Wake Transit Plan Concurrence Meeting for Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Northern Corridor Project
Information Packet for Midtown Concurrence Points 1-4

Agenda

- Introductions
- Wake Transit Plan Concurrence Process Overview
- Wake BRT Southern Corridor Concurrence Timeline
- Review of Concurrence Points 1-4 for the Triangle Town Center Corridor
- Review of Concurrence Points 1-4 for the Midtown Corridor
- Next Steps

Concurrence Team Members:

Project Sponsor: City of Raleigh (with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Wake Transit as funding partners)

Cooperating Agencies to be Invited:

- Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources – State Historic Preservation Office
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
- United Stated Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Fish & Wildlife

Participating Agencies to be Invited:

- Wake County
- GoTriangle
- City of Raleigh, Mobility, Strategy & Infrastructure

Wake Transit Plan Concurrence Process Overview

Concurrence is a process in which Sponsors of major Wake Transit Capital Projects may, with respect to such Projects, verify compliance with: Laws, regulations, and policies enacted and/or enforced by agencies having regulatory authority over a resource or interest that may be substantially impacted by the project. The Concurrence Process arises at key project milestones throughout: (1) Project development and permitting and, if applicable to the project, (2) Final design, right-of-way/land acquisition, construction, or other subsequent phases. These milestones, or points, are known as Concurrence Points.

Concurrence Points are distinct to the nature and magnitude of impacts anticipated for each project. Specific sequential Concurrence Points are identified in a project-specific Concurrence Plan. Concurrence Points cumulatively build over the course of project development and subsequent phases such that Concurrence at prior milestones informs the trajectory of project implementation that leads to future milestones. It is anticipated that Project Sponsor actions, and project trajectories, will be informed and improved by the Concurrence Process. Concurrence Points 1-4 include:

- ***Concurrence Point 1: Project Purpose and Need***
- ***Concurrence Point 2: Identification of Alternatives to Study Further***
- ***Concurrence Point 3: Alternatives Screening Process***
- ***Concurrence Point 4: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Recommendation***

Figure 1: Sequential/Cumulative Nature of Concurrence Process

Concurrence signifies that an agency does not object to a Project Sponsor-proposed action or project implementation approach at a Concurrence Point. More particularly, it signifies that the agency does not object to the proposed action in light of impacts to resources or interests over which the agency has regulatory authority. Concurrence further signifies that the agencies will abide by their Concurrence unless there is a profound changed condition upon which the proposed action was based. Non-Concurrence signifies an objection based upon an agency's finding: (1) That the proposed action or approach to project implementation is in conflict with the laws, regulations, or policies under its jurisdiction; (2) That the proposed action or approach to project implementation has substantial negative impacts on a resource or interest over which the agency has regulatory authority; or (3) That information provided is not adequate for Concurrence.

The Concurrence Process does not establish a project-level steering committee or working group. It does not provide a platform for expression of opinions or positions. It does not authorize a project or an

Implementation Element of a project. It does not authorize financing for a project. The Concurrence Process is an inter-agency verification of compliance process, involving only the agencies having regulatory responsibility as previously noted. Further, the Concurrence Process is not legally binding upon the agencies which are involved. For example, an environmental permitting agency may concur on a given matter, but that Concurrence does not bind the agency to ultimately issue a permit.

The Concurrence Process is a mechanism that streamlines and expedites the process of securing verification that proposed actions at key project milestones are consistent with the laws, policies and regulations of other agencies. Without the Concurrence Process, the Project Sponsor would be forced to coordinate with other agencies on an individual basis. It would accordingly be difficult to balance the various agencies' mandates, policies, laws, or regulations.

A major goal of the Concurrence Process is to bring order to what can easily be an unwieldy and excessively time-consuming process. Agencies having regulatory jurisdiction over an impacted resource or interest are much better positioned to provide guidance to a Project Sponsor if they have knowledge of and understand the nature of other agencies' interests in the project. Accordingly, the involved agencies may collaboratively react to proposed actions or approaches to project implementation at key project milestones so that compromise-based choices can be made (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Project Sponsor Verifying Compliance with Agencies as a Team

Agency roles (Participating versus Cooperating)

The group of agencies involved in the Concurrence Process for each applicable project is known as the Concurrence Team. The Concurrence Team is composed of a Project Sponsor, Cooperating Agencies, and Participating Agencies. The composition of agencies on each Concurrence Team will vary, depending on the project's geographic location and scope. The determination of the composition of a Concurrence Team and its progression through the Concurrence Process is facilitated and staffed by a Concurrence Administrator, in support of and in cooperation with the

Project Sponsor. The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) will serve as the Concurrence Administrator for the Concurrence Process.

