



Town of Apex Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 6th, 2022

4:00pm-5:30pm

3rd Floor Training Room, Apex Town Hall

Meeting Purpose

The main purposes of this meeting were to: (1) discuss transit initiatives in Town with Mayor Gilbert; (2) receive and discuss updates on transit-related Town projects; and (3) receive and discuss updates on transit-related regional projects.

Meeting Outcomes

Town staff will: (1) finalize the Call for Artists document for the GoApex pavement art project and send to selection committee members for review; (2) send informational updates on GoApex Route 1 bus stop installation and service start; (3) send updates to those who have volunteered to come to the GoApex booth Town-sponsored events; and (4) send information to the committee on the CAMPO Regional Mobility Management Integration Study.

Attendees

Committee members:

- Linda Barrett
- Amanda Bunce
- Nick Bryant
- Joanna Helms
- Kurt Pfeifer
- Angela Reincke
- Stuart Wagner
- Andrew Werking

Absent:

- David Yokum

Staff support:

- Shannon Cox
- Katie Schwing

Guests:

- Mayor Jacques Gilbert (Apex Town Council)
- Councilor Brett Gantt (Apex Town Council)
- Taylor Wray (Apex Park and Recreation, Liaison to Apex Public Art Committee)
- Bethany Bryant (Apex Public Art Committee)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Chair Stuart Wagner opened the meeting at 4:06 pm and welcomed the members and special guests. A round of introductions was made.
- In his remarks, Stuart noted that as of March, 2022, he has started riding the ACX daily to work in Cary, and it has been a positive experience. The group was happy to hear that.



2. Meeting Minutes

(Action Item: Shannon Cox, Town of Apex)

The committee reviewed the draft minutes from the January 12, 2022 meeting. There were no corrections noted.

Requested Action: Approve meeting minutes from the January 12, 2022 meeting.

- Nick Bryant made a motion to approve the January 12, 2022 meeting minutes.
- Andrew Werking seconded the motion to approve the January 12, 2022 meeting minutes.
- The motion was unanimously approved by the Committee.

3. Mayor's Comments and Discussion on Transit

(Mayor Jacques Gilbert)

Katie Schwing briefly introduced this item as an opportunity to reflect on the many transit related projects going on in Apex and this group's contributions over the past almost-five years that the group has been meeting. It was also an opportunity for the Mayor to share his thoughts about how transit fits into the Town's priorities.

- **Summary**
 - Mayor Jacques Gilbert noted that it was impressive to see community members so engaged in this work, and thanked everyone for being a part of the group and being involved.
 - He mentioned some of the various ways that transit can help the Town achieve its larger goals and challenges, such as the extensive growth the Town has seen – adding over 10,000 residents since the beginning of 2020.
 - He also mentioned that he is excited about how transit can help support that growth and encourage transit-oriented development.
 - He brought up how transit can help affordable housing and people with disabilities.
 - He noted that GoApex can help support the Town's affordable housing efforts, such as the new community of Broadstone walk which has 164 units of affordable housing (and will be served by GoApex).
 - He mentioned that he attended a Braille challenge at Apex UMC and was made aware, through that experience, of the visually impaired population in Town and their needs (for example, the technologies that allow for talking crosswalks).
 - He mentioned he received a Facebook message from someone thanking him for the new GoApex service, as her mother lives in Apex and has disabilities that prevent her from driving. She was worried about how her mother would get around and was so happy to learn that there would be a transit option for her.
 - Mayor Gilbert then brought up some larger regional efforts, such as the S-line rail project. He likened it to a catalyst to help develop the vision for the change we need into the future.
 - He brought up the Apex Parkway project and the highway and sidewalks bond passed recently as a sign that Apex is actively working to improve the transportation system in Town.
 - The Mayor finished his thoughts and Stuart asked if there were any questions or



comments from the group.

- **Discussion**

- Andy Werking said that he thought that Facebook feedback was amazing to hear. It helps to reinforce that, even if most people don't use it, transit can still be a valuable part of the community for those that do use it.
- Nick Bryant added some thoughts that even though there has been a lot of activity, we need to keep the transit conversation going. We need to be able to keep workers in Apex and provide options.
- Mayor Gilbert noted that transit helps with all of the Council's strategic goals, more than almost any other service offered in Town.
- Katie asked how the Mayor's perception of transit has changed since this project started. He said that at first, he wasn't sure if it was something that would be worth the investment for a Town like Apex. Adding transit would be something big. But the more he learned about the benefits, and with the growth that Apex has experienced, and will continue to experience, his perspective changed to think of it as something more forward-facing. Conversations with people like Councilman Gantt has helped him see the potential impact this could have and he is looking forward to what it can bring.
- On that point, Stuart Wagner thought back to about four and a half years ago when staff and some others did a pop-up event in Walmart asking about people's interest in transit in Apex and the reactions seemed to be a mixture of shock and curiosity. It seems that has changed and the reaction has been mostly positive.
- Andy said it was great to have the GoCary ACX in town as a visible display of transit for awareness building. He said he has been in Salem Street pub when the ACX goes by, and has heard people say, "We have a bus?"
- Mayor Gilbert closed out the discussion with the the sentiment, that this is a long-term effort.

