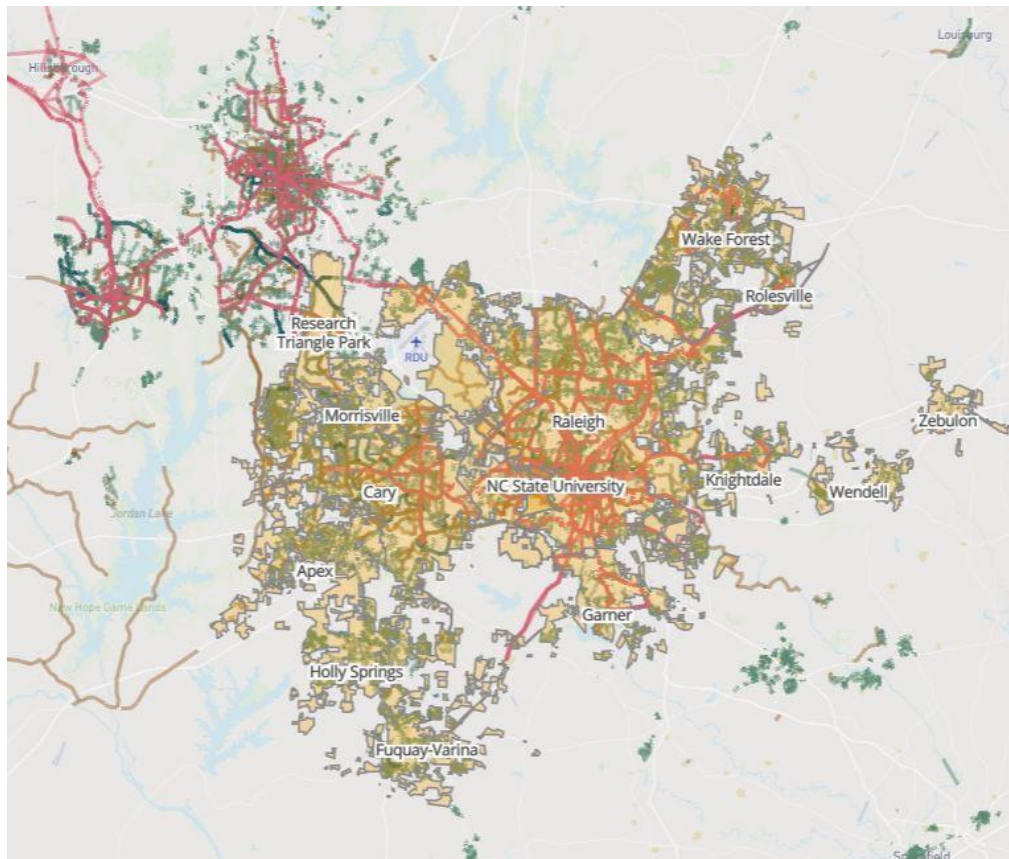




**WAKE TRANSIT**  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**



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## **1.0 Purpose & Context**

- 1.1** On November 8, 2016, Wake County voters approved a transit-dedicated, half-cent sales tax investment to expand and better connect the public transportation network throughout Wake County. This policy acknowledges the fact that community input is a crucial element in planning for effective transit, as well as the prioritization and implementation of public transportation services that meet the needs of residents and the community.
- 1.2** The Wake Transit Master Participation Agreement established designated partnership roles for implementing specific programs and projects in order to serve the best interests and the greater good of all community members. That agreement indicates that Implementation Elements, Implementation Agreements, and Operating Agreements tied to capital investment shall at a minimum include public involvement and engagement expectations (WT MPA, Article II).
- 1.3** The purpose of the Wake Transit Community Engagement Policy is to build upon, develop, and maintain a thoughtful set of guiding principles to apply to the development of community engagement strategies designed to maximize communications with the public and other stakeholders related to the investments funded through the Wake Transit program. This policy applies to project sponsors to serve as a guide for engagement practices when delivering program-level and/or project-level services in the area.
- 1.4** This policy seeks to improve Wake Transit's engagement processes and outcomes by encouraging a consistent, transparent approach, and continual learning through evaluation and expanding the range of engagement methods.
- 1.5** Project sponsors are committed to engaging the community in planning and decision-making through the use of appropriate, effective, and inclusive practices.
- 1.6** This Community Engagement Policy document does not supersede federal, state, or local regulations or guidance governing agencies or organizations responsible for the planning or management of any Wake Transit-funded investment. These regulations, among others, are referenced in Appendix 1.