Each role on the Concurrence Team has a defined set of responsibilities in moving the Concurrence Process forward, and in satisfying National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) compliance requirements:

Concurrence Team Role	Responsibilities
Project Sponsor	Role assigned through adoption of *Wake Transit Work Plan*
	Initiates project and takes responsibility for its implementation
	Identifies Cooperating Agencies and Participating Agencies with Concurrence Administrator
	Identifies necessary project Concurrence Points with Concurrence Administrator and Cooperating Agencies
	Leads project through Concurrence Points and proposes project-level actions or implementation approaches at corresponding key milestones
Cooperating Agency	Federal, state, or local agency with legal jurisdiction over aspects of project implementation or with respect to resources the project can reasonably be anticipated to impact
	Develops information and/or prepares analyses related to verification of proposed actions' compliance or noncompliance with regulations, policies, or laws under its jurisdiction
	Has capability of voting on Concurrence or Non-Concurrence in response to proposed actions at key project milestones
Participating Agency	Is invited to Concurrence Meetings and may provide input throughout the Concurrence Process
	Does not have legal jurisdiction over aspects of project implementation or with respect to resources the project can reasonably be anticipated to impact
	Does not have capability of voting on Concurrence or Non-Concurrence in response to proposed actions at key project milestones

Project Background/Explanation

Wake County residents passed a ballot measure to fund the Wake Transit Plan in November 2016. The Wake Transit Plan recommends 20 miles of BRT infrastructure to be implemented in four (4) corridors in Wake County, to provide frequent and reliable urban mobility. The four (4) corridors are:

- Southern Corridor
- New Bern Corridor
- Northern Corridor
- Western Corridor

The 2018 *Wake Transit Plan Major Investment Study (MIS)* refined three BRT corridors, New Bern, Western, and Southern to include alignment options. However, that study only examined the Northern Corridor from Downtown Raleigh to Crabtree Blvd and included the caveat that further study would determine the path forward for the Northern BRT project.

The 2021 *Wake Transit Plan Update* expanded the Northern BRT scope to include connecting Downtown Raleigh to both Triangle Town Center and North Hills. In the 2025 *Wake Transit Plan* update funding was identified for the two Northern BRT branches.

The City of Raleigh proposes implementing the Wake BRT: Midtown Corridor connecting Downtown Raleigh and North Hills. The project would include dedicated transit infrastructure improvements between Downtown Raleigh and North Hills, including transit signal priority (TSP) at signalized intersections and weather-protected BRT stations. BRT stations will be designed to include branding, fare payment options, level vehicle boarding, real-time bus arrival information, ADA accessibility and safe pedestrian infrastructure between stations and surrounding infrastructure.

Concurrence Point 1: Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Midtown BRT Corridor project is to improve transit service from Downtown Raleigh to the North Hills area of Raleigh. This new transit investment would accommodate the existing and continued growth of the surrounding area, create transit infrastructure to bypass congestion points, and improve the attractiveness of the service to capture new ridership. Project needs are summarized below:

- Address existing and projected future growth and travel demand
- Create infrastructure that allows the transit service to navigate major congestion points faster
- Facilitate ridership growth along the corridor
- Improve transit service and rider experience
- Support local planning efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of life along the corridor

Concurrence Point 2: Identification of Alternatives to Study Further

In 2022, The City of Raleigh began the Northern Bus Rapid Transit Major Investment Study to complete a full analysis of route alternatives and recommend a locally preferred alternative (LPA). The study began by including all roadway segments that are possible paths from downtown Raleigh to North Hills. A fatal flaw analysis was performed on these segments to shape the identification of alternatives that could

move forward into further study. Figure 1 below displays the identified segments to move forward for Midtown BRT in orange.

