Wake Transit Bus Plan

Project Prioritization Policy (DRAFT)

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1 Project Prioritization Policy Overview

The Project Prioritization Policy is a framework to guide the development and implementation of expanded public transportation services in Wake County, North Carolina.

In 2016, voters in Wake County approved a tax package that will invest $2.3 billion in public transit services over the 10-year period between 2017 and 2027. The combined investment strategy, branded as the Wake Transit Plan, reflects a vision for transit service development articulated as "Four Big Moves". These Four Big Moves include:

- **Connect Regionally:** Create cross-county connections by developing a combination of regional rail and bus investments. The investment plan reflects a Durham-Wake commuter rail project as well as a series of regional express routes.
- **Connect All Wake County Communities:** Connect all 12 municipalities in Wake County plus the Research Triangle Park (RTP) and Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU). This investment will include a combination of regional and express bus routes.
- **Frequent, Reliable Urban Mobility**: Develop a frequent transit network in Wake County's urban core. The frequent transit network will include development of bus rapid transit services, plus high frequency bus services along major corridors in the County's most developed communities.
- **Enhanced Access to Transit:** Directs investment to existing fixed-route services to make service more convenient. The investments include expanding transit operating hours, such as providing more service on weekend days or increasing services on weeknights. Enhancing access to transit also increases the frequency of service on many routes and develops demand-response services in lower density areas.

In addition to the Four Big Moves, the Wake Transit Plan identifies a series of investment goals to guide transit network development:

- Prioritize investment in ridership-justified routes, but continue investment in coverage routes.
- Balance investments in transit infrastructure and new services to create a network that will be robust and viable in the long term. The Wake Transit Plan emphasizes infrastructure investments that improve the speed and reliability of transit operations.
- Ensure the majority of Wake County residents have access to a reliable transit network.
- Focus investment on projects that will enhance customer service and the user experience. The Wake Transit Plan will prioritize accessibility, comfort, security, reliability, cleanliness, courtesy, and communication.

The Governing Boards directing the implementation of the Wake Transit Plan (hereinafter Wake Transit Governing Boards) are accountable for governing and overseeing implementation of the Wake Transit Plan. The Wake Transit Governing Boards consists of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Executive Board and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees.

The Governance ILA parties established the Wake County Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC), a staff-level advisory committee to coordinate planning and implementation of the Wake Transit Plan. The TPAC is comprised of regional and local governments, as well as the region's transit providers (GoTriangle, City of Raleigh, Town of Cary, and Wake TRACS/WCTS) and major institutions. The TPAC is overseeing development of the Wake Transit Multi-Year Bus Service Implementation Plan (MYBSIP), also referred to as the Wake Transit Bus Plan. Hands-on management and direction is provided through the Core Technical Team (CTT), a subsidiary of the TPAC.

WAKE TRANSIT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITIZATION

While the Wake Transit Plan identifies major investment projects, it does not dictate or prescribe the full suite of transit-related investments that TPAC member agencies will need to implement over the 10-year development period. The lack of specificity for significant portions of the transit network creates an opportunity for the region to shape future investments. In 2017 and 2018, the TPAC is developing an investment schedule for the Wake Transit Plan. This plan, the Wake Transit Bus Plan (hereinafter Bus Plan), will recommend transit investments and develop an implementation schedule to ensure the region realizes the goals set by the Wake Transit Plan. The long-term investment strategy will also include a year-by-year program of projects to direct resources to operating and capital projects.

While the Wake Transit Bus Plan will program projects for the 10-year period, the Wake Transit Governing Boards and the TPAC acknowledge that implementation may vary from the Bus Plan's guiding framework. Changes may occur because there is more or less funding available and/or in response to a variety of exogenous variables that could change investment priorities at any given year. The TPAC, at its discretion, may elect to utilize the Project Prioritization Policy to update the 10-year investment schedule after it is developed in 2018.

The Project Prioritization Policy is a decision-making framework. It is intended to provide:

- A transparent and easily understandable process for making choices between competing investment needs associated with implementation of the Wake Transit Plan
- Guidance on the development of the 10-year bus service and capital investment plan prepared through the Multi-Year Bus Service Implementation Plan (MYBSIP)
- An optional process that may be used by the TPAC to adjust the bus service and the capital investment program outlined by the MYBSIP to reflect changes in available funds, new or substantially modified project requests, or other needs in the region. This type of process may require a third-party to arbitrate among project sponsors. In this case, CAMPO may function as the lead agency to correspond with its responsibility of preparing/maintaining/updating the multi-year operating and capital improvement programs.

