

**Wake Transit Plan Concurrence Process Meeting for Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Southern Corridor Project
Information Packet for Concurrence Points 3-4**

Agenda

- Introductions
- Wake Transit Plan Concurrence Process Overview
- Wake BRT Southern Corridor Concurrence Timeline
- Project Update
- Concurrence Point 3: Screening of Alternatives/Elimination of Alternatives
- Concurrence Point 4: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Recommendation
- Next Steps

Concurrence Team Members:

Project Sponsor: City of Raleigh (with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as funding partner)

Cooperating Agencies to be Invited:

- Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
- Town of Garner

Participating Agencies to be Invited:

- Wake County
- GoTriangle
- Town of Cary
- Town of Clayton
- Johnston County
- North Carolina State University
- United States Army Corps of Engineers

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 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.

Concurrence Timeline for Wake BRT: Southern Corridor

Action	Date
<i>Send Concurrence Plan to Concurrence Team</i>	<i>March 16, 2020</i>
<i>Concurrence Meeting with Consideration of Concurrence on Points 1 and 2</i>	<i>March 30, 2020</i>
<i>Raleigh City Council endorsed S. Wilmington Street for Northern Section</i>	<i>October 20, 2020</i>
<i>Town of Garner Council endorsed S. Wilmington Street Extension for Southern Section</i>	<i>April 5, 2021</i>
<i>Raleigh City Council endorsed full LPA</i>	<i>April 20, 2021</i>
Concurrence Point 3: Screening of Alternatives/Elimination of Alternatives	May 21, 2021
Concurrence Point 4: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Recommendation	May 21, 2021
LPA Consideration of Adoption by CAMPO Board	June 2021
Concurrence Meeting with Consideration of Concurrence on Points 5 and 6	Fall 2022

Project Update

Project Limits: Approximately 5 miles, to connect Downtown Raleigh and GoRaleigh Station with Purser Drive in Town of Garner (Attachment A).

Project Description: The northern terminus of the proposed project is GoRaleigh Station in downtown Raleigh, and the southern terminus is Purser Drive in Town of Garner. The proposed project includes dedicated BRT runningway improvements for a minimum of 50 percent of the five (5) miles of the corridor, this will be finalized during the next phase of preliminary design. The proposed project also includes transit signal priority (TSP) at signalized intersections and up to ten (10) weather-protected BRT stations.

Concurrence Point 3: Screening of Alternatives/Elimination of Alternatives

- Based on effectiveness of alternative to satisfy Purpose and Need.
- Based on environmental avoidance or minimization associated with each alternative.

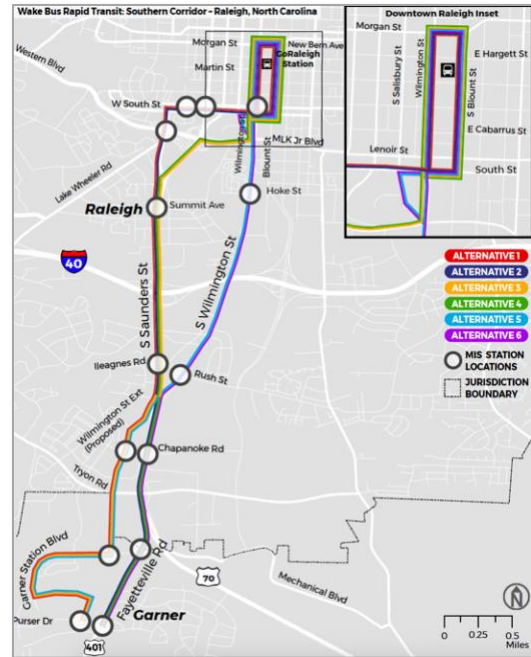
Summary

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

- Alternative 1: South Saunders/Wilmington Extension
- Alternative 2: South Saunders/Fayetteville Road
- Alternative 3: South McDowell/Wilmington Extension
- Alternative 4: South McDowell/Fayetteville Road
- Alternative 5: Wilmington/Wilmington Extension
- Alternative 6: Wilmington/Fayetteville Road

These alignments are best explained by splitting the corridor into two (2) sections: Northern Section and Southern Section. The alignments within the Northern Section would use either South Wilmington Street, South McDowell Street or South Saunders Street from downtown Raleigh to the convergence of South Saunders Street and South Wilmington Street at US 70. The alignments within the Southern Section would use either Fayetteville Road (US 70/US 401) or South Wilmington Street Extension (proposed new roadway) and Garner Station Boulevard to connect to Purser Drive in Garner.

