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# More Piedmont passenger trains coming in July but not for every NC city along the route

BY RICHARD STRADLING

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## *RALEIGH*

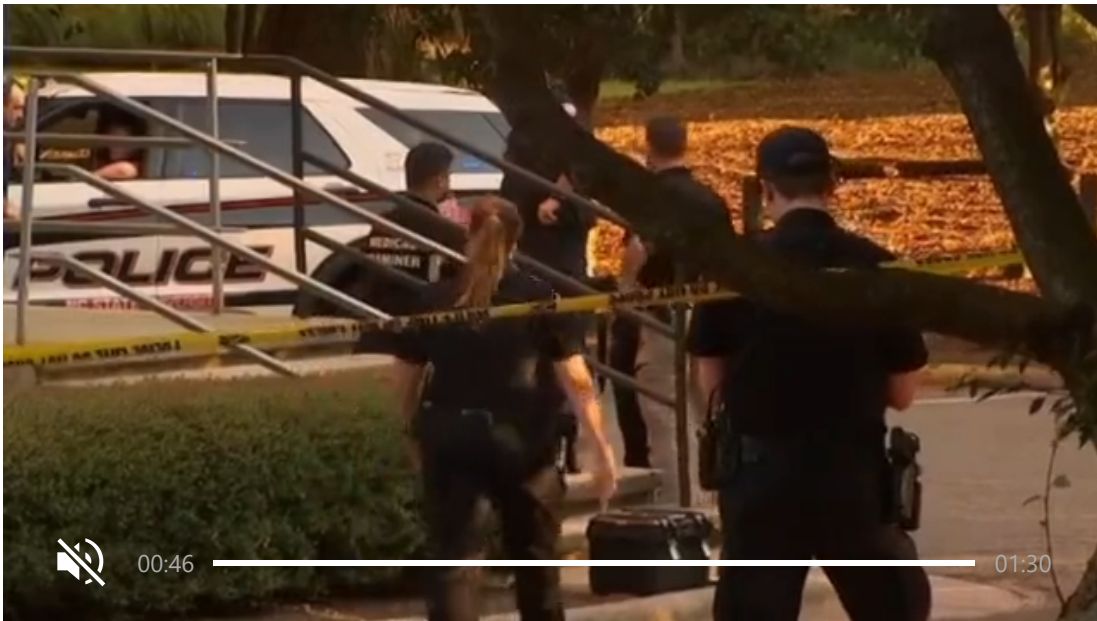
Passenger trains will run more frequently between Raleigh and Charlotte starting next month, but not all the stations in between North Carolina's largest metro areas will get added service.

Some trains won't stop at smaller cities. In particular, the 6:30 a.m. southbound Piedmont train from Raleigh and the 5:30 p.m. northbound train from Charlotte won't be stopping in Burlington, High Point and Salisbury, as other Piedmont trains do. Two other Piedmont trains won't stop in Kannapolis.

The omissions strike some riders as unfair. David Robinson of Raleigh, who frequently rides the Piedmont, was so moved that he created a campaign to urge people to question the decision. Robinson, a board member of a group called [Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains](#), gave his effort a name — Campaign to Restore Axed Piedmonts or CRAP — and [created a YouTube video about it](#).

Robinson notes that the trains that skip Burlington, High Point and Salisbury are scheduled to make the 173-mile trip between Raleigh and Charlotte in just under three hours. That's 12 minutes less than the trains that do stop at those cities. He says the Piedmont is often a few minutes late anyway and that 12 minutes on the schedule isn't that important to most riders.

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“They like the convenience of the train. They’re not driving. They can work,” he said. “And whether it gets there at 2 hours and 58 minutes or 3 hours and 10 minutes doesn’t make an awful lot of difference.”

Shaving minutes off a couple of trains wasn’t the only goal of the new schedule, but it is an important consideration for some riders, counters Jason Orthner, director of the [Rail Division at the N.C. Department of Transportation](#). NCDOT owns the Piedmont and pays Amtrak to run both it and the Carolinian, which runs between Charlotte and New York City.

“A car-competitive trip is really important to a lot of folks that are going the longer distances,” Orthner said in an interview.

Orthner said several other factors went into [the new schedule, which takes effect July 10](#). They include working around the freight trains of Norfolk Southern, which controls the tracks, and making sure the passenger train crews and equipment are available when and where they’re needed. NCDOT also took into account demand at each station.

