



Salisbury Station Connectivity Study

Prepared For:

Submitted By:



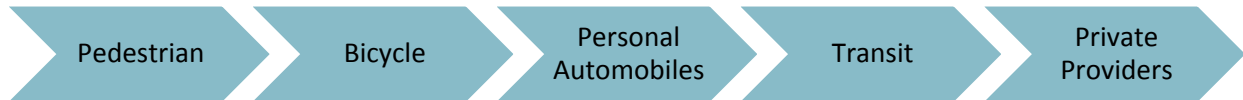
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is this study focusing on?

This study focuses on improving connectivity to and from the Salisbury Train Station. Utilizing the rail service at the Salisbury Train Station will be more appealing to passengers if the ease of the “first mile” and “last mile” of their trip is improved. This study considers the obstacles and opportunities for the following transportation modes:



What does the terms “first mile” and “last mile” mean?

The terms “first mile” and “last mile” are phrases that are used to describe the initial and final leg of a transportation trip. The “first mile” is the way that a passenger would access the Salisbury Train Station before boarding a train (i.e. as a pedestrian on foot, cyclist on bicycle, transit passenger on a bus, or driver in a personal automobile). The “last mile” is the way that a passenger accesses his or her final destination after departing the train.

Who are likely train passengers?

The Salisbury Train Station is located in the heart of Downtown Salisbury; therefore, the station attracts rail passengers from Rowan County. Potential passengers include residents traveling for work or leisure, students traveling to or from nearby universities, and veterans seeking health care at the Hefner VA Medical Center. Passengers have the option of arriving and departing from the station using a number of different modes of transportation. Understanding who potential passengers may be and the transportation modes that those passengers may take, helps to guide solutions for connectivity.

 <p>Residents living in the surrounding neighborhoods that can access the station as a pedestrian or on a bicycle.</p>	 <p>University students driving their own automobile, asking a friend for a ride, or by contacting a private transportation provider.</p>
 <p>Transit riders utilizing Salisbury Transit, Rowan Express Route, and RTS demand response service.</p>	 <p>Veterans traveling to and from the Hefner VA Medical Center for health care.</p>
 <p>Commuters living in Rowan County and working elsewhere who will access the station by automobile.</p>	 <p>Visitors spending leisure time at the many attractions and events in the region.</p>

What are the future rail initiatives?

NCDOT is working to enhance connectivity throughout the region on all modes. By enhancing connectivity, a greater catchment area will have access to multi-modal transportation opportunities.

The Charlotte to Raleigh Rail Corridor is being incrementally upgraded. NCDOT Rail is working to provide convenience and enhance rider experience.

One of the recommendations in the State Rail Plan is to add trips to the *Piedmont* Service; a fourth roundtrip will be implemented in 2017 with a fifth roundtrip in 2019. These added trips will result in train service every three hours, and will greatly improve connectivity throughout the region.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Purpose

The NCDOT Rail Division Operations & Facilities Branch hired WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff to study how connectivity could be improved at the Salisbury Train Station, which is depicted in **Figure 1**. It is recognized that the ease of a passenger's "first mile" and "last mile" will influence individual decisions on whether or not to utilize the Amtrak service at the Salisbury Train Station. This study identifies opportunities to improve connections to the Salisbury Train Station in an effort to bolster existing and future ridership, on both passenger train and local transit, and expand the potential ridership markets. This station planning effort is the second along the Raleigh to Charlotte corridor.

The terms "first mile" and "last mile" are phrases that are used to describe the initial and final leg of a trip.

