Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan
February 26 - March 26, 2024
 **News Article**

**Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan available for community review**

The Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan is available for community review during a 30-day comment period from February 26 to March 26, 2024. The Draft Work Plan is available online, along with links to provide feedback, at: <https://goforwardnc.org/getinvolvedwake>

A new Wake Transit Work Plan is developed each year. It includes two main parts. First, there is a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget allocates funds to specific operating and capital projects that are continuing from previous years or that are new investments in our transit network. Second, the Plan includes the Multi-Year Investment Program and the Capital Improvement Plan which provide a look ahead at how projected Wake Transit revenues are anticipated to be spent in future years. Current planning extends through FY 2030.

The Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan budget is displayed differently than in previous years. Reviewers will see two separate summary budgets and detail sheets for both the operating and capital budget sections.

“One version contains the Wake County portion of the Regional Transit Authority Vehicle Rental Tax revenue, and the other does not,” said Ben Howell, Wake Transit Program Manager. “Wake Transit partners are expected to determine which budget will move forward between the February release of the Draft Work Plan and the May release of the Recommended Work Plan. Whichever option does move forward, we will have a balanced Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan budget.”

The goal of the Wake Transit Plan is to improve and expand Wake County’s transit network. There are “Four Big Moves” that guide all investment decisions: 1) Connect the region; 2) Connect all Wake County communities; 3) Create frequent and reliable urban mobility; and, 4) Enhance access to transit.

**Operating Highlights**

In FY25, approximately $45.6 million in expenditures has been proposed in the operating budget. This total includes new investments, as well as the continuation of bus routes and other services that began in previous years.

New operations and improvements include two new GoCary bus routes. The current Apex-Cary Express (ACX) route will be converted to Route 12. This improved route will still connect downtown Cary to downtown Apex, but will stop more often at more locations, and run for more hours each day. Route 11 will provide a new East Cary connection to the regional transit network.

The GoRaleigh transit system will implement service improvements and expansion to Glascock Route 3, Avent Ferry Route 11, Method Route 12, and Carolina Pines Route 7L. In addition, it will launch a new on-demand microtransit service to better connect Rolesville and Wake Forest riders to the network. Another operational investment of note is the contribution of Wake Transit funds to GoRaleigh and GoCary in support of their efforts to increase safety and security for transit riders.

Just over $1.3 million has been set aside for the Community Funding Area (CFA) Program in FY25. The CFA Program provides matching funds to smaller Wake County communities that are seeking to provide new or improved transit services for their community members. CFA is a competitive award program, and the FY25 selection process is currently underway. Projects chosen to receive funding will be included in the Recommended Work Plan that is scheduled for release in May.

**Capital Highlights**

The proposed FY25 capital expenditure total is $196.8 million.

A core component of the Wake Transit capital budgeting process is balancing day-to-day responsibilities, such as providing safe and reliable transit vehicles and investing in technology upgrades, with the need to save money for high-priority capital projects planned to be completed in future years.

Since its creation, the Wake Transit Plan has reserved and provided funding in support of each of the Four Big Moves. One example is the continued development of the four core Wake Bus Rapid Transit (Wake BRT) corridors that will radiate outward in each direction from downtown Raleigh:

* Construction of the Wake BRT: New Bern Avenue corridor is progressing and is expected to be complete in 2025.
* A $15 million allocation to the Wake BRT: Western Corridor will advance that project toward final design and prepare the project for federal funding consideration.
* $131 million allocated to the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor will move that project ahead into the final design phases.
* $5 million will support moving the preferred route alternatives selected for the Wake BRT: Northern Corridors into preliminary design.

The Draft Work Plan would also help ensure that progress continues on the new Regional Transit Center in Research Triangle Park, the Downtown Cary Multimodal Center, Raleigh Union Station, and construction of compliant operations and maintenance and paratransit service facilities.

Commuter rail project development is on hold, but the rail service discussion continues as our local elected officials work together to identify all options available to the Triangle Region. A path forward for rail investment is anticipated to be a result of the 2035 Wake Transit Plan Update that is currently underway.

**What’s the Plan? Wake Transit Plan, Wake Bus Plan, Wake Transit Work Plan**

The Wake Transit Plan provides the framework for all things Wake Transit. It sets a long-term vision for transit investment throughout Wake County. Performance targets and objectives are set, and projects are identified to help realize the Four Big Moves. The last Wake Transit Plan update was adopted in 2021 and extended the planning horizon to FY30. The update process to develop the 2035 Plan is just beginning. It will involve extensive community engagement and is expected to be adopted in 2025.

Providing safe and reliable bus service is a vital component of the Wake Transit Plan. As such, it is important to plan ahead for route expansion and transit network growth. The Wake Bus Plan includes the identification of transit service investment needs and related capital projects each year for a five-year period. The most recent Wake Bus Plan was adopted in 2023 and spans fiscal years 2025—2030.

A Wake Transit Work Plan is developed for each fiscal year, July to June. It allocates Wake Transit funds to specific projects or project phases, most often initially identified in the Wake Transit Plan and Wake Bus Plan. Local project sponsors identify their project as being ready to receive funding in the upcoming year and confirm that the original timeline and budget are adequate to meet the project’s needs. Readers of the Wake Transit Work Plan not only see the planned investments for the next year, but also the projects programmed to receive Wake Transit funding in future years.

**Community Review & Public Comment**

Wake Transit planners will collect comments on the Draft FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan between February 26 and March 26, 2024. Input received will be reviewed and considered for incorporation in the Recommended FY 2025 Wake Transit Work Plan scheduled for adoption in June.

Anyone interested in following Wake Transit Program progress on Twitter can visit @WakeTransit. They may also sign up for email updates by visiting: <https://goforwardnc.org/>, scrolling to the bottom of the page, clicking the Wake County Transit Plan box, and entering their contact information.