



NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Staff Report

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To: Executive B

Locally Preferred Alternative for Wake Bus Rapid Transit: Western Corridor

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Building upon the identification and initial refinement of bus rapid transit (BRT) alternatives studied under the Wake Transit Fixed Guideway Corridors Major Investment Study (MIS), the City of Raleigh is in the process of developing a BRT project linking downtown Raleigh and downtown Cary. The MIS generated a single alignment option for the corridor between downtown Raleigh and Jones Franklin Road. This alignment would use a combination of Wilmington, Salisbury, Blount, South, and Morgan Streets in downtown Raleigh and the existing alignment of Western Boulevard from downtown Raleigh to Jones Franklin Road. The MIS and further subsequent alternatives analysis carried out by the City of Raleigh and Town of Cary generated four (4) alignment options for the corridor between Jones Franklin Road and downtown Cary, which include:

- 1) Chapel Hill Road (NC 54): The Chapel Hill Road/NC 54 alternative would use Hillsborough Street and Chapel Hill Road between the intersection of Western Boulevard/Hillsborough Street and downtown Cary. This segment is approximately 4.1 miles in length.
- 2) Chatham Street: The Chatham Street alternative would use Hillsborough Street and Chatham Street between the intersection of Hillsborough Street/Western Boulevard/Jones Franklin Road and downtown Cary. This segment is approximately 3.1 miles in length.
- 3) Cary Towne Boulevard/Walnut Street: The Cary Towne Boulevard/Walnut Street alternative would use an extension of Western Boulevard on new location, Cary Towne Boulevard, and Walnut Street between the Western Boulevard/Jones Franklin Road intersection and downtown Cary. This segment is approximately 3.9 miles in length.
- 4) Cary Towne Boulevard/Maynard Road/East Chatham Street: The Cary Towne Boulevard/Maynard Road alternative would use an extension of Western Boulevard on new location, Cary Towne Boulevard, Maynard Road, and East Chatham Street between the Western Boulevard/Jones Franklin Road intersection and downtown Cary. This segment is approximately 4.7 miles in length.

A map of these alignment alternatives is provided as **Attachment A**.

The proposed project includes dedicated BRT runningway improvements for a minimum of 50 percent of the 8-10 miles of the corridor, depending on alignment, as well as transit signal priority (TSP) at signalized intersections and up to 15 weather-protected BRT stations. The eastern terminus of the proposed project is GoRaleigh Station in downtown Raleigh, and the western terminus is the proposed downtown Cary multimodal transit facility to be located in the vicinity of the existing Cary Depot. The downtown Cary multimodal facility will be implemented as a separate project from the Western Corridor BRT project.

The purpose of the Wake BRT: Western Corridor project is to improve transit service from downtown Raleigh to downtown Cary. This new transit investment would accommodate projected growth; create transit infrastructure that allows the BRT route, or other approved transit services, to bypass major congestion points; and improve the attractiveness of the service to experience ridership growth.

Consideration of a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for a high-capacity, fixed-guideway transit project involves three characteristics of a proposed project: mode, alignment, and termini. In its evaluation of modes, alignments, and termini along the corridor and between downtown Raleigh and downtown Cary in general, the City of Raleigh, in cooperation with the Town of Cary, determined that the Western Boulevard/Cary Towne Boulevard/Maynard Road/Chatham Street alternative (identified in **Attachment B**) is the most suitable alternative for adequately serving the travel market identified in the MIS and that satisfies the purpose and need for the project. This alignment provides direct access to more existing and future trip-generating origins and destinations along the corridor, accommodates more transit-oriented economic development potential, and provides access to more disadvantaged transit-dependent populations than the other alignment alternatives. It was determined that the proposed BRT mode along the described alignment and with the described termini is the most cost-effective and least intrusive mode that can achieve the purpose and need for the project. The BRT mode improves throughput capacity and transit service reliability to a level that is adequate to serve the existing and projected travel market without introducing significant impacts to the corridor.

On July 23, 2020, the Cary Town Council endorsed the segment of the recommended LPA that lies within the Town's limits. On August 18, 2020, the Raleigh City Council recommended the described alternative as the LPA to CAMPO for its adoption and inclusion in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and FYs 2020-2029 TIP. The LPA will be proposed by the City of Raleigh for concurrence by the Cooperating Agencies identified in the Wake BRT: Western Corridor Concurrence Plan by late-October and will be posted for a 30-day public comment period by mid-October. The Executive Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed LPA at its October 21st regular meeting and will consider action on the LPA at its November regular meeting.

Requested Action: Receive as information.