Figure 1: Salisbury Train Station

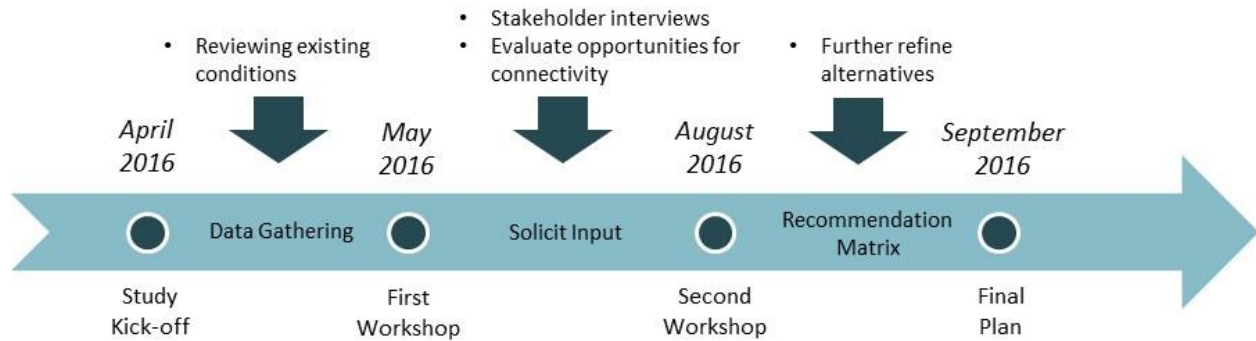


1.2 Study Process

The study process consists of a series of tasks, including reviewing existing information, developing potential connectivity opportunities, and further refining alternatives. Receiving feedback from key stakeholders is an important element of the study process. Two stakeholder workshops and a number of targeted interviews will be held to:

- Educate participants on NCDOT initiatives that will benefit the Salisbury Train Station, including improved passenger rail service in the near future;
- Assess obstacles that may prevent individuals from choosing to ride the train from Salisbury;
- Identify potential passenger markets and points of interest to enhance ridership; and
- Coordinate with local, state and private stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve connectivity.

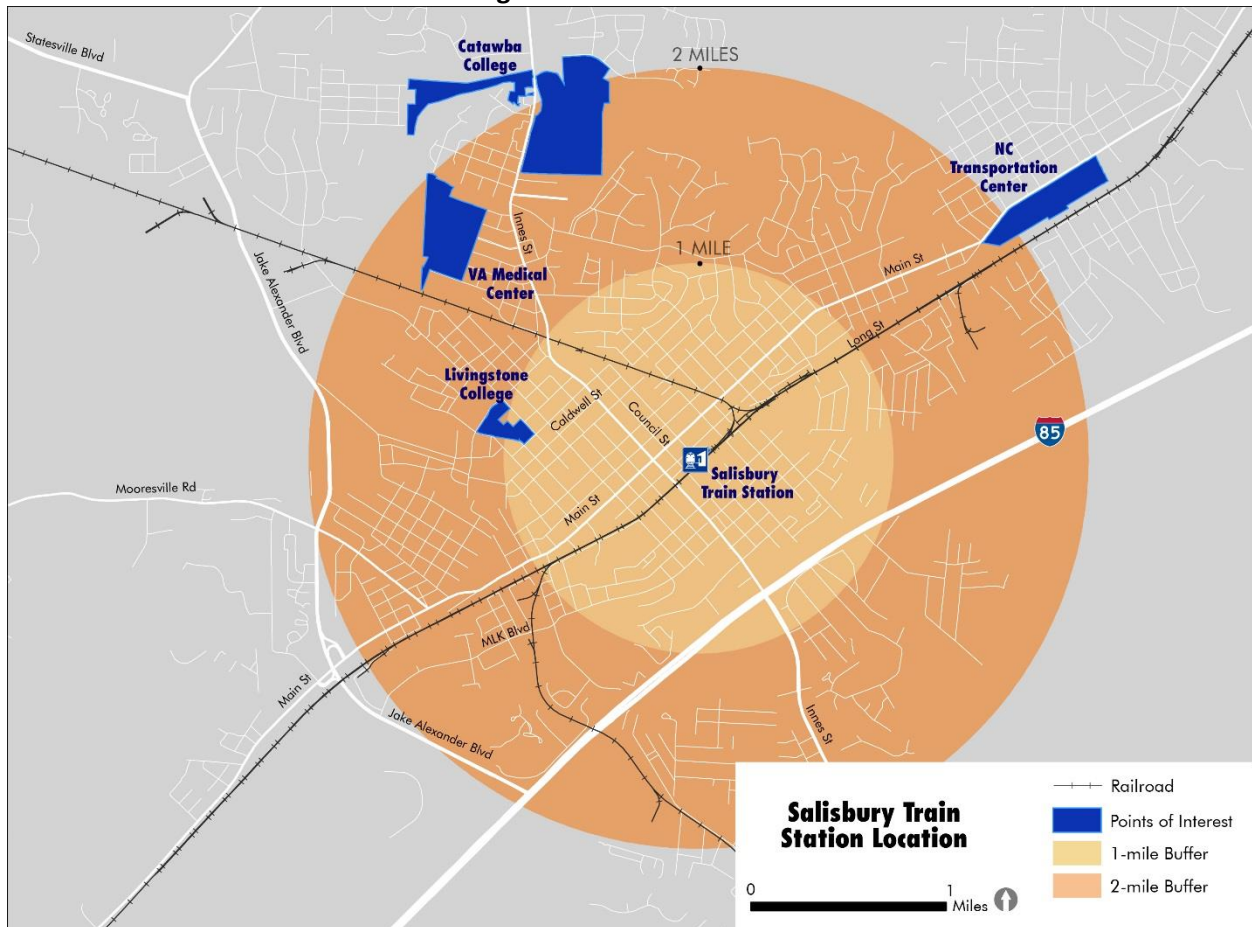
The components of each step in the study process are shown as follows:



