

In January 2003, the Town of Wake Forest adopted the *Wake Forest Transportation Plan*, which recommended improvements and strategies to accommodate traffic growth and fulfill the desire for a diversified transportation system. The adopted transportation plan is shown in **Figure 1.1**. Much has changed in the years since the 2003 plan was adopted. The *Wake Forest Transportation Plan Update* amends the 2003 Plan to incorporate changes, reflect recent planning, and strengthen the town's vision for its future in the year 2035 and beyond.



**Dr. Calvin Jones Highway**

Aside from continued population growth and development in and around Wake Forest, the completion of the Dr. Calvin Jones Highway (NC 98 Bypass) — which was in the planning phase in 2003 — has been built and has created new travel patterns around downtown. (Note: As of March 2010, the Dr. Calvin Jones Highway west of US 1 is still under construction.) Further, Wake Forest adopted four new or updated plans of particular relevance: the US 1 Corridor Study (2006), the Pedestrian Plan (2006), the Bicycle Plan (2008), the Open Space and Greenways Plan (2009), and the Community Plan (2009). Each plan is the result of extensive data collection and public input gathering and reflects

equally important aspects of Wake Forest's transportation and sustainability goals. Similarly, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), Wake County, and the City of Raleigh have produced various plans that include goals and visions affecting Wake Forest as it relates to regional transportation and land use objectives.

Given these numerous changes, now is the time to update the 2003 Transportation Plan and its recommendations. The *Wake Forest Transportation Plan Update (Plan Update)* expands upon key recommendations from the 2003 Plan and provides the Town of Wake Forest with new ideas and tools to effectively create and maintain a comprehensive transportation system. Much of this plan conforms with the 2035 Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) adopted by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) in 2009. CAMPO will need to review and consider those areas where the Wake Forest Transportation Plan Update differs from the adopted 2035 LRTP when the LRTP is updated.



## Transportation Plan Purpose

The goal of transportation planning is to meet anticipated transportation needs in the most efficient manner that blends with the character of the community and supports its overall goals. Planning now for future facilities minimizes impacts to homes, businesses, and environmentally sensitive areas when new roads, wider roads, or other transportation improvements are needed. Prior to construction of specific projects, a more detailed study will be required to reconsider development trends and to determine specific locations and design requirements.

The *Plan Update* is multi-modal. It includes elements for streets, highways, public transportation, pedestrians, rail, and bicyclists. It also serves as a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which is a multi-modal long range vision plan depicting transportation infrastructure designed to address the area's travel demand for a minimum 20 year period. Publicly-funded transportation projects often take 20 or more years to plan, design, fund and construct. For example, the Dr. Calvin Jones Highway first appeared in the North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (the state's seven-year "funded" plan) in 1981. It took 29 years since then to build the road.

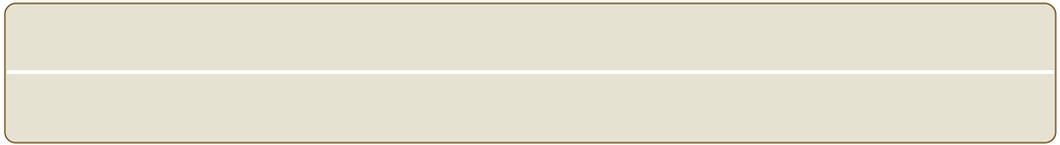
The purpose of the *Wake Forest Transportation Plan Update* is to:

- Work with the Board of Commissioners to pursue adequate funding to implement projects
- Work with the development community to implement spot improvements
- Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on projects along corridors of regional, statewide and interstate significance

The overarching goal is to establish a strategic plan that improves accessibility and mobility in Wake Forest while minimizing impacts to environmental, social, cultural, and historic resources and maintaining the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

## Study Area

The study area — defined by the Wake Forest Urban Services Area — covers approximately 21 square miles of northern Wake County and southern portions of Franklin County. The existing corporate limits of Wake Forest encompass 15 square miles. **Figure 1.2** shows the extent of the study area.



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See Figure 1.2 – Study Area.**

## **Planning Process**

The *Plan Update* represents a collaborative effort to determine the safety, connectivity, and access issues that contribute to the need for improved movement in Wake Forest. The analysis combines a projection of traffic volume on specific streets and highways with determinations of the facilities needed to accommodate that level of travel demand without undue congestion during peak travel periods. For more than 15 years, the community has documented its travel needs in adopted plans.

To succeed, transportation planning requires a cooperative process between multiple jurisdictions, key stakeholders, and citizens. Groups can share in the collective vision for a project even as they hold differing opinions on how this vision should be reached. The planning process was designed to create an open dialogue about the needs of Town residents.

The development of the Town's Comprehensive Transportation Plan has been a cooperative effort between Wake Forest, Rolesville, Raleigh, Youngsville, Wake County, NCDOT, and the Capital Area MPO. Given the overlap in the planning process for these plans as well as similarities in each plan's preferred vision for the Town, the results of public involvement, data collection, and analysis are shared.

## **Public Input**

As is typical in the transportation planning process, local residents have an intimate understanding of existing conditions and a collective vision for the future. To incorporate that knowledge into the decision-making process, the *Plan* relied on public input through the involvement of an Advisory Committee and several public meetings.

## **Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee (AC) was formed as a diverse group composed of planning staff, local officials, and citizens to provide informed guidance throughout the planning process. Beginning with a kick-off meeting on February 23, 2009, the AC met periodically to fulfill its mission of examining the existing deficiencies and potential solutions for driving, bicycling, walking, and transit use. The committee's duties included serving as a sounding board for project team ideas, participating in visioning and mapping exercises, providing feedback to the project team, and spearheading the promotion of other public involvement efforts.

## Public Meeting – Findings and Preliminary Recommendations Session

A public meeting held at Town Hall on September 22, 2009 provided an opportunity for the project team to discuss with citizens a variety of transportation findings. These included current and anticipated traffic problems, areas of concern, future projects and expansion plans, and potential corridor alignments. Road, bicycle, pedestrian, bus, and passenger rail initiatives were mapped and presented to the public. In addition to discussing the *Plan's* potential impact on their respective interests, several themes emerged from the public meeting. These themes included:

- Blending bicycle improvement recommendations to ensure smooth, seamless transitions for cyclists riding between Wake Forest and surrounding cities, towns and counties. Providing wide, striped shoulders on roads would benefit bicyclists and motorists by creating a safe separation for road sharing. These and other bicycling initiatives should lead to a coveted designation of Wake Forest as a bicycle-friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists.
- Additional traffic signs at various locations in Wake Forest informing motorists of posted speed limits as well as lane assignments (left, through, right) were suggested.
- Angled curbs at intersections were identified as a suggestion by a motorist who frequently hits them when turning right.

The first public meeting served as a forum to present initial recommendations and gauge public support and interest.

## Public Hearing – Feedback on Recommendations

At a public hearing in May 2010, the project team presented recommendations and results of the public outreach meetings to obtain Board of Commissioners and public input regarding the recommendations. A draft report and corridor profiles were available for review and comment on the Town website beginning in September 2009.



## Report Organization

The *Plan* outlines analysis, findings, recommendations, and public input. Guiding Principles influenced the study recommendations.

The report includes the following chapters:

- **About the Plan:** introduction to the planning process
- **Designing Our Future:** guiding principles, vision, Community Plan Update, and summaries of other planning studies
- **Area Growth Dynamics:** existing and projected demographics
- **Existing and Future Conditions:** current and recent travel trends
- **The Plan:** recommendations
- **Implementation**

