



# Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) Implementation Blueprint



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## Introduction

The North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and its partners, GoTriangle, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) initiated a study to create a programmatic approach for identifying, prioritizing, and developing best practices for Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) deployment in the Triangle and across North Carolina. The Implementation Blueprint is the culmination of the study. The Blueprint documents the steps necessary to develop and implement a successful BOSS project across the state of North Carolina with the goal of enabling any transit agency or MPO to implement their own BOSS project with these partners.

## Planning for BOSS Operations

### Purpose and Need

The first step in developing a BOSS project is to determine the purpose and need for running buses on the shoulder. The need for BOSS typically originates at the transit agency which identifies routes with poor travel time reliability, a need for express bus service, regional connectivity issues, etc. NCDOT and the local MPO may also propose BOSS implementation. These agencies plan into the future as far as 50 years and can identify the need for BOSS projects through their planning and programming efforts. Specifically, NCDOT monitors the highways to identify current and future congestion. MPOs manage fiscally constrained plans to program the next 30 years of transportation investment. Some common reasons for implementing BOSS operations include the following:

- High congestion level in the corridor impacting bus schedule reliability
- Support for new express bus service strategy in the corridor
- Solution to a regional connectivity issue and, ultimately, a commuter solution for maintaining reliability through traffic congestion areas
- Interim measure until construction of managed lanes or widening of the highway
- Long-term transit solution for the corridor
- Short-term solution for non-typical congestion like in advance of construction projects

### Identifying Potential BOSS Segments

As mentioned above, an initial BOSS proposal can come from the transit agency, MPO, or NCDOT but the procedure for identifying potential BOSS segments may be different for each of these agencies. For example, the transit agency will identify BOSS projects through a transit lens which may stem from buses encountering frequent congestion on an express route. In addition, the MPO and NCDOT may be looking into the future and identify anticipated congestion on a future corridor and suggest BOSS elements be incorporated into a programmed project. Regardless of the origin of the BOSS proposal, the design and operating criteria in Appendix A should be met to justify BOSS and to build a successful system.

#### *Transit Agency Roles and Responsibilities in Identifying Potential BOSS Projects*

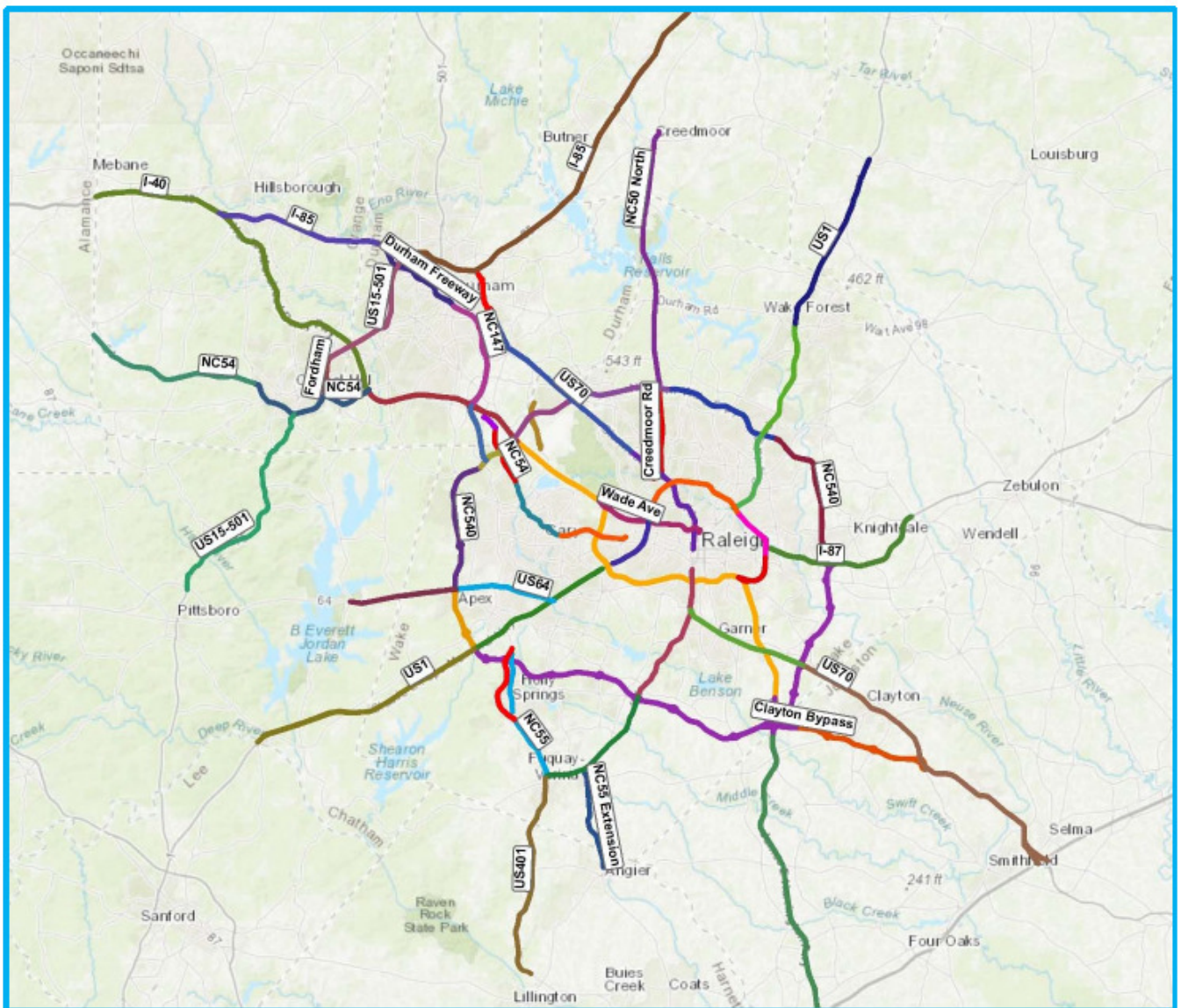
Bus on Shoulder is not a new concept nationally, but our peer review and engagement has found there is little documented guidance for how to approach developing and implementing BOSS. BOSS should be considered as an alternative for improving transit operations and reliability for transit agencies across the state. Transit agencies should evaluate existing transit operations prior to bringing the project to the MPO and/or NCDOT. Existing transit operations analysis should include evaluation of route level ridership, service frequency, hours of operation, travel time, on-time performance, vehicle miles, operating cost, etc.

They should also identify any recurring and non-recurring congestion/delay, and its impact on existing bus operations. This will serve as the foundation for baseline conditions and project justification. Additional roles and responsibilities of the transit agency will be discussed in later sections.

*Identifying Subject Roads and Conducting Suitability Analysis*

As part of this project, a systematic approach to identify subject roads and analyze their potential suitability for BOSS was developed. The first step relies on GIS to determine which corridors may be candidates for BOSS implementation. Elements considered to identify initial subject roads include transit ridership, volume, volume to capacity ratio (v/c), delay, and transit frequency. A second step focuses on sub-dividing the candidate corridors into unique segments to most accurately measure the level of transit service and congestion in each segment.

Figure 1 BOSS Subject Road Segments for Analysis



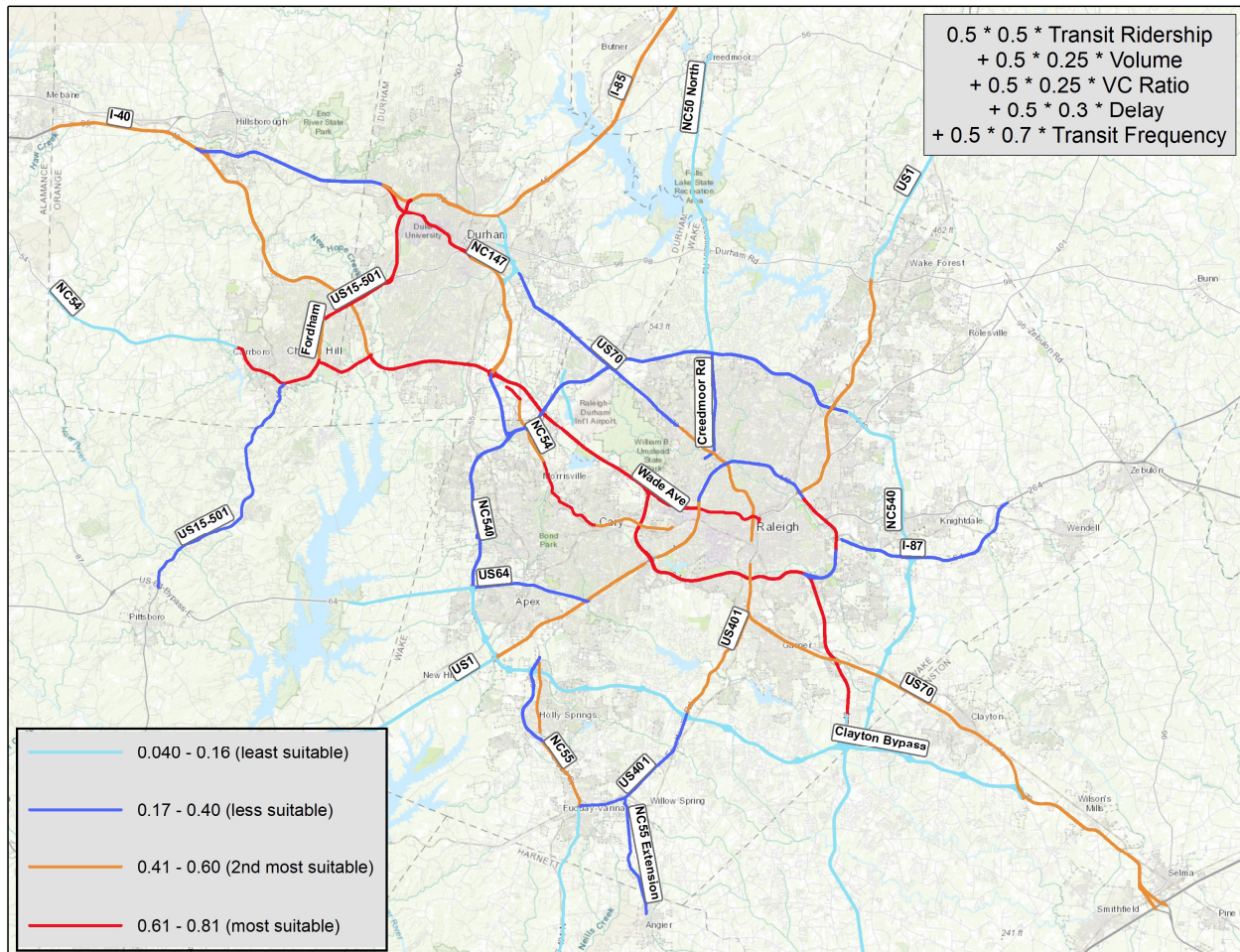


After segmentation, the subject road segments are analyzed according to the methodology described in detail in Appendix B in the BOSS Suitability Metrics Technical Memorandum. This produces an overall suitability map for BOSS implementation that combines travel demand data (transit ridership, travel volumes, congestion) with transit operations data (service frequency, travel time delay).

This portion of the analysis answers the question: “Where is BOSS likely to provide the greatest benefit, regardless of the cost or ease of implementing the project?”

For the Triangle region, the BOSS Corridor Suitability Map in Figure 2 shows those locations in red.

Figure 2. BOSS Corridor Suitability Map



**Opportunity Assessment: Incorporating BOSS Elements in Programmed Projects**

BOSS is meant to be a low-cost solution to reduce travel time and operating costs, improve on-time performance, and ideally, increase ridership. Incorporating BOSS elements into planned and programmed projects reduces the cost of BOSS which makes BOSS a cost-effective implementation project.

This assessment was undertaken with the goal of using GIS-level roadway data on pavement depth, shoulder width, and shoulder materials to screen the same segments in the BOSS Suitability analysis for ease of construction and for opportunities to incorporate BOSS elements into State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) projects. NCDOT staff with expert knowledge of the subject roads concluded that limitations in the GIS data from real-world conditions, and variations along the subject roads themselves

make field review of candidate segments much more important than GIS data in understanding true constructability.

With that in mind, this study recommends that North Carolina communities seeking to be opportunistic about BOSS deployment should look for ways to “nest” BOSS expansion projects within a larger strategic framework of improvements.

Within the Triangle, the ongoing effort to use Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and other technology to enhance freeway performance is a promising framework for the strategic expansion of BOSS. NCDOT’s approach combines roadway, interchange, and traffic management technologies to enhance travel time reliability. Deploying BOSS within the regional “ecosystem” of ITS improvements and projects can help to facilitate joint visioning and coordinated decision-making to address both state and local partner interests. Integration with ITS strategies and projects also serves to position BOSS deployment to serve core and secondary transit markets regionally.

In other regions of North Carolina, potential frameworks for BOSS investment could include:

- Two or more limited access roadways that connect and have improvements planned in the next 5-10 years
- A corridor planned for freeway conversion over a decade
- A transit expansion plan focused on particular corridors.

The STIP includes all planned and programmed projects for the next 10 years which are scored through the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) funding process. When reviewing the STIP, projects that could incorporate BOSS may be eligible for reprioritization and potentially reviewed for rescoping to accommodate BOSS supportive elements. The combination of these future STIP and submitted project priorities represent infrastructure, widening and operational improvements conducive to BOSS.

Finally, one key transit provider recommendation was that if the MPOs, transit agencies and NCDOT could reach an agreement on levels of forecast congestion and transit service that would require wider shoulders in project design, the BOSS network could grow proactively instead of reactively. The more 11 or 12-foot shoulders exist along major corridors to begin with, the more “BOSS-ready” a region will be.