1.3 Study Area

As shown in **Figure 2**, the Station is a short walk from shops and dining in Downtown Salisbury, roughly 1 mile from I-85, approximately 2 miles from Hefner VA Medical Center, and roughly 2.5 miles from the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

Figure 2: Station Location



2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Historic Depot

The Salisbury Depot is located at 215 Depot Street in the heart of Downtown Salisbury. The building was constructed in 1908 by Southern Railroad and after being purchased by the Historic Salisbury Foundation was renovated in the mid-1990s. The Historic Salisbury Foundation rents the grand waiting room and covered concourse as event space and has previously leased office space, in addition to leasing a portion of the Depot space to operate as a functioning train station. This study focuses on the Salisbury Train Station which is located within the historic Depot structure.

Passengers have access to an enclosed waiting room that is open daily at: 12:30AM - 3:15AM; 7:00AM - 10:00AM; 12:00PM - 3:00PM; and 5:00PM - 8:00PM. A station attendant is on duty one hour before and stays until one-half hour after all train arrivals and departures.

There are two tracks and one side platform at the Salisbury Train Station. In 2009, a new 600-foot platform and 300-foot canopy were constructed. Passengers access the single train platform via a covered walkway. The station and platform are ADA accessible.

2.2 Train Service

The station is currently served by three Amtrak passenger rail services: the *Crescent*, *Piedmont* and the *Carolinian*. *Crescent* travels between New York to New Orleans, *Piedmont* travels between Charlotte and Raleigh, while the *Carolinian* extends from Charlotte to New York City. Daily at the Salisbury Train Station, four northbound trains stop and four southbound trains stop. Train arrivals/departures (effective November 30, 2015) are show in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Train Times

Northbound		Southbound	
2:32 AM	<i>Crescent Train 20</i>	1:17 AM	<i>Crescent Train 19</i>
7:43 AM	<i>Carolinian Train 80</i>	9:14 AM	<i>Piedmont Train 73</i>
12:44 PM	<i>Piedmont Train 74</i>	2:14 PM	<i>Piedmont Train 75</i>
5:59 PM	<i>Piedmont Train 76</i>	7:24 PM	<i>Carolinian Train 79</i>

During FY 2015, Amtrak had 26,061 boardings and alightings at the Salisbury Station, which was 2.76% of the North Carolina ridership. As a comparison, during the same year the Charlotte Station had 184,911 boardings and alightings, Greensboro Station had 123,080 boardings and alightings, and Raleigh Station had 159,784 boardings and alightings.