Accordingly, the Project Prioritization Policy provides a consistent and mutually agreed upon process for prioritizing operating and capital projects. The policy also creates an internal governance process designed to align and affirm transit investments so they collectively advance the goals of the Wake Transit Plan.

The Project Prioritization Policy balances the need to create a transparent, data-driven approach that ranks projects based on expected performance and the need to prioritize projects according to the broader, qualitative goals of the Wake Transit Plan. The Policy is designed to reinforce the investment schedule proposed by the MYBSIP by translating the values and goals of the Wake Transit Plan into an objective and transparent method to choose between competing projects. Accordingly, the Project Prioritization Policy should prioritize and advance projects that offer the most overall value to the Wake Transit Plan. By agreeing to this policy, Wake Transit Governing Boards are agreeing to a framework and process for allocating resources within in a constrained investment schedule.

2 Evaluation Framework

The Evaluation Framework is a quantitative process to prioritize and rank proposed operating and capital projects. It is the first in a two-step process to help TPAC member agencies rank projects and arbitrate between investment decisions. The Evaluation Framework considers operating and capital projects, including capital projects directly tied to transit service investments (bus stops, fleet expansion, etc.) and capital projects independent of any specific single transit service or package of services.

The outcome of the Evaluation Framework will be a complete ranking of the projects included in the Wake Transit Bus Plan. This set of ranked projects will be subsequently reviewed and prioritized through the Governance Framework (see Chapter 3). The Governance Framework will help ensure individual projects fall within the funding allocations and overall network needs by balancing total investments in operating and capital projects. The Governance Framework will also measure and track overall capital investment and investments in enhanced customer services.

This chapter outlines project typologies, prioritization metrics, and scoring methodologies that guide both the operating project evaluation and capital project evaluation processes.

EVALUATING OPERATING PROJECTS

Projects included in the Wake Transit Plan will be evaluated according to a three-step process:

Step 1 – Project Typologies: As the Wake Transit Bus Plan is developed, the CTT will categorize each project as one of four typologies. The CTT will use the Wake Transit Financial Model to collect information on project characteristics, including projected operating costs, and performance estimates. Project characteristics will reflect data included in the most recent Wake Transit Bus Plan financial model. Changes, updates or additional information will be collected from relevant parties or estimated according to a consistent, replicable methodology. Projects may only be assigned to one typology.

Step 2 – Project Scoring by Type: Project proposals are evaluated using quantitative metrics designed to gauge the project's effectiveness at meeting four prioritization objectives. Projects within each typology are scored comparatively, with scores weighted based on the primary objectives of their designated project typology.

Step 3 – Overall Project Scoring: Scores for each project type will be compiled and ranked into an overall slate of projects that will be subjected to the Governance Framework, detailed in Chapter 3.

Project Typologies

The Evaluation Framework separates Wake Transit operating proposals into four distinct project typologies, according to direction provided by the CTT. Each project typology is directly tied to one or more of the Four Big Moves; they are also linked to one of the overarching Wake Transit Plan goals (Figure 1). As the Wake Transit Bus Plan develops, the CTT will assign each operating project proposal to a single typology, using definitions provided in Figure 1 (more information on data sources is available in Appendix A). Operating projects will be evaluated relative to other projects within their designated typology, rather than in comparison to all operating projects. Dividing the evaluation process across four project typologies provides the following benefits:

- Allows TPAC member agencies to make progress towards each of the Four Big Moves and overarching goals during each funding cycle. Without typologies, TPAC member agencies risk consistently prioritizing projects that have the highest ridership or lowest costs.
- Permits the weighting of evaluation metrics within the context of the primary objectives of each project type. This ensures that projects most strongly aligned with their direct goals will be prioritized first.
- Ensures that the most viable projects within each typology are prioritized. This will ensure that the strongest aspects of the transit network are constructed first and will create better opportunities for secondary projects to succeed in later years.