## Establish BOSS Team

After the BOSS project has been identified, it is then critical to establish a BOSS team before proceeding with the development of a concept plan, design and operations of the corridor. The BOSS team should include but is not limited to:

- NCDOT
- Transit Agency(s)
- MPO(s)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- State and Local Law Enforcement
- Emergency Responders
- Traffic Incident Management Professionals
- Local Jurisdictions

It is important for these groups to identify the potential benefits and impacts of implementing BOSS operations. Early coordination helps define the project and implementation strategies shifting the focus from identifying obstacles when implementing BOSS to finding ways to overcome those obstacles.

The first meeting should fully explain the BOSS concept as well as previous experience in North Carolina. It may be beneficial to present case studies from across the country to demonstrate the BOSS concept’s safety record and benefits. This session is meant to be informative and give the initial findings of the

segment. Specific technical information and challenges associated with the study corridor should be shared at subsequent meetings with the end goal of developing potential alternatives.

## Development of a BOSS Concept Plan

After a potential BOSS project has been identified and the BOSS team has been established, the next step is to develop a BOSS Concept Plan. This is the responsibility of the original agency that identified the project; however, if the transit agency does not have the resources to complete this task, they should coordinate with the MPO and NCDOT for guidance and technical assistance. A concept plan should clearly identify the problem, demonstrate the need for the project and provide a conceptual design for the operations. It should also include a plan and schedule for the evaluation and identification of steps necessary for the pursuit of BOSS implementation.

If the transit agency is requesting BOSS, they should provide preliminary estimates of potential transit benefits such as running time savings, schedule reliability improvements, and increased ridership. If they are currently running buses on limited access facilities, they should analyze data from the corridor and determine if BOSS would be beneficial in terms of bus operating performance. However, if the transit agency is utilizing an alternate route to bypass congestion, they should review the current route performance and compare with the prospective BOSS corridor to understand the potential benefits. The concept plan must then be presented to the transit agency, MPO, and NCDOT for initial feedback.

## Feasibility Analysis

After the BOSS team has met and preliminary information has been provided, it is necessary to conduct a feasibility analysis consisting of reviewing existing conditions, forecasting future conditions, developing and evaluating alternatives, and ultimately, choosing the preferred alternative. Details on each of the analysis elements is discussed in the following sections.

### *Analysis of Existing Conditions*

An analysis of the existing conditions involves a review of the current roadway conditions. These include inventorying the shoulder widths and identifying pinch points, assessing pavement strength, drainage, and utilities, assessing the interchange weave suitability, and conducting a safety analysis. The feasibility analysis will likely rely on the expertise of the MPO and NCDOT.

#### *Shoulder Width and Pinch Points*

The shoulders must be a minimum of 10 feet for buses to safely operate on the shoulder; however, 12 feet is ideal as this width is consistent with travel lanes. Buses can merge back into the general purpose lanes at pinch points along the BOSS corridor as needed, but there must be a significant portion of continuous running in order to fully benefit from BOSS operations. The segment length for continuous running depends on the length of the entire corridor with BOSS and should be determined by the BOSS team on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Pavement Condition*

The shoulder pavement condition must be evaluated to determine if the shoulder is conducive to running buses. NCDOT is currently updating the pavement depth requirements and should be consulted to determine if the pavement is strong enough to support the continuous running of BOSS. It is also important to take note of the condition of the pavement. If there is a lot of rutting and evidence of wear and tear, repaving may be warranted to ensure the safety of BOSS. Drainage and utilities along the BOSS corridor should be inventoried to determine if there is a need for reinforcements to preserve catch basins as well as provide a smooth bus ride. If there are utilities obstructing the shoulder, buses will merge into the general purpose lanes to avoid pinch points.



### *Interchange Weave Suitability*

The number and complexity of interchanges is critical to the safety and benefits of buses on the shoulder. There are two scenarios for buses to choose when approaching interchanges. If the interchange is complex, buses may find it easier to merge back into the general purpose lanes to eliminate conflict with traffic at the on/off ramps. However, BOSS is permitted to utilize auxiliary lanes or cross on/off-ramps where it is safe.

### *Safety Analysis*

While safety may be a concern when discussing running buses on the shoulder, it has not proven to be an unsafe practice. It is advised that the transit agency and NCDOT monitor BOSS during the life of the project to ensure safety is not negatively impacted.

Additional and more specific guidance can be found in the BOSS Criteria document (Appendix A) developed for this study.

## **Development of BOSS Operating Scenarios**

After the existing conditions have been evaluated, operating scenarios can be developed. The operating and design guidelines (see Appendix A) should be consulted during the development of the scenarios to ensure compliance with the NCDOT requirements for BOSS. Developing operating scenarios should address the shoulder being used (inside or outside) and operating options for when the bus is permitted to use the shoulder (based on speed threshold).

The development of operating scenarios or alternatives should take into consideration the level of implementation required for the scenario. BOSS projects range from low-level implementation to high-level implementation. A low-level implementation project runs buses on the existing infrastructure, merging at any pinch points, minimal BOSS signage, and bus driver training. A high-implementation project is a full build out of the shoulder and pavement structures. The low-medium implementation piggybacks on programmed projects and only running buses on the shoulder where the shoulder has been previously widened and strengthened. Medium-High implementation involves widening all paved shoulders to 11 to 12 feet. The costs associated with implementation can be from \$1,000/mile to upwards of \$1million+/mile.

### **Alternatives Design Evaluation**

Upon the selection of potential BOSS scenarios, a detailed analysis will be needed for each alternative to determine potential benefits and costs associated with the improvements. The goal of the evaluation is to recommend a preferred alternative and present it to the BOSS team for feedback.

A simplified operating scenario design evaluation can utilize the following criteria:

- Capital cost;
- Operations and Maintenance (O&M) cost;
- Benefit-cost ratio; and
- Funding options.

*Capital Costs may include but are not limited to:*

#### *Engineering:*

Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) and requirements documents, design and contract documents, testing and acceptance activities, construction engineering, and environmental assessments.

#### *Shoulder reconstruction and widening:*

Repaving the shoulder, modifying drainage structures, adding/relocating guardrail, and complete reconstruction or minor widening of the shoulder.



### *Signage and striping:*

Likely installation of static signage only.

### *Public outreach and marketing:*

The transit agency using BOSS will need to market the new service in multiple ways to ensure general motorists are aware of BOSS. Additionally, this may be an opportunity to increase transit ridership by promoting how BOSS can improve transit reliability and reduce travel time for commuters

### *Transportation Systems Management and Operations:*

In lower-cost BOSS projects, advanced TSMO strategies are rarely included. In higher-cost BOSS implementation, ramp meters and dynamic signage systems may be adapted to support BOSS functionality. The potential benefit of ramp metering for BOSS is that slowing traffic on the on-ramp can provide a gap for the bus to traverse the on-ramp, traverse the auxiliary lane, and move back onto the shoulder. The potential benefit of dynamic message signs for BOSS is allowing the region's Traffic Management Center to provide information on shoulder blockages or any other message that may impact the bus operating on the shoulder in real time.

Operations and Maintenance costs may include but are not limited to:

### *Enforcement:*

Additional law enforcement presence needed to enforce the use of the shoulder by buses only.

### *Driver training:*

Transit agencies using BOSS facilities will need to conduct driver training to ensure bus drivers are comfortable operating on the shoulder

### *Incident Management Assistance Patrol(IMAP):*

NC DOT IMAP vehicles help identify and remove debris from the shoulders

### *Roadway maintenance:*

BOSS may require increased maintenance to ensure clear shoulders for BOSS operation.

### *Benefit-Cost Analysis*

Benefit-cost ratio of each alternative is estimated considering life cycle costs and benefits of the project.

The benefits to be quantified in the benefit-cost analysis may include:

- Travel time savings for bus passengers-in areas with very high levels of bus service, travel time savings for motorists may also be able to be measured;
- Safety benefits;
- Transit schedule reliability;
- Emissions savings; and
- Vehicle operating cost savings.

Availability of funding is an important consideration in the selection of the recommended scenario. This should be discussed with the BOSS team for building consensus during the feasibility analysis phase.

## Project Development and Implementation and Operating Procedures

After the alternatives have been evaluated and the recommendation has been presented to the BOSS team for their buy-in, the BOSS project moves into the development phase. The development phase includes a high-level environmental screening, development of the Implementation and Operations Plan, action plan, proper approvals and preparing for the implementation of the system.

### Project Development

NCDOT has received concurrence from FHWA to identify all BOSS projects as Type III projects which do not require a noise analysis or abatement measures. Refer to Appendix F for the letter concerning 23 CFR 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise and how it applies to BOSS projects.

### Statewide Implementation and Operations Plan; Regional Memorandum of Agreement

The Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) is the guide to design, implementation, and operation of BOSS projects in North Carolina. While NCDOT has developed a statewide IOP (see Appendix C), the IOP should be augmented with a Regional Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that is customized to the BOSS implementation effort in a specific city or region. The Regional MOA should include:

- Project Background, BOSS corridor limits, goals and desired outcomes of the BOSS project
- Description of roles and responsibilities of each BOSS team
- Standard Operating Procedures for BOSS (authorized users, speed protocols, vehicle interaction protocols, operational scenarios, incident management and response, enforcement)
- Summary of Impacts (infrastructure modifications and traffic operations and control, changes in roles and responsibilities, public outreach and education)
- Performance Measures (ridership, reliability, safety, frequency of use by BOSS operators, and qualitative data)
- Additional information: map of project limit and roadway plans (inclusive of signage and pavement markings)

The NCDOT IOP and the BOSS Operating and Design Criteria should be consulted during the development of the Regional MOA. It is important for this document to fully explain how the BOSS corridor will operate under normal conditions and during incidents or inclement weather. The plan should be presented to the BOSS team to ensure that everyone agrees upon the details of the planned project. It is also critical to clearly define the roles and responsibilities with each team entity in a formal meeting, ultimately leading to a contractual agreement between all parties.

### Action Plan

The purpose of the action plan is to document the steps to implementation and to present a timeline for the project. This should be shared with the BOSS team.

## Project Implementation

Preparing for implementation consists of obtaining approvals necessary to build the project such as any potential FHWA design exceptions. This will also involve marketing the new service to both transit riders and the public, driver training, and other associated start-up measures. Details for each of these tasks is provided below.

## Start-Up Measures

### *Marketing and Public Awareness Campaign*

Marketing and public awareness is critical to the success and safety of the project and is the one of the main responsibilities of the transit agency. Since many areas have not deployed BOSS service, the concept may be confusing to both the transit riders and general motorists operating in the corridor. It is important to ensure that riders understand the purpose of operating on the shoulder and when bus drivers are permitted to operate on the shoulder. Additionally, it is important that general motorists understand that only authorized buses are permitted to use the shoulder. Marketing and public awareness strategies are described in detail in the BOSS Messaging chapter of this study.

### *Driver Training*

Driver training must also be conducted by the transit agency prior to start-up. The driver training plan should include classroom and on-the-road training. During the driver training, it is crucial that operating procedures are clearly defined and expectations for shoulder use are in place (e.g. discretion of transit drivers to use the shoulder or not based on their personal comfort levels). These items are at the discretion of the transit agency but should be clearly defined in the agency's training plan.

## Monitoring the System

After implementation is complete, the next step is to monitor the performance of the system. Performance measures may include maintenance, enforcement, benefits, and desired changes (if any). Examples of measurements are listed below.

### *Maintenance of the shoulder*

- Keep the shoulders clear of debris and disabled/abandoned vehicles
- Monitor for wear and ride quality of the shoulder
- Ensure maintenance is performed often enough that BOSS service is not frequently disrupted

### *Enforcement*

- Law enforcement must continually monitor the shoulder to ensure only authorized users are operating on the shoulder
- NCDOT should keep law enforcement up-to-date on authorized users as well as any other changes associated with BOSS operations

### *Assess Benefits*

- Collect before and after travel time and safety data for comparison purposes
- Monitor safety, transit operations (on-time-performance), roadway operations (LOS) and bus ridership counts before and after implementation
- Survey BOSS users to have them rate their experience, and learn where they heard about BOSS

### *Desired Changes*

- Interview the bus drivers for feedback regarding speed, shoulder conditions, passenger reactions, as well as any challenges involving vehicles in the general purpose lanes
- Review routes to determine if there are other buses that could benefit from BOSS
- Assess if there is a need for a change in the bus schedule

## Conclusion

The steps outlined in this Implementation Blueprint are the culmination of meetings with the CAMPO BOSS Technical Steering Committee (staff from CAMPO, DCHC MPO, GoTriangle, and NCDOT), the consultant expert panel, as well as the literature review conducted on BOSS across the US. It should be noted that each BOSS project presents different challenges and circumstances. Every project should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The appendices provided in the next sections serve as additional resources to be used when developing a BOSS project. BOSS projects must remain consistent with the operating and design criteria developed during this study. It is imperative to consult early and often with the BOSS team to determine BOSS eligibility.



## Appendix A: BOSS Operating and Design Criteria



# Triangle Region Bus on Shoulder Study Design and Operating Criteria



October 2020

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## Introduction

The North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and its partners, GoTriangle, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) initiated a study to create a programmatic approach for identifying, prioritizing, and developing best practices for Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) deployment in the Triangle, and across North Carolina. This technical memorandum uses findings from the previous technical memorandum "Peer Review" to prepare minimum criteria and desirable criteria for BOSS facility design and operations on current and future roadways.

## Design Guidelines

The BOSS concept has been in operation across the United States for decades and most bus on shoulder systems follow similar design criteria. Design features to be evaluated include lane and shoulder width, use of the inside or outside shoulder, pavement condition, drainage and utilities, placement of rumble strips, signage and pavement markings, and access management and control. Additionally, there are elements such as the placement of park and ride lots and use of ramp metering which may enhance the bus on shoulder system. The following sections provide information on the assessment of these features and the ideal situation for bus on shoulder operations. Refer to Table 1 for the design criteria and recommendations.