2.3 Pedestrian Accommodations

The station is located in the heart of downtown Salisbury, where there is considerable pedestrian activity. While most of the sidewalks in the vicinity of the station are narrow, all of the streets leading to the station have sidewalks on both sides of the street. There are crosswalks and curb ramps at the intersection of Depot Street and Council Street. The Depot Street and Liberty Street intersection and Depot Street and Kerr Street intersection do not have crosswalks. The train tracks interrupt continuity of the sidewalks on Council Street and Kerr Street.

The Carolina Thread Trail is proposed along Innes Street a couple blocks south of the Salisbury Train Station.

2.4 Bicycle Accommodations

Amtrak allows passengers to bring bicycles onboard Trains 73, 74, 75, 76, 79 and 80. Reservations are required because bicycle rack space onboard is limited.

Passengers can secure their bicycles at the station on the decorative bicycle racks shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Bicycle Racks



There are two touring bicycle routes developed by the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation that run along Main Street two blocks from the Salisbury Train Station: Route 1 – Ellis Park, Salisbury, Granite Quarry, Rockwell and Gold Hill; and Route 5 – Salisbury Spencer, East Spencer and Gold Hill.

Based on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan for the City of Salisbury (dated July 2009), the Salisbury Train Station is on the 6.6 mile Historic District Tourism Loop. The Plan identified a number of bicycle priority streets and recommended different improvements.

2.5 Transit Service

The Salisbury Train Station is served by three Salisbury Transit Service fixed-routes and the Rowan Express deviated-fixed route. The Rowan Transit System (RTS) provides demand response services upon request to the Station for residents living in Rowan County and local towns.

The northbound and southbound trains headways compared to the transit headways for Monday through Friday are shown in **Table 2** and for Saturday are shown in **Table 3**. Transit service ends prior to the arrival of the *Piedmont* Train 76 (5:59PM) and the *Carolinian* Train 79 (7:24PM). It is impossible for passengers arriving on those trains to use transit to get to their final destination, such as using Route 2 to go to a local hotel.

The Salisbury Transit Service routes are shown in **Figure 4**.

The bus station is located one block south of the Salisbury Train Station on Depot Street. The bus station consists of three bus shelters along the street, as shown in **Figure 5**.

Buses pull to the side of Depot Street to allow passengers to board. Depot Street currently accommodates a low volume of traffic.

While relatively close in proximity, the bus shelters on Depot Street are not visible from the Train Station. Passengers arriving in Salisbury on the train who would like to use transit for the next leg of their trip may find it difficult to know where to go to access transit. Once in the shelters, a map of the fixed routes are displayed. Wayfinding / signage and additional printed route maps at the Train Station would be helpful.

Table 2: Train and Transit Times (Monday – Friday)

Amtrak	Salisbury Transit			Rowan Express
	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	
7:43AM	6:00AM	6:00AM	6:00AM	5:19AM
	6:30AM	6:30AM	6:30AM	6:19AM
	7:10AM	7:10AM	7:10AM	7:19AM
	7:40AM	7:40AM	7:40AM	7:19AM
9:14AM	8:20AM	8:20AM	8:20AM	8:19AM
	8:50AM	8:50AM	8:50AM	9:19AM
	9:30AM	9:30AM	9:30AM	
	10:00AM	10:00AM	10:00AM	
12:44PM	10:40AM	10:40AM	10:40AM	
	11:20AM	11:20AM	11:20AM	
	12:00PM	12:00PM	12:00PM	
	12:40PM	12:40PM	12:40PM	
2:14PM	1:20PM	1:20PM	1:20PM	1:19PM
	2:00PM	2:00PM	2:00PM	2:19PM
	2:40PM	2:40PM	2:40PM	2:19PM
	3:20PM	3:20PM	3:20PM	3:19PM
5:59PM	4:00PM	4:00PM	4:00PM	4:19PM
	4:40PM	4:40PM	4:40PM	5:19PM
	5:20PM	5:20PM	5:20PM	
	6:00PM	6:00PM	6:00PM	
7:24PM	6:40PM	6:40PM	6:40PM	