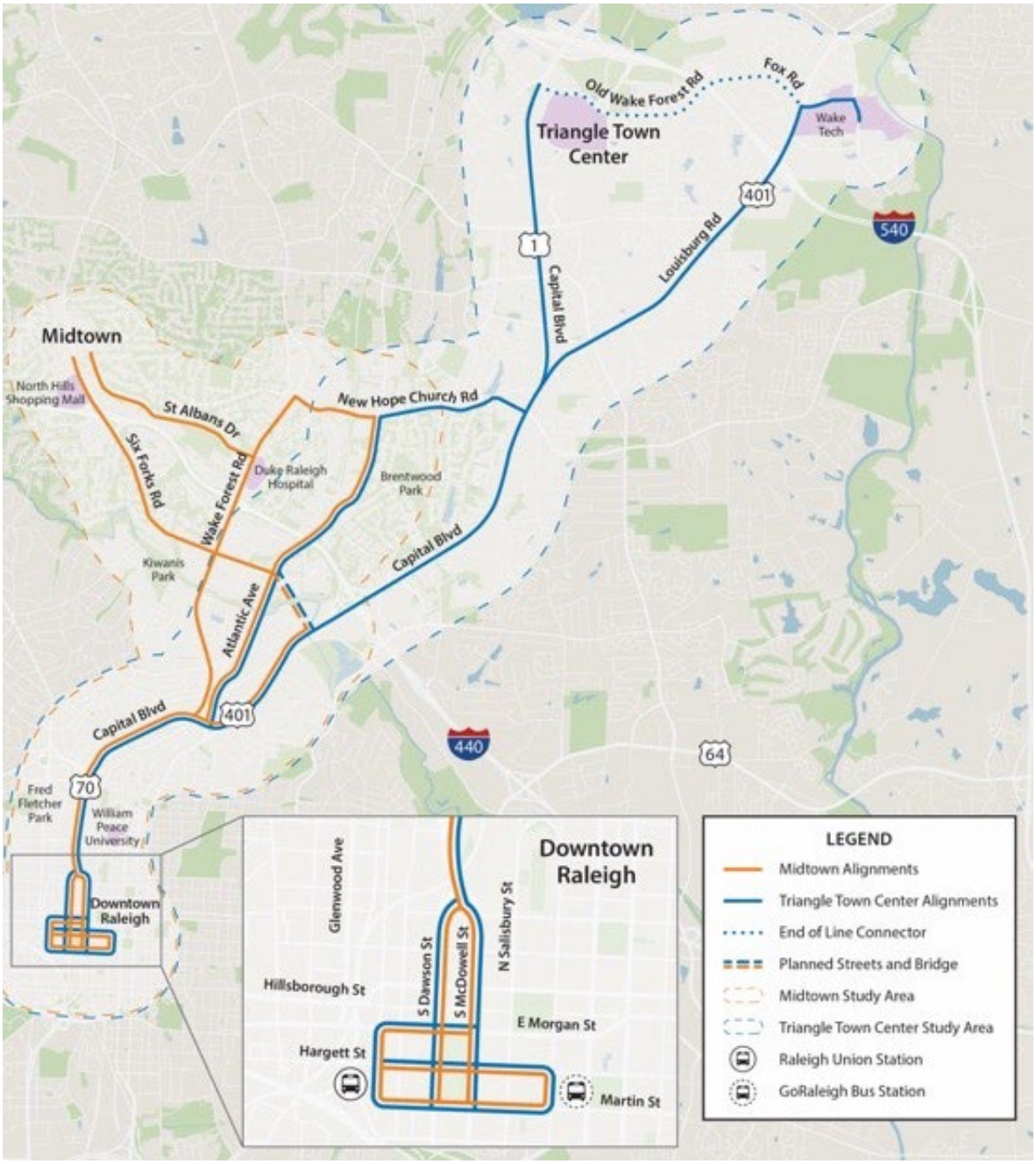

Figure 1: Segments that remained after Fatal Flaw analysis

These segments were paired to make 5 alternatives. Listed below are those 5 alternatives. All route path descriptions begin in downtown Raleigh.

- Midtown 1: The Midtown 1 alternative would operate along Capital Blvd, exiting Capital Blvd onto Atlantic Avenue, then turning onto Six Forks Rd to reach North Hills.

- Midtown 2: The Midtown 2 alternative would operate along Capital Blvd, exiting onto Atlantic Avenue, and operating along Atlantic past the I-440 interchange. The route would head west on New Hope Church Rd, turning south onto Wake Forest Rd, and finally traversing St. Albans Dr to reach the North Hills terminus.

- Midtown 3: The Midtown 3 alternative would operate along Capital Blvd until the Hodges St/Crabtree Creek area, a new Six Forks Road extension would be constructed for the BRT project to connect Six Forks to Capital Blvd. The route would then operate along Six Forks to the North Hills terminus.

- Midtown 4: Midtown 4 would operate along Capital Blvd until Wake Forest Rd, where the route would exit to travel north on Wake Forest Rd. The route would turn at Six Forks Rd and head west to the North Hills terminus.

