

# STAFF REPORT

## Transportation Plan Amendments

December 9, 2025 Town Council Meeting



### Purpose of the Apex Transportation Plan

The Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan Map, Transit Plan Map, and Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan Map collectively represent a network of current and future facilities that provide guidance on what is likely to be suitable for long term growth, connectivity, recreation, and multimodal travel. The Transportation Plan does not provide a schedule for implementation, nor does it set aside funding for improvements. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider proposed amendments to the Transit Plan Map in order to make a decision.

### Overview of Proposed Amendments

A map of the proposed amendments to the Transit Plan Map is displayed in Figure 1.

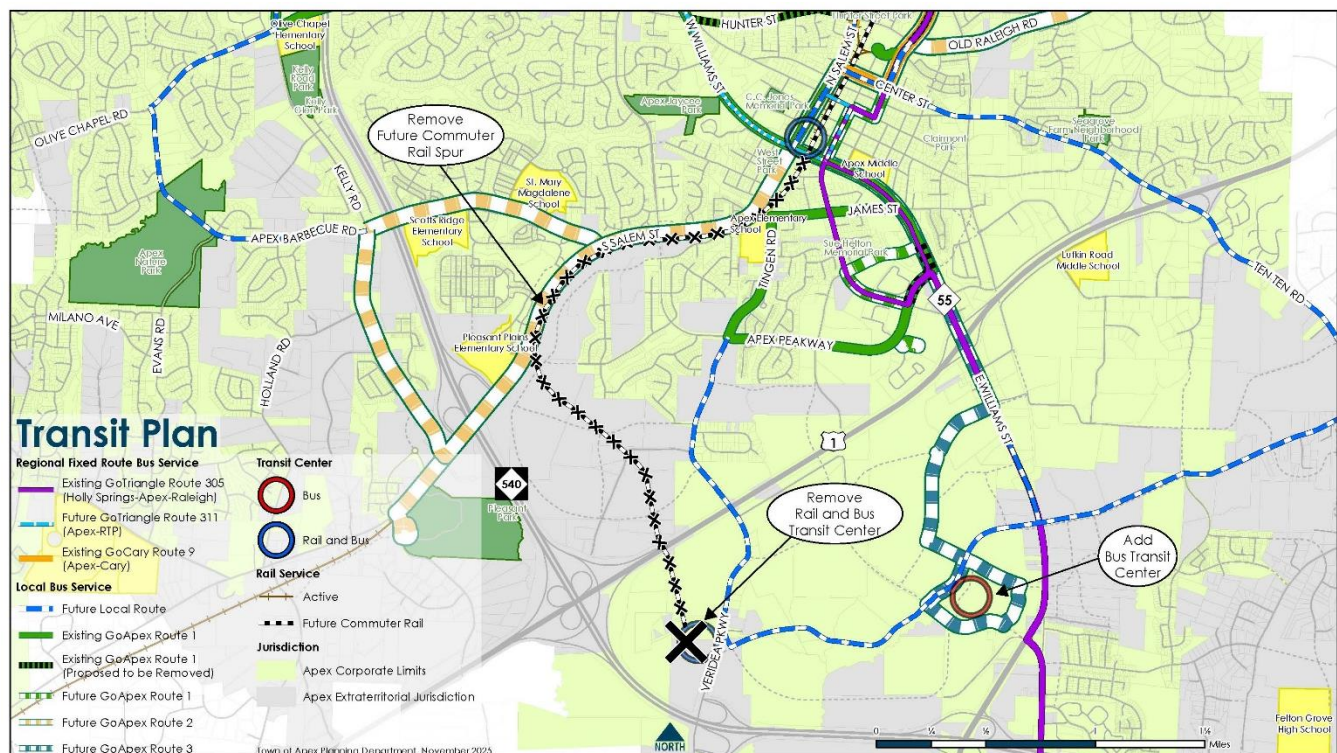


Figure 1. Proposed amendments to the Transit Plan Map

### Explanation of Proposed Amendments

The amendments are associated with the proposed rezoning, 25CZ18 Veridea SD-CZ amendment, but are requested by staff.

The commitments for Veridea established with zoning case 09CZ07 include a condition to reserve land for a "Regional Public Transit System", which is to include a fixed guideway or comparable transit technology. In summary, the reservation of land is to prohibit permanent development within the reserve area until 2035, at which time, if there are no plans that financially commit implementation of a regional rail plan that includes Veridea, the reservation is null and void. Staff are requesting the removal of the rail spur and associated Rail and Bus Transit Center west of Veridea Parkway from the Transit Plan Map. The staff report for the rezoning amendment will explain proposed modifications to the rezoning commitments, including removal of the condition associated with rail right of way reservations.