It is worth noting that the project typologies are not mutually exclusive–some projects can qualify for multiple categories. This ambiguity is tolerated in the prioritization process for two reasons: 1) creating transit service types that are mutually exclusive would result in an overly complex categorization that would make an efficient ranking process untenable; and 2) the ambiguity allows the CTT flexibility for how to best position individual projects.

In addition, demand response service, including both service provided as part of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and general public dial-a-ride is not specifically included in the project prioritization policy. ADA paratransit is mandated by federal law, so the costs and development of ADA paratransit service will be included as part of estimating fixed-route bus service. Needs for general public dial-a-ride service, including emerging mobility services are not directly programmed in the Wake Transit Plan. Funding for general public dial-a-ride type demand response services is included in the Wake Transit Plan and projects will be identified and refined as part of developing the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (CHSTP). The CHSTP is being conducted as part of the overall Wake Transit Bus Plan.

Figure 1 | Operating Project Categories and Related Four Big Moves/Overarching Goals

Project Typologies	Typology Definition	Related Four Big Moves	Wake Transit Plan Goals
Frequent Network Routes	▪ Operating projects on Frequent Network corridors, as outlined by the Wake Transit Plan ▪ Will include phased or interim investments (e.g., new routes initially implemented as 30-minute service but scheduled for subsequent upgrade to 15-minute service)	▪ Frequent, Reliable Urban Mobility	▪ Achieve 70% ridership oriented service
Intra-County and Express Routes	▪ Operating projects on limited stop and/or peak only routes designed to increase mobility within and beyond Wake County ▪ Includes limited stop and/or peak only routes that provide service to areas that are currently unserved	▪ Connect Regionally ▪ Connect All Wake County Communities	▪ Ensure all Wake County communities have access to a regional or express bus route
All Day Transit Routes that Serve New Areas (30 or 60 minute frequencies)	▪ Operating projects on routes designed to provide transit service to a currently unserved area of Wake County ▪ Includes routes that provide access to both an unserved area and transit supportive areas	▪ Connect All Wake County Communities ▪ Enhanced Access to Transit	▪ Provide transit service to all Wake County municipalities ▪ Maintain 30% coverage oriented service
Improvements to Service Span and Frequency	▪ Operating projects primarily intended to increase service span or service frequency ▪ Applies to existing transit services only	▪ Enhanced Access to Transit	▪ Ensure all day transit service within ¾ miles from 54% of residents and 80% of jobs in Wake County

Prioritization Objectives and Metrics

The Four Big Moves provide an easily understandable framework for explaining the underlying mobility goals of the Wake Transit Plan to stakeholders and the public. The Project Prioritization Policy similarly utilizes a set of four policy objectives to communicate the process to measure and evaluate projects. Prioritization objectives draw directly from the Four Big Moves and the overarching goals of the Wake Transit Plan, but are not directly tied to the project typologies. Instead, they are designed to measure the potential success and impact of an individual project (Figure 2).

Figure 2 | Prioritization Objectives

Key Objective	Definition of "Success"
Develop	Improve transit in the areas that best support it
Connect	Connect more people to more places
Enhance	Make transit more convenient
Sustain	Provide financial and long-term sustainability

For each project type and key objective, the Bus Plan Core Technical Team identified two metrics that best define how well an individual project works to achieve its assigned objective (Figure 3). Metrics reflect transit service design principles, such as the number or density of people served, or the number of new residents within walking distance of a route. In this way, the process grounds the prioritization process in customer benefits. Other metrics are directly tied to the proposed Wake Transit Bus Plan Service Guidelines—working to ensure that projects that meet or exceed the guidelines are prioritized first.

Figure 3 | Evaluation Framework Prioritization Metrics

Objective	Definition	Prioritization Metrics
Develop	Improve transit in the areas that best support it	▪ People + Job Density ▪ Network Connectivity
Connect	Connect more people to more places	▪ New People + Jobs with Access to Transit ▪ Minority + Low Income Population Served
Enhance	Make transit more convenient	▪ Reduction in Travel Time to Major Activity Centers ▪ Consistent Span and Frequency Coverage
Sustain	Provide financial and long-term sustainability	▪ Projected Passengers per Revenue Hour ▪ Projected Operating Cost per Passenger

Each metric is operationalized using a simple methodology designed to be easily replicated throughout the Wake Transit Plan implementation process. The metrics rely on data published by the U.S. Census Bureau and proposed service characteristics developed by the agency sponsoring the operating project proposal (Figure 4).