- Midtown 5: The Midtown 5 alternative would operate along Capital Blvd, and exit onto Wake Forest Rd. The route would continue north on Wake Forest Rd, pass through the I-440 interchange and turn west onto St Albans Dr to reach the North Hills terminus.

Throughout the MIS study, these alignment options assumed the use of Dawson and McDowell as the downtown road pairs to support Northern BRT. The City of Raleigh has recently completed a Downtown Mobility Study that identifies Dawson and McDowell as vehicle centric roads that will continue to support high throughput of traffic, as they do now. The findings of this plan directly conflict with the goals of the BRT project. An alternative downtown routing was proposed due to concerns around feasibility of dedicated infrastructure on the Dawson/McDowell pair and as a result of the findings of the Downtown Mobility Plan. Both proposed downtown routing alternatives satisfy the Purpose and Need of the project. All the alternatives use the existing road network to approach GoRaleigh Station and turn around for the next northbound trip.

All five of these alternatives provide access to the major origins and destinations along the corridor and serve the identified travel market. Bus Rapid Transit is the most cost-effective and least intrusive mode that can achieve the proposed purpose and need for the project. The BRT mode improves throughput capacity and transit service reliability to a level adequate to serve the travel market without introducing significant impacts to the corridor.

The number and location of stations will be identified as preliminary plans are developed.

Concurrence Point 3: Screening of Alternatives/Elimination of Alternatives

As previously described in Concurrence Point 2, five alternatives to study further included:

- Midtown 1: Atlantic/Six Forks
- Midtown 2: Atlantic/New Hope Church/Wake Forst/St Albans
- Midtown 3: Capital/Six Forks
- Midtown 4: Wake Forest/Six Forks
- Midtown 5: Wake Forest/St Albans

