

WAKE COUNTY TRANSIT PROGRESS REPORT

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

WAKE COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

Progress continued during FY2023 toward achieving the goals outlined in the Wake County Transit Plan. This planning document is collaboratively developed and provides a vision for improving the overall mobility of Wake County residents by improving and expanding the county's public transportation network. The vision includes increasing and diversifying travel choices so as to improve access to jobs, education, community services, shopping, entertainment and other activities. The goals of the Wake Transit Plan – known as the Four Big Moves – are to connect the region; create frequent, reliable urban mobility; connect all Wake County communities; and enhance access to transit.

HIGHLIGHTS

In FY2023, the technical work for Phase 2 of the **Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Feasibility Study** was completed. The feasibility study results and technical appendices are available at readyforrailnc.org. Public engagement to share and gather input on the results was completed in early 2023 and included thousands of survey responses from participants across the region. Despite the challenges described in the feasibility study summary report, more than 80% of survey respondents expressed support for continued planning of commuter rail. The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization created subcommittees to facilitate the ongoing decision-making process regarding whether or how to move forward with commuter rail project development in the Triangle.

Construction began on the 1.76-acre site for the **Raleigh Union Station Bus Facility**, known as RUS Bus. This facility will be part of a vibrant, integrated, joint development in the Warehouse District of downtown Raleigh. RUS Bus will weave together a street-level bus facility with bike- and pedestrian-friendly spaces. Private development will include 420 multifamily residential units, including 10% dedicated for affordable housing opportunities, as well as retail space, in one central hub.

The Town of Cary progressed design for the **Regional Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility**. This new facility will accommodate GoCary's current fixed-route and Door to Door service, allow room for expansion and afford the opportunity to share resources with other regional transit providers. GoTriangle continued to advance the multifaceted study to identify fleet maintenance facility needs to support existing and planned service expansions funded by the Wake Transit Plan. The study has produced designs and cost estimates for expanding and renovating the GoTriangle Nelson Road Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) planning continued to progress throughout the year in these four corridors:

Wake BRT: New Bern Avenue Corridor – The City of Raleigh received a full funding agreement with the Federal Transit Administration for a Small Starts Capital Investment Grant for the New Bern Avenue Corridor project. Final design for the project was completed and preparations for construction began. Construction of the New Bern BRT Corridor is expected to be completed in FY2025.

Wake BRT: Northern Corridor – In 2021, the Wake Transit Plan Update identified two potential extensions of the Northern BRT corridor: to serve North Hills and Triangle Town Center. In FY2023, a Major Investment Study was launched to further evaluate the Northern Corridor options. The study is scheduled to be completed, including preferred route alternative(s), in winter 2023/2024.

Wake BRT: Southern Corridor – Preliminary design and National Environmental Policy Act work continued through the year. The project received Federal Transit Administration-Capital investment Grant “Medium High” Rating with a full funding recommendation in the FY2024 President Joe Biden’s Budget Proposal. Final design is anticipated to be completed by summer 2025.

Wake BRT: Western Corridor – Preliminary design and National Environmental Policy Act work continued through the year. Application submittal for a Federal Transit Administration-Capital Investment Grant is anticipated to occur summer 2024.

CAMPO conducted a Major Investment Study, through FY2023, to evaluate and identify preferred rapid bus service extensions for the Western and Southern BRT Corridors. The Western extension would continue service from downtown Cary to Research Triangle Park. The Southern extension would continue service from Garner to Powhatan, just south of Clayton. The final results of the study are expected to be released in early FY2024.

The Community Funding Area Program sets aside a portion of Wake Transit revenue for community-based transit services in areas with limited access to fixed-route services. During FY2023, the **Town of Morrisville** continued operating its node-based **Smart Shuttle** service and the **Town of Fuquay-Varina** received funding to study the feasibility of local and regional fixed-route transit opportunities to serve their community. In July 2022, the Town of Apex launched its first fixed-route circulator, **GoApex Route 1**, finished building more than 40 new bus stops and began operating its door-to-door, complementary paratransit service.

Wake Transit partners collaborated on developing the **Recommended FY2025-2030 Wake Bus Plan**, a fiscally constrained, year-by-year, implementation plan for transit service expansion and related capital projects. By FY2030, implementation of the plan would increase bus service in Wake County by 30% above current levels and will exceed goals set in the Wake County Transit Plan for job and population proximity to transit services.

GoRaleigh, GoTriangle and GoCary continued to provide new and enhanced bus operations despite the agencies’ experiencing a driver shortage, service adjustments and the continued suspension of fare collection. GoWake introduced weekend service hours and added a fourth vehicle to its fleet to support the **SmartRide NE Microtransit Program**. In response to interest expressed from Wake County residents, transit providers are implementing strategies to reduce vehicle emissions. In FY2023, GoRaleigh added 28 compressed natural gas buses, and GoTriangle added six electric buses to their fleets.