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“We have to think about balancing all these different factors in producing a schedule that yields the most amount of use of the system,” he said.

The Piedmont will go from three to four round trips a day between Raleigh and Charlotte. Including the Carolinian, people will be able to choose from five daily round trips between the state’s two largest metro areas.

## Ten Daily Trips Between Raleigh & Charlotte

**EFFECTIVE JULY 10, 2023**

<b>SOUTH-BOUND</b>	TRAIN 71 Piedmont	TRAIN 73 Piedmont	TRAIN 75 Piedmont	TRAIN 77 Piedmont	TRAIN 79 Carolinian	<b>NORTH-BOUND</b>	TRAIN 80 Carolinian	TRAIN 72 Piedmont	TRAIN 74 Piedmont	TRAIN 76 Piedmont	TRAIN 78 Piedmont
Raleigh*	6:30 AM	10:00 AM	1:00 PM	3:15 PM	5:30 PM	Charlotte*	6:45 AM	10:25 AM	2:20 PM	5:30 PM	7:45 PM
Cary*	6:42 AM	10:12 AM	1:12 PM	3:27 PM	5:43 PM	Kannapolis	7:10 AM	10:50 AM	2:45 PM	5:55 PM	—
Durham*	7:02 AM	10:32 AM	1:32 PM	3:47 PM	6:04 PM	Salisbury	7:28 AM	11:06 AM	3:01 PM	—	8:22 PM
Burlington	—	11:08 AM	2:10 PM	4:26 PM	6:41 PM	High Point†	8:02 AM	11:40 AM	3:35 PM	—	8:56 PM
Greensboro*	8:01 AM	11:35 AM	2:35 PM	4:51 PM	7:16 PM	Greensboro*	8:24 AM	11:59 AM	3:54 PM	6:55 PM	9:15 PM
High Point†	—	11:52 AM	2:52 PM	5:08 PM	7:32 PM	Burlington	8:46 AM	12:21PM	4:15 PM	—	9:37 PM
Salisbury	—	12:25 PM	3:25 PM	5:41 PM	8:06 PM	Durham*	9:27 AM	1:02 PM	5:01 PM	7:53 PM	10:17 PM
Kannapolis	8:59 AM	12:42 PM	3:42 PM	—	8:23 PM	Cary*	9:47 AM	1:28 PM	5:22 PM	8:15 PM	10:38 PM
Charlotte	9:28 AM <sub>ar</sub>	1:10 PM <sub>ar</sub>	4:10 PM <sub>ar</sub>	6:21 PM <sub>ar</sub>	8:56 PM <sub>ar</sub>	Raleigh*	10:05 AM <sub>ar</sub>	1:41 PM <sub>ar</sub>	5:36 PM <sub>ar</sub>	8:29 PM <sub>ar</sub>	10:52 PM <sub>ar</sub>

\* Times are departure times unless indicated by <sub>ar</sub> for arrival times.  
 \* Carolinian Trains 79 and 80 continue service to DC and NY.

\* indicates checked baggage service available at stop  
 † indicates connector service is available at stop

Visit **NCByTrain.org** or call **1-800-By-Train** for more information

The new schedule for the Piedmont and Carolinian passenger trains is set to begin July 10, 2023. *NCDOT*

The Carolinian schedule remains unchanged. But to add another round trip of the Piedmont, NCDOT tinkered with the departure times.

The southbound schedule will be very similar to the existing one, except for a 1 p.m. departure from Raleigh. But the northbound schedule will be significantly different, with Piedmont trains leaving Charlotte at 2:20, 5:30 and 7:45 p.m., all new times.

And then there are the stations where some trains won't stop. NCDOT has heard from riders who aren't pleased with some aspect or another of the new schedule, which is to be expected, Orthner said. He notes that though some cities are left out at times, no city will be served by fewer trains than it is now.

Travelers can get more information and reserve tickets on the new trains at [www.ncbytrain.org](http://www.ncbytrain.org).

## NC passenger train ridership

A record 522,550 people rode the Piedmont and Carolinian trains last year, besting the previous record set in 2014.



Chart: Richard Stradling • Source: NCDOT • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

This story was originally published June 15, 2023, 5:30 AM.

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