### Lane and Shoulder Width

General purpose lanes are typically 12-foot wide with a 10-foot outside shoulder depending on the age and maintenance of the particular corridor. In an ideal situation, BOSS would operate on 12-foot shoulders adjacent to a 12-foot travel lane; however, this situation is not common. The majority of BOSS deployments run on a 10-foot shoulder with no safety implications. In areas with barriers such as bridge structures or guardrails, the shoulder should be widened to 11-12 feet to ensure the bus has sufficient space to operate safely and comfortably. Where a continuous shoulder meeting criteria throughout an entire corridor does not exist or is not achievable, BOSS operations may still be beneficial even with small segments requiring buses to merge back into the general purpose lanes to avoid pinch points.

### Inside versus Outside Shoulder

The decision to run buses on the inside shoulder versus outside shoulder and vice versa depends on the origin and destination of the BOSS route and the conditions of the shoulder. Most BOSS systems utilize the outside shoulder because it is typically wider and the buses are not required to navigate across multiple lanes of traffic to enter the shoulder. However, the outside shoulder is the designated breakdown lane and encounters on-ramps which present conflict. When determining whether to use the inside or outside shoulder, it is important to look at all elements of the shoulder condition and the planned BOSS route.

### Pavement Depth and Pavement Conditions

Pavement depth has not presented a problem for most BOSS systems. In Florida locations where BOSS has been implemented, shoulders are usually 3-inches in depth whereas the general purpose lanes are 7-inches in depth. In BOSS applications with a limited number of buses per day, existing shoulder depth is sufficient. With higher volumes of buses running daily, the shoulder pavement depth may need to be strengthened to avoid shoulder damage. Strengthening of the shoulders is often accomplished at a later date as part of a resurfacing project which happens roughly every 10 years. This approach minimizes the cost at the start of the project and allows for monitoring BOSS operations to determine if BOSS is warranted and should continue along the corridor.

Pavement conditions on the shoulder are important to take note of when planning for BOSS operations. A shoulder is sufficient for BOSS if the pavement is in good or fair shape. Poor pavement conditions including shoulders with deep rutting, inadequate skid resistance, or those not structurally sound can cause discomfort for the bus operator and passengers, damage the bus, and most importantly create unsafe



conditions for BOSS operations. In the case of poor conditions, the shoulder would require resurfacing prior to the start of BOSS operations.

## Drainage and Utilities

Drainage and the location of utilities (lighting poles, sign mounts, ITS infrastructure storage cabinets) should be assessed to determine if there are going to be issues with buses running on the shoulder. Although drainage is not typically an issue, Minnesota found that catch basins caused discomfort to bus passengers and heavy vehicle traffic damaged the basins over time. Reinforcement and improvement of the catch basins was a simple solution.

## Rumble Strips

Rumble strips are a safety feature of the shoulder to warn drivers they are drifting out of the general purpose lanes. When buses operate on the shoulder, the rumble strips can present an unpleasant ride for the bus operator and passengers. Because the rumble strips are a safety feature, they cannot be removed and can only be relocated. In NC, the rumble strips will be shifted closer to the edge line of the travel lane and possible narrowed to accommodate a wider breadth for buses.

## Signage and Pavement Markings

The signage and pavement markings for a BOSS system do not have to be elaborate and most systems use static signage and minimal pavement markings when implementing BOSS. The signage used indicates that buses are authorized to run on the shoulder, the beginning and end of the BOSS segment, and warning of pinch points. Signage along the corridor should be placed at the beginning of the BOSS corridor indicating the beginning of BOSS operations and at the end of BOSS corridor indicating the ending of BOSS operations. There should also be "Authorized Buses Only" or "Buses on Shoulder" placed at minimum every two miles to remind drivers that authorized buses are permitted to operate on the shoulder. Pinch point signs may be used to warn the bus operator to move back into a general purpose lane before shoulder narrowing; however, bus driver training emphasizing the pinch points for the BOSS corridor(s) is sufficient. Pavement markings, if used, are usually only at the start of the BOSS segment which read "Authorized Buses Only". Dynamic signage has been implemented in some states but it is more costly and does not appear to be more effective than static signage.

## Access Management and Control

Managing the integration of BOSS operations at on-ramps, off-ramps, auxiliary lanes, and interchanges can be a challenge. The majority of the time, the answer is simple: bus operators yield to other traffic that is merging on or off of the roadway. Where auxiliary lanes are present, buses will operate in the auxiliary lane for the length and then return back to the shoulder. Ramp metering can be installed to create a larger gap for buses to continue on the shoulder at on-ramps; however, this is not usually necessary for most BOSS systems. If ramp metering is already in place, transit signal priority may be used to hold traffic at the ramp as the bus approaches and clears the ramp. The location of park and ride lots is also important to BOSS operations. If the bus can easily exit the highway to stop at a park and ride lot and return to the interstate via a slip ramp, this improves travel time for the bus. Ramp metering, transit signal priority, and park and ride lots are not critical to the success of BOSS operations. BOSS operations are the most successful where there is daily gridlock, stop-and-go conditions with traffic moving at 15 mph or less.

Table 1. BOSS Design Features

Design Features	Minimum Requirements/Recommendations	Explanation of Requirement/Recommendations	Current Requirement in Existing IOP
Shoulder width (without barrier)	10 ft. minimum; 12 ft. desirable	Buses can safely operate on a 10 ft. shoulder. 12 ft. shoulders emulate general purpose lanes and provide the ideal space for bus operators. BOSS operations on narrower than 10 ft. shoulders does not provide sufficient space for the bus (9.5 ft.) to safely operate.	10 ft. minimum shoulder; 12 ft. desired
Shoulder width (with barrier)	11 ft. minimum; 12 ft. desirable	Shoulders with barriers such as guard rails leave no room for error for the bus operator. This causes discomfort and discourages use of BOSS.	10 ft. minimum shoulder; 12 ft. desired
Shoulder pavement depth and conditions	[Interim recommendation based on FDOT standards]  3 in. depth minimum; 7 in. depth desirable  Pavement must be in good or fair shape prior to running buses on the shoulder	In Florida, shoulders are generally 3-in. in depth and the general purpose lanes are 7-in. because they experience high traffic volumes. Overtime, heavy vehicles running on the shoulder may result in damage to the pavement.  Shoulders with crumbling pavement can damage the bus and create unsafe conditions for BOSS. Repaving would be required to run buses on the shoulder.  At the time these criteria were being developed, NCDOT had begun a process to evaluate and refine its pavement depth standards. We recommend that this criterion be updated to reflect the outcomes of this NCDOT process at a later date.	Not addressed
Rumble strips	Move closer to edge line of travel lane and potentially narrow rumble strip	Rumble strips cause discomfort for the bus operator and riders but cannot be removed because they are a safety feature of the roadway. Moving the rumble strips closer	Rumble strips located concurrent with, or within 6 inches of, pavement edge lines or audible longitudinal pavement markings

		to the edge line of the travel lane accommodates the bus	
Drainage/utilities	<p>Catch basins may require reinforcement/improvement over time</p> <p>Ensure no utilities (lighting poles, sign mounts, ITS infrastructure storage) are in the bus path</p>	<p>Catch basins may be damaged over time with buses travelling over them. If damage is noticed, the catch basins should be reinforced.</p> <p>If there are utilities in the bus path causing a pinch point, the bus would be required to merge into the general purpose lane prior to the utility.</p>	The IOP suggests that NCDOT will identify drainage structures that need to be restrengthened during the feasibility study of the BOSS corridor.
Inside vs. outside shoulder	Consider shoulder width, location of entry and exit ramps, segment length, and operating conditions to make this determination	<p>The outside shoulder is generally preferred to eliminate the need for the bus to weave across lanes to access the inside shoulder. The inside shoulder could be beneficial in any of the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when the bus is exiting left during AM/PM peak period;</li> <li>when the outside shoulder is narrow and the inside shoulder meets the 10 foot minimum criterion;</li> <li>when the BOSS segment is long and the bus will not encounter interchanges, etc.</li> </ul> <p>All elements should be carefully reviewed to determine the best option on a case by case basis.</p>	Not addressed which leads to the interpretation of outside shoulder use only
Frequency of on/off-ramps	Interchange spacing greater than two miles is desirable for optimal BOSS benefits	Interchanges may require the bus to merge back into the general purpose lane; therefore, if there are interchanges very close together, the bus may not benefit from BOSS dependent on the BOSS corridor length.	Not addressed
Signage and pavement markings	<p>At minimum: Static signage indicating the start and end of BOSS operations and authorized buses only approximately every two miles</p> <p>Pavement markings are not more effective than signage and therefore not required.</p>	The minimum signage has proved to be effective in most BOSS systems across the US. Signage present at on ramps is desirable to make oncoming traffic aware of BOSS operations. Dynamic message signs may be useful for alerting buses of shoulder blockages such as emergency	<p>Begin/Shoulder/Authorized Buses Only</p> <p>No Parking</p> <p>Watch for Buses on Shoulder</p> <p>Shoulder/Authorized Buses Only</p> <p>Pinch Point</p> <p>End/Shoulder/Authorized Buses Only</p>

	Desirable: Dynamic message signs to indicate buses are allowed on the shoulder and to warn buses of conflicts ahead	vehicles or broken down vehicles. While these are not necessary for the safety of the corridor, they can be beneficial.	No Pavement markings
Access management and control	<p>Limited access facilities such as interstates with controlled entrances and exits are ideal for BOSS operations</p> <p>Ramp metering at extremely congested on-ramps may be desirable but is not a requirement</p>	<p>Limited access facilities such as interstates and expressways with controlled entrances and exits are required for BOSS operations. Arterial BOSS presents conflicts with bike/ped, traffic signals, etc. Arterial BRT is not bus on shoulder.</p> <p>Ramp metering creates a space for the bus on shoulder to traverse the on/off ramps but is not required. Buses should merge back into the general purpose lane prior to ramps.</p>	<p>Roadway must be an existing freeway or expressway</p> <p>Facility must have full or partial control of access</p> <p>Ramp metering is not addressed.</p>
Park and Ride lots	<p>Easily accessible park and ride lots may encourage transit usage</p> <p>Off-line stations (bus required to exit interstate) - close proximity to an interchange and some level of dedicated bus on/off ramps to/from BOSS lanes desired</p> <p>Online stations (directly adjacent to interstate and exiting is not needed) - desirable but requires additional infrastructure</p>	<p>Park and ride lots are not required for BOSS operations. Park and ride lots for commuters who are using the BOSS corridor may encourage transit usage. If park and ride lots are easily accessible for the bus, the bus will not lose time navigating to and from park and ride lots. Online stations are the ideal situation because they remove the need for the bus to exit the freeway but this requires additional infrastructure and may be costly</p>	Not addressed



## Operating Guidelines

Standard operating procedures for BOSS systems largely mirror the operating protocols of the Minneapolis-St. Paul system due to the success and expansion of the system. Operating guidelines should be established for speed, operating hours, driver training requirements, authorized users, safety, arterial operations, incident management, law enforcement, and emergency services, maintenance, and start-up measures. The following sections provide best practices for operating a safe and successful BOSS system. Refer to Table 1 for the operating criteria and recommendations.

### Speed

Buses should only merge onto the shoulder during congested periods when the speed of the general purpose lanes slow to below 35 mph. When the buses are traveling on the shoulder, their speed should never exceed 35 mph. Additionally, buses should never travel more than 15 mph over the speed of the general purpose lanes. For example, if the general purpose lanes are travelling at 15 mph, the bus is only permitted to travel at 30 mph.

### Operating Hours

The buses should be permitted to use the shoulder during recurring and non-recurring congestion to fully benefit from shoulder use. This means that the bus would use the shoulder any time of day or night when the speed of the general purpose lanes drop below 35 mph.

### Driver Training Requirements

Driver training to ensure safe BOSS operations is critical to the success of the system and is the responsibility of the transit agency. Drivers should be trained in the classroom and on-the-road. The classroom training should consist of teaching the operating requirements for BOSS. This should be inclusive of speed protocols, operating hours, authorized users, handling of emergency situations that may occur while operating on the shoulder, reporting of blocked shoulders, etc. On-the-road training should begin in a controlled environment. This may include police escorts during initial training and implementation of the BOSS system. Depending on the capabilities of the transit agency, driving simulators may be beneficial prior to conducting on-the-road training.

### Authorized Users

Any entity seeking authorization to use BOSS must develop and implement a training program. All drivers must be trained prior to operating on the shoulder. During the start-up of BOSS operations, it is encouraged that only fixed route transit buses operate on the shoulder. If use of shoulder by other buses such as charter buses, school buses, or paratransit vehicles is warranted and approved by the facility owner, those entities must also develop and implement a training program and their drivers must be trained prior to use. There must never be an untrained driver operating on the shoulder.

### Safety

BOSS is proven to be a safe practice based on the track record of longstanding systems. Utilizing the proper speed protocols and driver training requirements, BOSS operations are safe. The use of four-way flashers while operating on the shoulder is encouraged. BOSS operating practices should allow the operator to exercise discretion to remain in the general purpose lanes if they feel unsafe using the shoulder. Buses that are approaching an on-ramp or off-ramp should carefully traverse the conflict point if possible or merge back into the general purpose lanes prior to the ramps.

### Arterial Operations

Arterial operations are more complex than limited access facilities such as interstates. Arterials generally have frequent traffic signals, on-street parking, hidden driveways, and other features that conflict with

shoulder operations. While freeway BOSS is a more straightforward concept than arterial BOSS, certain arterial roadways with significant levels of access control may still be promising candidates to consider. Arterial BRT, in which the bus has a dedicated travel lane, is preferable in corridors where the conflicts mentioned exist. Arterial BRT features also typically include: transit signal priority, fewer stops, ticket machines at stations to eliminate paying when boarding, low-floor buses and raised curbs at stations, plus wider bus doors and boarding from the front and back, speed up boarding.