Table 3: Train and Transit Times (Saturday)

Amtrak	Salisbury Transit		
	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3
7:43AM			
9:14AM	9:30AM	9:30AM	9:30AM
	10:00AM	10:00AM	10:00AM
	10:40AM	10:40AM	10:40AM
	11:20AM	11:20AM	11:20AM
12:44PM	12:00PM	12:00PM	12:00PM
	12:40PM	12:40PM	12:40PM
	1:20PM	1:20PM	1:20PM
	2:00PM	2:00PM	2:00PM
2:14PM	2:40PM	2:40PM	2:40PM
	3:20PM	3:20PM	3:20PM
5:59PM			
7:24PM			

Figure 4: Salisbury Transit System

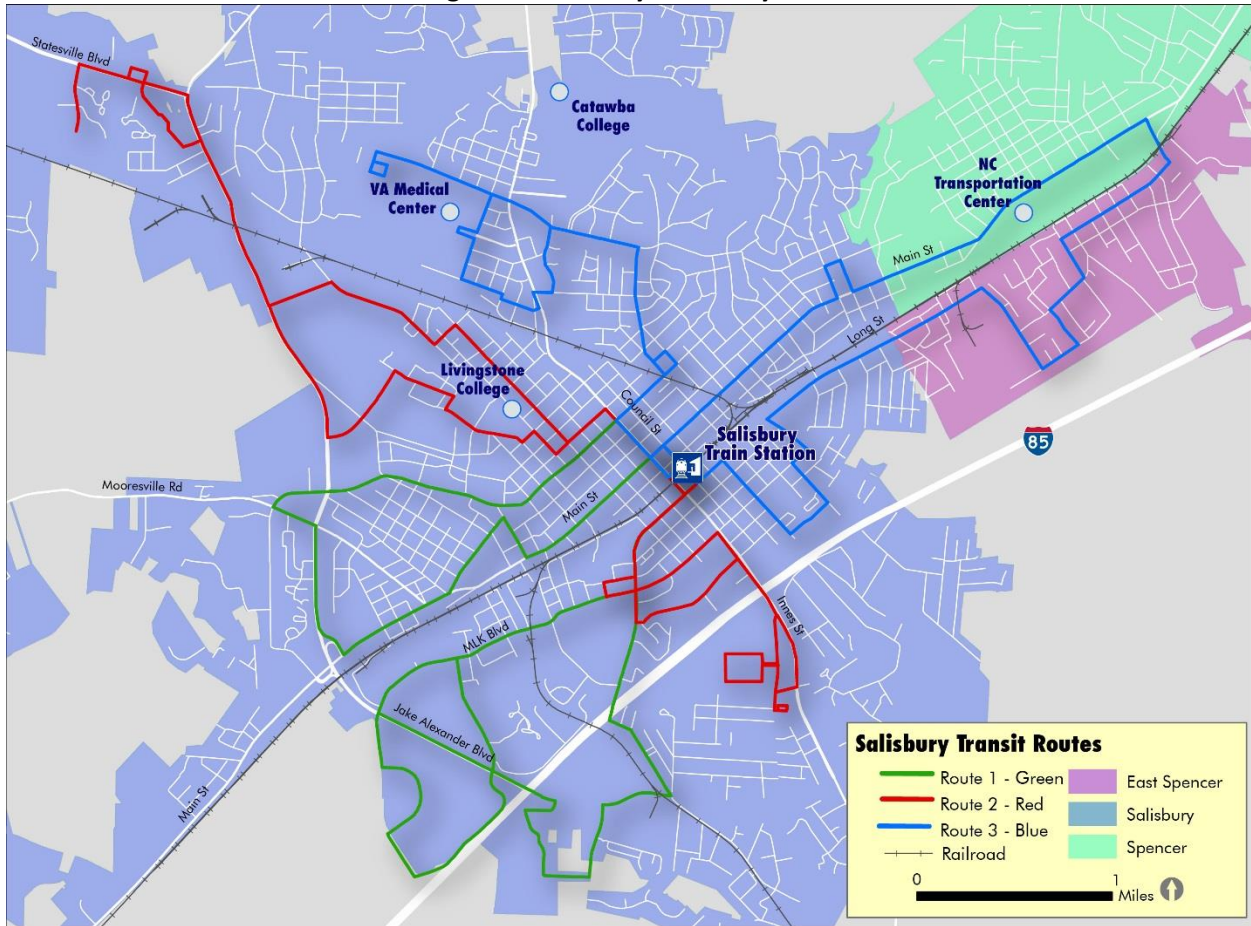


Figure 5: Depot Street Transit Shelters



2.6 Parking Inventory

Based on information provided by the City of Salisbury, there are 1,330 parking spaces within the 36 blocks around The Square (defined as the intersection of Innes Street and Main Street). Parking is free in Downtown Salisbury and there are a number of underutilized parking lots and on-street parking spaces in the vicinity of the Salisbury Train Station. A portion of the on-street parking is restricted to two-hour limits.

Adjacent to the Train Station to the north is a restricted lot with 38 parking spaces, as shown in **Figure 6**. This lot including two handicapped parking spaces, eleven signed “Rouzer Customer Parking”, and the remaining for use by Amtrak passengers.

Figure 6: Reserved Parking Lot North of Station



Directly south of the Train Station is a narrow parking lot between Depot Street and the train tracks with 56 unrestricted parking spaces. Drivers often complain about feeling uncomfortable about parking in this lot due to the number of people waiting for transit or aimlessly loitering throughout the day.

