



Wake Transit Plan Update

Apex Town Council – February 11, 2025

Agenda

- 1 State of the Plan
- 2 Market Analysis
- 3 Plan Development Public Engagement – Phase 2
- 4 Next Steps



State of the Plan



1

Wake Transit Plan

- **Wake Transit Plan is a revenue stream for public transportation investment**
 - Voters approved funding package in 2016
 - Wake Transit Plan started funding new transit service in August 2017
 - More service on weekends, in the evenings, and more frequent bus routes.
- **Wake Transit Plan is updated every four years**
 - Community and stakeholder preferences and priorities
 - Financial and technical data about performance and outcomes



Wake Transit Plan

Four Big Moves



Connect Regionally

- Commuter Rail
- Work with Existing and Planned Train Service
- More Regional Bus Service



Connect all Wake County Communities

- More Connections to Raleigh, Cary, and RTP
- More Town to Town Bus Service
- Funding to Towns



Create Frequent, Reliable, Urban Mobility

- Bus Only Lanes
- More Night and Weekend Service
- More Frequent Bus Service



Enhance Access to Transit

- Improve Amenities at Bus Stops
- Make Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Bike Lanes
- Expand On-Demand Transit Program

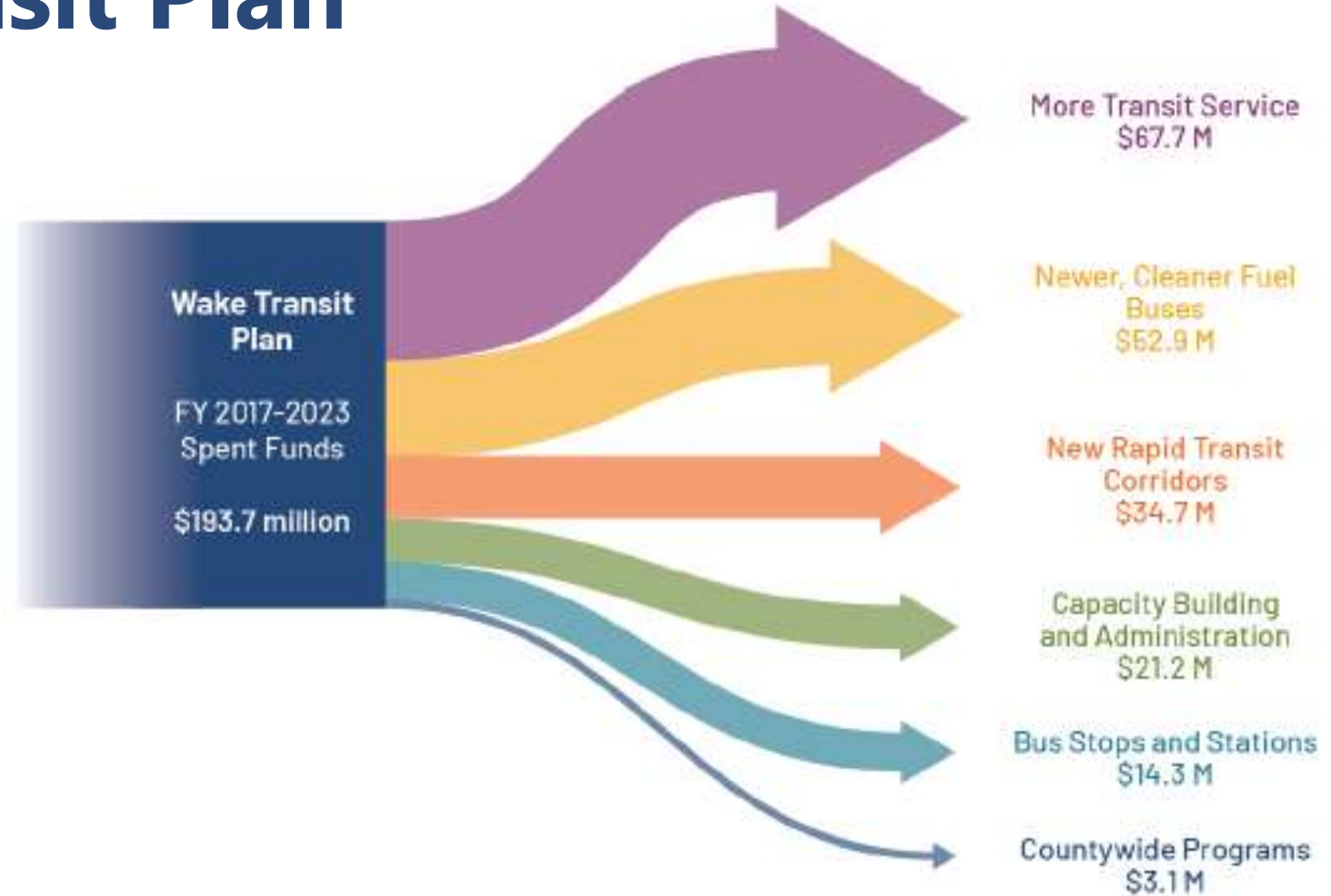
State of the Plan

- Wake Transit Plan revenues have been consistently strong
 - Raised nearly \$750 million to date (2017 – 2023)
- The Wake Transit Plan is expected to raise another \$700 million to \$1 billion over next ten years (2024 – 2035)
- **What are your transit priorities for the next ten years?**