## **2.0 What is Community Engagement?**

- 2.1** Community engagement is a strategic process that involves working with the public on decisions affecting the well-being and quality of life of their communities.
- 2.2** Community engagement focuses on gaining meaningful public input and feedback to inform the development of a Wake Transit-funded investment including any associated outreach, promotion, marketing, advertising, public relations, relationship building, or communications activities.
- 2.3** The goal of engagement is to consult with and acquire feedback from all sectors of the community in order to identify the transit needs and priorities that ensure transportation plans are fair across all levels of society. Public input helps planning staff increase their awareness of potential adverse effects and implement efforts to mitigate the costs in favor of benefits that serve the greater good.
- 2.4** Community engagement provides a strong foundation for understanding and working with our community to establish a system of shared responsibility for decisions and develop trust in the decision-making process.
- 2.5** Engagement delivers opportunities for our community to participate in Wake Transit's decision-making process, ensuring outcomes that benefit the greater good of the community by reflecting the opinions expressed through the gathering of meaningful input.

## **3.0 Why is Community Engagement Important?**

- 3.1** Community input remains as vital as ever to the mission of improving the quality of life of residents by connecting people and places through safe, reliable, and easy-to-use travel choices.
- 3.2** Input from the communities impacted by transit plans and activities allows Wake Transit to serve their needs and plan effectively for the future.
- 3.3** Community engagement allows Wake Transit to create transit solutions by drawing upon and implementing local knowledge provided by diverse groups, thereby creating solutions that are inclusive, practical, and effective.

## **4.0 Guiding Principles**

- 4.1** Accountability: Wake Transit community engagement efforts include advising the Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) members of planned engagement efforts, requesting support, and providing updates on efforts; explaining how community input influenced the decision-making process; sharing outcomes of engagement and planning activities with the community; and, conducting performance assessments to ensure future engagement efforts meet objectives.
- 4.2** Inclusivity: Wake Transit community engagement efforts will identify affected and interested community members and provide equitable access and opportunities to contribute meaningful input into the decision-making process.
- 4.3** Transparency: Wake Transit community engagement efforts will build trust and prove integrity through authentic interactions; the distribution of timely information that provides clarity of purpose, intent, and relevance of the engagement effort; clarity on the community's role in the decision-making process; and, keeping TPAC members informed of past, current, and future engagement efforts and results.

## **5.0 Policy Statement**

- 5.1** Wake Transit partners are committed to ensuring all Wake County community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in the decision-making process for Wake Transit investments through continuous, cooperative, transparent, inclusive, and comprehensive engagement.
- 5.2** The community can expect Wake Transit partners to evaluate and select the most appropriate engagement methods to meet their specific needs, based on project requirements, audience factors, and proposed impacts.
- 5.3** An effective engagement strategy will establish timelines and strategic plans for proactive outreach to impacted Wake County communities regarding Wake Transit program investments and goals.
- 5.4** Plans will facilitate the development of efforts that realize the meaningful implementation of community input in the Wake Transit decision-making process
- 5.5** Engagement strategies will develop specific opportunities for community members to provide input and share ideas with governing boards and planning staff.
- 5.6** Resources are available, upon request, to assist Wake Transit partners responsible for engagement activities in support of implementation elements, programs, projects, and planning efforts.

- 5.7** Engagement strategies will focus on the identified community and the creation of a situational evaluation, which includes the strategic analysis of audiences, engagement methods and tools, key messaging, and analytics designed to measure the effectiveness of efforts.
- 5.8** This policy encourages meaningful collaboration among Wake Transit partners on community engagement implementation activities to incorporate the concerns of the community and apply a thoughtful prioritization of programs, projects, and planning efforts.
- 5.9** Wake Transit partners are encouraged to support the community engagement activities of each other by representing a unified and consistent approach when possible and appropriate. This may include the sharing of engagement strategies and materials and/or co-developing, promoting, and attending the events of partners.

## **6.0 Community Engagement Framework**

- 6.1** When developing community engagement work plans, project sponsors should consult all available references and resources. The approved Wake Transit Community Engagement Strategy and Wake Transit Community Engagement Summary Report templates are available as part of the Wake Transit Communications Plan. These documents are examples of appropriate sources that contain valuable resources that can guide project sponsors as they develop engagement frameworks. Project sponsors should also consult with lead agency personnel for additional insights and resources. Project sponsors should then develop clear engagement frameworks that include objectives, priorities, action steps, timelines, strategies, recommended activities, and communications tools.
- 6.2** Community engagement frameworks match the investment with its impact on the audience through a customized approach. Targeted community engagement tools, strategies, and materials educate audiences about the Wake Transit program by presenting accurate information in a narrative form designed to optimize engagement.
- 6.3** Each engagement effort should include measurable goals. Relevant analytical feedback should be gathered and included as part of the Wake Transit Community Engagement Summary report. Evaluating and reviewing engagement activities allows project sponsors to optimize their efforts. The Wake Transit Communications Plan includes information related to measuring objectives.