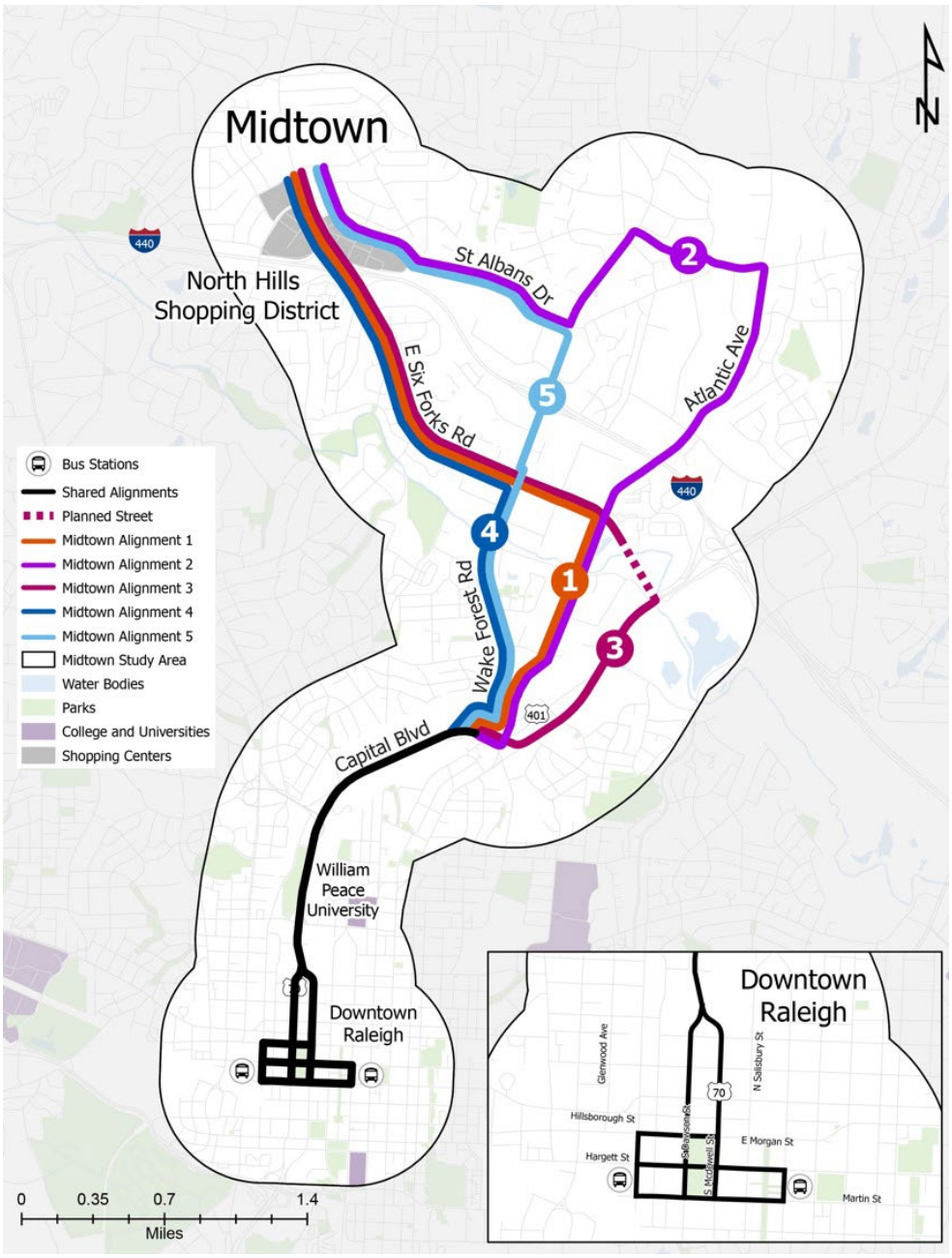

Figure 2: Identified Alternatives for Midtown BRT

These alignments all slightly differ in their pros and cons, with each having unique characteristics that shape their ultimate viability as an alternative. The table below lists the pros and cos determined after detailed analysis for each alternative.

Alternative	Pros	Cons
Midtown Alignment 1	• Moderate connectivity to existing and planned bike/ped facilities • Moderate existing and future population and employment densities	• Primarily industrial uses along Atlantic Ave • Relatively low transit dependent & EJ population densities
Midtown Alignment 2	• Connects to Duke Raleigh Hospital area and $1.0B Exchange Raleigh development • High EJ population densities (relative to other alignments reviewed)	• Circuitous routing requires out of direction travel • Low existing and future population and employment densities • One (1) at-grade rail crossing
Midtown Alignment 3	• Moderate Connectivity to existing and planned bike/ped facilities • Moderate future population and employment centers	• Requires extension of Six Forks Rd. To Capital Blvd. (potential fatal flaw) • Moderate transit dependent & EJ population densities (relative to other alignments reviewed)
Midtown Alignment 4	• Most linear, direct alignment between downtown Raleigh & Midtown • Wake Forest Rd. Is a proven transit corridor (shares portion and alignment with Routes 2 & 24L) • High Density of senior and zero auto household populations (relative to other alignments reviewed) • High existing future population and employment densities	• Minimal connectivity to existing and planned bike/ped facilities • Low transit dependent & EJ population densities (relative to other alignments reviewed)
Midtown Alignment 5	• Most linear, direct alignment between downtown Raleigh & Midtown • Wake Forest Rd. Is a proven transit corridor (shares portion and alignment with Routes 2 & 24L) • High Density of senior and zero auto household populations (relative to other alignments reviewed) • High existing future population and employment densities	• Minimal connectivity to existing and planned bike/ped facilities • Low transit dependent & EJ population densities (relative to other alignments reviewed)

After the initial evaluation of alignments, two preferred alignments were selected out of the five alternatives to move forward into a detailed screening. Those alternatives were:

- Midtown 1: Atlantic/Six Forks
- Midtown 5: Wake Forest/St Albans

Feedback from public engagement resulted in the development of a proposed hybrid alignment that was not previously considered, named Midtown 6:

- Midtown 6: Atlantic/Six Forks/Wake Forest Rd/St Albans.

During public engagement resident feedback indicated the desire for a mix and match option that included elements of both Midtown 1 & Midtown 5. The result was the development of Midtown 6, a slightly longer/more circuitous route that serves all major growth areas along the corridor.

<u>Detailed Evaluation Findings:</u>

Within the Midtown corridor, the Midtown 5 and 6 alignments show significant advantages over the Midtown 1 corridor.

Ridership: Midtown 5 attracts the most riders with 1,822 daily projected riders. Midtown 6 attracts 1,624 riders (89% of Midtown 5) whereas Midtown 1 attracts 1,370 riders (75% of Midtown 5).

Traffic Impacts: Midtown 5 has 1.28 miles of roadway that may move from under capacity to over capacity with BRT construction, while Midtown 6 has 2.22 miles. Midtown 1 has more roadway miles with traffic impact risk than the other two alignments combined, at 3.66 miles.