HDR reached out to Minneapolis' Metro Transit to determine if there were established criteria for arterial BOSS operations. The Agency suggested that they utilize the same criteria for arterial BOSS operations as they do for interstates and freeways. Given their extensive BOSS system, there is the cultural acceptance and expectation to see buses operating on the shoulder everywhere after decades of operation.

It is recommended that the criteria for arterial operations be consistent with the interstate BOSS criteria with the addition of reviewing the number of intersections with public roadways per mile of road. This number will represent the "interruption index" and will be considered when identifying BOSS facilities. This criterion should give measurable representation of how often a bus on an arterial shoulder must navigate vehicle turning movements as compared to running on an Interstate, US, or NC signed road. The higher the "interruption index" the lower the facility will score in terms of prioritization.

### **Incident Management, Law Enforcement, Emergency Services**

Buses utilizing the outside shoulder are operating in the designated breakdown lane of the interstate facility. Buses are likely to encounter traffic stops, debris, broken down vehicles, and crash and incident scenes. As such, it is important to have an incident management plan specifically for bus on shoulder operations. The incident management plan needs to address the protocols for buses to report blockage of the shoulder and procedures for emergency situations involving the bus including a bus fire (inside shoulder and outside shoulder). Buses must always merge back into the general purpose lanes when approaching an emergency scene and when an emergency response vehicle is approaching the bus.

### **Maintenance**

Maintenance of the corridor is critical to the success of the BOSS system. If the shoulders are blocked by broken down vehicles and debris for an extended amount of time, the bus is unable to use the shoulder and the transit agency loses the benefits of shoulder use. Shoulders should be swept at the same frequency as the general purpose lanes and broken down vehicles and debris should be removed in a timely manner.

During all types of precipitation, bus operators should be trained to use their best judgment when choosing to merge onto the shoulder. If there is high water, bus operators should remain in the general purpose lanes.

### **Start-up Measures**

Prior to BOSS implementation drivers should be fully trained in a classroom setting and on-the-road. Public awareness of the new operation is a critical element of BOSS implementation. Public awareness and education should start a minimum of one-month before the service begins and is the responsibility of transit agencies. Advertisements should be made via radio, television, social media, and print materials, with translated materials available upon request, to inform roadway users and bus riders of the new BOSS service. Installing static signage at least one month ahead of implementation will ensure that the travelling public is aware that buses will be utilizing the shoulder and that only authorized buses are permitted to travel in the shoulder lane under specified conditions. The NCDOT should deploy dynamic message signs (such as those used to indicate road construction or closings) at least 2 weeks prior to buses running on the shoulder

Table 2. BOSS Operating Features

Operating Features:	Requirement/Recommendations	Explanation of Requirement/Recommendations	Requirement in Existing IOP
Operating hours	Anytime the traffic in the general purpose lanes slows to below 35 mph	This is the requirement for most systems. There are systems in the US which only allow BOSS operations during AM/PM peak periods but this excludes the use of shoulders during nonrecurring congestion.	Anytime the traffic in the general purpose lanes slows to below 35 mph
Maximum speed on the shoulder	35 mph	National standard	35 mph
Allowable speed differential between the shoulder and general purpose lanes	15 mph	National standard	15 mph
Authorized users	Identify transit agencies/bus operators - fixed route, paratransit, charter, school buses, etc who can use the shoulder Trained drivers only	There are various types of buses and bus operators. It should be discussed and in writing who the authorized users are and are not. All drivers All drivers utilizing the shoulder must be trained in collaboration with their state DOT	Fixed-route and paratransit as long as they meet the vehicle type requirement which is a standard 40' bus All drivers utilizing the shoulder must be trained in collaboration with NCDOT
Types of buses using shoulder	Standard 40' bus/ paratransit vehicles/ etc.	Standard 40' buses are generally the type of vehicle that uses the shoulder; however, if a transit agency operates articulated buses, these may be allowed if shoulder conditions permit.	Standard 40' bus
Driver training	Classroom training and On-the-road training	Transit agencies should train their drivers in the classroom and on-the-road. Driving simulators may be used in addition if the transit agency has the opportunity.	Classroom and on-the road training by the transit agency(s)
Requirements for shoulder usage	Encourage drivers to use the shoulder when speed conditions are met but discourage use during inclement weather or other unsafe conditions	Drivers should use the shoulder at their discretion when the conditions for shoulder use are met. Drivers should not operate on the shoulder if they feel conditions are unsafe or if there is inclement weather.	At the discretion of the drivers when conditions are met.

Audible/Visual	<p>Use of four-way flashers when operating on the shoulder</p> <p>Use of horn as needed to warn drivers of the bus operating on the shoulder</p>	<p>National standard</p> <p>Horn should be used as needed</p>	Use of four-way flashers when operating on the shoulder
<p>Approaching on/off-ramps</p> <p>Use of auxiliary lane</p>	<p>Bus operators may traverse the interchange if there is ample space to safely do so but must yield to exiting or entering traffic. If there is heavy congestion, bus operators may need to merge back into the general purpose lanes when approaching on/off-ramps</p> <p>Where auxiliary lanes are present, buses will operate in the auxiliary lane for the length and then return back to the shoulder.</p>	<p>This may be left to the transit agency during BOSS training; however, there is a general consensus that buses are permitted to traverse the interchange without merging if it is safe to do so. If there is heavy traffic, the bus operator should be encouraged to merge back into the general purpose lanes.</p> <p>Auxiliary lanes should be used by the bus if safe.</p>	<p>Buses may traverse the interchange if safe to do so or they may choose to merge back into the general purpose lanes.</p> <p>Auxiliary lanes are not addressed in the IOP.</p>
Enforcement of shoulder use	State and local law enforcement should enforce the shoulder use requirements	State and local law enforcement should be a part of the BOSS team to ensure they are aware of the rules of the shoulder, as well as who the authorized users are.	NC State Highway Patrol or other law enforcement agencies and the NCDOT Incident Management Assistance Patrol (IMAP) will coordinate concerning the implementation of an effective enforcement program to ensure the safe operation of freeway and arterial BOSS corridors.
Incident Management/Law Enforcement/ Emergency Services	Emergency response vehicles and law enforcement take precedence over BOSS operations. Bus operators are required to merge back into the general purpose lanes when approaching or being approached by these vehicles.	Buses operation the shoulder must always merge back into the general purpose lanes if approaching or being approached by emergency response vehicles and law enforcement	Buses operation the shoulder must always merge back into the general purpose lanes if approaching or being approached by emergency response vehicles and law enforcement
Maintenance needs	The shoulder should be swept as often as the general purpose lanes	If the shoulder is frequently used by buses, it is important to clear the shoulder at the same level as the general purpose lanes and maintain the integrity of the shoulder by performing proper maintenance structurally	The regional BOSS Team will establish, implement, monitor, and modify the maintenance policies, strategies, and procedures as needed. These may include items such as:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A shoulder cleaning strategy to ensure that the shoulder is kept clear of debris</li> <li>- An inclement weather strategy to ensure safe operations of BOSS</li> <li>- A pavement preventive maintenance strategy to ensure pavement integrity in a cost-effective manner</li> </ul>
<p>Start-up measures</p>	<p>At minimum, signage should be installed one month prior to the start of BOSS operations</p> <p>Use of roadside dynamic message signs indicating that BOSS operations will begin are encouraged</p> <p>Transit agency is responsible for advertising new service via television, radio, social media, and print materials</p> <p>Police escort for the first two weeks is desirable</p>	<p>Installing signage prior to BOSS implementation gives the motorists along the corridor notice of the change.</p> <p>Dynamic message signs announcing the new service are not required but are a best practice to inform drivers of the upcoming BOSS operations.</p> <p>The transit agency should use a variety of outreach methods to ensure the public knows about the new BOSS operations and understands that only buses are authorized to use the shoulder under certain conditions.</p> <p>This is being done in Florida to help with the jealous motorist issue in which vehicles will purposely block the shoulder so the bus can not bypass traffic</p>	<p>Each regional campaign should be a cooperative effort of NCDOT, local and regional transit agencies, and other public and private partners in each region. While the specifics of each program will depend on the region, each outreach program should utilize multiple communication channels well in advance of the implementation as well as upon commencement of BOSS operation or expansion. The regional BOSS Team will establish, implement, monitor, and modify the public outreach policies, strategies, and procedures as needed.</p>

## Equity Considerations in Planning for BOSS

During the development of the BOSS criteria, the project team discussed how to evaluate questions of equity in the deployment of BOSS in the Triangle and across North Carolina. As of 2020, BOSS is still a relatively new transit strategy outside of Minneapolis, with limited deployment in a few states. As such, we did not turn up any significant analysis or discussion linking BOSS and equity in the literature. Nevertheless, there are a few prisms through which we can look at BOSS to assess how it can contribute to a more equitable transit network.

### Consider BOSS Trips In the Broader Universe of Transit Trips

BOSS is primarily deployed on major highways that either already have shoulders, or can add them without significant impacts to homes and businesses. BOSS is most often used by bus routes that benefit from running on highway facilities. In most metro areas, buses that travel significantly on highways travel farther distances at higher speeds on longer routes. Since the economic motivation to travel further for high-paying jobs means that longer-haul routes are likely to contain a higher proportion of higher-income earners than the overall transit system in a given region, BOSS facilities are likely to be used by bus riders with a range of incomes, and not primarily transit-dependent riders. In the Triangle region, the only agency using BOSS at present is GoTriangle, which provides longer trips than GoRaleigh, GoDurham, GoCary, and Chapel Hill Transit. While serving riders across the economic spectrum, GoTriangle also has a larger percentage of higher-income riders than other agencies in the region. What does this mean for assessing BOSS and equity?

### Bus Service Planning May Play The Greatest Role in Determining Who Uses BOSS

In a transit network where BOSS has no inline stations and is primarily a strategy to improve travel time reliability, the demographics of who rides on BOSS facilities will be significantly determined by the locations served by the bus before and after it enters the BOSS lane, and not by any attribute of the BOSS facility itself. While the CRX bus linking Raleigh and Chapel Hill has park and rides near I-40 where BOSS is available, it is the connections to downtown Chapel Hill and GoRaleigh Station on either end that give low-income riders direct access to the service that spends the most time in the BOSS lane. Downtown Chapel Hill and GoRaleigh Station are both approximately five miles away from the nearest accessible BOSS lane segment.

### With Inline Stations, Traditional Title VI Analysis Is Recommended

At this time, as current BOSS facilities are located along limited access freeways where pedestrians are discouraged from walking, and there are no plans to add inline stations to any BOSS facilities in North Carolina. If that were to change, then transit agencies, MPOs, and NCDOT should work together to assess who is being served by the establishment of any bus stops established along a BOSS lane, and whether the access to BOSS services that was being provided was being made available equitably to individuals of all socioeconomic characteristics. The quantitative methods used for Title VI bus service change analysis would be appropriate tools for this work.

### Equitable Engagement and Transit Onboard Surveys Can Help with Prioritization

If a transit agency, MPO, or NCDOT wants to prioritize investing in BOSS on routes that have a higher proportion of environmental justice populations, an equitable community engagement process can play a role in identifying which street segments present the greatest on-time performance challenges for these passengers. A route-level transit onboard survey of bus routes serving candidate facilities could also help determine if investing in one BOSS corridor ahead of another is more likely to achieve that goal. That said, even on routes that have higher-than-average incomes than other transit routes, it is usually the



case that almost every route is serving some portion of passengers whose primary mode of transportation is the bus. Given that BOSS is a relatively low-cost investment per mile, ideally this analysis would primarily inform the *order* in which BOSS facilities were added, and not whether BOSS facilities were ultimately constructed.

### **BOSS Investment Is One Component of A Larger Transit Plan**

It is healthy for agencies to ask equity questions about any type of transportation investment. As BOSS is more widely deployed, agencies in North Carolina and nationally will need to develop tools to explore the equity implications of individual BOSS investments using some of the approaches described above.

Finally, at the programmatic level, it is also appropriate to look at the overall cost of investing in BOSS as compared to the entire transit investment program in an individual community or region. Compared to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which frequently approaches \$10 million per mile when using dedicated lanes, BOSS can often be deployed for \$1 million per mile or less, and sometimes for less than \$25,000 per mile. In a program that was also investing in existing stops, sidewalk access to bus stops, frequent service networks, and BRT, BOSS investment would likely be a relatively small portion of the overall transit investment package in the community.

### **Prioritization of BOSS Projects in North Carolina**

Bus on shoulder projects may be implemented for a variety of reasons including congestion resulting in poor travel time reliability, improvement of regional connectivity, interim measure until BRT, LRT, or managed lanes are constructed, or to support special events that are recurring in the area. BOSS is traditionally a low-cost, easy to implement solution; therefore, prioritizing BOSS corridors should start with the review of corridors with the minimum requirements for BOSS operations. As mentioned earlier in this technical memorandum, BOSS can be implemented if minimum requirements are met and over time, incremental improvements can be made to create a more advanced system if desired. Advancements may include but are not limited to, fully built out shoulders, park and ride accessibility, ramp metering, dynamic signage, etc. Below is a list of minimum criteria that must be met for BOSS consideration.

Minimum Criteria for BOSS:

- Limited access facility such as interstates and expressways
- Existing paved shoulders which meet the minimum width of 10 ft. and are in good or fair condition, or require minimal upgrades
- Buses are utilizing the facility or if not, there is evidence of a transit market present
- Corridor experiences recurring congestion

Generally, bus on shoulder is suggested by the transit agency utilizing or planning to utilize the corridor for bus operations. As such, the transit agency would present a project justification to the DOT for review. North Carolina is developing a process for prioritizing the need for BOSS operations as a way to be proactive. Determining the potential need should consider the minimum criteria mentioned above to ensure BOSS would be cost-effective and beneficial to transit service.

