 2014

300 250 200 150 100 50 0 Atlanta Austin Boston Dallas Raleigh San Diego San Fran Seattle



Source: Council for Community and Economic Research, Cost of Living Index

Wake County is now considered to have **one of the nation's healthiest housing markets**. Following is a sample of the housing costs and options available throughout Wake County.

#### **Downtown Raleigh – Condos**

Downtown Raleigh offers mid and high-rise condo living within walking distance to the best dining and entertainment in the area. These condos are everything from new construction, such as the 30+ story PNC Plaza, to the under construction Sky House, to a converted department store called the Hudson with concrete floors and exposed beams and brick. These condos offer an urban living environment with all the amenities you would expect such as rooftop pools and lounging, fitness centers and on-site concierges. Condo's are priced from the low \$200's to \$1M.

#### PNC Plaza \$956,000







#6 Most Affordable Housing Market in 2014

#6 Hottest Housing Market in 2014

#9 Market for First-Time Home Buyers

# Dawson on Morgan \$299,000



#### Historic Oakwood

Historic Oakwood is the most notable neighborhood in Downtown Raleigh. The neighborhood features everything from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Victorian homes, bungalows and other great architecture. Historic Oakwood is rich in history and homes sit on tree-lined streets. Homes range from the \$200's for small bungalows to the high \$800's for fully renovated homes.

# Historic Oakwood - New Construction Farmhouse



#### Historic Oakwood 1920's Bungalow \$279,000



#### **Cameron Village**

Just minutes from Downtown Raleigh, Cameron Village offers a great opportunity for an active lifestyle with everything you need within walking distance-restaurants, shopping, entertainment and green space are at your front door. Cameron Village is full of mid-century to new construction architecture with everything from townhomes under \$200,000, to condos to single family ranches from \$200,000 to \$1M+.

#### Cameron Village - 1925 Bungalow \$429,000



#### Cameron Village - 1950's Ranch \$352,000



#### Five Points – Raleigh

The Five Points area of Raleigh is a conglomeration of neighborhoods, Bloomsbury and Hayes Barton being two of them. Five Points is defined by its center rather than its borders, with the center being a five-way intersection. Five Points blends into neighborhoods surrounding the intersection of Glenwood Avenue, Fairview and Whitaker Mill. In Five Points, you will find a variety of housing options from 1920's and 30's bungalows to large colonials to new construction Row Houses and urban condos. Prices in the Five Points area range from the mid \$200's for small, original bungalows to the \$500's for condos to the multi-millions for estate homes.

Hayes Barton - Condo - New Construction - \$644,000



TMLS

Bloomsbury - 1930's Bungalow \$519,000





# **Country Club Hills**

Country Club Hills is a neighborhood which is adjacent to one of Raleigh's most exclusive golf courses, Carolina Country Club. The homes are on large lots with tree-lined streets and have lots of southern charm. The style of homes range from small 1950's bungalows to stately mansions. Home prices range from the mid \$500's to the multi-millions.

Country Club Hills - 1950's Ranch \$675,000



# North Hills – Drewry Hills/Anderson Heights/Ramblewood

The North Hills area of Raleigh offers residents access to some of the most diverse residential options in the area while living in an area with a true live/work/play environment. From urban condos to townhouses and single family homes, North Hills has it all. The area gives you access to an urban lifestyle with a vast array of shopping, dining and entertainment as well as great access to our green spaces.



#### Anderson Heights - \$374,000



# **Bedford at Falls River**

Located in North Raleigh, Bedford at Falls River is one of Raleigh's many PUD neighborhoods. Bedford offers a vast variety of housing options—everything from condos, to townhouses, to row houses and estate living. The community was built to encourage just that, "community". With walkways, parks, amenity centers and playgrounds throughout, Bedford promotes interaction with the neighbors. Home prices range from the low \$100's to the \$900's.

#### Bedford at Falls River \$634,000



#### Bedford at Falls River - \$399,000



#### Bedford at Falls River - \$226,000



TMLS

#### Bedford at Falls River - \$144,000



TMLS

# <u>Heritage – Wake Forest</u>

Heritage is a collection of neighborhoods located in Wake Forest, just 20 miles north of Downtown Raleigh. The neighborhoods of Heritage enjoy access to amenities such as greenways, playgrounds, bike paths, swim, tennis and golf are also available. Heritage is recognized for its diverse housing styles and price points, as well as its community feel.

# Heritage Golf Course View - \$619,000



# Heritage - Golf Course - \$399,000



Heritage Townhouse - \$208,000



# **SCHOOLS**

# Wake County Public School System

Wake County is the largest school system in North Carolina and the 16<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. As of July 2014, Wake County had 155,023 students enrolled. Wake County is <u>one district</u> and covers 835 square miles. 93% of students are within 3 miles of their base elementary school. For the 2014-15 schools year, Wake County Public Schools System has a total of 171 schools:

- 104 Elementary Schools
- 33 Middle Schools
- 27 High Schools
- 4 Special/Optional Schools
- 1 Academy (K-8)
- 2 Leadership Academies (6-12)

The average public school child to teacher ratio is 15:1.