Figure 4 | Evaluation Framework Metric Operationalization

Objective	Prioritization Metric	Evaluation Methodology
Develop	People + Job Density	Calculate average population and job density of each block group within ¾ miles of target corridor
	Network Connectivity	Determine the number of existing transit services that intersect the target corridor
Connect	New People + Jobs with Access to Transit	Calculate sum of population and jobs in block groups within ¾ miles of target corridor that are not currently served by fixed-route transit
	Minority + Low Income Households Served	Calculate sum of minority and low-income households in census tracts within ¾ miles of target corridor
Enhance	Reduction in Travel Time to Major Employment Centers	Calculate increase in jobs accessible within a 30 minute transit trip of block groups within ¾ miles of target corridor during morning commute (8 a.m.)
	Consistent Span and Frequency Coverage	Calculate increase in population served by transit that meets Wake Transit span and frequency guidelines due to change in target corridor service
Sustain	Projected Passengers per Revenue Hour	Divide the projected total ridership of proposed project by the planned total revenue hours
	Projected Operating Cost per Passenger	Divide the projected total operating cost of proposed project by the projected total ridership

Note: Data for population, demographics, and employment calculations will be sourced from the most recently available American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates and/or Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES). This data will be evaluated using the smallest aggregated geography unit available, typically US Census block groups or tracts. For any measure of population or jobs within ¾ miles of a corridor, the calculation determines the geographic areas that are within ¾ miles true walking distance (determined using ESRI Network Analyst, or similar program) of the target corridor. That proportion is then applied to the population and jobs of that block group or tract. For example, if 50% of a block group or tract with 10 people is newly accessible by transit due to the project, the project makes 5 more people have access to transit.

Note: Express bus routes typically draw customers from a larger capture area than other bus transit services (Up to 5 miles versus ¾ miles), as customers are more willing to drive to access an express service. The impact of this larger capture area on prioritization will be considered during project programming.

For additional information, see Appendix A.

Project Scoring

The Evaluation Framework uses the same process to score and prioritize proposals within each operating project typology:

- Projects first receive a raw score for each prioritization metric. Depending on the metric, these raw scores are expressed as total or density of people/jobs, intersecting transit routes, transit riders, or operating cost.

- Raw scores are translated into relative scores for each typology. This relative score is based on quartiles of the raw metric, expressed as a four (highest performing) through one (lowest performing) ordinal score. These scores will be used to develop the 10-year bus investment program.

- Ordinal scores for each prioritization metric are then multiplied by the defined weightings for each project typology. Prioritization objective weightings for each project typology are based on the intended primary goals of services within that typology (explained in-depth below).
- Final scores for each operating project are determined by summing the weighted ordinal scores, with scores ranging from 16 (lowest) to 64 (highest). These final scores are relative to other projects within each project typology.

Figure 5 is an indicative scoring sheet for an example Frequent Network Routes project proposal.

Figure 5 | Example Operating Project Scoring Sheet

Objective	Weighting	Metric #1	Metric #2	Score
Develop	3x	4	4	24
Connect	2x	2	3	10
Sustain	2x	4	4	16
Enhance	1x	2	1	3
Final Score: 53				

Metric Weighting

While all projects should contribute to each prioritization objective, the proposed prioritization framework recognizes that certain project typologies exist to achieve certain elements of the Wake Transit Plan. These values and priorities were confirmed with the public as part of the public engagement effort conducted in October and November 2017. Data collected through this process consisted of online surveys, interactions and feedback at public meetings, and outreach at transit centers. Public engagement data was used to shape and refine the project prioritization weightings.

The prioritization policy thus weights prioritization objectives for each project typology based on the intended objectives (Figure 6).

- **Frequent Network Routes:** Frequent transit routes are the highest quality transit services in a transit network; these routes also consume the most resources (operating and capital). To be successful, frequent network routes must operate in areas with high density, especially in proximity to populations that typically use transit at higher rates, and connect to other high-quality transit services. The prioritization policy thus weights "Develop" as the top priority, and "Connect" as a moderate priority.
- **Intra-County and Express Routes:** Intra-County and express routes are designed to enhance mobility throughout Wake County, the Research Triangle Park, and the region by establishing transit connections where none currently exist and by providing more direct service between activity centers. For these routes to be successful, they must increase access to jobs and provide a consistent level of service between transit-supportive locations. The prioritization policy thus weights "Enhance" as the top priority, and "Develop" as a moderate priority.