4. **Project Updates**

(Information Item: Katie Schwing, Town of Apex)

- **Art in Transit**
 - Katie provided updates on this project which was also discussed at the September 2021 meeting. The idea for the project has been refined by staff to be a bit simpler – to paint art on concrete near bus stop waiting areas. This was decided for a couple of reasons –as a first step that can be built upon later, and as something that can be done in a faster timeframe with fewer regulatory needs.
 - Apex did not get the Bloomberg Asphalt Art grant and will pursue the project with local funds.
 - Katie mentioned that the staff is putting together a selection committee that will include members of the TAC (Nick, Stuart, and Andy) and Public Art Committee (Bethany, Ton Colwell, and Taylor Wray) and town staff (Shannon, Katie, and Chad Lemasters from Public Works).



- Katie went over some aspects of the draft call for artists, including the budget, timeframe, and selection criteria. She said she had already received some feedback about the timeframe - based on the Town's Public Art Policy, the Town should post the open call for two months instead of the one proposed, and the weighting for the selection criteria - to weight it more evenly between the practical criteria and the creative criteria.
- Bethany Bryant mentioned that this project can also be a great way to help raise awareness market the new bus route.
- Shannon Cox added that a goal of the project is to engage the community, both in the design and in the installation, which will also help raise awareness of the stops.
- Stuart asked about the project budget. Katie said there was \$40,000 in the budget for this project that would have to be spread across 12 bus stops and include artist fees, materials, and public engagement costs.
- Andy asked about the lifespan of the project – was this something that will be maintained over time?
- Nick remembered that when this project was discussed previously, there were ideas like custom shelters with rooftop gardens, etc. This might be something where the Town could ask a company to partner in to help support the project. Can we ask to do that sort of thing? Amanda agreed and thought it might be good to have some buy-in with these things – like adopting a stop or sponsoring a stop near the business.
- Stuart added that this first project can be a start, to show that the Town is being active with it, and could do something more. This is an opportunity to almost advertise the possibilities.
- Bethany echoed that idea as a possibility for getting businesses to sponsor a bus stop. The Public art committee started on a project to paint the concrete sewer manholes along the greenways, and then volunteers saw it, and wanted to get involved and help. The Town may have to work on the policies to make sure it meets all requirements.
- Angela offered the suggestion that the Town could have it be set up with an Adopt a Stop process.
- Angela asked for clarification if these are sidewalks around the stops, not the roadway? She had been told there was a rule against painting road surfaces in Town. So, it might be worth checking. But, the idea of having enhanced crosswalks in the area near the stops, like for example, on Mason Street near the Community Center, would be nice.
- Bethany wanted make sure to get the call for artists out to local artists. This could be a great opportunity for those local to Apex.
- Nick asked if the route went by the Hunter Street Skate park? Katie replied that it did not go directly by it, but near to it.
- Nick asked about the idea for integrating art into the walls of the new shelters that are planned. Can we find a shelter that has a way to replace/integrate art?
 - Shannon responded and said it may, depending on a few factors, like the funding sources and placements. She heard that the committee liked the vinyl wraps and that option is still on the table.
 - Nick thought he has seen some special panels where there was a design in the metal panel itself.
- Katie said she would update the call for artists based on the discussion and comments, and would send out an updated version to the selection committee members.