## Conclusion

The current North Carolina BOSS system operating on I-40 in Raleigh is highly utilized by the routes operating in the corridor and has improved travel time reliability. As such, the state is planning to expand the use of BOSS and incorporate it into their plans and policies as a transit improvement strategy. In order to identify potential BOSS corridors, the BOSS technical steering committee has undertaken several tasks to understand how their peers have expanded their BOSS network, develop minimum design and operations criteria to aid in the prioritization of BOSS projects, and determine if the North Carolina BOSS Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) needs to be updated based on the peer review.

The I-40 BOSS system was designed and is operating based on the MnDOT design and operating criteria established in the 90s. Minnesota currently has the most advanced BOSS network in the country with nearly 400 miles of bus on shoulder facilities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul urbanized area. Like the MnDOT system, the I-40 BOSS corridor is operating on a 10-foot outside shoulder for roughly 20 miles. The corridor has static signage roughly every two miles indicating that buses are allowed to operate on the shoulder as well as signage at the beginning and ending of BOSS operations and at on-ramps to warn oncoming motorists of the BOSS operations. Currently, the only transit agency utilizing the shoulder is GoTriangle and the only buses permitted are standard 40' GoTriangle buses. The bus drivers have been trained by the transit agency in collaboration with NCDOT, and are only allowed to operate on the shoulder during periods of congestion when the speed drops below 35 mph. Buses are not allowed to operate over 35 mph or more than 15 mph over the general purpose lanes.

Based on the peer review, the criteria developed in this technical memorandum is consistent with national BOSS standards. The minimum criteria was compared to the North Carolina BOSS Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) which outlines the bus on shoulder design and operating criteria, eligibility, and framework for deployment of BOSS developed in 2013. The design and operating criteria in the IOP are relatively consistent with other states as demonstrated in the BOSS design and operating criteria tables above with few elements not addressed and slight variations in criteria. As part of the next steps in the Triangle Region Bus on Shoulder Study, the variations will be reviewed by the BOSS technical steering committee to determine if the findings warrant updates to the current IOP. In addition, the minimum criteria for BOSS prioritization will be finalized and used to identify potential BOSS subject roads in the Triangle.

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## **Appendix B: BOSS Suitability Metrics Technical Analysis Memo**

# Memorandum

TO: Patrick McDonough, AICP and Jeff Dayton, PE (HDR)

FROM: Feng Liu, Ph.D., Xuenan Ni, and Alpesh Patel

DATE: March 24, 2021

RE: Task 5 – Screen Each Subject Road Using Multiple BOSS Suitability Metrics

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This memorandum summarizes the task work activities and associated findings for Task 5 – Screen Each Subject Road Using Multiple BOSS Suitability Metrics.

The objective of this task is to provide an initial screening of the potential BOSS roadways using a set of BOSS suitability metrics. This screening analysis involved the following work activities:

- Developed the BOSS suitability metrics
- Developed the BOSS suitability weighting schema
- Analyzed the data to quantify the BOSS suitability metrics, including those from the Triangle Regional Model (TRM), the CAMPO and DCHC MPOs, and transit agencies
- Segmented the BOSS subject roads for analysis
- Scored the BOSS subject road segments
- Prepared the maps of the BOSS suitability metrics and final weighted scores.

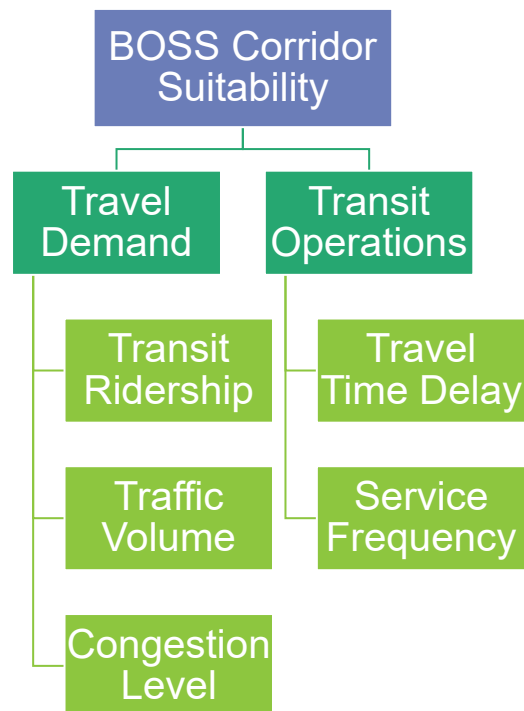
In the following, we summarize the results and findings for the analyses.

## BOSS Suitability Metrics

The BOSS suitability metrics are grouped into two dimensions: travel demand and transit operations (see Figure 1). The travel demand dimension consists of transit ridership, traffic volume, and congestion level, while transit operations include travel time delay and transit service frequency. This final set of five metrics incorporated the feedback and comments made by stakeholders, including those made in the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) meeting in December 2020.

- Transit ridership represents transit demand for regional travel markets that will use individual BOSS subject roadways, with higher transit ridership showing the higher potential for the needs of BOSS services.
- Traffic volume demonstrates the travel demand in terms of vehicular modes among major origins-destinations in the region, which utilizes BOSS subject roadways and shows the potential for transit demand in the future.
- Congestion level, as measured in terms of volume-capacity ratios for the AM peak period, is used as an indicator for the potential benefits of the BOSS services: the higher the congestion, the higher the potential benefits to provide a BOSS service.
- Travel time delay, in terms of daily total delays, is a proxy measure for affecting transit on-time performance – the more delay, the higher the potential for a BOSS service.
- Transit service frequency specified in the 2035 horizon year of the CAMPO/DCHC MPO MTP measures transit planners’ perception of the future transit demand among major activity centers in the region, with more frequent services indicating the higher potential needs for BOSS services.

**Figure 1. BOSS Suitability Metrics**





The initial set of metrics included transit on-time performance metrics and pavement conditions (width and depth). Based on the feedback from the TSC members, the transit on-time performance metrics were replaced by travel time delay, so as to minimize the issue related to intentionally scheduling transit services to account for potential delays. The pavement condition metrics were moved to Task 6 for further consideration, based on the TSC meeting discussions.

The TRM model data were used to generate the BOSS suitability metrics, with 2035 as the planning horizon year for this study. The BOSS suitability analysis included the following process:

- BOSS subject roads were identified in Task 4 of the study (see Figure 2). The BOSS subject roads were segmented into operational segments for analysis (see Figure 3).
- Each of the BOSS suitability metrics was generated for each segment using the data assembled from the TRM model and other sources.
- Values of metrics were normalized to index scores with a 0-1 range, typically using the largest value of all segments.
- BOSS suitability metrics were weighted based on the weights provided in Table 1, which were generated as part of discussion among stakeholders and consultants.
- Maps of individual metrics and total weighted metrics were prepared to show the distribution of suitability for the BOSS services in the region.

The segmentation of BOSS subject roads went through a couple of iterations. Initially, the segmentation considered a sufficient length needed for the potential state funding such as SPOT/STI. Later, the initial segments were further split into smaller segments to account for differentiations in roadway characteristics on a long roadway, based on the CAMPO and TSC comments. Examples of further splitting include NC 54, US 401, and I-440.

**Table 1. Model Performance by Volume Groups**

Dimension	Metric	Metric Weight (within dimension)	Dimension Weight (total suitability)
Travel Demand	Transit Ridership	50%	50%
	Traffic Volume	25%	
	Congestion Level (Volume-to-capacity ratio)	25%	
Transit Operations	Travel Time Delay	30%	50%
	Service Frequency	70%	

## Findings

Figures 4 through 8 display the index scores of individual suitability metrics while Figure 9 exhibits the total weighted scores of all suitability metrics. The total weighted scores show most suitable to least suitable corridors to potentially deploy BOSS resulting from Task 5. Major findings from Task 5 include:

- Primary BOSS expansion opportunities occur mostly along major interstates which connect core destinations in the region, such as University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Duke University, Downtown Durham, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina State University, and Downtown Raleigh. These destinations anchor mature, core transit markets and therefore validate suitability to operate BOSS. These segments total 75 miles.
- Second tier BOSS expansion opportunities link downtowns to core suburban markets through US 1, NC 54, US 70 and US 401. In the future, Park and Ride facilities strategically located at the intersection of these routes and heavily traveled secondary facilities could serve as collection areas during peak commute periods allowing suburban commuters to opt for transit service. Some of these routes coincide with proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) locations in the Wake County Transit Plan (WCTP) providing an additional dimension of short and longer distance choice rider service opportunity. These segments total 139 miles.
- A prioritization or narrowing of locations should stem from factors outside these metrics, driven by infrastructure factors which impact deployment such as constructability, design/access feasibility, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects or other planned regional operational improvements.

