



May 16, 2018

**Comments at CAMPO Public Hearing on FY 19 Wake Transit Plan  
Presented by Karen Rindge, Executive Director, WakeUP Wake County, on behalf of the  
Capital Area Friends of Transit**

On behalf of several organizational members of the Capital Area Friends of Transit coalition, we are pleased to provide comments on the draft FY19 Wake Transit Plan. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our views.

**The intent of our comments is to achieve two goals:**

- Building ridership
- Maintaining and building public support for the Wake Transit Plan

Overall, we are pleased with the next steps planned for the second year of the Wake Transit Plan. Transit riders will see new benefits, including new bus routes, more shelters, extended service on some routes, and a new free youth fare. We are, however, still concerned that the level of funding proposed to be spent on planning consultants is disproportionately high when compared to the funding allocated for actual transit service expansion and marketing to increase ridership. We offer the following comments:

- **We are excited about the proposed seven new bus routes, and we are pleased transit staff listened to prior public input to help identify high priority roads/corridors.** While bus service will continue on high-need routes, it is vital to identify where transit service has been absent, and where it is needed to facilitate access to jobs, services and amenities.
  - We urge GoTriangle to solicit public input about the placement of the proposed 25 new bus stops. It is unclear from the plan how many of these bus stops will be on existing routes and how many on new routes.
  - It is unclear from the plan whether the new bus stops in Raleigh will include the newly designed, more modern and unique bus shelters currently under review.
  - Some existing bus stops are currently not accessible in bad weather, and some are difficult to access with wheelchairs and strollers. It is our hope that the 25 new stops will get ahead of this issue and provide equitable bus stops that are easily accessible by all.

- We support additional funds for marketing, communications, and public relations. In particular, \$250,000 for GoRaleigh. **However, we question if this level of funding is sufficient to promote new routes and build ridership.** We are also concerned that the current plan doesn't identify any specific initiatives to increase ridership.
- We fully endorse the system-wide free Youth Fare. We note, however, that **it is imperative that this program be coordinated and marketed with the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) and municipalities.** WCPSS has been slow to promote public transit and more needs to be done to get the information to parents and students through schools and media. Given the shortage of school bus drivers and insufficient funding for school buses, public transit can complement bus service for children.
- **We continue to note that more money is proposed for administration and planning consultants than is proposed for improving service.** When the referendum was passed Wake County taxpayers voted to raise money to see transit service improvements. We understand the need to plan well for future bus and rail service. To ensure continued support for the sales, however, we believe it is imperative for GoTriangle to be able to set in place tangible improvements to the transit system that the public will notice. These improvements will also prompt ridership to increase more quickly.
- **We recommend that Wake Transit form a clear and distinct messaging strategy that speaks to the actual progress of the plan.** Keeping the public informed in positive ways is vital to continued community and business support. We recommend distribution of specific talking points to community stakeholders so that we may use the same messages.
  - The new GoForwardNC.org website is a good step in this direction, because it combines information about all Triangle transit plans.
- We commend the transit agencies' efforts to "green" the bus fleet. **However, no Triangle buses are electric yet. We continue to urge all agencies to pursue electric buses, noting that technology is improving each year, and buses are becoming increasingly affordable.** If external grants are not available, we encourage you to strongly consider purchasing electric buses with Wake Transit funds. Electric buses will not only improve localized air quality and will also help combat climate change as a region grows.
- **We support study on technology improvements for riders.** Riders want and need better technological interfaces to improve their rider experience. We especially need review of opportunities for alternative ways to pay for bus fare with smart phones.
- **The public input process continues to be lengthy and somewhat confusing.**

- We recommend a more streamlined process for community input, as opposed to multiple opportunities to provide input over the course of the next few years.
- The community will burn out on providing input if asked repeatedly to come out and share opinions.
- We do support new efforts to provide input online, as well as GoTriangle's social media outreach.
- We also recommend that Wake Transit stakeholders meet more with community groups and civic leaders in the future.

Thank you again for reviewing our public input.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of,

Amalgamated Transit Union  
Capital Group Sierra Club  
Clean Air Carolina  
NC Conservation Network  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Town of Morrisville  
WakeUP Wake County  
Wake Voter Education Coalition

*Please note that other CAFT organizational members are sending additional comments separately.*