At the beginning of the analysis to select an LPA, South Saunders Street/South McDowell Street (Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4) and South Wilmington Streets (Alternatives 5 and 6) were examined within the Northern Section of the corridor.



The Southern Gateway Corridor Study (SGCS), along with additional technical analysis in early BRT planning work, highlighted the potential conflicts with BRT running along South Saunders Street and benefits for BRT running along South Wilmington Street. Those highlights include:

- South Wilmington Street at Pecan Road serves as a major transfer point for east-west route connectivity, benefiting transit ridership and transit dependent populations.
- Lower traffic volumes along South Wilmington Street compared to South Saunders Street allow for more opportunities with dedicated transit infrastructure and speed and reliability.
- Right-of-way availability on South Wilmington Street is greater, allowing for better bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Right-of-way availability along South Wilmington Street compared to South Saunders Street minimizes potential commercial and residential property impacts and costs.

A full description of analysis is provided in the *Attachment B: Southern Corridor Alternatives Selection Memo with Appendices*. In addition to the highlights above, prior public engagement efforts through the Southern Gateway Corridor Study, MIS and Wake BRT Southern Corridor Kickoff in February 2020 provided support for South Wilmington Street alignment within the Northern Section.

Based on the analysis, along with public and stakeholder support, South Saunders Street was eliminated from consideration, eliminating Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 and leaving Alternatives 5 and 6 for further analysis. Raleigh City Council endorsed this decision on October 20, 2020. Further analysis focused on the Southern Section of the Corridor and included conducting a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for the future intersection of South Wilmington Street Extension at Tryon Road and additional outreach to stakeholders including Town of Garner and NCDOT.

From this analysis and outreach, Alternative 5: South Wilmington Street to South Wilmington Street Extension was determined to be the preferred alternative due to its ability to:

- Provide more opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connections;

- Provide opportunities for economic development including equitable transit oriented development;
- Provide a parallel facility to Fayetteville Road with lower vehicle speeds and lower traffic, as Fayetteville Road (Alternative 6) has high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds, presenting potential challenges for dedicated bus only lanes; and,
- Provide a feasible crossing at Tryon Road without the need for a grade separation.

Based on this evaluation, Alternative 5: South Wilmington Street to South Wilmington Street Extension appears to be the most suitable alignment for BRT along the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor and satisfies the Purpose and Need, outlined in Concurrence Point 1. The Town of Garner Council and Raleigh City Council both endorsed this decision in April 2021.

While all of the alignment alternatives carried forward for further study were determined to address the project purpose and need, the preceding analysis reveals that Alternative 5: South Wilmington Street to South Wilmington Street Extension has much greater potential than the other alternatives to accommodate projected growth and travel demand; create transit infrastructure that allows the BRT route, or other approved transit service, to bypass major congestion points; improve the attractiveness of service to experience ridership growth; and support local planning efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of life along the corridor. Alternatives 1-4 and 6 do not have the potential or ability to address the project purpose and need to the extent of Alternative 5, or they are more challenged by constructability, right-of-way, or land use compatibility constraints.

Concurrence Point 4: Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Recommendation

- This is a recommendation of the LPA for which the City of Raleigh will seek concurrence from the Cooperating Agencies.
- The recommended LPA would then be considered by CAMPO's TCC and Executive Board.
- The LPA would need to be appropriately integrated with the 2045/2050 MTP with an MTP amendment; however, the City of Raleigh can proceed with the concurrence process when the LPA adoption occurs.
- At this point in the process, the project alignment, mode, and termini must be established. Although not required, preliminary station area identification would be valuable to have. Runningway options do not yet need to be determined and should be determined by applying appropriate evaluations through the NEPA process. Station areas can be further refined through the NEPA process.
- If concurrence is not achieved for Concurrence Point 3 at the second concurrence team meeting, Concurrence Point 4 will be considered at a subsequent concurrence team meeting.

Summary

Alternative 5: South Wilmington Street to South Wilmington Street Extension, as described, is recommended to be submitted as the LPA to CAMPO. As previously mentioned, this is consistent with the decisions made by the Town of Garner Council and Raleigh City Council, which endorsed the LPA on April 5, 2021 and April 20, 2021, respectively. After these endorsements and upon concurrence, the LPA will move forward to CAMPO for its consideration of adoption and inclusion in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. A map of the described LPA can be found in Attachment A.

Attachments

- A. Project Map – Locally Preferred Alternative
- B. Southern Corridor Alternatives Selection Memo with Appendices