Figure 2. BOSS Subject Roads

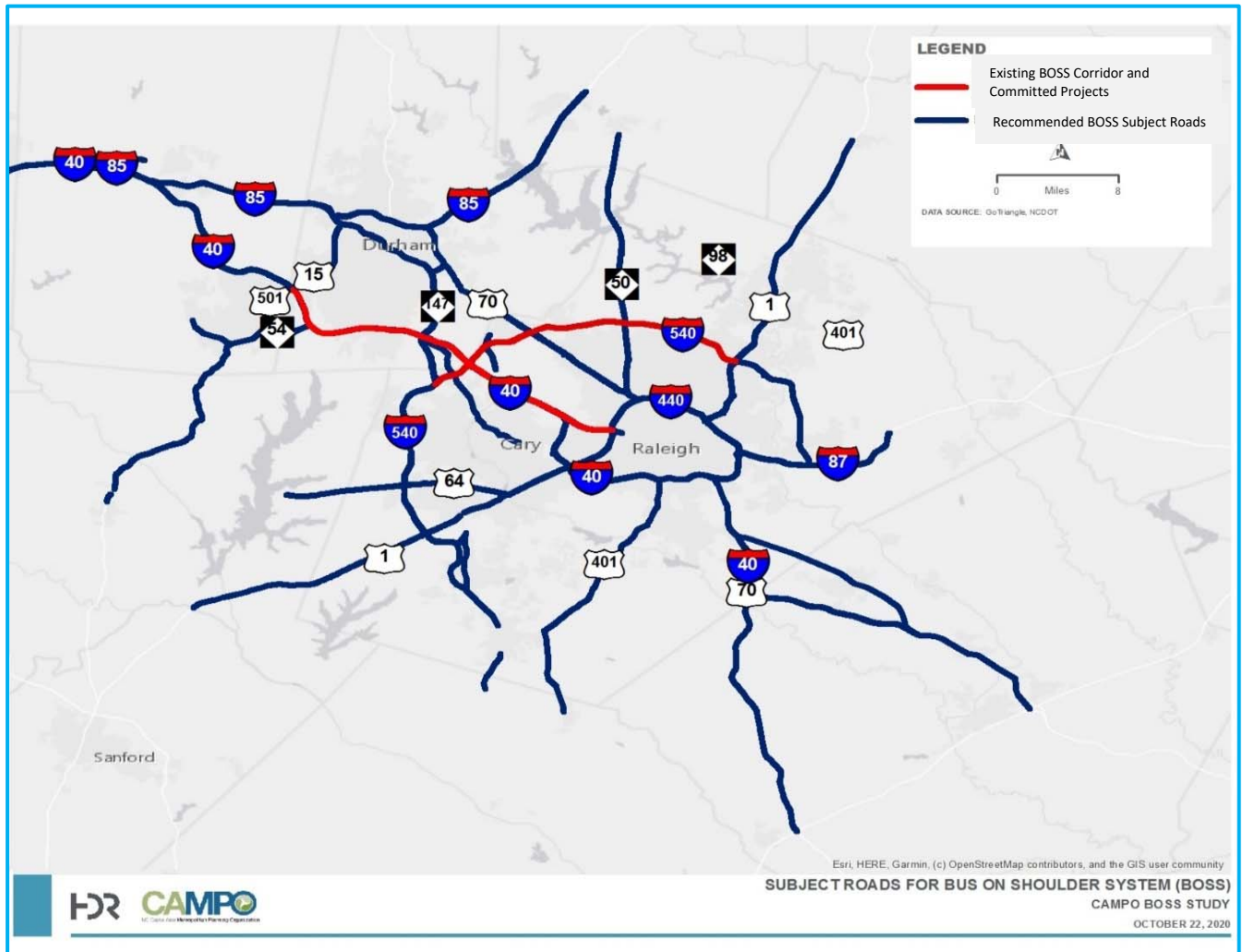


Figure 3. BOSS Subject Road Segmentation

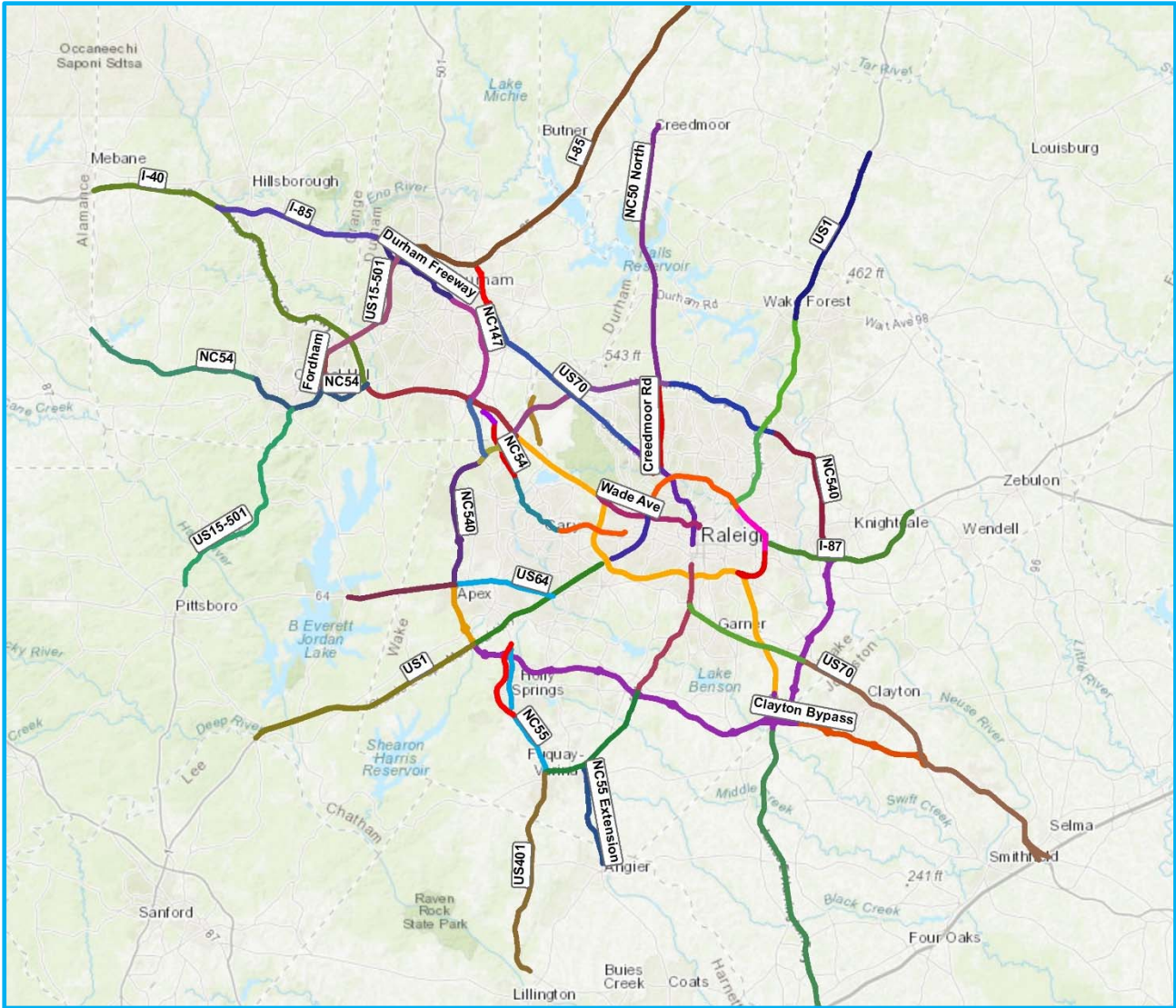




Figure 4. Transit Ridership Metric Score

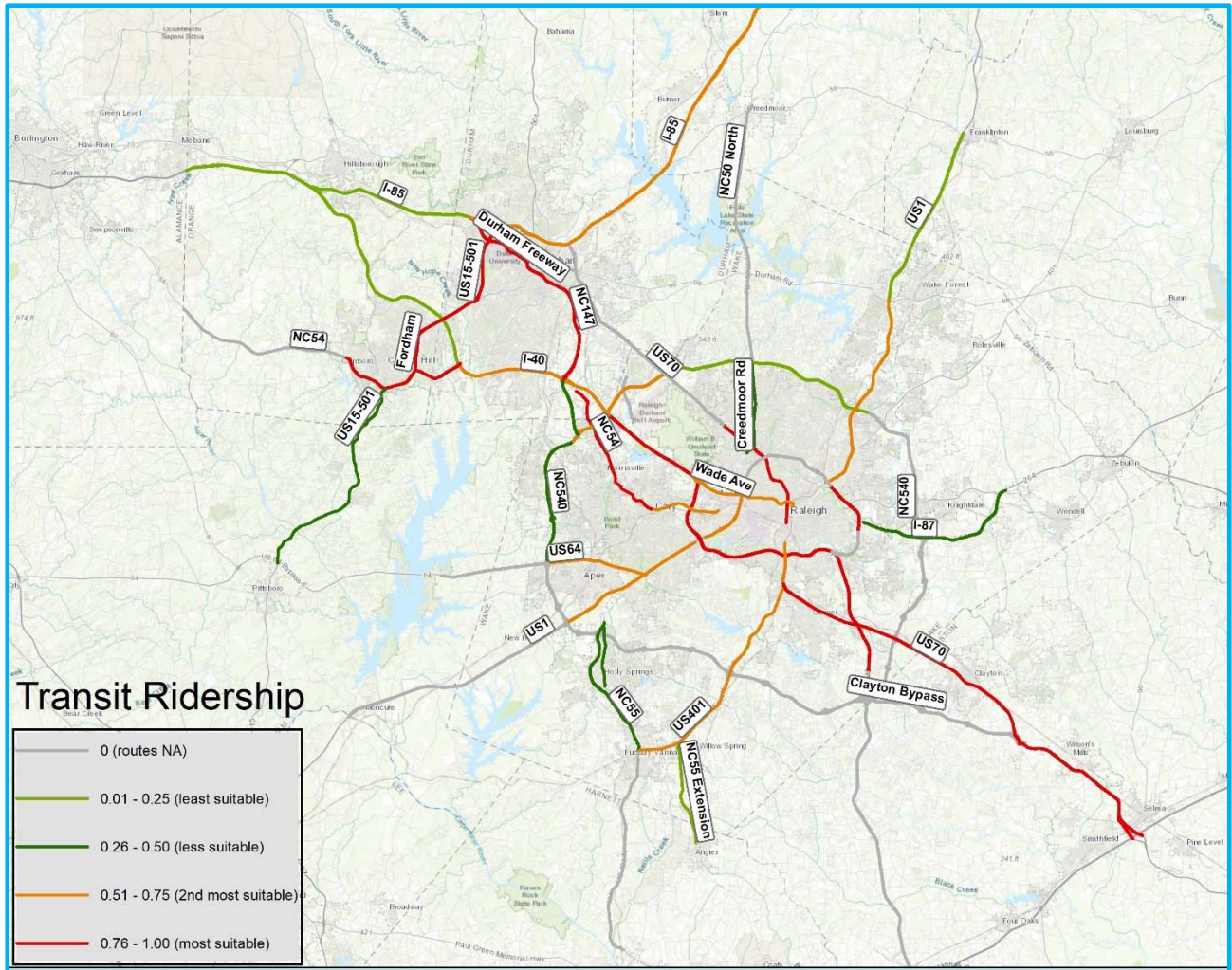


Table 2. Ridership Suitability Metric Score

Ridership Metric Index	Suitability
0.01 - 0.25	Least
0.26 - 0.50	↓
0.51 - 0.75	
0.76 - 1.00	

Figure 5. Average Daily Volume Metric Score

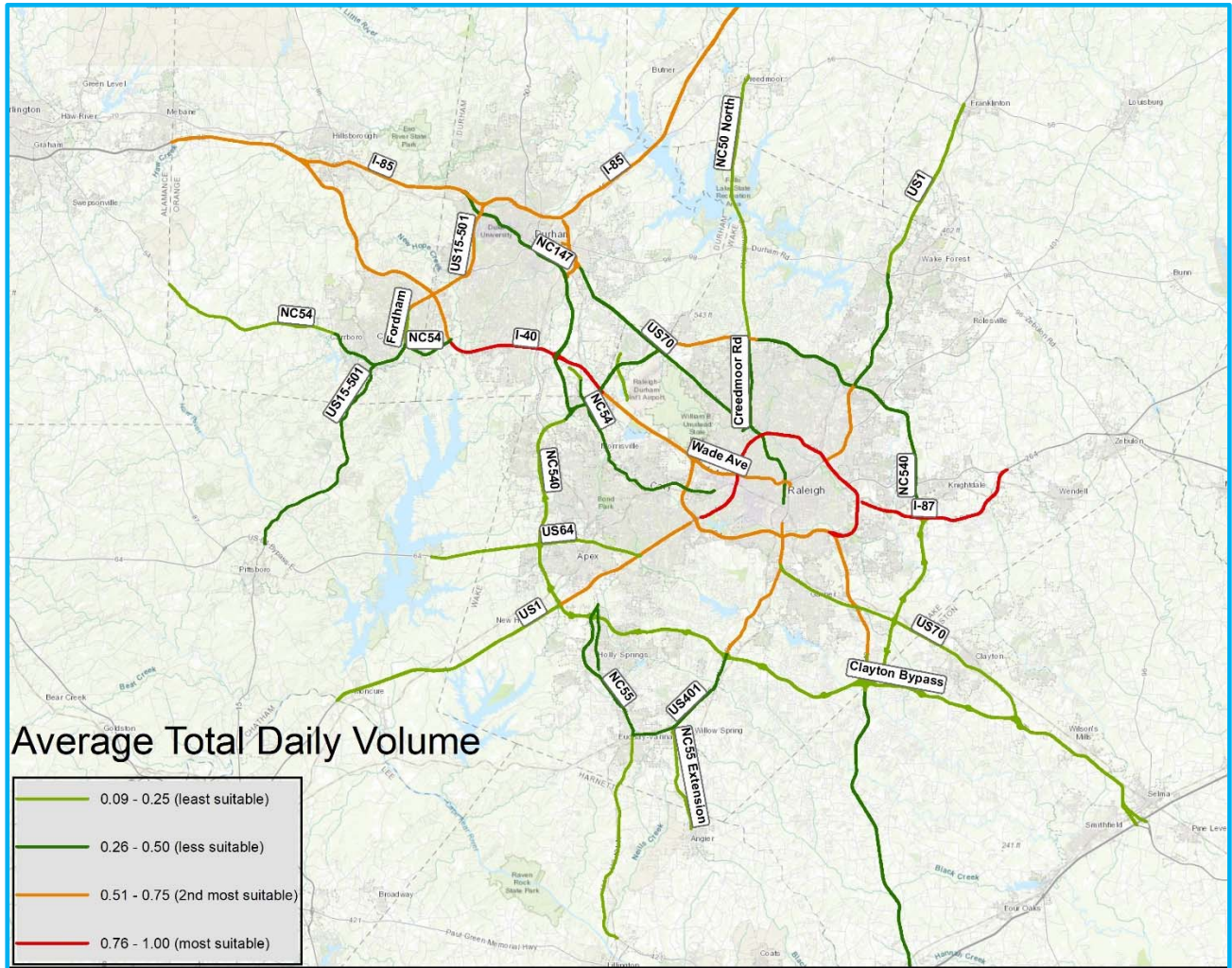


Table 3. Traffic Volume Suitability Metric Score

Traffic Volume Metric Index	Suitability
0.01 - 0.25	Least
0.26 - 0.50	↓
0.51 - 0.75	
0.76 - 1.00	Most



Figure 6. Congestion (VC Ratio) Metric Score

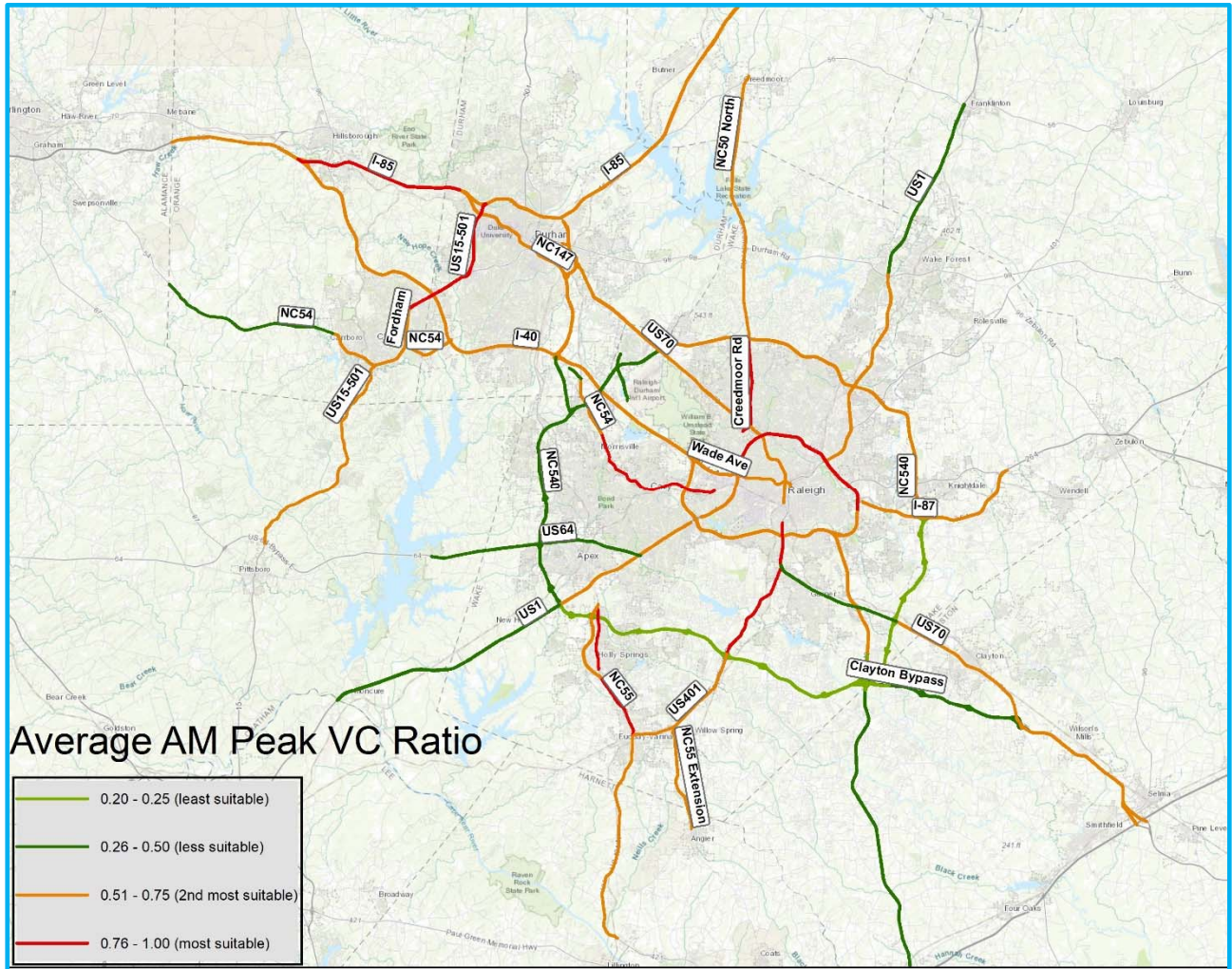


Table 4. Congestion (VC Ratio) Suitability Metric Score

Congestion (VC Ratio) Metric Index	Suitability
0.01 – 0.25	Least
0.26 – 0.50	↓
0.51 – 0.75	
0.76 – 1.00	