Wake Transit Plan

**\$200 million
invested since
2017.**

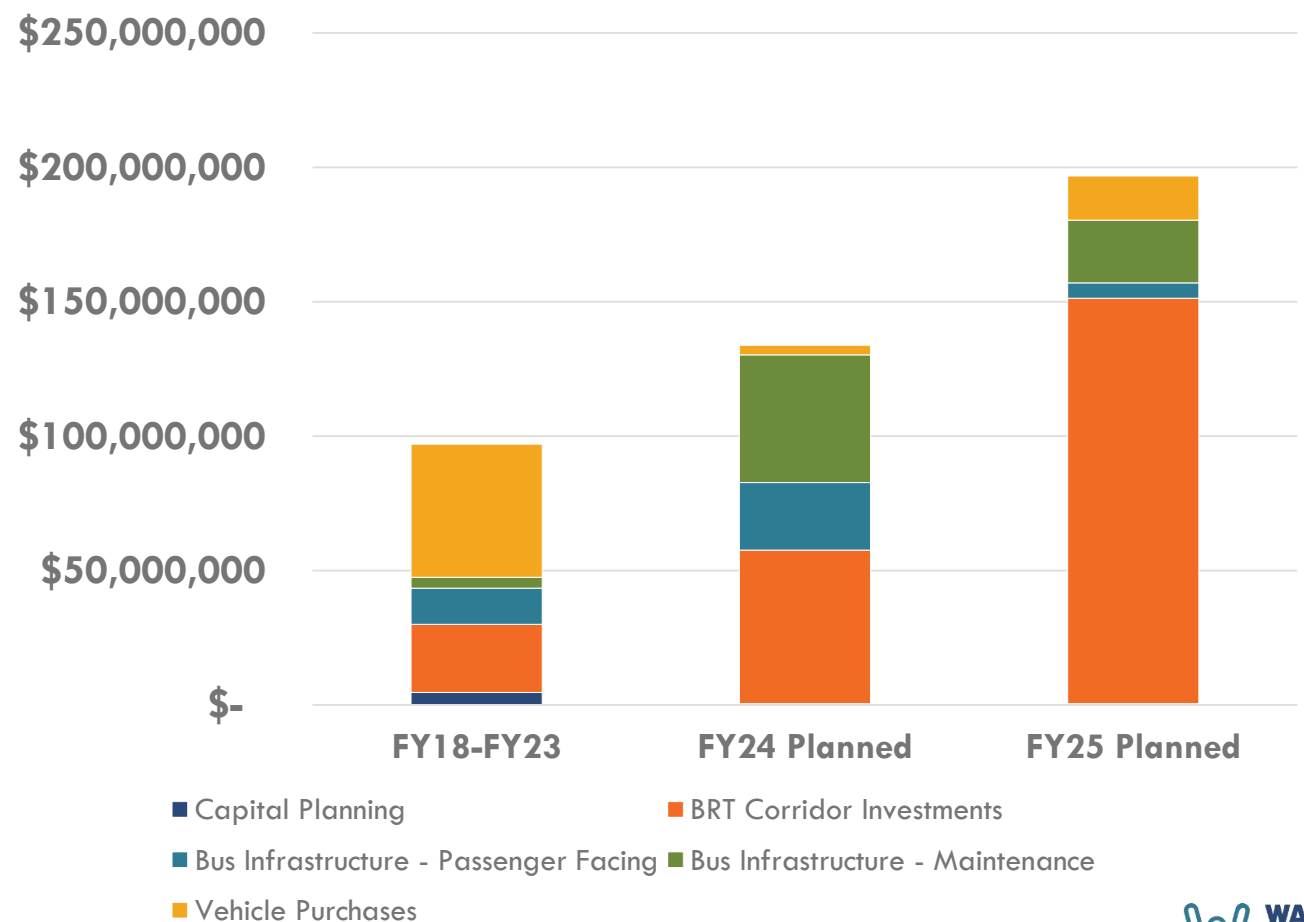


Wake Transit Plan

\$350 million will be spent in next few years.

Major projects include:

- New Bern BRT
- Design Southern BRT
- Design Western BRT
- GoRaleigh/GoWake Access ADA Maintenance Facility and Call Center
- Cary Multimodal Center
- RUS Bus



Market Analysis



2

Key Findings: Community Profiles

Key findings from the Community Profile analysis include:

1. **Suburban Towns in Wake County are growing at an unprecedented rate**, with many communities experiencing population growth rates of 30% to 50% since the Wake Transit Plan was approved in 2016. In many cases, growth is on top of a small baseline population, but the pace of growth suggests communities are changing.
2. **Towns in Wake County are actively planning for growth** with most communities recently completing comprehensive transportation plans, strategic plans and/or transit plans. In almost all cases, these plans are calling for investments in multi-modal infrastructure, including sidewalks and shared use paths.
3. **All but two Wake County communities have participated in the Community Funding Area program.** Towns are using grants to plan, design and operate local transit services as well as investments like sidewalks and bus stop improvements.
4. Data on recent and planned development shows that **most new projects are single use development largely on the outskirts of downtown centers and often near highways.** Most developments in Wake County towns do not follow best practices for creating walkable, compact communities. Suburban style master planned developments are difficult to serve with transit.
5. **Development patterns suggest on-demand microtransit style service is likely the most effective solution for local mobility.** On-demand microtransit services work in low density, suburban style development by picking up and dropping off riders at or close to their destination. The services can attract riders by providing a viable option, but the cost of microtransit on a per trip basis is high, with experience showing trips can cost between \$30 and \$50 per ride.
 - While microtransit is an effective strategy in the short term, if communities continue to add population by building low density residential development the cost to maintain microtransit service levels may become prohibitive. Providing on-demand service to a larger, more distributed population will require increasingly levels of investment or slower response times/reduced levels of service.
6. **Potential for sub-regional solutions.** Wake County is a geographically large region covering 857 square miles. Unique characteristics within Wake Region suggest potential for different solutions in different parts of the County:
 - **Apex is a “sub-regional hubs” in southwest Wake County.** There are nearly 100,000 in Apex and Holly Springs, plus another 35,000 in Fuquay-Varina. Apex already functions as an economic activity center with regional transportation access. Creating a mini-transit hub in Apex that is connected to neighboring towns with fast, frequent services to regional destinations is a potential future model.
 - **Northwest Wake County also has nearly 100,000 people** but is more rural, spread out over a larger area and further from Raleigh and regional employment centers. Emerging solutions in this part of Wake County include on-demand service models that connect to Wake Forest as the sub-regional hub.
 - **Garner** has more in common with the City of Raleigh than other parts of Wake County and the planned BRT stations will change transit access. Local transit solutions may focus on first mile/last mile connections and more transit-oriented style development as compared with other parts of Wake County.

