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 public 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.

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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 Public 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 public engagement is to 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 Public 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 Public 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.

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3.0 Why is Community Engagement Important?

3.1 Public 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.

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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.

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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-level investments (Appendix 2) and project level (Appendix 3) investments.

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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

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Appendix 2: Program-Level Investments

	Wake Transit Plan Update	Wake Bus Plan Update	Annual Wake Transit Work Plan	Community Engagement Policy	Other Policies
Description	The Wake Transit Plan is the multi-year vision for public transportation investments in Wake County for a 10-year planning period. The overarching goals of the plan are the "Four Big Moves."	The Wake Bus Plan provides a year-by-year listing of planned service investments by type and provider. It defines the order in which service expansion will occur in order to meet the goals of the Wake Transit Plan.	The Work Plan details the specific operations 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.	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.	Additional program-level policies, plans, and documents that advance or clarify Wake Transit goals and investments.
Document Span	10 fiscal years (July to June)	10 fiscal years (July-June)	1 fiscal year (July to June)	Continuous until updated	As needed.
Update Cycle	Updated every 5 years	Updated every 5 years	Developed each year	Updated as needed	As needed.
Adoption Authority	Governing Boards	Governing Boards	Governing Boards	Governing Boards	Governing Boards
Adoption Date	Adopted in March 2021	Adopted in February 2019	Adopted in June annually	Adopted as needed	Adopted as needed
Project Lead	CAMPO	GoTriangle	CAMPO	GoTriangle	Varies
Engagement Lead	CAMPO	GoTriangle	GoTriangle	GoTriangle	Varies
Required Strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy	Project specific engagement strategy
CE Subcommittee Role	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; participate in after-action review	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; participate in after-action review	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; participate in after-action review	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; participate in after-action review	Review & recommend the draft strategy to TPAC; participate in after-action review
TPAC Role	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 for public review; receive engagement report and incorporate feedback, release recommended plan for public review; receive second engagement report; recommend Governing Board adoption	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft update to policy for public review; incorporate feedback into the recommended draft; recommend Governing Board adoption of the policy	Receive engagement strategy as information; release draft update to policy for public review; incorporate feedback into the recommended draft; recommend Governing Board adoption of the policy
CAMPO Role	Lead development, advertise, and attend public hearing and review period; TCC review of draft and recommended Plan, Executive Board review and adoption of final Plan	Advertise and attend public hearing, advertise public review period; TCC review of draft and recommended Plan, Executive Board review and adoption of final Plan	Lead development, advertise and attend public hearing and review period; TCC review of draft and recommended Plan, Executive Board review and adoption of final Plan	Advertise public hearing and review period; TCC review of draft and recommended Policy; Executive Board review and adoption of final Policy	Varies
GoTriangle Role	Advertise and attend public hearing, implement draft review period; Board of Trustee review and adoption of the final Plan	Lead development and advertise public hearing & review period; incorporate feedback; Board of Trustee review and adoption of the Plan	Advertise and attend public hearing, implement draft review period; Board of Trustee review and adoption of the final Work Plan	Lead development and advertise public hearing & review period; incorporate feedback; Board of Trustee review and adoption of the final Policy	Varies
Partner Role	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities	Support dissemination efforts for planned engagement activities
Public Hearing	Joint: CAMPO and GoTriangle (14-day notice)	CAMPO or GoTriangle (14-day notice)	CAMPO or GoTriangle (7-day notice)	CAMPO or GoTriangle (7-day notice)	Varies
Public Review Period	Joint Review Period: 30-days for the recommended plan update	Joint Review Period: 30-days for recommended plan update	Joint Review Period: 30-days for draft, 14-days for recommended	Joint Review Period: 30-days for recommended policy	Joint Review Period: 30-days for recommended policy
Reporting	Project Lead provides engagement report to PE&C and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Project Lead provides engagement report to PE&C and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Project Lead provides engagement report to PE&C and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Project Lead provides engagement report to PE&C and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption	Project Lead provides engagement report to PE&C and TPAC as information and Governing Boards prior to consideration of adoption
After-Action Review	Performance Review on update engagement and development process	Performance Review on update process	Annual after-action performance review	Annual policy performance review	Annual policy performance review

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Appendix 3: Project Level Investments

	Project-level plans, policies, and materials
Description	Any project that has a Wake Transit capital, operating, or special agreement should develop and implement a customized engagement strategy to be reviewed by the TPAC, or its designee, as part of receiving funding. Planning and project efforts being led by partner agencies may also require engagement as noted in the annual list of projects requiring an engagement strategy. These strategies will be unique and scoped for each unique effort.
Document Span	Varies by project size, scope & type
Update Cycle	Updated as needed
Adoption Authority	Partner Agency, TPAC, or Governing Boards
Adoption Date	Adopted as needed
Project Lead	Partner agency
Engagement Lead	Partner agency
Required Strategy	Project specific engagement strategy
TPAC-CE Subcommittee Role	Review draft strategies, provide feedback, advertise, and support the project sponsor's implementation efforts
TPAC Role	No role unless a material concern with the engagement strategy arises or upon TPAC request for additional information
CAMPO Role	No role unless determined in the engagement strategy or as requested by the TPAC or Governing Boards
GoTriangle Role	No role unless determined in the engagement strategy or as requested by the TPAC or Governing Boards
Partner Role	Oversee and implement planned engagement activities
Public Hearing	As determined by local strategy, plan, or policy
Public Review Period	14-day minimum public comment period in absence of other adopted local guidance
Reporting	Partner Agency provides engagement summary to CE Subcommittee and presents to TPAC and/or Governing Boards per engagement strategy
After-Action Review	After-action review recommended

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Appendix 4: 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 as defined. 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 including the scope, budget, potential for conflict of interest, missing partners from the process, performance targets, a need for additional approvals, and other possible concerns that can impact the

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success of a planned engagement effort.

- **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.

- **Operating Agreement:** An agreement to provide an Implementation Element of the Wake Transit Annual Work Plan funded by Wake Transit Tax Revenue.

- **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 Governing Boards, and/or are the responsibility of a Lead Agency to execute. The Community Engagement Policy applies as follows, at a minimum, to Program Level Investments.
    - A customized Community Engagement Strategy
    - At least one public review and comment period, as defined in Appendix 2
    - A Public Hearing
    - An Engagement Summary Report

- **Project Level Investments**: Project Level Investments apply only to one project, do not necessarily require approval by the Governing Boards, and/or are the responsibility of a Project Sponsor to execute. The Community Engagement Policy applies as follows, at a minimum, to Project Level Investments.
    - A customized Community Engagement Strategy submitted on a monthly basis to the Lead Agency for Public Engagement & Communications, as defined above
    - A Community Engagement Summary Report submitted on a monthly basis to the Lead Agency for Public Engagement & Communications, as defined above
    - Provide promotion details to Lead Agency for Public Engagement & Communications for distribution to Wake Transit Partners

- **Community Engagement 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 development and promotional support for Wake Transit Project Level engagement efforts.

- **Significant Change:** Significant changes to a draft document 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

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that would qualify as major amendments to an existing document.

- **Stakeholders:** Individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, industry leaders, elected officials, and other community members who have a stake in and/or may be impacted by a project, plan, or program.

- **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.

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