## **7.0 Standards and Requirements**

- 7.1** Operating and capital projects that create forward progress on transit opportunities by meeting the goals outlined in the Wake Transit Plan receive funding through the annual Wake Transit Work Plan.
- 7.2** Programs, projects, plans, and policies are implemented by Wake Transit lead agencies and partners, also known as Project Sponsors, as either program-level investments, which apply to the Wake Transit program as a whole, or as project-level investments, which apply to individual projects carried out by municipal, institutional, and agency TPAC members.
- 7.3** Each level of investment involves different requirements to meet Wake Transit Community Engagement Policy standards. The tables included in this policy document outline the requirements for both program and project-level investments. They are located in the Wake Transit Community Engagement Development Guide on the following page.

**Wake Transit Community Engagement Development Guide**

empty	Wake Transit Plan Update	Wake Bus Plan Update	Annual Wake Transit Work Plan
<b>Description</b>	The Wake Transit Plan is the multi-year vision for public transportation investments in Wake County. It spans a 10-year planning period. The overarching goals of the plan are referred to as the "Four Big Moves."	The Wake Bus Plan provides a year-by-year listing of planned infrastructure and service investments by type and provider. It defines the order in which service expansion will occur to meet the goals of the Wake Transit Plan.	The Work Plan details the specific operating and capital investments scheduled to receive funding in the upcoming fiscal year. It also outlines anticipated investments in the remaining years of the 10-year Wake Transit planning period.
<b>Document Span</b>	10 fiscal years (July to June)	10 fiscal years (July to June)	1 fiscal year (July to June)
<b>Update Cycle</b>	Updated every 4 years	Updated every 4 years	Developed each year
<b>Adoption Authority</b>	Governing Boards	Governing Boards	Governing Boards
<b>Adoption Date</b>	Adopted in April 2021	Adopted in February 2019	Adopted in June annually
<b>Project Lead</b>	CAMPO	GoTriangle	CAMPO
<b>Engagement Lead</b>	CAMPO	GoTriangle	GoTriangle
<b>Required Strategy</b>	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy
<b>CE Subcommittee Role</b>	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; support engagement and communications activities; participate in after-action review process	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; support engagement and communications activities; participate in after-action review process	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; support engagement and communications activities; participate in after-action review process
<b>TPAC Role</b>	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft plan for public review; receive engagement report as information; incorporate feedback in the recommended plan; recommend Governing Board adoption	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft plan for public review; receive engagement report as information; incorporate feedback into the recommended plan; recommend Governing Board adoption	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft plan for public review; receive engagement report as information; incorporate feedback, release recommended plan for public review; receive second engagement report; recommend Governing Board adoption
<b>CAMPO Role</b>	Lead development; advertise, and attend public hearing and review period; TCC reviews draft and recommends final plan; Executive Board reviews and adopts the final plan	Advertise and attend public hearing; advertise public review period; TCC reviews draft and recommends final plan; Executive Board reviews and adopts the final plan	Lead development; advertise and attend public hearing and review period; TCC reviews draft and recommends plan; Executive Board reviews and adopts the final plan
<b>GoTriangle Role</b>	Advertise and attend public hearing; implement draft public review period; Board of Trustees reviews and adopts the final plan	Lead development and advertise public hearing & review period; incorporate feedback; Board of Trustees reviews and adopts the final plan	Advertise and attend public hearing; implement draft review period; Board of Trustees review and adoption of the final Work Plan
<b>Partner Role</b>	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities
<b>Public Hearing</b>	Joint: CAMPO and GoTriangle (14-day notice)	CAMPO (14-day notice)	CAMPO (14-day notice)
<b>Public Review Period*</b>	30-days for the recommended plan update	30-days for recommended plan update	30-days for draft, 14-days for recommended
<b>Reporting</b>	Engagement Lead provides engagement report to CE and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Engagement Lead provides engagement report to CE and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Engagement Lead provides engagement report to CE and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption
<b>After-Action Review</b>	Annual after-action performance review	Annual after-action performance review	Annual after-action performance review
<p align="center"><b>If you have questions about the Wake Transit Community Engagement Development Guide, or how it applies to an agency, please contact Wake Transit Communications Coordinator <a href="mailto:info@goforwardnc.org">info@goforwardnc.org</a></b></p>			