Apex: Overview

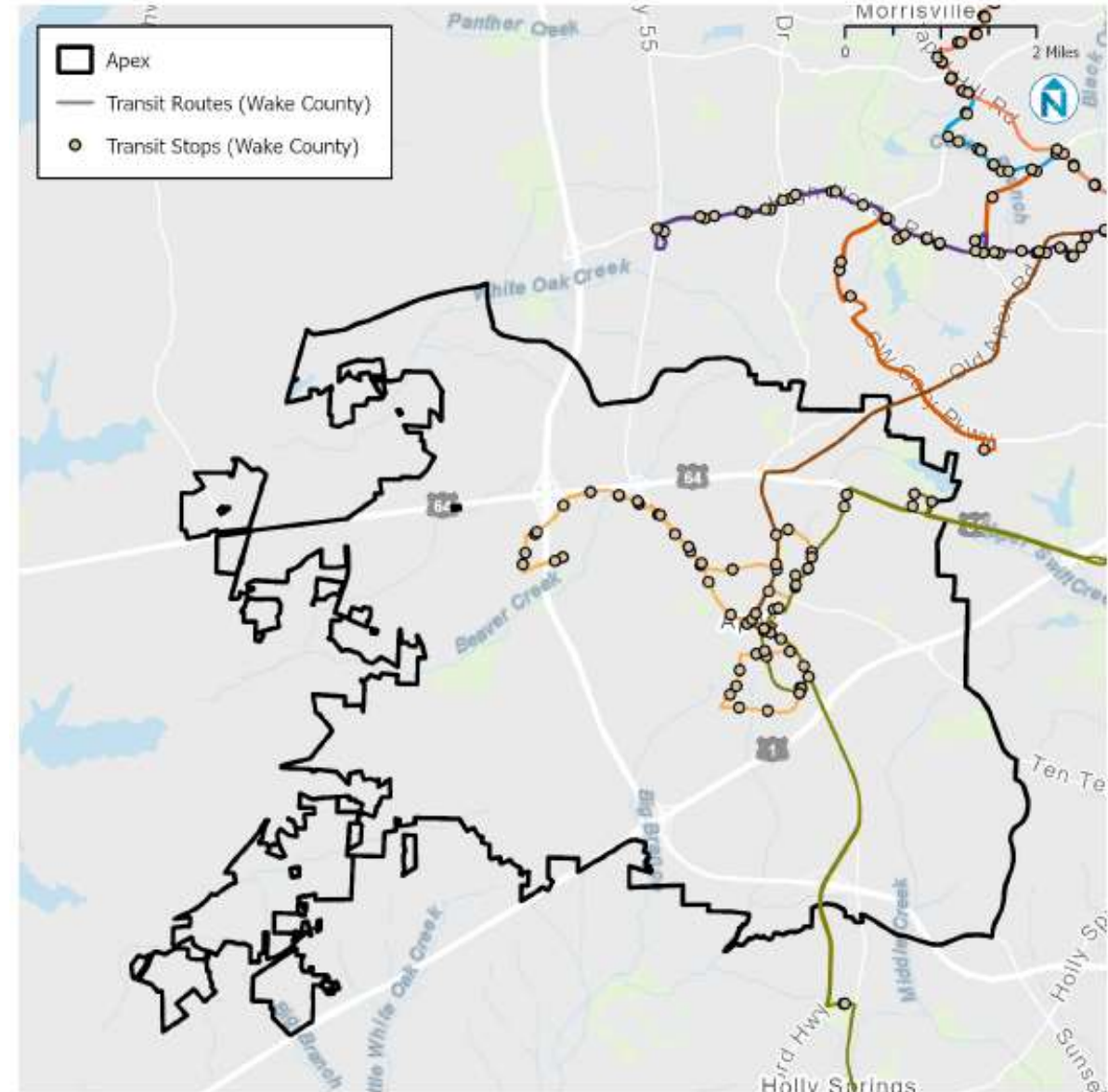
The Town of Apex is one of the largest towns in Wake County with a population of nearly 100,000 and it is also one of the fast-growing communities, increasing its population by 49% between 2016 and 2022. This compares with employment, which grew by 18% over the same period. Apex's larger population contributes to a denser population as compared with Wake County overall. In terms of demographic characteristics, Apex is wealthier, less diverse and younger as compared with the Wake County population overall.

Apex has three regional bus routes although one route (Route 311) was suspended during COVID and has not yet been re-instated.

- Apex-Cary Express (ACX) that connects Apex and Cary with peak period service on weekdays.
- Route 305: Connects Apex with North Carolina State University and Raleigh with hourly service during peak periods on weekdays. A handful of morning and evening trips extend to Holly Springs.
- Route 311: Apex-RTC that provides peak-only connections between Apex and Research Triangle Park. This service was suspended in 2020 and is planned to start again in FY27.

A fourth route – GoApex Route 1 – provides local circulation within the Town of Apex. It operates hourly on weekdays and Saturdays from 6 AM to 10 AM and is fare free.

Apex is actively pursuing several planning efforts and has been one of the largest participants in the Community Funding Area program. Funded projects include a Transit Prioritization Study, bus stop improvements, GoApex Route 1 and sidewalk improvements.