Travel Time: Midtown 5 has the shortest projected travel time of the three alignments, and Midtown 6 has the longest projected travel time. However, the total difference in travel time (between Downtown and Midtown) across all three alternatives is less than 4 minutes.

Cost: Capital Cost and Operating Cost estimates across all three alignments are so similar that cost is not a distinguishing factor when choosing between the Midtown alignments.

CIG Scoring: In testing each of the three Midtown alignments against the FTA's CIG criteria, all three alignments scored Medium-Low, which means they are likely not good candidates for federal funding.

While Midtown 5 equals or slightly outperforms Midtown 6 across the above metrics, Midtown 6 has two key strengths that differentiate it:

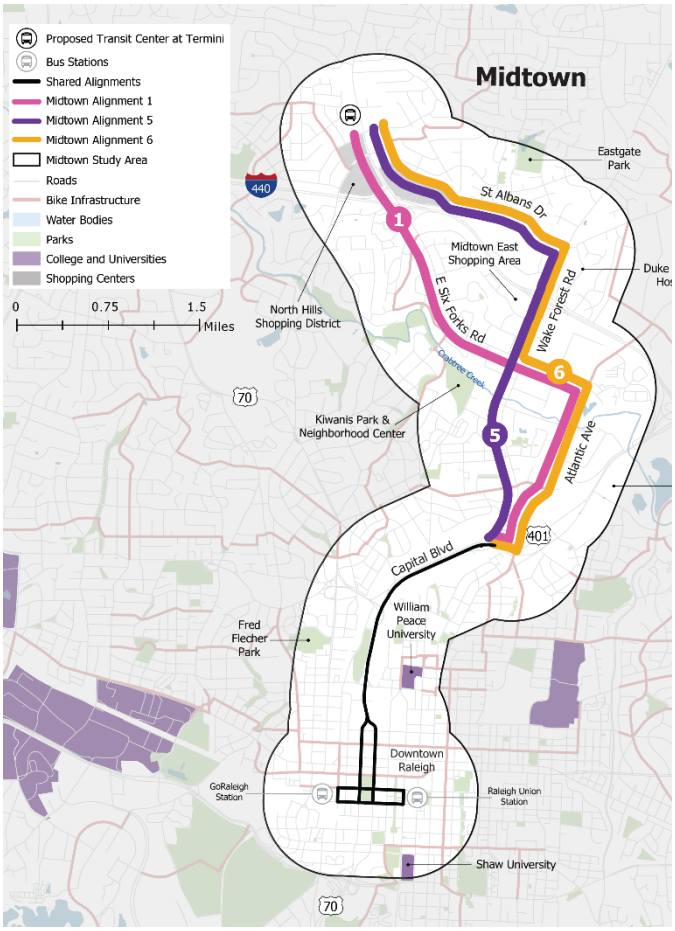

Figure 3: Alternatives for Detailed Screening Including Midtown 6

- Midtown 6 has the highest development opportunity potential of any of the Midtown or TTC corridors. Midtown 6 also has the highest percentage of roadway miles under direct City of Raleigh control among the Midtown alternatives, which may be crucial to implementing dedicated lanes and other BRT infrastructure.
- Midtown 6 is in close proximity to the future S-Line Mobility Hub proposed for the land north of East Six Forks Rd and east of Industrial Drive. This is the only identified opportunity to create a connection between BRT and intercity passenger rail in the City of Raleigh outside of downtown.

During in-person meetings where the detailed alternative results were shared, the public expressed a preference for the Midtown 6 alignment. This preference was rooted in the wider variety of destinations that Midtown 6 offers along the route compared to Midtown 5. These additional destinations were decided to provide a bigger benefit to the route even after considering the longer travel time for buses on Midtown 6 compared to Midtown 5.

Concurrence Point 4: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Recommendation

Midtown 6: is recommended to be submitted as the LPA to CAMPO. This recommended LPA establishes the project's alignment (Midtown 6), the project's termini (Downtown Raleigh & the North Hills area), and the transit mode (bus rapid transit). This is consistent with the recommendation made by Raleigh City Council, which endorsed the LPA on May 19, 2026. After these endorsements and upon concurrence, the LPA will move forward to CAMPO's TCC and Executive Board for its consideration of adoption and inclusion in the 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. A map of the described LPA can be found in Attachment A.

Attachments

A. Project Map – Locally Preferred Alternative
B. Northern Bus Rapid Transit Major Investment Study

Attachment A: Project Map – Locally Preferred Alternative