In June 2023, the two Wake Transit governing boards – the CAMPO Executive Board and GoTriangle Board of Trustees – adopted the FY2024 Wake Transit Work Plan. The plan includes the scope descriptions and financial details of transit investments allocated funds in FY2024 and those programmed to receive funding through FY2030.

Wake Transit Progress

Tracking Wake Transit Progress: Wake Transit Plan implementation and progress toward meeting program goals is reported in two places. This annual progress report is published in December/January to provide a snapshot of the work accomplished in the previous fiscal year, July 1-June 30, as well as to note some activities planned to be undertaken in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Wake Transit Performance Tracker is an online resource for ongoing program progress information. Details of service and capital projects are included on the interactive project map. Progress toward reaching the many goals and objectives of the Wake Transit program are graphically displayed with historical data on the performance dashboard. The Tracker is updated at least three times a year: in summer, after the adoption of the new Wake Transit Work Plan; in December, to update annual revenue and expenditure totals; and in the spring, to reflect approved Work Plan amendments and commuter rail and bus rapid transit project progress information.

WAITING FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE FOUR BIG MOVES

- Connect the region. 1
- Connect all Wake County communities. 2
- Create frequent, reliable urban mobility. 3
- Enhance access to transit. 4

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Increased annual ridership by 8% from FY2022. 4
- Reinstated the CRX and DRX routes after a short canceling of service due to the driver shortage. 4
- Realigned Routes 310 to be more efficient route and to improve safety. 2,4

CITY OF RALEIGH

- Increased ridership by 17.8%. 3,4

NOTE: Due to the operator shortage, planned service improvements for FY2023 remained on hold. Once GoRaleigh has the necessary staff, improvements will be implemented.

WAKE COUNTY

- Added weekend hours for GoWake SmartRide NE. 4
- Added a fourth service vehicle to microtransit fleet. 4

TOWN OF APEX

- Launched service on July 30, 2022, for GoApex Route 1, the town's first free, local circulator, as well as for GoApex Door to Door, the free complementary ADA paratransit service to GoApex Route 1. 4

TOWN OF CARY

- Collaborated with Apex on launching GoApex Route 1. GoCary serves as operator of the fixed-route service. 4

TOWN OF MORRISVILLE

- Continued successful service of the Morrisville Smart Shuttle. 4

CAPITAL PROJECTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Completed the technical work for Phase II of the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Feasibility Study. Completed public engagement regarding the feasibility study results, which included surveying thousands of participants from across the region. 1
- Began construction on the 1.76-acre site for Raleigh Union Station Bus Facility with remediation and demolition of three former warehouse buildings. 2,4
- Purchased six electric buses. 2, 4
- Executed contract for design for 56 bus stops in Wake County, including Americans with Disabilities Act improvements and amenities to enhance passenger safety and comfort. 2,4

CITY OF RALEIGH

- Improved 15 bus stops with shelters and installed 21 ADA-compliant landing pads to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to improve safety. A further 127 bus stop improvements are in design. 4
- Completed the design for seven enhanced transfer point sites. An additional four enhanced transfer point sites are near final design. 4
- Began construction on the Poole Road Park & Ride facility. The facility will provide more than 200 parking spaces (12 will have electric vehicle chargers) and bus stop amenities. 3,4
- Completed the federal Title VI Equity Analysis for site selection and identified a preferred site for the GoRaleigh/GoWake ACCESS Paratransit Operations & Maintenance Facility. The National Environmental Policy Act process was completed for this site, which received a Documented Categorical Exclusion. City staff completed the Title VI and NEPA in-house – a significant cost savings to the Wake Transit Plan. The city's Real Estate Division has submitted an offer for the property and anticipates acquisition in second quarter of FY2024. City staff applied for a 2023 RAISE grant to help offset rising costs in the construction industry and \$9.9 million was awarded toward construction of the ADA facility. 4
- Began design work on the East Raleigh Park and Ride and future transit facility. The preferred site was purchased in FY2023. 3,4

TOWN OF CARY

- Began design work for Phase 3 of the GoCary Bus Stop Improvement Project, which will build new stops for upcoming Routes 11 and 12 as well as bring many existing stops in the system up to ADA compliance. 3,4
- Continued to move the Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility project forward with review of 60% design, initiation of 90% design and conclusion of NEPA process. 3
- The Town of Cary issued an RFQ for the development of town-owned land in downtown Cary, including master planning of the Multimodal Center site. The Town of Cary continued to acquire land for the Multimodal site. 4

TOWN OF APEX

- Completed installing 38 bus stops for GoApex Route 1, along with installing benches at 12 stops, trash receptacles at four stops and bike racks at two stops. (TC002-BE). 4