Raleigh was the fastest growing city over the past decade from 2000 – 2013 (*Forbes*). In order to accommodate growth, Wake County residents recently passed an \$810 million bond referendum to build 16 new schools, perform renovations on 85 existing schools, and support technology upgrades and acquisition

Wake County is unique in that it provides "choices" for families to pick from to meet their scheduling and educational preferences. The Wake County Public School System has both a traditional calendar (nine months of school starting in August with 2 months off in the summer) and a year-round calendar (divided into 4 tracks, where a student is in school for nine weeks and then off for 3 weeks). Families are assigned to a "base" school and 2 alternative calendar options (traditional or year-round) based on the address of their residence.

- One third of WCPSS schools (48) operate on a year-round calendar
- Two thirds of WCPSS schools (113) operate on a traditional calendar
- The remaining schools operate on a modified or alternative schedule to coincide with the community college, colleges or university schedule.

In addition to calendar choices, there are a wide range of public schools that have an emphasis on certain programming. These include Magnet schools, Charter Schools, Renaissance Schools, STEM schools, Career academies, Leadership academies and Early colleges. The programming in these schools includes gifted and talented, international studies, language emersion, International Bachelorette, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), leadership, and arts and culture. <u>http://www.wcpss.net/what-we-teach/index.html</u>

# International and Global Schools:

WCPSS has 17 **Global Network Schools** (at the elementary, middle and high school level) which focus on developing global literacy across all disciplines and providing world language opportunities to all students. <u>http://www.wcpss.net/what-we-teach/programs/global.html</u>

WCPSS has 34 Magnet Schools, 24 of which have a focus on leadership and world languages, gifted and talented (including world language instruction and performing arts opportunities), international studies and international baccalaureate. Languages offered include Spanish, French, Japanese, German, Chinese and Mandarin Chinese.

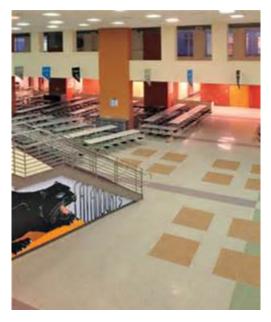
Based on the results of the NC Department of Public Instruction school performance results, the following public high schools had the highest percentage of college and career ready students:

1. Wake NCSU STEM (Raleigh)

- 2. Green Hope High School (Cary)
- 3. Apex High School (Apex)
- 4. Panther Creek High School (Cary)









Raleigh Charter High School was recently rated: 20<sup>th</sup> in the Nation by US News & World Report and 34<sup>th</sup> in the Nation by Newsweek

School's growth and performance in the State of North Carolina are measured by an accountability program known as ABCS. <u>http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/</u>

- 64% of Wake County Public Schools are either an Honor School of Excellence, a School of Excellence or a School of Distinction
- 152 schools met their expected growth standard
- 110 met their High Growth standards

More information on this program and a report on how each school scored can be found here. <a href="http://www.wcpss.net/results/test-scores/nc-abcs/2012/">http://www.wcpss.net/results/test-scores/nc-abcs/2012/</a>

# **Rankings and National Comparisons:**

- 47.5 % of Wake County's population has a four-year degree or higher making it the <u>#2 Most</u> <u>Educated City in the US</u> (Raleigh, NC) WalletHub, September 2014
- <u>#1 Top public schools in Large U.S. cities</u> (Greatschools.org, 2010)
- <u>4 of the top 10 Public High Schools in North Carolina</u> are in Wake County (US News and World Report 2014)
- 1 in 4 of WCPSS students are in academically gifted programs more than double the statewide average
- More WCPSS students participate in taking the SAT, 19% higher than the national average. 69% of students participate in the SAT in Wake County, compared to 50% nationally.
- WCPSS students consistently outperform their counterparts across the United States on the SAT. Average score in Wake County is 1064. Average score nationally is 1010.
- 49% of high school seniors have taken Advanced Placement Courses, compared to 36% nationally.
- Advanced Placement Exam scores range from 1 to 5, with 3 being the minimum score required to earn college credit. 76.6% of WCPSS students received AP college credit, compared to 58.6% nationally.
- More than 80% of WCPSS students go on to Post-Secondary education.
- WCPSS has 1916 nationally board certified teachers, more than any other district in the United States.
- 47% of WCPSS teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists and other school professionals have an advanced degree.

# **Private Schools**

There are 81 private schools in Wake County serving 17,392 students. Of the 81 private schools, 30 are high schools and serve 10,095 students. The average private school child to teacher ratio is 10:1. <u>http://www.privateschoolreview.com/county\_private\_schools/stateid/NC/county/37183</u>

# A few of the top Private schools in Wake County include:

**Ravenscroft (Raleigh)** - - Typically, 100 percent of Ravenscroft graduates pursue their education beyond the secondary level. In 2011, 237 students wrote 485 AP exams with 91 percent of the scores being a "3" or better. Ravenscroft offers 24 AP classes in its curriculum. The Class of 2011 with 102 students achieved an SAT average of 1277 (Critical Reading and Math) or 1924 (Critical Reading, Math, and Writing).