Apex: Key Statistics



Population Density
(Persons/Acre): 2.65

Wake County: 2.06



Employment Density (Jobs/Acre):
0.71

Wake County: 1.19



Zero Vehicle Households:
1.9%

Wake County: 4.0%

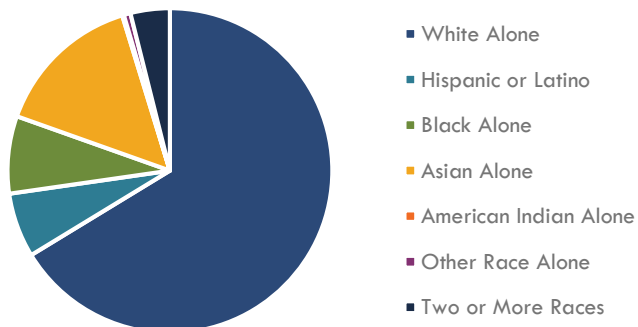


Median Household Income:
\$129,688

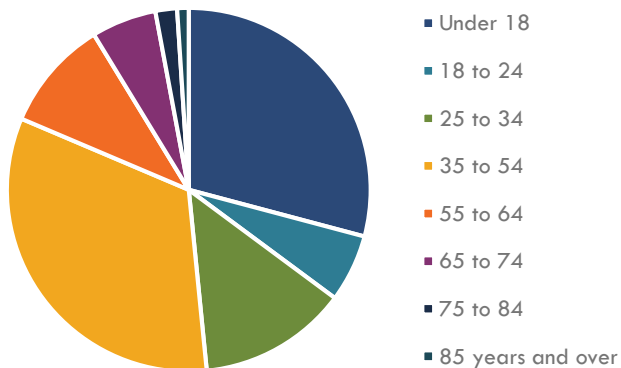
Wake County: \$96,806



Race and Ethnicity

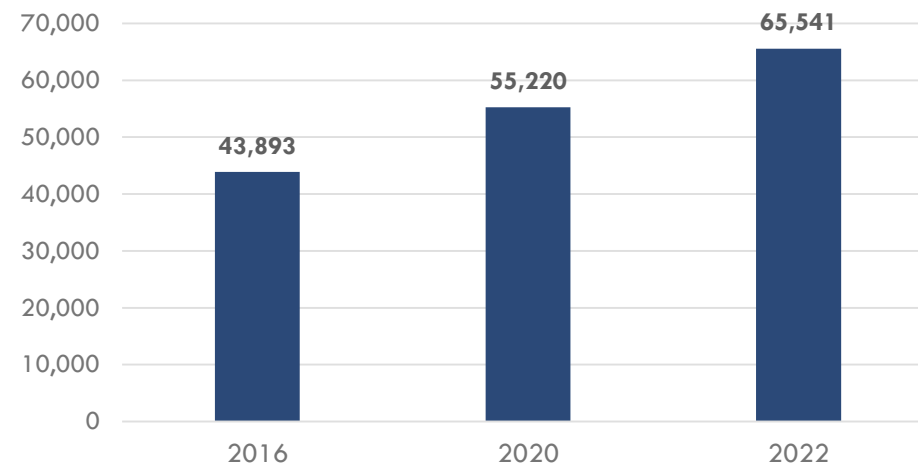


Age Groups



Population Growth, 2016 to 2022: **49%**

Wake County: 13%



Employment Growth, 2016 to 2021: **18%**

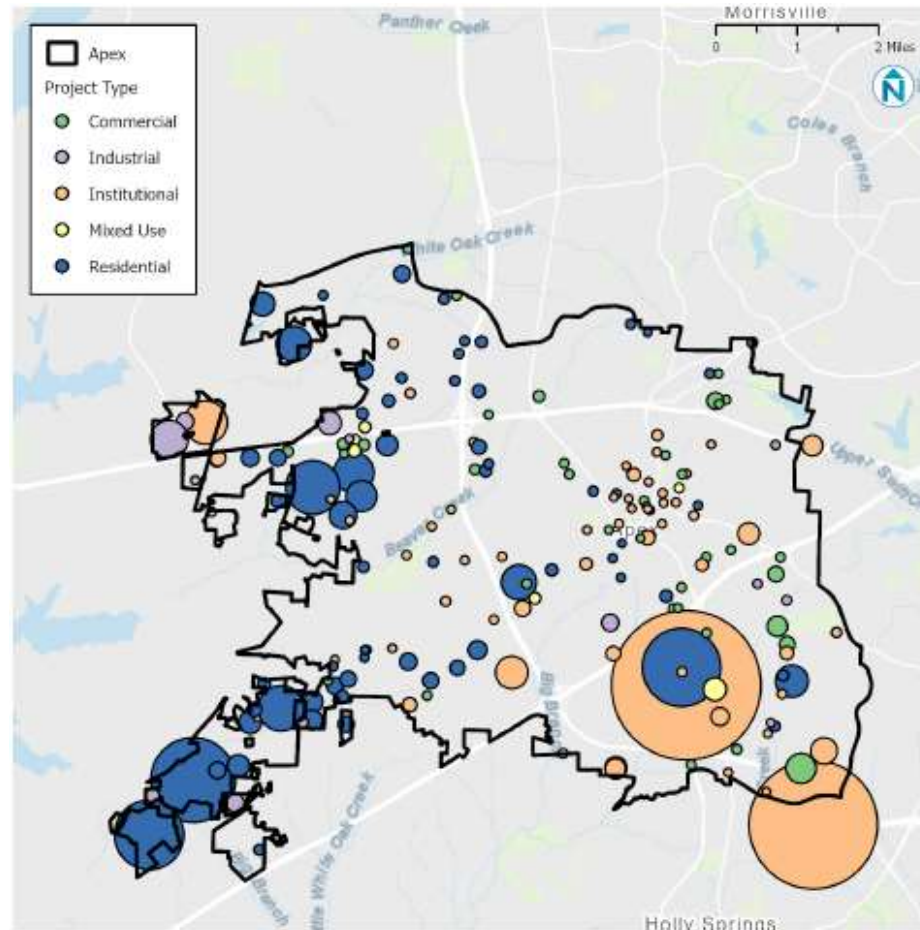
Wake County: 8%



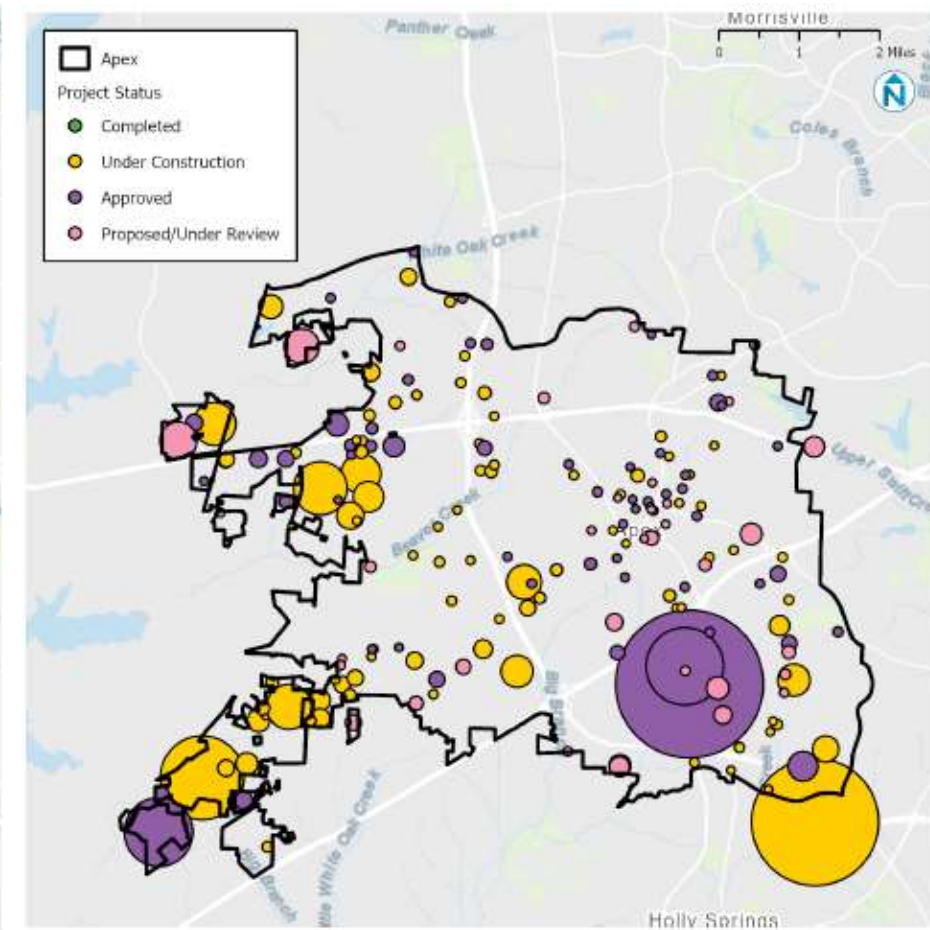
Apex: Development

Data collected in 2024 shows Apex has a multitude of projects in various stages of development. Most projects are residential, although a handful of large institutional projects are under construction or recently completed. Most new projects are not located within walking distance of existing transit services, including GoApex Route 1. This suggests that future connections will be needed.

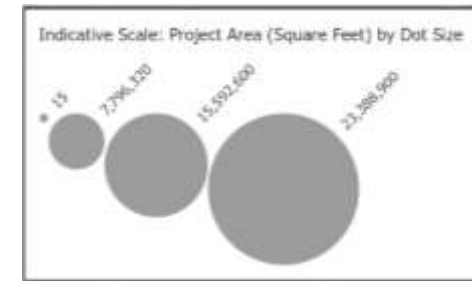
Apex's future rail station, combined with the Town's strategic location south and west of Raleigh mean it has potential to function as a regional transit hub for both Apex residents but also people traveling to/from Cary, Holly Springs and Fuquay Varina. Identifying a location and a facility for a future hub is a potential project.



Development by Type and Size



Development by Status and Size



Phase 2 Engagement



3

Engagement Goals

- 1. Share information on planned WTP rail investments between FY26 – FY35**
 - Lots of rail investment planned, but near term will not include commuter rail
 - Feasibility studies show commuter rail is too expensive and takes too long to implement
 - Instead, WTP will leverage investments in regional rail to strengthen local connections.
 - Region may revisit CRT in future.
 - 2. Discuss concept of using BRT to connect Raleigh and Durham**
 - 3. Ask what projects people want to see completed first**
 - Serve more people (invest in service frequency)
 - Serve more places (invest in regional connections and infrastructure)
 - 4. Share on-going Wake Transit Plan projects and investments**
- **Feedback will shape direction for Wake Transit Plan 10-year Investment Strategy**



Engagement Strategy



What	Online	In person	Focus Groups	Presentations
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media and email distribution lists • Banners on trip planning apps • Posters, flyers, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 20 “pop-ups” throughout Wake County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six Focus Groups with target audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to schedule and support
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short, simple questions/feedback form • Click to learn more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick, focused exercise • Boards • FAQs with more information (QR codes to learn more) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used Boards to frame conversation • Dive into details and understand concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation materials • Hand-outs/boards as relevant

Engagement Timeline

We are here!