TOWN OF MORRISVILLE

- The Town of Morrisville installed a bus shelter at the Morrisville-Carpenter Road node in May 2023. 4

PLANNING PROJECTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Completed the Regional Transit Center Relocation Study to better serve the needs of transit riders by improving transit speed and reliability; addressing passenger amenity and operational needs; and providing more multimodal connections. 1,2,4
- Continued to advance the multifaceted study to identify fleet maintenance facility needs, to establish low- or no-emissions fleet composition goals – including charging or fueling infrastructure – and to evaluate opportunities for regional cooperation. 2,4

CITY OF RALEIGH

- GoRaleigh completed construction on its Set 6 Bus Stop Improvements. Set 6 brought improvements to 16 bus stops within the GoRaleigh system. 4
- Completed community outreach efforts to notify riders of the upcoming changes associated with the Biltmore Hills Route Package. Flyers were placed at every shelter location along all routes within the impacted zone, and staff set up informational tables at multiple community events within the service area to educate the community of the coming changes. 3,4

CITY OF RALEIGH-BRT Projects

- NEW BERN AVENUE CORRIDOR – Received Federal Transit Administration-Capital Investment Full Funding Grant Agreement in Preparation for Construction. Additionally, final design was further refined to prepare for 100% design review and a construction management firm was selected to provide administrative support and inspection services during construction. 3
- WESTERN CORRIDOR – Continued preliminary design, National Environmental Policy Act work, and coordination with capital projects. 3
- SOUTHERN CORRIDOR – Continued to advance preliminary design and National Environmental Policy Act work. Received Federal Transit Administration-Capital investment Grant “Medium High” Rating with full funding recommendation in FY2024 President’s Budget Proposal (\$85.9 million) in March. Additionally, a consultant was selected to advance the corridor to final design. 3
- NORTHERN CORRIDOR – Continued to advance a Major Investment Study through fatal flaw and preliminary screening of alignment alternatives. 3

WAKE COUNTY

- Completed the pilot stage of the SmartRide microtransit program through survey and ridership data collection. The data will help the towns in northeast Wake County plan for future service improvements to the program in the coming years. 4

TOWN OF FUQUAY-VARINA

- Completed the Community Funding Area Program and town-funded transit study. 4

CAPITAL AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

- Completed the Wake BRT Rapid Bus Extension Major Investment Study. The study evaluated the feasibility of implementing rapid bus service from Research Triangle Park to Clayton as extensions to the Wake BRT Western and Southern corridors, respectively, as envisioned in the Wake Transit Plan and the CAMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The MIS was intended to develop a locally preferred alternative for the extensions to the core BRT projects, but the evaluation concluded that additional operational analysis is necessary before a final Locally Preferred Alternative and project sponsor can be determined. 2,3

NEXT STEPS

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Finalize planning to add mid-day service for the Route 305. 2
- Continue to plan for route restorations. 1,2

CITY OF RALEIGH

- Implement the Route 5: Biltmore Hills high-frequency route package in FY2024. This package will see the elimination of GoRaleigh's Routes 13 and 22, while realigning Route 5 to include some areas previously covered by the eliminated routes. The new Route 5 will operate at 15-minute frequencies and Route 20 will be expanded to include weekend service. 3
- Implement Rolesville Microtransit in FY2024 as an alternative to the under-performing 401X route. 4
- Finalize route path for the Hillsborough high-frequency route package and implement service. Due to the ongoing operator shortage, the service is planned to go online in FY2024. This route will connect downtown Raleigh with Meredith College, North Carolina State University and Plaza West shopping center. 3

WAKE COUNTY

- Implement new scheduling software, Ecolane. 4
- Onboard new operations vendor, RATP-Dev. 4
- Roll out SmartRide service enhancements to include weekends. 4

TOWN OF CARY

- In FY2025, GoCary plans to begin service on Routes 11 and 12. Route 11 will serve East Cary and connect GoCary to the NC State campus for the first time. Route 12 is an expansion of the current Apex-Cary Express providing all-day, local service between the two municipalities. 2,3

TOWN OF MORRISVILLE

- No future service improvements to report at this time.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Continue construction for the RUS Bus facility in anticipation of opening in 2025. 1,2,3
- Begin construction on 56 bus stop improvements in Wake County. 4

CITY OF RALEIGH

- Begin construction of Set 7 bus stop improvements. 4
- Complete construction of Poole Road Park-and-Ride facility. 4
- Complete design and begin construction of enhanced Transfer Points at WakeMed North Hospital, Pleasant Valley Shopping center and Hillsborough/Gorman streets. Continue designing eight more sites. 4
- Complete design and start construction of the East Raleigh Park & Ride. Purchase property and begin design work on GoRaleigh/GoWake Access ADA/Paratransit Operations & Maintenance Facility. 4
- Acquire four replacement vehicles for the GoRaleigh Access paratransit program, seven vehicles for the GoRaleigh shuttle and maintenance fleet (four replacement, three expansion) and three new low no-emission buses for GoRaleigh's fixed-route operations (two replacement, one expansion). 4