# Tuition:

Preschool – Kindergarten (\$13,000 - \$14,500), First Grade – Fifth Grade (\$18,825) Sixth Grade to Twelfth Grade (\$21,085)



<u>Cardinal Gibbons</u> (Raleigh) - Cardinal Gibbons High School, Raleigh, North Carolina 98% of students that graduated last year went directly to a 4 year college or university.

# Non-Affiliated rate: \$13,905.00 per student Catholic Rate: \$9,845.00 per student



**Cary Academy (Cary)** - As a school established by the founders of SAS, the school has placed a heavy emphasis on the use of technology. From 1997 until 2006, the school had desktop computers located in every classroom. Typically, 100% of graduating students attend four year college or university.

Tuition: Sixth Grade – Twelfth Grade (\$22,380)



# TAXATION

An overview of state and local taxation for residents is provided below.

# Income Tax:

The state of North Carolina levies a corporate and personal income tax rate. For 2014, the corporate income tax rate is 6 percent. That rate will be reduced to 5 percent in 2015. Personal income tax in North Carolina is based on taxable income as calculated for federal income tax purposes with adjustments. Specific deductions and rates are provided below:

Standard Deductions	
Married, Filing Jointly	\$15,000
Qualifying Widow(er)	\$15,000
Head of Household	\$12,000
Single	\$7,500
Married, Filing Separately	\$7,500

#### Sales & Use Tax:

In North Carolina, the general sales and use tax is a combined state and county rate. In Wake County, this is equivalent to 6.75% (State: 4.75%; County: 2%).

#### Property Tax:

Taxes are calculated against each \$100 in value. If your property is located within a city or town, you will pay both County and Municipal property taxes, plus any additional special taxes that may apply. For more information, please visit the <u>Wake County Revenue Department website</u>.

The effective tax rates for Wake County and each municipality are provided below.

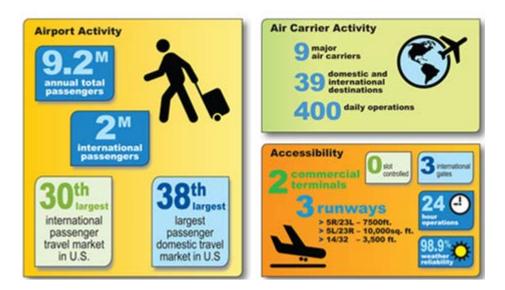
0.5340
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0.3280
0.4400
0.5100
0.4900
0.5250

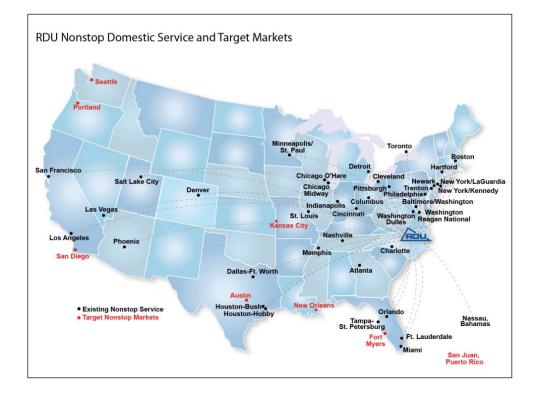
For example, a property located in Raleigh would be taxed at a combined rate of \$0.862 (\$0.534 Wake County + \$0.3280 Raleigh) per \$100 in value.

#### Gasoline Tax:

The current gasoline tax rate in North Carolina is 36.5 cents per gallon.

**RDU RATED AS ONE OF THE BEST AIRPORTS.** Raleigh-Durham International Airport has been named the #7 Best Regional Airport in North America and the #9 Fastest Growing Airport.



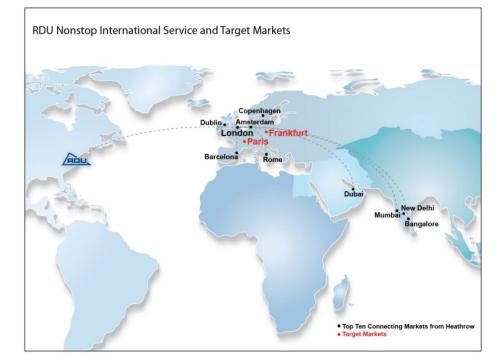


ADDITIONAL DOMESTIC FLIGHTS ON HORIZON. Currently, RDU has 9 major carriers making 400 daily flights to 39 nonstop destinations.

RDU continues to expand its nonstop domestic service. The map below illustrates both existing nonstop service and targeted nonstop markets.

# MORE INTERNATIONAL

DESTINATIONS COMING. RDU is also seeking additional international nonstop options. Currently, there are daily flights to London Heathrow. Frankfurt and Paris have been targeted as international nonstop flight options.





#### **UPGRADES ABOUND.**

RDU recently opened up the new \$68 million upgrade to Terminal 1. Combined with the \$570 million Terminal 2 project that was completed in 2011, RDU offers travels an open and welcoming experience.