Figure 7. Travel Time Delay Metric Score

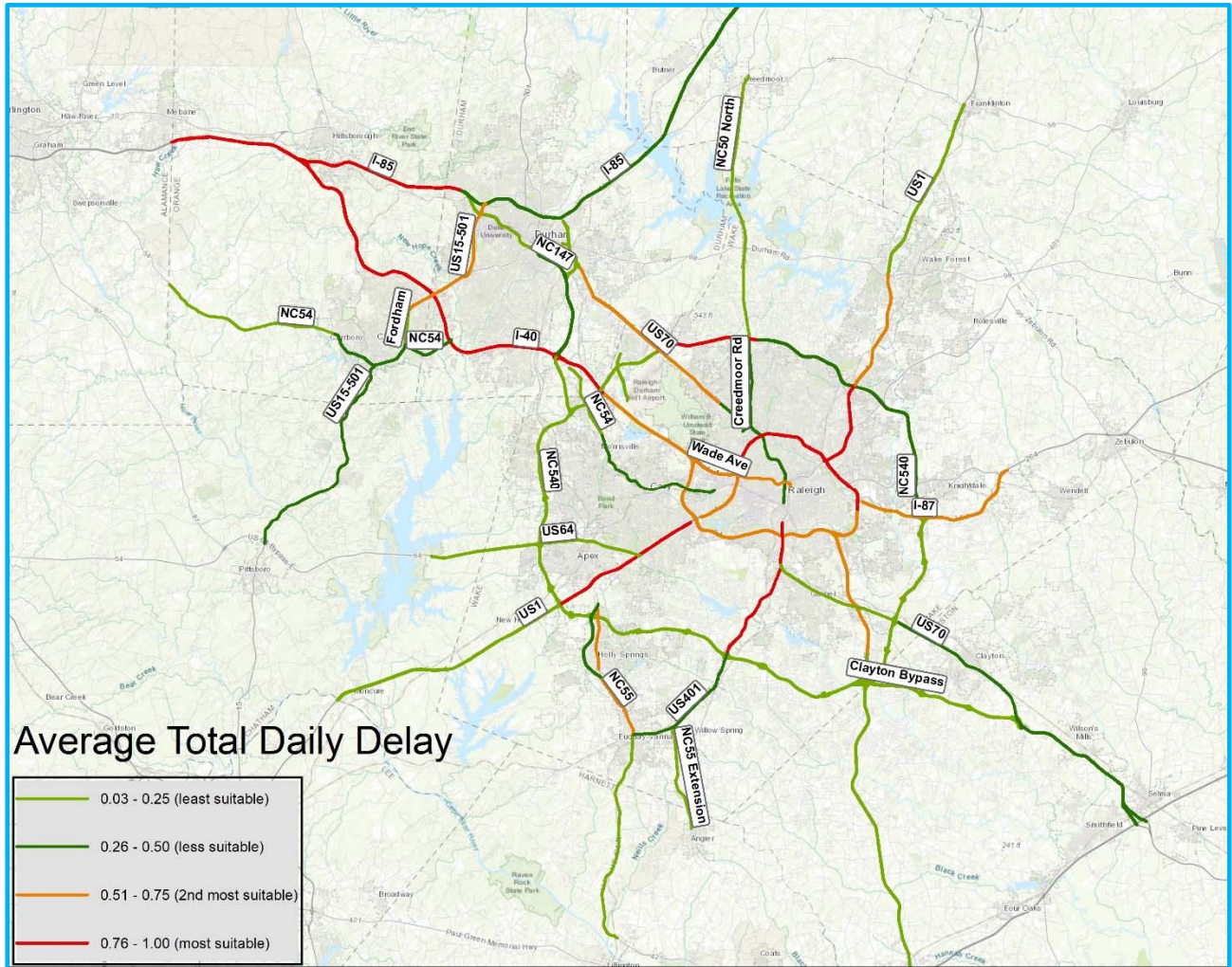


Table 5. Travel Time Delay Suitability Metric Score

Travel Time Delay Metric Index	Suitability
0.01 - 0.25	Least
0.26 - 0.50	↓
0.51 - 0.75	
0.76 - 1.00	Most



Figure 8. Transit Service Frequency Metric Score

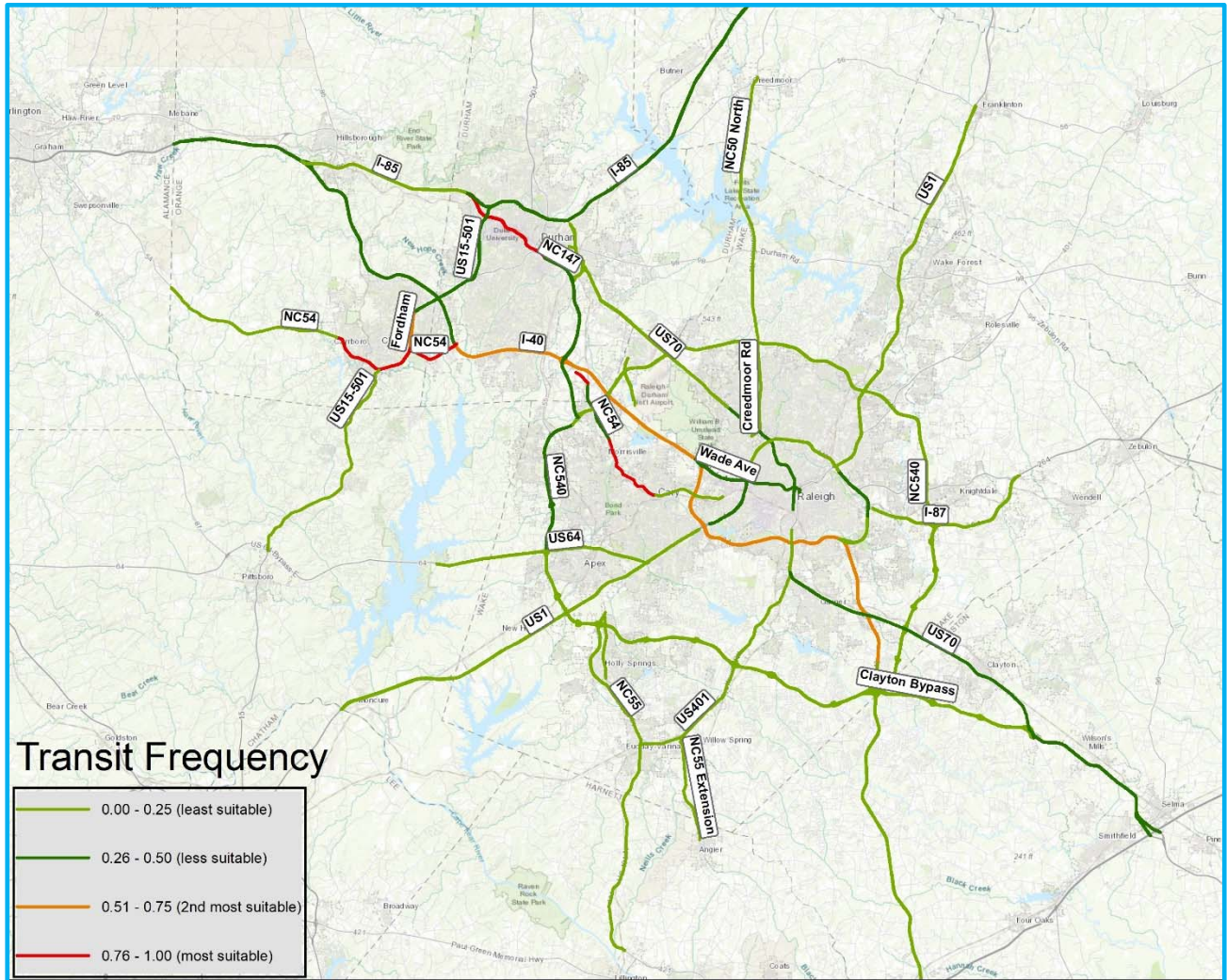


Table 6. Transit Frequency Suitability Metric Score

Transit Frequency Metric Index	Suitability
0.00 – 0.25	Least
0.26 – 0.50	↓
0.51 – 0.75	
0.76 – 1.00	

Figure 9. Total Weighted Score

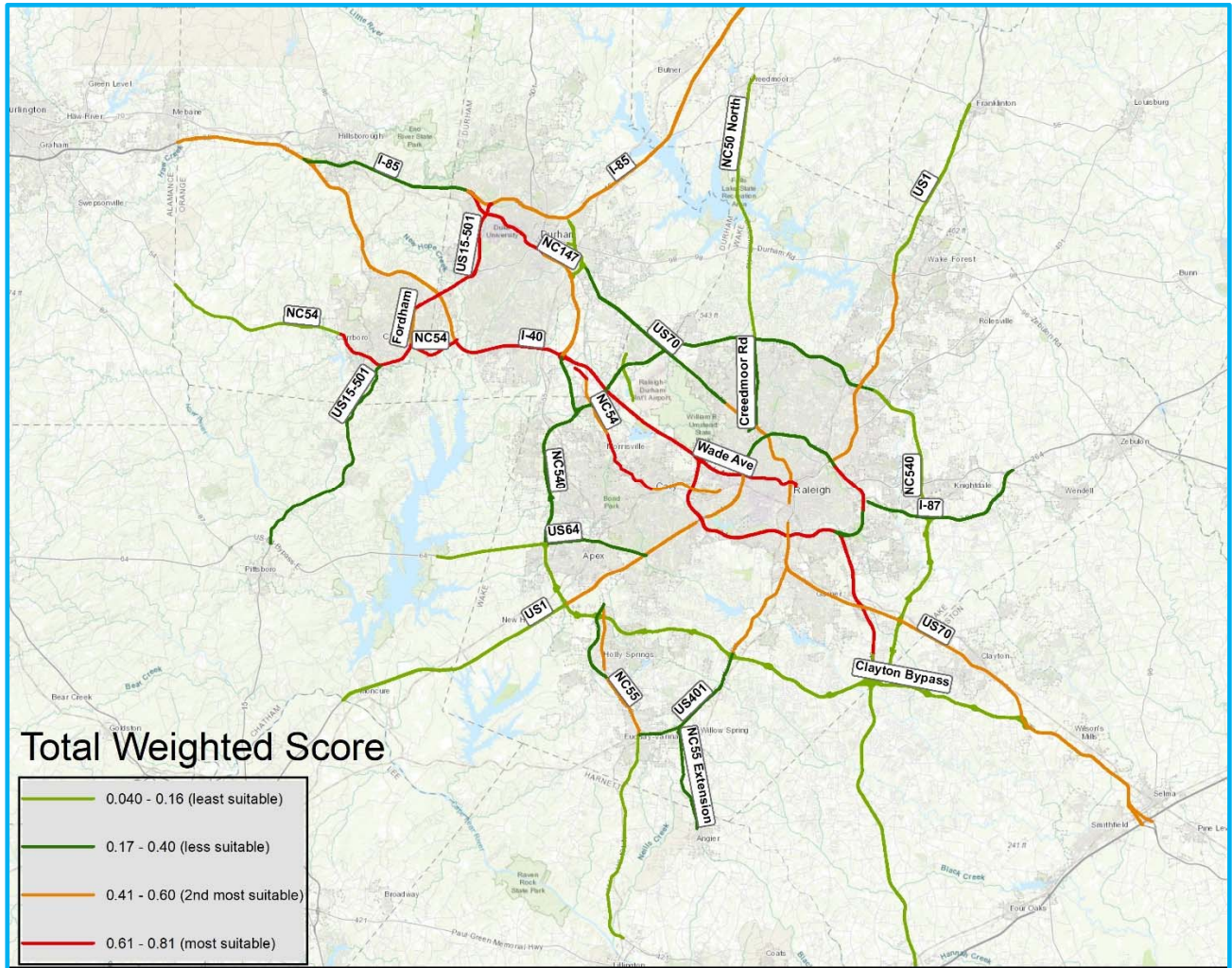


Table 7. Total Weighted Suitability Metric Score

Total Weighted Metric Index	Suitability
0.01 - 0.16	Least
0.17 - 0.40	↓
0.41 - 0.60	
0.61 - 1.00	

## Appendix C: NCDOT BOSS Implementation and Operations Plan



# Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) North Carolina Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP)

Pilot Implementation Coordinating team: I-40 Regional Partnership



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**INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines an Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) for the development of BOSS in North Carolina, beginning with a pilot project in the Research Triangle region. Given the extensive experience of Minnesota with bus on shoulder operations, this plan gratefully acknowledges the assistance and support of “Team Transit” – a partnership of regional transit agencies and the Minnesota Department of Transportation that provides overall coordination for bus on shoulder operations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region.

**OVERVIEW OF BUS ON SHOULDER OPERATION**

A number of States have implemented policies that permit buses to operate on selected freeway and/or arterial shoulders in order to bypass congestion and maintain transit schedules, as noted in **Exhibit 1** below. These policies allow buses to use shoulders while traveling at slow speeds that are nonetheless faster than mainline traffic when travel is delayed due to a recurring or nonrecurring congestion event. Even under conditions where bus shoulder travel is permitted, however, the primary use of the shoulder: clear zone, clearing area for incidents, area for enforcement activity, vehicle breakdown, etc. remains unchanged. Bus on shoulder operation is a low-cost, fast-implementation treatment that can provide immediate benefits to transit whenever mainline travel is experiencing moderate to heavy degrees of congestion.