**Finalize/Update
Materials**

**Engagement
Launch**

Holiday Break

Ongoing Activities

**October –
November**

- Finalize materials
- Train the Trainer
- Schedule FG and Pop-ups

December 2 - 20

- Website
- Social media
- Focus groups
- Six "Core" pop-up locations

**December 23 –
January 3**

- Website stays active
- No active messaging or outreach

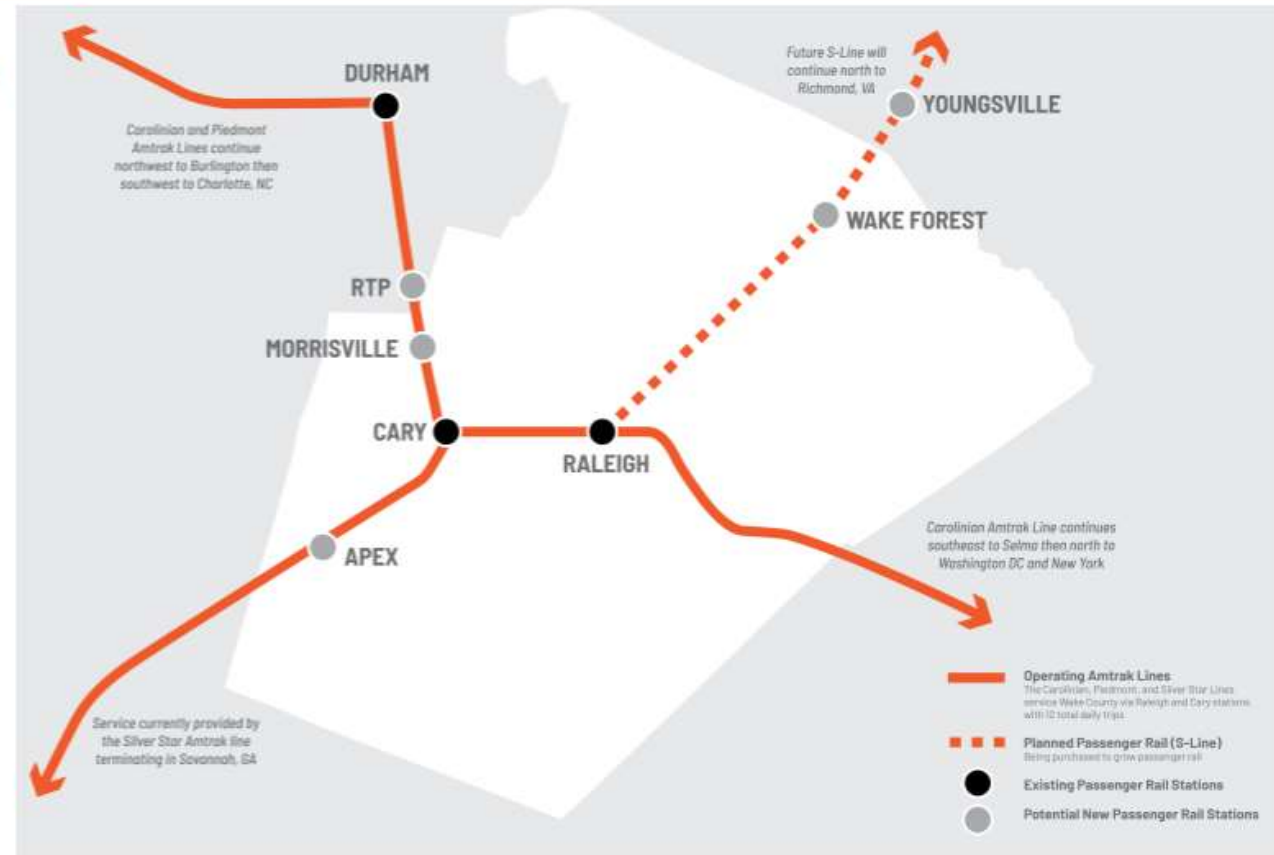
**January 6 –
January 31**

- Social media
- More pop-ups
- Presentations
- Email distribution
- Adjustments / corrections as needed

You told us you would like rail service in Wake County.

Here's what's happening.

- ▶ Amtrak is and will continue to operate passenger rail service in Wake County. These trains provide regional connections with stops in Durham, Cary, and Raleigh.
- ▶ There are a lot of rail projects planned in Wake County, including plans to purchase and/or upgrade tracks between:
 - Raleigh and Wake Forest.
 - Raleigh, Cary and RTP.
 - Raleigh and Apex.
- ▶ The Wake Transit Plan could help improve the existing services or help new projects happen sooner by:
 - Providing funding for additional trains in Wake County.
 - Improving train infrastructure (tracks, stations, etc.).



What do you think? Is this a good way of building rail service in Wake County?



You told us you want fast, reliable connections between Raleigh and Durham.

Here's what we can do.

- The region could build Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along I-40 to provide fast, frequent, reliable connections between Raleigh and Durham. This service could include:
 - Buses every 15 minutes all day, every day.
 - Widening and improving highway shoulders so buses can travel faster for the full way between Raleigh and Durham.
 - Making it easier and faster for buses to get on and off I-40.
 - Building new transfer points, including an Airport transit hub close to the on/off ramp.



	Time to Get Started	Estimated Travel Time (One-way peak period Raleigh to Durham)	Weekday Service	Weekend Service
Express Bus Service	Expansion starts in 2026 and 2027	60-70 minutes	15 minutes peak 30 minutes evenings	Every 15 minutes
BRT on I-40	5-10 years	50-60 minutes	30 minutes daytime 60 minutes evening	Every 20 minutes

How often do you travel between Raleigh and Durham?

Every day

Once a week or so

Every month or so

Rarely or Never

Do you think BRT will be a good way to connect Raleigh and Durham?



Here's what we can do.

Different Ways of Building a Transit Network

What should we do **first**?

OPTION 1

Expand bus service in Cary and Raleigh, so buses come more often and are available for longer hours and more days.

*This option would serve more **people**.*



OPTION 2

Build mobility hubs in Wake County Towns and create new (or expand existing) connections to Cary, Raleigh, and other regional destinations.

*This option would serve more **places**.*



Here's what we are doing.

Current and planned projects that are funded by the Wake Transit Plan



Connecting The Region

- Investment in existing and planned rail services
- Express bus service from Raleigh to RDU, RTP, Durham and Chapel Hill
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) connecting to Durham and Johnston Counties
 - » Cary to RTP
 - » Garner to Clayton



Connecting All Wake County Communities

- Town-to-Town direct connections
- Projects that support seniors and people with disabilities
- On-demand and door-to-door service in Wake County's small towns
- More transit service to/from Wake County towns
- Funding for local projects provided by Community Funding Area program



Create Frequent, Reliable, Urban Mobility

- More buses that come more often
- Longer hours each day and more weekend bus service
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes serving
 - » Raleigh
 - » Garner
 - » Cary



Enhance Access to Transit

- Better technology and new apps that make it easier to plan and use transit.
- Safe and comfortable bus stops
- Sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes to bus stops
- Improving bus stops so they are accessible for everyone

Bus Rapid Transit

- Frequent, reliable, convenient transit
- Key elements of service:
 - Dedicated lanes, stations, traffic signal priority, frequency, off-board fare collection, branding, etc.
- Provides regional and local connections
- Currently building 4 corridors: New Bern, Southern, Western, Northern