Figure 7: Reserved Parking Lot North of Station



Some of the once empty storefronts along Depot Street have recently begun to fill up due to economic development and revitalization efforts. As a result, the on-street parking in the area has also begun to be utilized.

2.7 Private Providers

Private transportation providers (Uber, Lyft and Taxi) have the ability to complement personal automobiles, bicycles, and public transit as a convenient way to arrive and depart the Salisbury Train Station. There are a few taxi companies operating in Salisbury, which are licensed by the City to operate. Only recently have Uber drivers started to appear in Salisbury.

Taxi companies utilize parking spaces in the parking lot north of the Salisbury Train Station because no other accommodations are available. A taxi pulling out of parking space is shown in **Figure 7**.

In addition to the traditional private providers, rental car companies provide another option to passengers. The local Enterprise can pick up passengers from the Salisbury Train Station who make reservations in advance.

Greyhound has a bus stop in East Spencer. The Greyhound stop is served by the Salisbury Transit System's Blue Route.

3 REGIONAL AND STATE INITIATIVES

One of the recommendations in the State Rail Plan is to add trips to the *Piedmont* Service; a fourth roundtrip will be implemented in 2017 with a fifth roundtrip in 2019. These added frequencies will result in train service every three hours, and will improve connectivity throughout the region. Anticipated train times are shown in **Table 4** on the following page.