- **Routes that Serve New Areas:** Routes that serve new areas provide transit access to new customers. These routes will primarily operate in areas that may struggle to support transit services, and/or require strong connections to the existing network to be successful. The prioritization policy thus weights "Connect" as the top priority, and "Develop" as a moderate priority.

- **Improvements to Service Span and Frequency:** The Wake Transit Plan includes a goal of providing a baseline level of service to Wake County residents—including specific frequency and spans as outlined in the proposed Wake Transit Service Guidelines. Achieving this baseline level of service enhances access for all residents—but is most important for residents that rely on transit for everyday mobility. The prioritization policy thus weights "Enhance" as the top priority and "Connect" as a moderate priority.

Financial stewardship and sustainability, together with operational effectiveness, is an important element of all services. Consequently, "Sustain" is a moderate prioritization objective for all project types. This weighting emphasizes the need to prioritize more financially viable projects in earlier Wake Transit funding cycles. These services will build a strong framework for future projects that are expected to be less operationally efficient, and give these routes a strong chance of being successful over the long term.

Figure 6 | Evaluation Framework Metric Weighting

Weighting	Frequent Network Routes	Intra-County and Regional Express Routes	Routes that Serve New Areas	Improvements to Service Span and Frequency
Top Priority	Develop	Enhance	Connect	Enhance
Moderate Priority	Connect	Develop	Develop	Connect
	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Lower Priority	Enhance	Connect	Enhance	Develop
Top Priority is weighted by multiplying by 3; Moderate Priority is weighted by multiplying by 2; no additional weighting is added for Lower Priority				

EVALUATING CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Wake Transit Plan will fund operating and capital projects. There are three major types of capital projects:

- Capital projects required for successful implementation of one or more operating projects

- Capital projects that will strengthen existing services (but are not directly tied to Wake Transit Plan operating investments)

- Capital investments that improve customer service and enhance the customer experience; these projects (such as fare payment technology) may not be directly tied to an operating project

To adequately prioritize and program the variety of capital projects eligible for Wake Transit funding, the evaluation framework includes different prioritization strategies for each capital

project typology (Figure 7). Investments in shelters, bus stops, and passenger amenities should follow the guidance developed in the Wake Transit Bus Plan Service Guidelines and Performance Measures.

Figure 7 | Capital Project Types and Prioritization Strategies

Project Typology	Definition	Prioritization Strategy
Operations Support Project - Single	Capital projects related to a single operations project funded through Wake Transit	Scoring of associated operating projects
Operations Support Project - Multiple	Capital projects related to multiple operations projects funded through Wake Transit	Scoring of associated operating projects
Investments Supporting Existing Services	Capital projects related to existing services not funded through Wake Transit.	Guidance set by the Wake Transit Service Guidelines and Performance Measures; and Ridership
Independent Projects	Capital projects that are not associated with a specific operations project	Consensus among Core Technical Team. Consensus discussion will consider costs, benefits and opportunities

Capital Projects Tied to a Single Operating Project

The Wake Transit Bus Plan includes capital projects required to support or improve the operations of a single bus service. These projects may range from new ADA compliant bus stop pads and/or bus stop amenities to larger facilities such as park and rides (for example). In most cases, the Wake Transit Bus Plan should program and complete capital projects before the related operating service commences.

The Wake Transit Bus Plan will program the majority of capital projects. In future years, the Project Prioritization Policy may be used to update the Wake Transit Bus Plan. In these cases, capital projects supporting a single operations project could be prioritized based on 1) the score of the associated operating project; and 2) the associated operating projects' expected implementation timeline. In this way, the Wake Transit Bus Plan will ensure the highest ranked operating projects receive the necessary capital investments and that investments will occur in time for service implementation.

Capital Projects Tied to Multiple Operating Projects

Some bus capital projects will support multiple operating projects. In some cases, these investments may be tied to a specific package of operating projects (i.e., the need for a transit super stop); in other cases, a critical mass of operating projects will lead to larger scale investments, such as more vehicles, or creating additional capacity in transit maintenance facilities (for example). Similar to capital projects that support a single operations project,

investments typically must be in place before the associated operations project can be implemented.