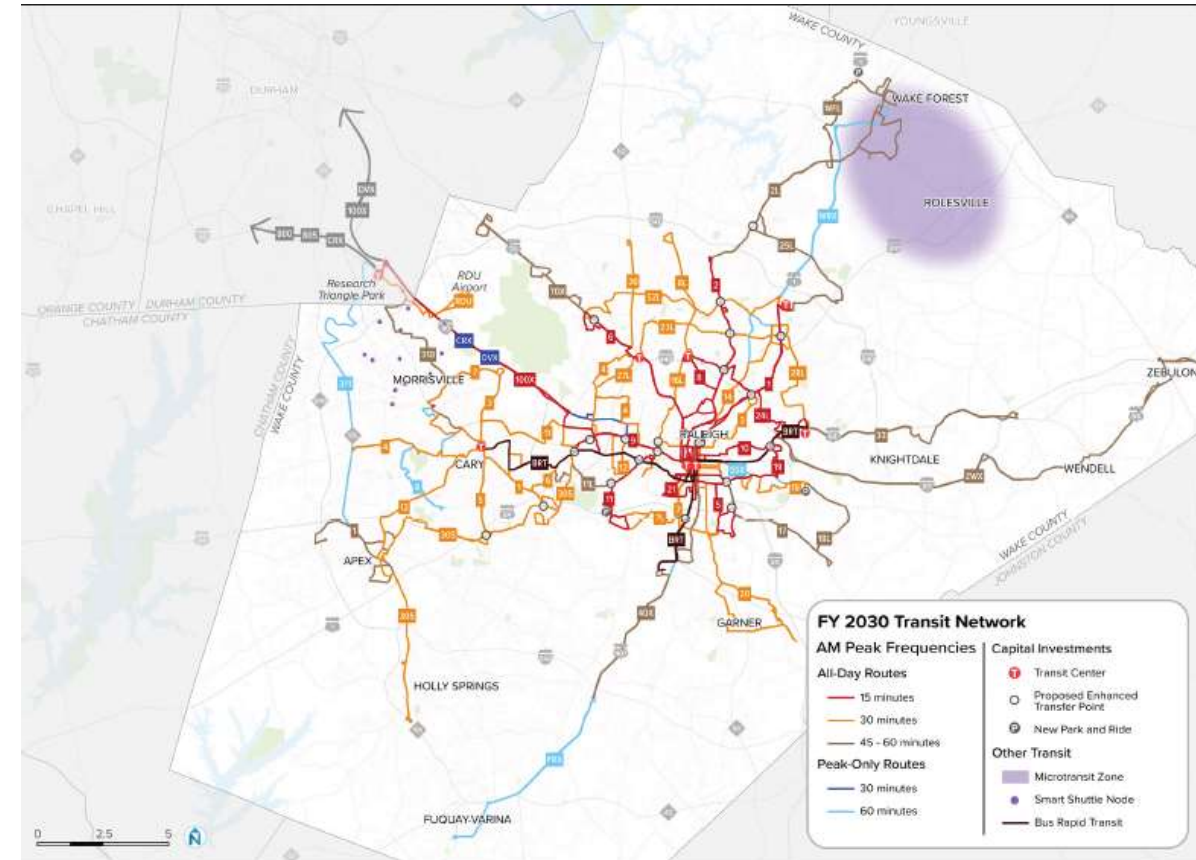
Source: City of Raleigh, NC

Wake Transit Plan Funded BRT Network



Invest in Service Frequency and Span

- **Wake Transit Plan will make buses more convenient by operating service more often and for longer hours/more days**
 - Wake Transit Plan defines frequent service as 15-minutes or better and span service runs at least 17 hours a day
 - By 2030, Wake will have
 - 14 frequent bus routes
 - 122 miles of frequent service



Source: Wake Bus Plan

Community Infrastructure: Mobility Hubs

- **Community transportation hubs**
 - People can find and transfer to different types of transportation
 - Car share
 - Bike Share
 - Bus
 - Uber/Lyft/Taxi
 - Local services can connect with regional services
 - Services available will vary by location
- Raleigh Union Station Bus Facility is under construction, and the Triangle Mobility Hub are already funded and planned to open by 2030



Commuter and Passenger Rail

• Commuter Rail

- Connects suburban communities to employment centers
- Operated by transit agencies, typically weekdays and sometimes on weekends
- Identified in the original Wake Transit Plan. Feasibility studies show it is too expensive and will take too long to implement

• Inter-city Passenger Rail

- Amtrak operates most passenger rail in US
- Fewer trips throughout the day (outside of major cities)
- Wake Transit Plan could increase train frequency between key points across the region