TOWN OF CARY

- Complete design and start construction of Phase 3 of the GoCary Bus Stop Improvement Project, which includes bus stops for upcoming Route 11, Route 12, Route 1 realignment, as well as improving existing bus stops in the system up to ADA compliance. 4
- Complete final design of the Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility project and begin the bidding process for construction. 4
- Review responses from the RFQ issued for developing town-owned land in downtown Cary, including master planning of the Multimodal Center site. The Town of Cary continues with land acquisition for the Multimodal site. 4

TOWN OF APEX

- Begin planning for bus stop improvements including amenities and accessibility improvements. 4
- Begin planning for Saunders and Hinton Street sidewalk improvements. 4

TOWN OF MORRISVILLE

- Install benches at six nodes and bike racks at five nodes. 4
- Relocate the node on Town Hall Drive to accommodate future roadway construction. 4

PLANNING PROJECTS

GOTRIANGLE

- Complete environmental review for the Regional Transit Center Relocation Study. 1,2,3,4
- Continue supporting regional partners in decision-making for the Greater Triangle Commuter Rail project. 1

CITY OF RALEIGH-BRT Projects

- NEW BERN AVENUE CORRIDOR – Start construction of New Bern Avenue Corridor. 3,4

- WESTERN CORRIDOR – Continue to advance design, National Environmental Policy Act work and prepare for Federal Transit Administration-Capital Investment Grant Ratings Application. 3
- SOUTHERN CORRIDOR – Continue National Environmental Policy Act work and advance corridor to final design. 3
- NORTHERN CORRIDOR – Continue to advance MIS to prepare for engagement, selection of Locally Preferred Alternatives and implementation plan. 3

WAKE COUNTY

- Propose school shuttle for dual enrollment students attending Wake Tech 4.0 in FY2025. The program would take students attending Knightdale and East Wake High Schools to their classes on the new Wake Tech campus located in Wendell. 4
- Procure an electric vehicle and charging infrastructure for the microtransit shuttle. 4
- After FY2024, GoWake will collaborate with the towns to improve the NE SmartRide service. 4
- GoWake Access will work to collaborate with nearby rural counties to establish Transfer Stations and develop a Rural Mobility Network. 4
- GoWake aims to convert existing vehicles into more environmentally friendly electric or alternative fuel vehicles in the next five years. 4

TOWN OF APEX

- Kick off Planning Study in FY2024, identifying Apex's next transit priorities. 4

TOWN OF MORRISVILLE

- No future projects to report at this time.

TOWN OF FUQUAY-VARINA

- Town Board to discuss Transit Study results. 4

CAPITAL AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

- CAMPO will begin the update to the Wake Transit Plan in FY2024. The study effort is expected to take 18 to 24 months and will include evaluation of existing and planned projects, robust public engagement and extensive scenario work to determine the evolution of the plan as the time horizon is extended to 2035. 1,2,3,4

REVENUE HOURS CHART

GoRaleigh

FY2023 revenue hours were 285,713, decreasing 8.2% compared with FY2022 revenue hours of 311,235.

GoWake Access

FY2023 revenue hours were 11,567, increasing 44.8% compared with FY2022 revenue hours of 7991

GoTriangle

FY2023 revenue hours were xx increasing/decreasing x% compared with FY2022 revenue hours of xx.

GoCary

FY2023 revenue hours were 50,384.27, increasing 5.9% compared with FY2022 revenue hours of 47,567.71.

GoApex

FY2023 fixed-route revenue hours were 4,482. (GoApex was established in FY2023.)

Town of Morrisville – Morrisville Smart Shuttle

FY2023 revenue hours were 6,521, increasing 46% compared with FY2022 revenue hours of 4,477. Please note that this service began October 2, 2021.

RIDERSHIP CHART

GoRaleigh

FY2023 ridership was 4,043,384, increasing about 17.8% compared with FY2022 ridership of 3,432,544.

GoTriangle's Wake County Ridership

FY2023 ridership was xxx increasing/decreasing about xx% compared with FY22 ridership of xx.

GoCary

FY2023 ridership was 348,590, increasing 40.3% compared with FY2022 ridership of 248,381.

GoWake Access

FY2023 ridership was 16,133, increasing about 26.7% compared with FY2022 ridership of 12,730.

GoApex

FY2023 fixed-route ridership was 12,075. (GoApex was established in FY2023.)

Town of Morrisville – Morrisville Smart Shuttle

FY2023 ridership was 21,445, increasing about 91% compared with FY2022 ridership of 11,226. Please note that this service began Oct. 2, 2021.