



NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Staff Report

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Agenda Date: 6/16/2021

Agenda Item: 5.4

To: Executive B

Locally Preferred Alternative for Wake BRT: Southern 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 Purser Drive in the Town of Garner. The MIS generated multiple alignment options for the corridor between downtown Raleigh and Purser Drive in Garner.

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 a combination of Wilmington, Salisbury, Blount, South, and Morgan Streets in downtown Raleigh and either S. Wilmington Street, S. McDowell Street or S. Saunders Street from downtown Raleigh to the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70. The alignments within the Southern Section would use either Fayetteville Road (US 70/US 401) or S. Wilmington Street Extension (proposed new roadway) and Garner Station Boulevard to connect to Purser Drive in Garner. The MIS and further subsequent alternatives analysis carried out by the City of Raleigh and Town of Garner generated six (6) total alignment options for the corridor:

- 1) S. Saunders Street to Wilmington Extension - utilizes South Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Saunders Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize the Wilmington Extension until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 5.06 miles.
- 2) S. Saunders Street to Fayetteville Road - utilizes South Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Saunders Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize Fayetteville Road until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 5.07 miles.
- 3) S. McDowell Street to Wilmington Extension - utilizes S. McDowell Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Saunders Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize the Wilmington Extension until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 5.28 miles.
- 4) S. McDowell Street to Fayetteville Road - utilizes S. McDowell Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Saunders Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize Fayetteville Road until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 5.29 miles.
- 5) S. Wilmington Street to Wilmington Extension - utilizes S. Wilmington Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Wilmington Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize the Wilmington Extension until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 4.78 miles.

- 6) S. Wilmington Street to Fayetteville Road - utilizes S. Wilmington Street to exit and enter Downtown Raleigh, then continues along S. Wilmington Street towards Garner. At the convergence of S. Saunders Street and S. Wilmington Street at US 70, this alternative would then utilize Fayetteville Road until reaching the southern terminus. This alternative is 4.78 miles.

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 five (5) miles of the corridor, depending on alignment, as well as transit signal priority (TSP) at signalized intersections and up to ten (10) weather-protected BRT stations. The northern terminus of the proposed project is GoRaleigh Station in downtown Raleigh, and the southern terminus is Purser Drive in the Town of Garner. The purpose of the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor project is to improve transit service from downtown Raleigh to Garner. 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 Purser Drive in Garner, the City of Raleigh, in cooperation with the Town of Garner, determined that the Wilmington Street to Wilmington Street Extension and Garner Station Boulevard 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, provides more opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connections, and provides access to more disadvantaged transit-dependent populations than the other alignment alternatives.

On October 20, 2020, Raleigh City Council endorsed the S Wilmington Street segment of the recommended LPA within the Northern Section of the corridor. On April 5, 2021, the Town of Garner endorsed the S. Wilmington Street Extension and Garner Station Boulevard segment of the recommended LPA within the Southern Section of the corridor. On April 20, 2021, Raleigh City Council endorsed the S. Wilmington Street Extension segment of the recommended LPA within the Southern Section of the corridor and recommended the described full LPA (S. Wilmington Street to S. Wilmington Street Extension and Garner Station Boulevard) to CAMPO for its adoption and inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and FYs 2020-2029 TIP. A map of the proposed LPA alignment is provided as **Attachment B**.

The LPA has been proposed by the City of Raleigh for concurrence by the Cooperating Agencies identified in the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor Concurrence Plan, and the City has received signification of concurrence by these agencies. The proposed LPA was posted for a public comment period on May 7th. The comment period will close on June 13th. The Executive Board held a public hearing on the LPA at its May 19th regular meeting. No members of the public came forward to speak on the item at the public hearing. The TCC recommended adoption of the LPA to the Executive Board at its June 3rd regular meeting, and the Executive Board will consider adoption at its June 16th regular meeting. The proposed Resolution of Adoption is included as **Attachment C**.

Requested Action: Adopt the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Wake BRT: Southern Corridor.