- GoApex Route 1

- Katie provided updates on the new GoApex Route 1 service. The bus stop installation project is set to begin any day now with concrete work to add bus stop pads, and in some cases, additional concrete to connect to the nearest sidewalk or curb. She added that amenities (benches, trash cans, and bike racks, depending on the stop) would come later, likely May-August depending on delivery times. She provided an update about the various agreements that need to be in place before service starts
 - Service agreement with GoCary – in negotiation but close to finalization
 - Service agreement with GoWake Access – approved by Wake Board of Commissioners but awaiting signatures
 - License agreement with Olive Chapel Professional park – signed in March
- Katie also provided updates on the proposed outreach for this project and that the focus at this point was for awareness, basic information, and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in the process. Staff are creating brochures and other documents to be able to hand out at in-person events. There are a few event types planned:
 - Town Events – Apex EarthFest, Apex PeakFest, and a Vision Zero Event.
 - Pop-up Events – Setting up a table outside local businesses – final locations TBD.
 - Pop-in's – local businesses or apartment offices for staff to distribute materials
- The group asked about efforts to reach out to young people, such as high schoolers. Katie mentioned that this was one of the target audiences for the service, but that at this point, there is not much specifically planned for this group. Some ideas were to go to Hunter St Park, and to downtown Apex in the evenings. Angela suggested the open gym time at the Community Center after school.
- Andy added that this service could be a way to help bolster independence for youth, to get to downtown on their own, for example.
- Andy Werking asked if the operator shortage will affect this route. He noted that operator consistency is so important for a new service to provide confidence to riders.
 - Katie responded that since we are partnering with GoCary, we can't guarantee there will never be missed trips but we have talked with them and they will prioritize this service as much as they can. The operator shortage is a national and regional issue, but GoCary does not seem to have had as big of an issue as other agencies.
 - Shannon added that we have talked with GoCary about ensuring this and they cannot put GoApex above their other routes, but that they have been able to raise their driver compensation to help avoid a larger operator shortage, and they haven't had to cut service as a result.
- Andy asked if there was flexibility in the funding to pursue direct service providers instead of contracting to another agency? Shannon responded that at this point, it would cause delays to do something like that, maybe even up to a year. She added that GoCary contracts their service to MV transportation.
- Shannon did want to emphasize the big step that was getting the license agreement finalized with Olive Chapel Professional Park and wanted to take a moment to celebrate that, as it means the routing is also finalized.
- Nick mentioned that something that could help with the success of GoApex, is that since Apex is growing so much, that there are people coming from all over the county and areas are used to having transit services, such as California, and they may be more



used to using it.

- Andy asked about some other outreach options, like can GoApex provide shuttle service for the PeakFest or other events? Shannon responded that the Town is looking into that for PeakFest and she can add the Vision Zero event to that list as well. The buses may not have the GoApex branding/wrap yet, but maybe the Town can have the backup branding for those events.
- Community Development Block Grant-funded bus stops
 - Shannon provided an update on this project and that they are heavily into the design phase. This is the project that the Town has partnered with Wake County on to add bus stop enhancements (including shelters) and some additional sidewalk connections in Town.
- Transit Pedestrian Enhancements LAPP Project
 - Shannon updated the group that Apex was awarded this grant and that design work has recently started. This is the project to add pedestrian connections to transit stops in Town. Shannon wanted to emphasize that this project was awarded to Apex under the Transit category, and that Apex has been doing a good job of leveraging those funds to make improvements.

5. Other Project Updates

(Information Item: Katie Schwing and Shannon Cox, Town of Apex)

- Regional Mobility Management Integration Study
 - Katie provided a “head’s-up” to the group that CAMPO is working on a study with some other regional project partners to study possibilities surrounding developing a regional mobility management program. Mobility management essentially refers to managing the various human service transportation needs for a region in a “one-stop shop” type of setup.
 - The project will explore developing a regional interagency agreement for this program as well as an implementation plan.
 - To save time in the meeting, Katie said she will send out some additional slides that explain what a mobility management program is.
- Wake Bus Plan
 - Katie let the group know that the Wake Bus Plan is currently in development. This is the bus planning portion of the Wake Transit program (does not include the rail projects) and will be completed around October 2022.
- S-Line TOD Study
 - Shannon provided a quick update on this project, which is focusing on land use supportive of transit. Mr. Gantt is sitting on the executive committee. In June 2022 there will be a big public engagement activity – a charrette or workshop. This effort is important to help prepare for future rail service.
 - Councilman Gantt expressed that this project has raised the awareness of commuter rail in the region. These lines (the S-line) are also where a lot of the growth is (Apex and Wake Forest) in the region. A project like this makes it more concrete to people in the region and gives us something to plan towards.
- S-Line Mobility Hub RAISE Grant Initiative
 - NCDOT is pushing for a RAISE grant to study mobility hubs along the S-line as well, in addition to the TOD project.



- For some selected areas, the proposed project will get into designing the stations (but not ours). Apex will participate in that grant application. Applications are due in April.

Shannon showed some photos and talked briefly about the tour she and Councilman Gantt took last week to South Florida, where they saw new multimodal projects such as the Brightline service and examples of mobility hubs – multimodal facilities built with the idea to provide seamlessness to get to and from the station and surrounding land uses (first mile and last mile service). Nick asked if this is the same idea for the mobility hub project at NC 55 and Salem St. Shannon said that is still in the works but this idea is more appropriate for around a new rail station. Councilman Gantt said that a big takeaway is that the region (Miami/Ft Lauderdale/West Palm Beach) is choosing multiple options for transit – not just one. They, in some ways, may be an example the future of the Triangle in the decades to come.

Andy added that the photos Shannon shared are a great way to visualize the first-mile, last-mile, mobility hub concept.

6. Other Business

- Katie reminded Andy, Stuart, and Nick that their appointment terms are up in July and to let Katie know if they would like to stay on for another term.
- The meeting was adjourned at 5:40pm.