Table 4: Train and Transit Times with Expansion

	Salisbury	Charlotte
4th Frequency		
Northbound (Charlotte to Raleigh)		
Train 80	Departs 7:10AM	Departs 6:30AM
Train 74	Departs 11:10AM	Departs 10:30AM
Train 76	Departs 3:10PM	Departs 2:30PM
Train 78	Departs 7:10PM	Departs 6:30PM
Southbound (Raleigh to Charlotte)		
Train 73	Arrives 9:00A	Arrives 9:40A
Train 75	Arrives 1:00P	Arrives 1:40P
Train 77	Arrives 5:00P	Arrives 5:40P
Train 79	Arrives 9:00P	Arrives 9:40P
5th Frequency		
Northbound (Charlotte to Raleigh)		
Train 80	Departs 7:10AM	Departs 6:30AM
Train 72	Departs 10:10AM	Departs 9:30AM
Train 74	Departs 1:10PM	Departs 12:30PM
Train 76	Departs 4:10PM	Departs 3:30PM
Train 78	Departs 7:10PM	Departs 6:30PM
Southbound (Raleigh to Charlotte)		
Train 71	Arrives 9:00AM	Arrives 9:40AM
Train 73	Arrives 12:00PM	Arrives 12:40PM
Train 75	Arrives 3:00PM	Arrives 3:40PM
Train 77	Arrives 6:00PM	Arrives 6:40PM
Train 79	Arrives 9:00PM	Arrives 9:40PM

Conceptual plans have been developed for a second platform at the Salisbury Train Station with pedestrian connections under the existing tracks. That platform will mirror the existing platform in length and design, and will better accommodate freight and passenger service.

Several concepts have been developed to expand the passenger waiting area at the Salisbury Train Station. This project is currently unfunded.

In Strategic Transportation Investment (STI), \$7 million has been identified for Salisbury Station improvements. Region and statewide rankings have been finalized and this project is on the cusp on being funded in the next STI. The next step will be for Cabarrus-Rowan MPO to assign local points. If this project receives significant local points, then it could be elevated in the process.

The State Rail Plan recommended implementing an Amtrak Thruway Bus Service to western North Carolina that has the potential to connect Salisbury to Asheville. The service would allow passengers to take a bus from the western part of the state and transfer to rail in Salisbury.

4 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

4.1 First Workshop

A half-day workshop was held on May 9, 2016 to expedite the collaboration process for this effort. The workshop provided an opportunity to educate stakeholders about rail initiatives that will impact future ridership at the Salisbury Train Station.

Data has shown that improving “first mile” and “last mile” connections is important to growing ridership. Multi-modal linkages are increasingly important, especially as rail service expands. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss potential connectivity enhancements to the Salisbury Train Station that could bolster existing and future ridership on passenger train and local transit. Representatives from various agencies reported on their future initiatives and desired wish list.

Figure 8: Walking Tour



The group took a walking tour of the station area and parts of Downtown Salisbury, as shown in **Figure 8**. The group was able to identify and discuss several transportation deficiencies.

Following the walking tour, the group participated in an electronic poll that was intended to help spur discussion about existing conditions and future needs. A participant taking the poll is shown in **Figure 9**.

During the polling activity, participants stated that the following were potential markets for rail:

- Veterans;
- College students;
- Tourists;
- Commuters;
- Seniors;
- Persons with disabilities; and
- School age children.



Figure 9: Electronic Poll

Many ideas emerged during the discussion of the workshop on ways to improve the connections to serve these markets, including the following:

- Improved lighting in the vicinity of the station;
- Wayfinding informing passengers where to go;
- More information for students and veterans regarding the train station;
- Additional information on trails and bike routes;
- A system that lets passengers know when a train or bus is coming;
- Extended service hours for Salisbury Transit System fixed-route buses on weekdays and Saturday;
- Possibility of relocating transit (Salisbury Transit System, Rowan Express and Greyhound) to the Depot to create a multimodal hub;
- Utilize rubber-wheel trolleys to circulate in Downtown Salisbury and provide additional connections to the NC Transportation Museum;
- Maximizing existing parking in near-term and preserving areas for parking for future use;
- Accommodations for private transportation providers;
- Opportunity to implement a bicycle library; and
- Partnership with Salisbury-Rowan Visitors & Convention Bureau and Amtrak to appear on Amtrak Vacations webpage.