Capital projects that directly support multiple operating projects will be prioritized based on the combined scoring of the associated operating projects (see Figure 8 for an example prioritization). This prioritization methodology effectively ranks projects in the following order:

1. Capital projects that support many high ranked operating projects

2. Capital projects that support many moderate or low ranked operating projects OR fewer but still several high ranked operating projects

3. Capital projects that support several moderate or low ranked operating projects

This methodology ensures that the capital projects that are necessary to implement the highest priority operations projects, or represent significant barriers to making any service improvements for a significant part of Wake County, are prioritized first. Several of these projects have already been allocated funding through the first round of Wake Transit Bus Plan project budgeting and programming.

Figure 8 | Example Prioritization for Capital Projects Tied to Multiple Operating Projects

Associated Operating Project Calculation

Associated Operating Project Scores	Transit Center	Maintenance Facility	Park and Ride
Project 1 Score	62	45	62
Project 2 Score	58	42	54
Project 3 Score	45	25	
Project 4 Score	41	22	
Project 5 Score		21	
Project 6 Score		21	
Project 7 Score		20	
Total Score of Associated Projects	**206**	**196**	**116**

Capital Project Prioritization

Capital Project	Number of Associated Operating Projects	Score of Associated Operating Projects	Prioritization Rank
Transit Center	4	206	1
Maintenance Facility	7	196	2
Park and Ride	2	116	3

Capital Projects Supporting Existing Transit Services

The Wake Transit Plan allows TPAC member agencies to receive capital funding for projects supporting or strengthening services or operations, even if they are not directly tied to new

services funded by the Wake Transit Plan. These projects may include general improvements that are applied system-wide, such as updates to overall bus stop infrastructure, changes to signage or other generalized improvements (for example). The Project Prioritization Policy will not score existing transit services. Instead, the proposed prioritization policy recommends ranking these projects according to two metrics:

1) If proposed investments are consistent with Wake Transit Bus Plan Service Standards and Performance Measures and will raise the transit provider's service to the standard

2) Ridership of the associated or underlying operating project(s).

Allocations may be further adjusted through the Governance Framework to ensure investments are equally distributed across all policy goals. This prioritization scheme will ensure that investments that support ridership-oriented services are prioritized first, while also distributing funds throughout Wake County.

Independent Projects

The Wake Transit Plan provides funding for investments designed to improve transit overall and enhance the customer experience. These include investments such as fare collection improvements and better transit service information (for example). As these investments provide a range of benefits and have different triggers for implementation, they need to be considered outside of the overall prioritization process. They will be programmed and included in the MYBSIP, but may require adjusting based on the overall progress and needs of the Wake Transit Plan implementation.

Independent projects not included in the Bus Plan, or projects the TPAC wants to advance faster should be sponsored by one of the TPAC member agencies and work through the annual work planning process to recommend programming. As part of determining which projects to fund, considerations should include:

- Is there a readily available and time-sensitive funding source that can supplement Wake Transit funds to implement this project?

- Can cost savings be achieved if this project is implemented in tandem with another capital or operating project programmed through this cycle?

- Do multiple agencies support the programming of this project during this cycle?

3 Governance Framework

Overview

The Project Prioritization Policy is a decision-making framework to guide the Wake Transit Plan's annual investment program, and to ensure that the network development works towards the Wake Transit Vision.

The Governance Framework represents a subsequent step in the Evaluation Framework. Consequently, it is applied after the projects have been prioritized and ranked based on a quantitative process. The CTT will use the Governance Framework to review the overall impact of the prioritized projects and assess the combined impact of the projects on progress towards the goals and vision articulated in the Wake Transit Plan. The step provides the TPAC and CTT an opportunity to balance and adjust recommendations in the context of the overall Wake Transit Bus Plan. Despite being subjective, the process is directed and constrained by the goals articulated in the Wake Transit Plan, as well as the available financial resources.

Framework and Goals

As discussed, the Wake Transit Plan sets a series of network development goals to guide system investment. There are four over-arching goals, each of which is further articulated by a tangible objective:

- Prioritize investment for ridership-justified routes, but continue investment in coverage routes. **The Wake Transit Plan sets a system-wide goal of 70% ridership routes and 30% coverage routes.**

- **Balance investments in transit infrastructure and new services to create a network that will be robust and viable in the long term.** The Wake Transit Plan emphasizes infrastructure investments that improve the speed and reliability of transit operations.