# STAFF REPORT

## Transportation Plan Amendments

December 9, 2025 Town Council Meeting



Funding the rail spur to Veridea by 2035 is not anticipated in regional plans. A Strategic Regional Rail Infrastructure Investment Study (Rail Investment Study) was completed by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization (TWTPO) over 2024 and into 2025. According to the study scope, “The goals of this study are to survey the universe of committed and proposed rail projects within the two MPOs, to assess which of these projects will do the most to increase the amount of passenger rail service operating in the Triangle, to align those projects in a way that maximizes their eligibility for BIL [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law] and other funding opportunities, and to develop an ongoing passenger rail development strategy for the region that can be updated over time.”<sup>i</sup> While the rail spur to Veridea was identified as a proposed project, it ultimately was not included in the study as it was determined it is not a viable candidate for federal funding. The intent of the study is to inform alignment of available regional funding to support rail projects that are candidates for federal funds. The 2035 Wake Transit Plan pivots from supporting commuter rail projects and instead, “The Plan will invest in regional service by implementing and expanding the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network and by setting aside a ‘rail-ready’ fund to support state and federal regional rail projects.”<sup>ii</sup> While the connection to Apex via the S-Line that has been supported by the North Carolina Department of Transportation is identified in the proposed regional network in the 2035 Wake Transit Plan, a spur to Veridea is not.

While not included in the referenced Regional Rail Investment study or Wake Transit Plan, by request, CAMPO prepared a planning-level estimate for a passenger rail spur from downtown Apex to Veridea. That estimate is summarized in Table 1. It should be noted that this estimate does not include site-specific factors such as topography and environmental features, that would likely increase costs. The estimated planning-level cost of the spur is approximately \$63 million. Without federal funding support, it is extremely unlikely that funding would be available for this spur by the 2035 deadline established in the zoning conditions, or within any reasonably-proximate timeframe.

*Table 1. Planning-level estimate for a passenger rail spur to Veridea*

Phase	Cost	Project Assumptions	Cost Assumptions
<b>Right-of-Way (ROW)</b>	\$ 28,500,460	Would require near to total (80-100%) ROW needs for new line in Wake County (Rural) for 4 miles of 100' ROW.	4mi of 100' ROW or 2,112,000 sq ft (~48acres) of rural Wake County. Avg Land Value by acre in Wake County is \$424,114; NCDOT recommends a modifier of 1.4 for Wake County ROW.
<b>Construction: Line</b>	\$ 12,777,600	4 Miles of single-track passenger/freight rail	4mi of new track at \$1,996,500 per mile, includes recommended 35% contingency per NCDOT recommendations.
<b>Construction: Bridge</b>	\$ 15,000,000	250' bridge deck at 25' width	\$175 per deck sq ft and additional steel supports and grading/earthwork needs.
<b>Construction: Station</b>	\$ 6,500,000	Utilized Apex Downtown Mobility Hub project for reference (Apex TOD Study)	Cost are assumed similar to mobility hub project submitted in SPOT 8.
<b>Total</b>	\$ 62,778,060		

Reserving land for a future rail spur would significantly impact land development plans within both Veridea and between South Salem Street and Old US 1 Highway; and, if ultimately constructed, an additional rail corridor could create a substantial barrier in these areas. Rail comes with some negatives; affecting crossings for roadways

## STAFF REPORT

### Transportation Plan Amendments

December 9, 2025 Town Council Meeting



and the bicycle and pedestrian network, and increasing noise and vibration. This idea would introduce these issues to a new area not currently served by any type of rail. Finally, when originally added to the Town's Transit Plan and included in the zoning commitments for Veridea, light rail was contemplated for the Triangle region. Light rail is no longer a viable option and any future passenger rail in our area is likely to have much less frequent service than originally envisioned.

Given the difficulties of bringing a rail spur from the existing S-Line corridor to the Veridea area, staff recommend instead focusing on bus service; with possible contemplation of Bus Rapid Transit as part of the Peak Plan 2055 comprehensive planning process. Both frequent bus service and Bus Rapid Transit can be implemented at a much lower cost than rail; and would likely provide much more frequent service to this area. A new bus route to Veridea was identified in the Apex Transit Prioritization Study as proposed GoApex Route 3. In addition, GoTriangle Route 305 travels along the NC 55 corridor. To better serve these routes, and to support the possible future opportunity for Bus Rapid Transit; staff recommend adding a Bus Transit Center within Veridea to the Transit Plan Map. Commitments related to reserving land area for and constructing the Bus Transit Center are included in the 25CZ18 Veridea SD-CZ amendment and will be described in that staff report.

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Planning Department staff recommend approval of the proposed amendments. The amendments were reviewed by staff in Transportation and Infrastructure Development; Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources; Police; Fire; and Water Resources, and there were no concerns. In addition, GoTriangle staff indicated they would support the location of the proposed Bus Transit Center.

#### **Planning Board Recommendation:**

The Planning Board will consider these amendments at their December 8, 2025 meeting. Their recommendation will be reported during the staff presentation.

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<sup>i</sup> NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization. Strategic Regional Rail Infrastructure Investment Study. Available: <https://www.campo-nc.us/programs-studies/rail>.

<sup>ii</sup> NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. 2035 Wake Transit Plan. August 2025. Available: <https://publicinput.com/Customer/File/Full/2d4b3a37-f975-4f98-ac0d-dfe755f81697>