**Wake Transit Community Engagement Development Guide**

	<b>Community Engagement Policy</b>	<b>Other Program-Level Plans, Policies, and Deliverables</b>	<b>Project-Level Plans, Policies, and Deliverables</b>
<b>Description</b>	The CE Policy is a framework for meeting community engagement requirements for applicable Wake Transit planning, programming, and project development efforts. It is a resource for all partner agencies.	Plans, policies, guidelines, and processes that apply to the Wake Transit program as a whole or components thereof AND must be adopted by the TPAC or Wake Transit governing boards require a public review and engagement.	Wake Transit planning and project efforts being led by partner agencies that require engagement, as identified in the project presentation schedule, are subject to the guidance provided in this policy. Engagement strategies will be unique and scoped for each individual project.
<b>Document Span</b>	Continuous until updated	Varies by project size, scope & type	Varies by project size, scope & type
<b>Draft Cycle</b>	Updated as needed	As needed	As needed
<b>Adoption Authority</b>	Governing Boards	TPAC and/or Governing Boards	Varies by project, may not require adoption
<b>Adoption Date</b>	Adopted as needed	Adopted as needed	Adopted as needed
<b>Project Lead</b>	GoTriangle	CAMPO/GoTriangle/Other Designee	Project sponsor
<b>Engagement Lead</b>	GoTriangle	GoTriangle	Project sponsor or designee
<b>Required Strategy</b>	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy
<b>CE Subcommittee Role</b>	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; support engagement and communications activities; participate in after-action review process	Review draft strategy as applicable; support engagement and communication activities	Receive presentation of engagement strategy as information; support engagement and communication activities
<b>TPAC Role</b>	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft policy for public review; receive engagement report as information; incorporate feedback into the recommended plan; recommend Governing Board adoption	Review all program-level deliverables, and take appropriate action	Varies by project
<b>CAMPO Role</b>	Advertise public hearing and review period; TCC reviews draft and recommends policy; Executive Board reviews and adopts the final policy	Review and adopt applicable plans, policies, and materials	Varies by project
<b>GoTriangle Role</b>	Lead development; advertise public hearing & review period; incorporate feedback; Executive Board reviews and adopts the final policy	Review and adopt applicable plans, policies, and materials	Varies by project
<b>Partner Role</b>	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support engagement efforts, as appropriate
<b>Public Hearing</b>	CAMPO (14-day notice)	Determined during project development	Determined during project development
<b>Public Review Period*</b>	30-days for recommended policy	14-day or 30-day public review period determined during project development phase	Varies by project
<b>Reporting</b>	Engagement Lead provides engagement report to CE and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Determined during project development (engagement summary report recommended)	Determined during project development (engagement summary report recommended)
<b>After-Action Review</b>	Annual after-action performance review	Optional to include in annual or separate after-action review	After-action review recommended, led by project sponsor

**If you have questions about the Wake Transit Community Engagement Development Guide, or how it applies to an agency, please contact the Wake Transit Communications Coordinator at [info@goforwardnc.org](mailto:info@goforwardnc.org)**

## Appendix 1: Regulations

Minimum requirements for public participation are based on a number of federal and state laws and regulations that speak to the inclusion of all individuals. The following federal and state rules guide public participation for all projects receiving Wake Transit funding.

Law/Regulation/Rule	Description
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act	Establishes requirements for electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public.
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin
Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987	Broadened the scope of Title VI to include programs whether federally assisted or not
Age Discrimination Act of 1975	Prohibits discrimination based on age
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504	Prohibits discrimination based on physical or mental handicap
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990	Prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities
1973 Federal-aid Highway Act	Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex
Executive Order 13166	Provides guidance on access for services for Limited English Proficiency persons
Executive Order 12898	Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
49 CFR Part 21	US DOT regulation on implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
49 CFR Part 27	US DOT regulation on implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
23 USC §128	Requires public meetings to be held at convenient and accessible locations and times
N.C. Gen Stat. §143-318.10(b)	North Carolina Open Meetings Law

## Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

- **Community:** A defined group of individuals, businesses, and organizations potentially affected by a planned Wake Transit investment as identified by geographic boundaries, special interests, specific characteristics, or other situations.
- **Community Engagement:** A strategic process that involves working collaboratively with and through identified groups of people connected by geographic proximity, special interest, or other affiliation to discuss issues affecting their well-being and quality of life.
- **Community Engagement Policy:** The Wake Transit community engagement policy provides overarching guidance for how partners will communicate, involve, and include community members in the Wake Transit decision-making process.
- **Community Engagement/Public Participation Plan:** Each partner agency's participation plan that provides details about how Wake Transit, state, federal, and local engagement requirements will be met.
- **Community Engagement Strategy:** An engagement strategy identifies the project manager, specific tactics, measures, methods, timeline, budget, and additional deliverables and activities needed to accomplish the goals of a planned engagement effort.
- **Implementation Agreements:** Shall mean regular and annual agreements that outline the details of how projects in the Wake County Transit Annual Work Plan shall be implemented. These agreements shall be designated as Operating Agreements or Capital Funding Agreements and will clearly outline implementation standards. The expected amount of funds associated with each Implementation Agreement will be clearly defined in the Wake Transit Work Plan.
- **Implementation Element:** Shall mean a discrete project, operation or study, or a discrete logical grouping of projects, operations, or studies tracked separately by the Wake County Transit Work Plan.
- **The Four Big Moves:** The adopted goals of the Wake Transit Plan are the "Four Big Moves," which are as follows: 1) Connect the region; 2) Connect all Wake County communities; 3) Provide frequent, reliable urban mobility; and, 4) Enhance access to transit.
- **Master Participation Agreement:** An agreement between the Wake Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement (ILA) parties (Capital Area MPO, GoTriangle and Wake County) and the other eligible partner agencies.
- **Material Concern:** A concern raised about core components of a project or plan's draft engagement strategy, scope, budget, potential for conflict of interest, missing partners from the process, performance targets, a need for additional approvals, and other possible concerns.

- **Meaningful Input:** Feedback from all sectors of the community that helps to identify transit needs and priorities so that transportation plans are fair across all levels of society. Meaningful input helps planning staff become aware of the potential adverse effects of a project and balance the benefits of a project against its potential adverse effects.
- **Partner Agency:** Agencies and organizations that are eligible to receive Wake Transit funds include Apex, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, GoTriangle, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, Research Triangle Park Foundation, Rolesville, Wake County, Wake Forest, and Zebulon. Partner agencies responsible for carrying out a specific project are designated as a “Project Sponsor” in relevant Wake Transit documents.
- **Program-Level Investments:** Program-level investments apply to more than one project, require approval by the TPAC and/or Governing Boards, and are most often the responsibility of a lead agency, CAMPO or GoTriangle, to execute.
- **Project-Level Investments:** Project-level investments apply only to one project, do not necessarily require approval by the Governing Boards, and are most often the responsibility of a Project Sponsor to execute.
- **Public Review Period:** The lead agency, project manager or other staff responsible for developing the engagement strategy for the deliverable must determine whether a 14-day or 30-day comment period will be required based on a set of criteria. In general, deliverables subject to the 30-day comment period requirement are major planning efforts including those that could directly impact community members. Deliverables that are subject to the 14-day comment period requirement are those that are more administrative in nature, act as guidance for staff and partners managing and/or participating in Wake Transit Plan implementation, and do not establish or change set requirements for communicating or engaging with the public.
- **Community Engagement (CE) Subcommittee:** A designated subcommittee of the TPAC tasked with oversight and support of Wake Transit program-level engagement and communication activities, as well as providing promotional support for Wake Transit project-level engagement efforts.
- **Significant Change:** Wake Transit Partners and staff collect community comments on draft Wake Transit planning documents. Following the review and consideration of comments, if there have been no significant changes to the draft, then a recommended version is released for consideration of approval or adoption.

Unless specifically outlined in an engagement strategy, a second public review and comment period is not required for a recommended plan that is materially the same as the draft previously presented for community review. However, if significant changes are made between the draft and recommended versions of a plan, policy or project document, the revised draft will be made available for an additional 7-day minimum public review and comment period to allow interested

community members the opportunity to review and comment on the changes made prior to a vote for adoption.

Significant changes to a draft are those in which the scope of a plan is adjusted, funding sources are changed, funding amounts are adjusted for more than minor modifications or calculation corrections, the addition or deletion of project(s) or other plan elements, and other edits that would qualify as major amendments to an existing document. Minor changes include a shift in allocation year, rewording plan components for clarity or for correctness, the division of a project funding amounts into phases, and other adjustments deemed minor in the approved Wake Transit amendment policy. Minor changes between a draft and recommended planning document do not require an additional public comment period.

- **Wake County Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC):** The TPAC is a staff-level advisory committee comprised of representatives from agencies and local governments with jurisdiction in Wake County charged with coordinating planning and implementation aspects of the Wake Transit Plan. The TPAC serves in a structured advisory role to the CAMPO Executive Board and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees.