

DRAFT LETTER IN RESPONSE TO FY 2019 WAKE TRANSIT WORK PLAN

Chip Russell
c/o GoTriangle
Ashley Hooper
PO Box 13787
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

RE: Draft FY 2019 Wake Transit Work Plan

Dear Chip,

The Wake County Transit Plan included four “big moves” by connecting the region across county lines, connecting all Wake County communities to the transit network, providing frequent and reliable urban mobility to the densifying areas of the County, and giving enhanced access to transit across Wake County. The plan includes investments over a ten year time frame of: (1) implementation of 20 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) infrastructure corridors including priority treatment at traffic signals, faster boarding and easier access for passengers, and 50 percent dedicated bus lanes; (2) connections to all Wake County communities through 30 and 60 minute all day service or peak-only service, as well as the increase of the frequent reliable urban network increasing 15 minute service and service on nights and weekends; (3) commuter rail which involves the collaboration of many partners including federal and state governments, Durham County, the North Carolina Railroad Company and their operators, and municipalities and communities involved in station planning; and (4) enhanced access to transit by improving non-fixed route services and providing matching funds for local service.

It is important that we adhere to the vision of these four big moves identified in the plan and we appreciate the various studies underway to refine the Transit Plan’s projects, scope, and implementation adhering to the ten-year vision we communicated to our stakeholders, the voters, and to Wake County residents when we adopted the Wake Transit Plan.

On February 19, 2018, the Board of Commissioners received an update regarding implementation of the Wake County Transit Plan and the projects included in the Draft FY 2019 Wake Transit Work Plan. The FY 2019 Draft Wake Transit Work Plan continues to make progress in implementing the Four Big Moves and we are supportive of the overall projects and approach outlined in the Draft Work Plan. We offer the following recommendations for TPAC to consider as it moves to recommend the FY 2019 Wake Transit Work Plan to CAMPO and GoTriangle later this Spring.

It is a Board of Commissioners’ key objective for 2018 to collaborate with municipal, community and private partners to encourage best development practices in corridors and areas identified for transit investment, including serving communities in need and creating affordable housing. However, we request that municipalities share in the cost of area land use studies if they are requested to be funded by Wake

Transit. Land use studies should be specific to transit corridors and that land uses supporting transit investments and affordable housing result from those studies.

We are very excited that starting July 1, young people 18 and under will ride free on GoRaleigh, GoCary and GoTriangle buses in Wake County to school, work, activities, or anywhere else youth want to go. We want to encourage our transit providers to collaborate with the Wake County Public School System as this program is implemented.

We encourage a review for cost savings and synergies in marketing, staffing, or other cost items in the Draft FY 2019 work plan that can be streamlined. We also encourage additional marketing and other efforts be targeted to local employers in the coming year to encourage employers and their employees to choose transit.

The FY 2019 Draft Work Plan starts the purchase of replacement buses for transit agencies that were previously acquired using non-Wake Transit Funds. We request that a multi-year bus replacement schedule be developed and that this schedule clearly note how Wake Transit funds will leverage other available revenues, including municipal, state, and federal funds. We also continue to strongly encourage early inclusion and testing of alternative fuel vehicles to diversify our fleets as soon as possible.

Finally, the County is mindful of the studies underway to implement the Wake Transit Plan and awaits the results of these studies. We are especially interested in the Fare Strategy Study as part of the Wake Bus Plan and request consideration of a fare strategy for vulnerable populations. The results of the Human Services Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan and its findings for Human Services, rural, and other on-demand transit and how that coordinates with fixed route and community funding areas proposed in the Wake Transit Plan are very important to the County. The County also wants to encourage ease of access to transit and fully supports the Regional Technology Integration Study which will review farebox equipment, mobile fare payment options, passenger information systems, electronic signage, and other technologies. Through the County's participation on TPAC and the various Core Technical Teams, we look forward to the County's participation in these efforts.

Again, thank you and the TPAC for the critical work that has been done to date in structuring the planning and implementation of the Wake Transit Plan. If additional information is needed about our recommendations, please feel free to contact Nicole Kreiser or Tim Gardiner who serve as the County's TPAC members.

Sincerely,

Jessica Holmes
Chair, Wake County Board of Commissioners

CC: Nicole Kreiser, Assistant County Manager - Transit
Tim Gardiner, Wake County Planner III