- Ensure that the majority of Wake County residents have access to a reliable transit network. Specifically, the Wake Transit Plan identifies a **network goal of ensuring that all-day transit service is within three-quarters of a mile (roughly walking distance) from 54% of all Wake County residents and 80% of jobs in Wake County.** The existing network is within ¾ of a mile of all-day service for 41% of Wake County's population and 66% of jobs in the County (per 2016 Wake Transit Plan).

- **Focus investment on projects that will enhance customer service and the user experience.** The Wake Transit Plan prioritized accessibility, comfort, security, reliability, cleanliness, courtesy, and communication. The Project Prioritization Policy recommends

setting <u>minimum</u> investment targets for customer service and user experience projects at 20% for 2019 – 2021; 15% for 2022 – 2024; and 10% for 2025 – 2027[1].

The Governance Framework gives decision-makers an opportunity to apply a broader, qualitative perspective to projects that were ranked and prioritized based on quantitative parameters. By applying the broader perspective, the Wake Transit Governing Boards will ensure that key Wake Transit Plan goals retain focus on network priorities and goals and the annual work program is equitable, appropriate, and justifiable. As such, while the process allows for a re-balancing of the prioritized projects, it does not give the Wake Transit Governing Boards free reign to direct investments away from projects that work towards successful implementation of the Wake Transit Plan.

While the Governance Framework facilitates a qualitative check on the quantitative process, the process is still beholden to the goals and vision articulated in the Wake Transit Plan. These goals were confirmed with members of the public as part of the outreach activity conducted in the fall of 2017. The Governance Framework, therefore, identifies high-level goals designed to link the qualitative process with the Wake Transit Plan goals, so that investment recommendations are transparent, defensible, and can be clearly communicated to stakeholders and members of the public (Figure 9).

The Governance Framework acknowledges that in any given year, the annual work program may be directed to achieve one of the key goals at the expense of other goals. This may occur because of the financial implications of a large capital project, or the desire to implement a package of inter-related transit routes. The Wake Transit Plan must permit investment in periodic capital-intensive projects. Consequently, in any given year, capital-intensive projects may result in uneven investment from the perspective of one of the non-funded goals. For example, a large package of urban transit projects may advance in one single year, using most of the available resources. In a specific year, therefore, investment in other goals may lag temporarily. In these cases, the Wake Transit Governing Boards can direct a subsequent year's funding to the goals that may have fallen behind. The tension associated with balancing multiple goals is expected. As a strategy to balance these competing needs, the Governance Framework recommends balancing investment decisions on three-year funding cycles.

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[1] Investments in projects that enhance customer service and the user experience are largely expected to be capital projects. Thus, this investment target is likely to be a sub-set of the capital investment goal.

Figure 9 | Governance Framework Objectives and Funding Cycle Goals

Governance Framework Objective	Interim Goals 2019 -2021	Interim Goals 2022 - 2024	Interim Goals 2025-2027
Balance network investment to achieve a transit network comprised of 70% ridership and 30% coverage routes	Balance the investment portfolio to achieve a 50% productivity / 50% coverage service network	Balance the investment portfolio to achieve a 60% productivity / 40% coverage service network	Balance the investment portfolio to achieve a 70% productivity / 30% coverage service network
Allocate operating and capital investments to maximize and optimize implementation of Wake Transit Bus Plan	Ensure that the projects promised in the Wake Transit Plan can be delivered.	Ensure capital investments support service projects envisioned for the 2025 – 2027 funding cycle	Ensure remaining critical system-wide investments are funded
Connect Wake County Communities	All Wake County communities have access to commuter or regional bus service.	Connect highest need communities with all day bus service.	Ensure communities are connected with the greatest span of service as identified in the Wake Transit Plan.99999
Connect All Wake County Communities	Prioritize projects that will bring transit to 45% of Wake County residents and 70% of jobs	Prioritize projects that will bring transit to 50% of Wake County residents and 75% of jobs	Prioritize projects that will bring transit to 54% of Wake County residents and 80% of jobs
Prioritize Customer Service and User Experience	Assign at least 20% of investment to projects that improve customer service[2]	Assign at least 15% of investment to projects that improve customer service	Assign at least 10% of investment to projects that improve customer service

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[2] Investments in projects that enhance customer service and the user experience are largely expected to be capital projects. Thus, this investment target is likely to be a subset of the capital investment goal.