The study team would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the workshop:

- City of Salisbury
- Salisbury Transit System
- Rowan Transit System
- Hefner VA Medical Center
- Livingston College
- Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Downtown Salisbury Inc.
- SAL-Rowan Visitors & Convention Bureau
- NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT)
- NCDOT Division of Public Transportation
- NCDOT Rail Division

Results from the polling activity are included in **Appendix A**.

5 NEXT STEPS

The study team will begin to set up interviews with the following stakeholders to discuss connectivity enhancements and marketing: Hefner VA Medical Center; Catawba College; Livingstone College; NC Transportation Museum; and Downtown Salisbury Inc. After learning more from these groups, the study team will meet with the NC Transportation Board Director, Salisbury Historic Society, and City of Salisbury.

APPENDIX A – POLL ACTIVITY RESULTS

Participants of the polling activity were able to answer eight questions from their smart phones or electronic devices. The open ended questions were free response and there were some duplicate answers. The responses were displayed and participants had the ability to vote the responses up or down.

1. Who are potential train riders at the Salisbury Train Station?

Responses	Upvotes	Downvotes
Veterans	5	3
Students, veterans, seniors, children groups travelers	5	1
College students	10	1
Business commuters	11	3
Seniors	8	1
Students, seniors, business, families.	6	2
Visitors, Charlotte Region Commuters	7	1
College students and young professionals	11	2
Tourists	9	3
Visitors	8	3
Commuters	10	1
School kids	4	4
Persons with disabilities	5	2
Seniors	1	0

2. What are walkability concerns?

Responses	Upvotes	Downvotes
Safety	8	0
Uneven sidewalks	4	0
Lighting	10	1
ADA curb ramps	5	0
Sidewalk width/access	6	0
Sidewalks need repair	6	0
Ped heads	5	1
Narrow sidewalks	3	1
Audible indicators	6	1
Ada compliance	4	1
Safety	8	0
Pavement markings	7	0
Sidewalk level and ADA	6	0
Wayfinding	9	1
Ending sidewalks that should continue	6	0
No crosswalks	10	0
Signage	9	0
Sidewalk condition	5	1
Directional signage	12	0
Continuity of the route	6	0
Too close to bushes	3	0
Signage and lightning.	1	0

3. What are bike-ability concerns?

Responses	Upvotes	Downvotes
Lack of bike lanes	8	0
Wayfinding	6	0
Bike Storage	5	0
Safety	6	0
Safety	5	0
Connectivity	8	0
Safe and easy bike storage	10	0
Information	7	0
Bike facilities (lanes, sharrows)	4	0
Pavement surface quality, cracking	4	1
Not many bike lanes on streets	4	0
Need share bike program	2	0
Bike lanes	1	0

4. Is a bike share program a reasonable goal for Salisbury?

Response options	Count	Percentage
Yes	7	35%
No	13	65%

5. Do the transit facilities meet the needs?

Response options	Count	Percentage
Yes	0	0%
No	19	100%

Responses

6. What improvements could be made to transit?

Responses	Upvotes	Downvotes
Change route times	3	0
Extended hours	3	0
Extended hours on service	7	0
Extend bus schedule	4	0
Times	4	0
More attractive facilities	5	0
Time changes at transfer	5	0
Sunday service	8	0
Better facilities- shelters	6	0
One-way street in front of depot	5	1
Express route to hot spots	4	0
Van service running at non-peak hours	6	0
Stop locations	3	0
Restrooms	7	0
Bring transit station into the Depot	15	0
More shuttle services	8	0
Blended service (multimodal)	6	0
Change route times	3	0
Transit schedules to align with train schedule	3	0

7. Is there enough parking for rail passengers to handle future demand?

Response options	Count	Percentage
Yes	5	25%
No	15	75%

8. Should accommodations be made for private providers?

Response options	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	84%
No	3	16%