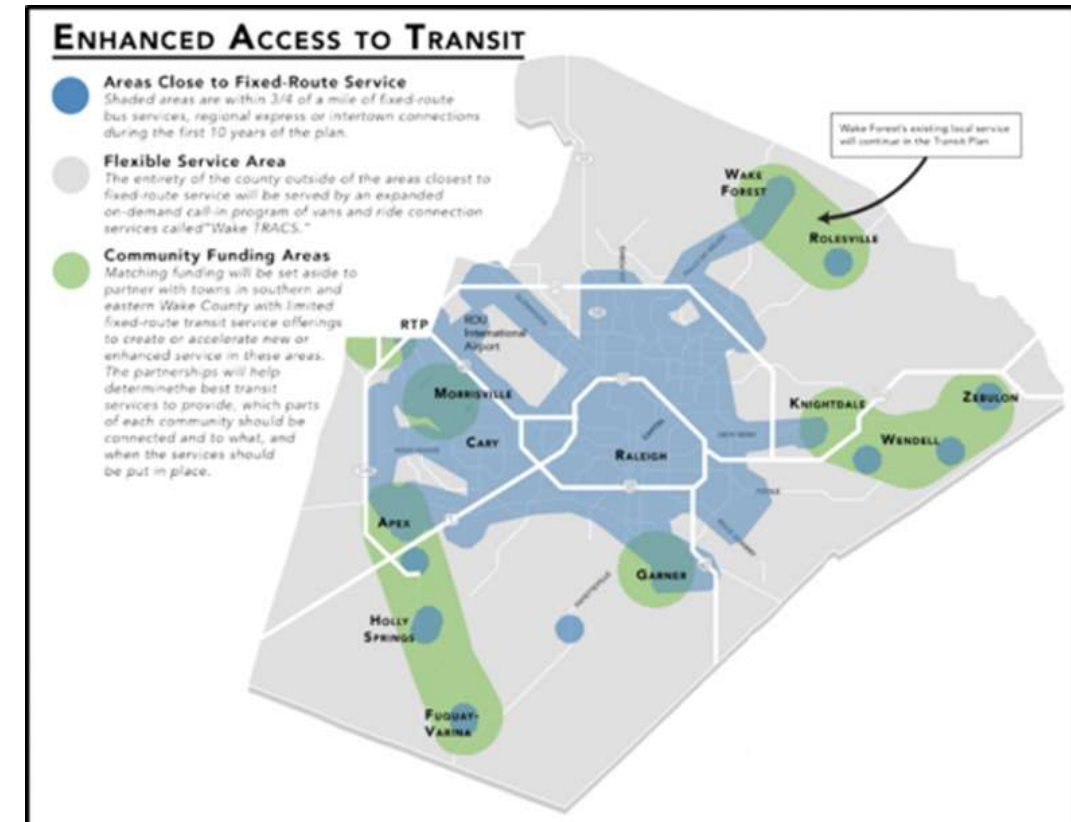
Improving infrastructure and access

- **Improved infrastructure and access impacts the decision to use transit**
- **Investing in Infrastructure**
 - Purchased and retrofitted 180 buses
 - Improved bus stops and transit centers
 - Purchased clean fuel vehicles
 - Leveraged \$30M in Wake Transit funds to get over \$133M in federal funds
- **Safe Access to Transit**
 - Crosswalks
 - ADA accessibility
 - Continuous connecting sidewalks



Investing in Communities

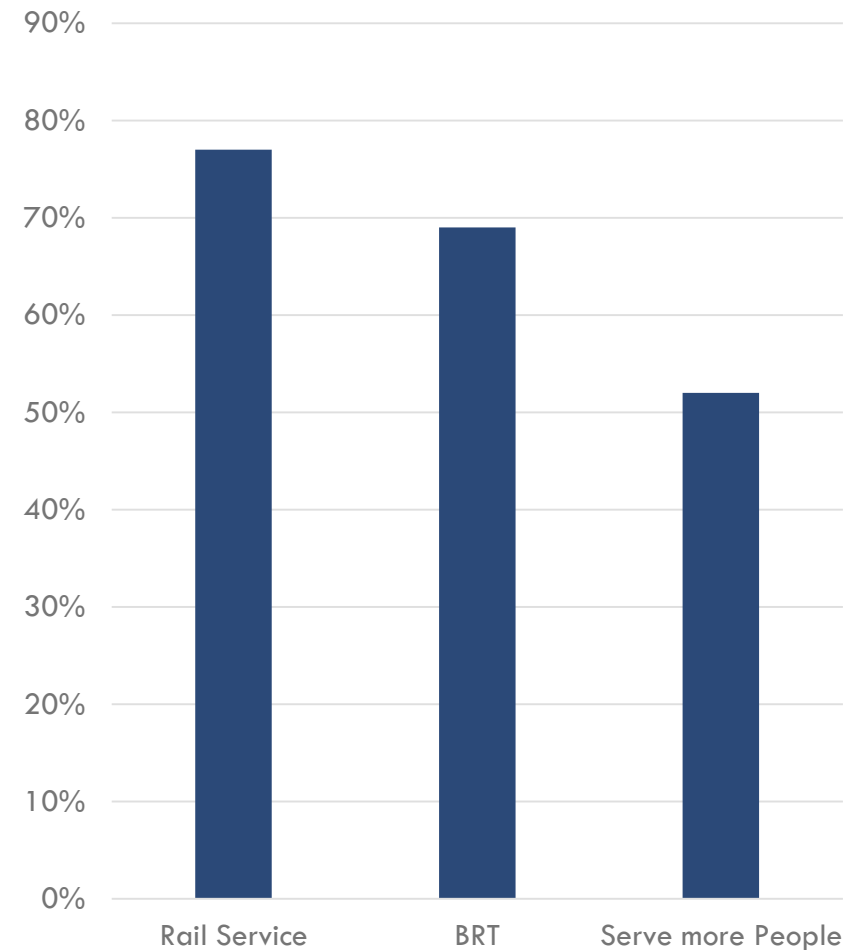
- **Community Funding Area (CFA) Program**
 - Fund eligible projects in 10 municipalities and Research Triangle Park
- **Eligible Project Types**
 - Planning/Technical Assistance
 - Operating Projects
 - Fixed-Route
 - Demand-Response
 - Flex-Route/Microtransit
 - Capital Projects
- **Increased Funding for CFA**
 - Current Financial Model allocates approximately \$19.59 Million from FY26 – FY35
 - Wake Transit Plan Update proposing to allocate approximately \$40 Million for CFA Program from FY26-FY35



Findings from Public Engagement

- As of Thursday, January 30th
 - 4,435 views of website
 - Over 970 survey responses
- Profile of responses
 - 51% male
 - 53% rarely or never use transit
 - 13% represent minority race
 - 5% of respondents' households receives one or more of these benefits: Medicaid, TANF, SNAP, FNS, LIEAP, or similar

Agree with Approach / “Serve More People”



Next Steps



4

Wake Transit Plan Update

We are here!



**State of the Wake
Transit Plan**

**Goals, Priorities &
Strategic Direction**

**Financial Capacity &
Scenario Development**

**2035 Wake Transit
Plan Update**

**Winter –
Spring 2024**

Engagement
May – June

Summer 2024

Evaluate Priorities
for Future
Investment

**Fall 2024 –
Winter 2025**

Investment
Scenarios

Engagement
December 2024 -
January 2025

Spring 2025

Recommendations
Final Engagement

Finish Study

Early 2025

- Community Engagement ended January 31st
- Partner Staff Workshop – January 30-31
 - Policy Discussion (Including CFA Program Management Plan)
 - Draft Investment Strategy
- Partner Staff Meeting - February
 - Engagement Findings
 - Discuss Recommendations
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Early March
 - Recommendations Workshop
- Draft Wake Transit Plan by mid-March 2025

Schedule Goals

1. Engagement May 2025
2. Finalize Wake Transit Plan by June 30, 2025



Thank you!