Governance Framework Application

The Governance Framework will be applied after the Evaluation Framework prioritizes and ranks an annual work program of projects. Staff participating in the Governance Framework will consider the recommended projects individually and collectively for their combined impact and progress towards the Wake Transit Plan vision and goals. Staff will adjust the annual investment schedule to maximize progress towards the goals identified in Figure 9. Staff is also directed to consider the current year's projects together with the slate of projects advanced within the current funding cycle to ensure the investment program is in line with expectations.

This Governance Framework is primarily a qualitative process. However, it will rely on data and benchmarks to guide decision-making. These benchmarks directly relate to the Wake Transit Plan and include annual data points such as the current breakdown of:

- Communities connected by Wake Transit all day transit network, inclusive of commuter or regional bus service
- Communities directly connected by all day transit service
- Ridership- and coverage-based transit routes
- Wake County residents within ¾ mile of all-day transit services
- Wake County jobs within ¾ mile of all-day transit services
- Funding allocated to projects that strengthen the customer service and user experience

These data points will be measured annually prior to the annual work plan and annual application of the prioritization process and will be used as guideposts in the Governance Framework. In nearly every case, data will be available from the Service Guidelines and Performance Measures review process.

The goal of the Governance Framework is to ensure annual investment decisions advance the overall goals of the Wake Transit Plan. As such, the process will be the second and final step in recommending the annual Wake Transit work program.

Appendix A   Prioritization Metric Addendum

Objective	Prioritization Metric	Evaluation Methodology	Data Source
Develop	People + Job Density	Calculate average population and job density of each block group within ¾ miles of target corridor	▪ Recent 5-year ACS and LEHD data (block group)
	Network Connectivity	Determine the number of existing transit services that intersect the target corridor	▪ Existing transit route alignment shapefiles
Connect	New People + Jobs with Access to Transit	Calculate sum of population and jobs in block groups within ¾ miles of target corridor that are not currently served by fixed-route transit	▪ Recent 5-year ACS and LEHD data (block group) ▪ Existing transit route alignment shapefiles
	Minority + Low Income Population Served	Calculate sum of minority and low-income households in census tracts within ¾ miles of target corridor	▪ Recent 5-year ACS data (tract)
Enhance	Reduction in Travel Time to Major Employment Centers	Calculate increase in jobs accessible within a 45 minutes transit trip of census block groups within ¾ miles of target corridor during morning commute (8:00 am)	▪ Recent LEHD data (block group) ▪ Existing transit route alignment shapefiles
	Consistent Span and Frequency Coverage	Calculate increase in population served by transit that meets Wake Transit span and frequency guidelines due to change in target corridor service	▪ Recent 5-year ACS data (block group) ▪ Existing transit route span and frequency
Sustain	Projected Passengers per Revenue Hour	Divide the projected total ridership of proposed project by the planned total revenue hours	▪ Ridership and service characteristics projections developed through Bus Plan
	Projected Operating Cost per Passenger	Divide the projected total operating cost of proposed project by the projected total ridership	▪ Ridership and service characteristics projections developed through Bus Plan

Definitions

▪ "Target Corridor": Alignment of the proposed operating project under evaluation.

▪ All ridership estimates will be developed using a standardized template developed through the Bus Plan

- Data for population, demographics, and employment calculations will be sourced from the most recently available American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates and/or Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES). This data will be evaluated using the smallest aggregated geography unit available, typically US Census block groups or tracts.
- For any measure of population or jobs within ¾ miles of a corridor, the calculation determines the geographic areas that are within ¾ miles true walking distance (determined using ESRI Network Analyst, or similar program) of the target corridor. That proportion is then applied to the population and jobs of that block group or tract. For example, if 50% of a block group or tract with 10 people is newly accessible by transit due to the project, the project makes 5 more people have access to transit.
- Express bus routes typically draw customers from a larger capture area than other bus transit services (Up to 5 miles versus ¾ miles), as customers are more willing to drive to access an express service. The impact of this larger capture area on prioritization will be considered during project programming.