

1. Investigate SE quadrant connecting track at Selma. Ten mins (for PTC to reinitialize) is a significant delay. If reinitialization can be held to under five minutes and take place during station work (to include bus/van transfers to/from the east) then maybe it might be justifiable. However, still believe the numbers/scenarios need to be run as this connection can greatly simplify and enhance operations. This connecting track has been referred to numerous time in relation to the proposed Fayetteville route (as well as the one at Pembroke which has been built) to include the 2005 SE NC Study. I realize that the less than 90 degree quadrant may possibly present some issues but if so, have they been weighed against the other alternatives? From comments by Neil Perry and Craig Newton, 9 Jan 20 it does not appear that anyone has done research on this.

Response: I think we are actually projecting a longer-than-ten-minutes delay in Selma. The study considered two options (with different cost approximations) that are shown in the report. The research associated with these two alternatives are the limits of what was done for this study. The siding alternative in the NW quadrant was developed and recommended by NCDOT Rail Division. This alternative allows for the trains to serve the curved Selma Station platform and conduct PTC reinitiation/engineer transition while not blocking any main tracks. Ideally, if we are looking to extend service beyond Raleigh or Fayetteville as noted in the following comments, we would not want to run trains in a push-pull configuration... thus the loop track would likely be the preferred option. Ultimately, further conversations with the key stakeholders, NCCR, CSX, Amtrak, and NCDOT Rail would need to occur to determine the best course of action.

Reply: Certainly agree that we do not want to block a mainline for any longer than necessary. However, with the loop concept we would be doing just that by cutting across both tracks. I find it hard to believe that CSX will guarantee any kind of reliability in adhering to commuter type on time performance reliability (and the CCX coming on line soon will only make a loop movement less reliable). I realize that the Selma housing complex is an issue but for the cost of the other projects, especially the loop, it could be an opportunity to do something positive such as replace older units with improved ones (especially in areas such as energy savings, maintenance costs, etc). It could be a win for both the Selma complex and the proposed passenger service.* Might want to also compare costs with the Pembroke connection. Bottom line is that the SE quadrant connection, to include passenger access/boarding operations, needs a really hard look. As a "fatal flaw" we are still not out of the woods on this one - especially if we are looking at a greater than 10 minute dwell time.

* I don't want to get too carried away here but perhaps a master developer, along with the state, would be interested in the entire site if a comparable site could be found for the housing complex.

2. Raleigh day time layover storage (lack of). Consider extending trains into the RTP, perhaps even as far as Durham. Could it possibly solve storage issues as well as provide much better (one seat) access to key Triangle destinations?

Response: That is potentially a reasonable option to explore in Phase II of the study, and is associated with the idea of "extending" the rail service north and/or south. The scope of the study would need to be extended to determine capacity and operational needs along the NCCR between Raleigh Union Station and Durham Station

Reply: I assume that Triangle area commuter rail interests have already examined capacity along with their station requirements needs. With this, we are getting into a lot of overlap. Maybe we need to be planning for a single commuter entity. If we do that, we are back to looking at both commuter rail to Fayetteville as well as intercity (Piedmonts) trains to Fayetteville and eventually to Wilmington.

3. Common stops with proposed Durham to Selma commuter service. Will either proposal impact on the other in terms of demand projections, track capacity or train operations?

Response: This study coordinated with that one, but there was no "handshaking" on the ridership forecasts. This initial foray of a study considered a stand-alone service to simplify matters. Am We initially assumed that the Wake-Durham Commuter Rail Project would add capacity east of Garner. However, the NCCR recommended that we incorporate H-Line (Garner to Selma) capacity improvements in the Raleigh-Fayetteville study.

Reply: This blends with the issues noted in 2 above. Another potential benefit of a single commuter operation could be daytime equipment storage and maintenance operations.

4. Examine extending trains as far south as Robeson County. Train storage in Pembroke or Lumberton might be simpler than in Fayetteville. Pembroke is the location of a UNC member minority campus and the county is ranked second from the bottom (99th) in the NC Dept of Commerce poverty tier index (exceeded only by adjacent Scotland County).

There is already a recently built connecting track for future access to Wilmington - and service to Wilmington will expedite future service between Wilmington and Charlotte. Incidentally, the study notes that only the Eastern Route supports service to Wilmington when in actuality both can.

Response: The location of maintenance and storage facilities was detailed in the Phase II scope; it does appear that any new location would likely be removed from either terminus (Fayetteville and Raleigh). With necessary improvements, both corridors would be able to facilitate Raleigh to Wilmington service. Any extension beyond the current limits of the study would require an evaluation of capacity and operational needs. The CSX A-Line is a busy corridor and capacity would need to be added to extend trains beyond Fayetteville Station. Another consideration is ridership. The primary population center in Robeson County is Lumberton, which is nine miles east of Pembroke....The population of Pembroke would likely not provide high enough ridership projections to justify an extension into Robeson County w/o an extension to Lumberton.

Reply: It's a given that additional capacity will be needed below Fayetteville (Hope Mills) and I agree that Lumberton would be the ideal terminus for this extension (this gets us even closer to Wilmington and should help fire up the folks down there).

Maybe this is a good place to talk about population driving the train. I could not agree more. However, its infrastructure, along with zoning and land use plans that drive development and they combine to drive population density, location of activity centers/trip generators and hopefully orderly growth (that help make fixed guideway transit viable). However, if we continue to study this matter without soon putting a stake in the ground (its been 15 years since the SE NC 2005 study identified this corridor as viable) the developers will get out ahead of transportation infrastructure (esp in the Eastern and Western corridors) and we will continue to have to retrofit two lane country roads with additional capacity. Hopefully the Phase 2 RFP will be structured so as to get us into position to starting looking at project funding (some design and engineering?). Between recovery stimulus bills and the House's recently released HR2 it appears that this is a possibility. Raleigh to Charlotte has certainly benefited from the Obama ARRA funds and we need to build on this legacy (could there be a Biden-Harris Stimulus bill on the way similar to Obama-Biden Stimulus Bill?).

5. Consider the extension of existing NCDOT Piedmonts to Fayetteville (and eventually Wilmington) as opposed to new startups. Future state service to SENC (Wilmington) has been a stated long range objective for NCDOT for quite some time and certainly formalized with the completion of the 2005 SE NC Rail Plan.

Response: Yes; Neil Perry certainly made it clear that this is an ultimate objective in this corridor. The study, as previously noted, was fairly contained to the Raleigh - Fayetteville corridor.

Reply: Good for Neil! By pushing the route as far as Lumberton we make the next step to Wilmington easier to accomplish and although Wilmington is the desired end point Lumberton and Robeson County certainly gets us closer and they will certainly benefit (incidentally, US Census Bureau shows that July 2019 population estimates for Robeson and Wayne Counties are 131,000 and 123,000, respectively) . Also, and as noted above at Item 4, Lumberton to Wilmington gets us about a third of future Charlotte to Wilmington service as well as makes possible either a Fayetteville to Charlotte train or connections at Pembroke. And keep in mind that some of the poorest tier ranked counties in the state lie along these corridors including Cumberland, Robeson, Columbus, Bladen, Scotland, Richmond and Anson.

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