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**Exhibit 1 - States with Active Bus on Shoulder Operations**

- Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region: NJ, DE, MD, VA
- South region: FL, GA
- Midwest region: OH, MN, IL, KS
- West region: CA, WA

*Note: While the vast majority of bus on shoulder usage remains in the Twin Cities metropolitan area of Minnesota, the mileage in other states has grown over time. No State has ever discontinued the use of bus on shoulder operation for safety reasons once it has been established in the State.*

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Bus on shoulder operations were first implemented in Minnesota more than 20 years ago, with nearly 300 shoulder-miles of bus on shoulder operations in use today. Minnesota has identified a number of benefits with bus on shoulder operation, including:

- Shorter and more predictable and reliable transit times
- Fewer missed transfer connections
- Increased transit ridership
- Reduced driver overtime
- Decreased operational costs

In some cases, travel times have decreased enough to allow for schedules to be revised, and for a bus to be eliminated on a route.

**OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS (BOSS) IN NORTH CAROLINA**

**Applicable Statutes and Required Ordinances**

Bus on shoulder operation is already permitted by law on freeways and expressways in North Carolina during peak traffic periods (ref: G.S. 20-146.2(b)). For the implementation of BOSS in North Carolina, peak traffic periods will be defined as when freeway or expressway traffic slows to below 35 MPH. NCDOT will enact “no parking” ordinances as appropriate for any segments of freeway and expressway designated for BOSS. In addition, NCDOT will monitor the implementation of BOSS and, if warranted, will request potential modification of the General Statutes, NCDOT policies, or both. Note that based on current law, only facilities with full or partial control of access will be considered for BOSS operation in North Carolina. At the present time, NCDOT will only consider existing or proposed freeway and expressway facilities for BOSS operation.

**Regional Partnership within a Statewide Framework**

The implementation of BOSS in any area of the state must be initiated at the local or regional level and then developed by the transportation partners in the region in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The policies and procedures in this statewide BOSS Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) must be followed – but the specific implementation elements in a region must emerge from a cooperative process coordinated at the regional level. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is pleased to support the development of a BOSS pilot project in the Research Triangle region and, if successful, the expansion of BOSS in that region and in other warranted areas of the state.

**Systems Approach to Implementation in each Region**

While significant benefits to transit operation and ridership may be realized from deploying bus on shoulder operation for even a single roadway segment, regions that are considering bus on shoulder operations will be encouraged to examine the potential deployment of a system of bus on shoulder corridors in their area in order to accelerate the potential network benefits from these investments. To emphasize the importance of such a systems approach, this document makes extensive use of the term “Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS)” throughout the document.

**Institutionalization of BOSS in North Carolina**

At this time, the only area designated for Bus on Shoulder implementation is the Research Triangle region, and the only approved county for implementation is Durham. However, more counties and regions may be added over time. **Exhibit 2** below outlines the current list of bus on shoulder implementation areas across North Carolina. The exhibit outlines the effective dates in designated BOSS areas whereby new and reconstruction projects shall be examined for bus on shoulder potential.

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**Exhibit 2 – Institutionalization of BOSS in North Carolina**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Counties</b>	<b>Effective date of required consideration of BOSS</b>
Research Triangle	Durham, Wake, Orange	(to be determined)
Other urban areas	All counties	(to be determined)
Rest of State	All other counties	(to be determined)

Note: BOSS should be considered for all projects on full- or partially-controlled access facilities with current or anticipated fixed route transit service slated for letting on or after the above effective date(s) in each region above, although incorporation into project design shall not be required until the completion and evaluation of a successful pilot project in the Research Triangle region. However, BOSS may be considered for any project that meets the above mentioned criteria in North Carolina at any time.

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## STATEWIDE OPERATIONAL POLICIES FOR BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS IN NORTH CAROLINA

The core elements of bus on shoulder policies concern restrictions on shoulder usage during congested periods.

**Exhibit 3** summarizes the primary operational policies – maximum operating speeds, utilization framework, vehicle restrictions, and driver training requirements – that the NC Department of Transportation has established for the implementation of BOSS in North Carolina.

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### Exhibit 3 - North Carolina Statewide Operational Policies for BOSS Corridors

#### Maximum Operating Speeds

- 1 – Maximum 35 MPH speed for buses using adjacent right shoulder
- 2 – Maximum 15 MPH speed differential between buses using shoulder and mainline travel speed

#### Utilization Framework

- 1 – Minimum number of buses to achieve a minimum time savings per mile must be established by region
- 2 – Voluntary usage of BOSS corridor by transit operators and drivers
- 3 – Transit vehicles must use four-way flashers (hazard signals) when traveling in shoulder
- 4 – No time-of-day restrictions, although transit agencies may voluntarily limit bus on shoulder operations to certain hours
- 5 – Mainline speeds must be below 35 MPH in the direction of travel
- 6 – Mainline operating speeds in rightmost lane adjacent to shoulder in the direction of travel dictate when entry is permitted. If traffic in rightmost lane is stopped due to exit ramp being over capacity, bus should not use shoulder.

*See also policies for yielding right-of-way as shown in **Exhibit 5***

#### Vehicle Restrictions

- 1 – Buses of different sizes and designs other than the standard transit bus will not be allowed to operate on BOSS corridors
- 2 – Both fixed route and demand-responsive services are permitted, as long as the vehicles themselves are permitted under vehicle restrictions, are identifiable as a local or regional transit agency bus, and are using four-way (hazard) flashers
- 3 – Cut-away buses, charter buses, paratransit vans, and maintenance support trucks will not be allowed to operate on BOSS corridors at this time.
- 4 – No minimum number of passengers (e.g., “deadheading” permitted to remain on schedule)

#### Driver Training Requirements

- 1 – Transit agencies in each area must administer driver training program in collaboration with NCDOT
- 2 – Individual drivers must be trained on both overall BOSS operation and on an individual corridor basis
- 3 – Contractors to transit agencies permitted if above driver training requirements met

---

The maximum operating speeds outlined above can be characterized as simply, “Buses can only travel on the shoulder when speeds in main lanes in the direction of travel are below 35 MPH, and buses cannot travel more than 15 MPH faster than other vehicles on the main line. In addition, the buses’ maximum speed is limited to 35 MPH. **Exhibit 4** provides more detail on the specifics of these operating speed policies.

**Exhibit 4 - Travel Speed Examples Associated with Maximum BOSS Operating Speeds**

<p><b>If travel speeds in main lanes in direction of travel are:</b>                  65 MPH, 55 MPH, even 35-40 MPH                  Below 35 MPH, 30 MPH, 25 MPH, 20 MPH                  15 MPH                  10 MPH                  5 MPH                  Stopped (0 MPH)</p>	<p><b>Then transit buses on adjacent right shoulder:</b>                  N/A: Cannot travel on shoulder                  Can go up to 35 MPH                  Can go up to 30 MPH                  Can go up to 25 MPH                  Can go up to 20 MPH                  Can go up to 15 MPH</p>
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In addition to the operational policies outlined above, buses operating on shoulders in North Carolina will be required to safely exit the shoulder when necessary or otherwise yield to all obstructions (static or dynamic) in shoulder. This policy is amplified in **Exhibit 5**.

**Exhibit 5 – Policy Affirming that Buses Must Exit Shoulder or Yield Right-of-Way to All Obstructions**

- 1 - Buses must safely exit shoulder when trailing emergency or law enforcement vehicles approach in shoulder
- 2 - Buses must safely exit the shoulder when the shoulder is blocked, of inadequate width, or otherwise unavailable for any reason
- 3 - Buses must yield to all other vehicles in shoulder, such as the following:
  - Any vehicle merging onto the highway via an entrance ramp
  - Any vehicle leaving the highway via an exit ramp
  - Any other vehicle that enters or occupies the shoulder (e.g., maintenance)
  - A disabled vehicle
  - Enforcement activities
  - Incident clearing measures

When a transit vehicle must exit the shoulder and enter the mainline of travel, buses will be expected to perform the maneuver in a safe and expeditious manner. Since mainline travel vehicles are not currently required by statute to yield to buses reentering the mainline from shoulder, the Department will monitor the pilot implementation of BOSS and, if conditions warrant, may pursue implementation of a statutory change requiring such yielding of mainline vehicles to buses that are reentering the travel way from the shoulder.

Note: This statute is currently applicable in Minnesota, although based on a site visit there in November 2011, the consensus of transit professionals was that this statute was not widely known or enforced.



## STATEWIDE DESIGN CRITERIA FOR BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS

### Geometric Design Criteria

Since the maximum speed for bus on shoulder operation is 35 MPH, most speed-related geometric design elements that would apply for a freeway or expressway section will function well for lower speed bus-on-shoulder operation. The primary geometric design criteria for bus on shoulder operation are those that are not specifically related to design or operating speed, including shoulder width, horizontal clearance (shy distance), vertical (overhead) clearance, and pavement strength. Bus on shoulder operational restrictions will be designated for all BOSS-prohibited segments with inadequate shoulder width, insufficient horizontal or vertical clearance, or inadequate bridge or pavement structural strength. **Exhibit 6** summarizes the primary design criteria that are being reviewed for use in North Carolina, with all design criteria contained in an **Appendix** at the end of this document.

Bus on shoulder implementation typically has a very low implementation cost (generally less than \$0.5m / mile and sometimes much less) compared with the typical cost of fully grade-separated bus rapid transit, light rail, commuter rail, etc. The primary reason for the low implementation cost is the limited number of roadway changes required due to the lower operating speeds and associated design criteria.





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**Exhibit 6 – NCDOT Selected Design Criteria for Bus on Shoulder Systems Implementation**

<b>Controlling Geometric Design Criteria</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Shoulder width on roadway or bridge	
- Minimum	10 feet
- Desired	12 feet
Horizontal clearance (shy distance)	
- Minimum	0 feet
- Desired	2 feet
Design speed	
- Maximum	35 MPH

**Note: See Appendix for complete design criteria**

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## Signage Elements

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has established overall guidance for BOSS signage that will provide direct information to motorists and bus operators, while minimizing sign clutter. **Exhibit 7** summarizes the primary elements of signage for BOSS implementation in North Carolina.

### Exhibit 7 – Summary of NCDOT Signage, Pavement Marking, and Audible/Tactile Warning Device Elements for Bus on Shoulder Operation

Roadway	Location	Installation	Type	Legend (note)
Mainline	Begin bus on shoulder section	Post-mounted	Regulatory	"Begin / Shoulder / Authorized Buses Only"
Mainline	Along bus on shoulder section	Rumble strip	N/A	Longitudinal along or within 6" of pavement edge
Mainline	Along bus on shoulder section <sup>1</sup>	Post-mounted	Regulatory	"No Parking"
On-ramp	Entering bus on shoulder section <sup>2</sup>	Post-mounted	Warning	"Watch for Buses on Shoulder"
Mainline	After on-ramp merge <sup>3</sup>	Post-mounted	Regulatory	"Shoulder / Authorized Buses Only"
Mainline	Inadequate shoulder width ahead <sup>4</sup>	Post-mounted	Warning	Small icon sign for buses to exit shoulder ahead
Mainline	Inadequate shoulder width begins	Post-mounted	Warning	Type 3 object marker, CM3-R
Mainline	Guardrail or barrier begins <sup>5</sup>	Post-mounted	Warning	Type 3 object marker, CM3-R
Mainline	End of bus on shoulder section	Post-mounted	Regulatory	"End / Shoulder / Authorized Buses Only"

*Notes on placement:*

<sup>1</sup>Place "No Parking" signs along mainline as required by ordinance. A typical installation may alternate "No Parking Any Time" and "Shoulder / Authorized Buses Only"

<sup>2</sup>Place one sign approximately 200-400 ft upstream from merge point. May use on both sides of two-lane on-ramps.

<sup>3</sup>Place one sign approximately 300-1000 ft downstream of entrance gore

<sup>4</sup>Place one sign on mainline in advance of restricted shoulder width or permanent obstruction

<sup>5</sup>As needed



Courtesy Mn/DOT, Team Transit

**Pavement Markings**

Bus shoulders are continuous through exit ramps and entrance ramps on freeway and expressway segments, and continuous across acceleration and deceleration lanes. No pavement markings will be used as part of the initial pilot in the Research Triangle region. NCDOT will review the effectiveness of the delineation and either maintain, add, expand, modify, or delete them for future installations as appropriate.

**Audible/Tactile Warning Devices**

Longitudinal warning devices will be rumble strips located concurrent with, or within 6 inches of, pavement edge lines or audible longitudinal pavement markings to help separate traffic flow on the mainline from shoulder usage. A field inspection can help determine if existing longitudinal warning devices are suitable.

**Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and BOSS**

ITS shall be integrated into BOSS operations where feasible. See **Exhibit 8** for sample messages for use on overhead dynamic message signs (DMS) in or in advance of BOSS implementation areas.

**Exhibit 8 – Intelligent Transportation Systems and BOSS -- Sample Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) Messages**

**Panel 1**

BUSES TRAVELING ON SHOULDER NEXT 15 MILES  
 BUS TRAVEL PERMITTED ON RIGHT SHOULDER  
 -CAUTION- AHEAD BUSES TRAVELING ON SHOULDER  
 SHOULDERS IN USE FOR TRANSIT BUS TRAVEL  
 STOPPING ON SHOULDER ONLY FOR EMERGENCIES  
 SHOULDER IN USE FOR AUTHORIZED TRANSIT BUSES  
 2 RIGHT LANES AND SHOULDER CLOSED AHEAD  
 RAPID TOWING ENFORCEMENT NOW IN EFFECT  
 BUS ON SHOULDER DRIVER TRAINING NOW IN EFFECT  
 TRAINING FOR BUS ON SHOULDER NOW IN EFFECT

**Panel 2**

SHOULDER USE FOR AUTHORIZED BUSES ONLY  
 BUS ON SHOULDER MAY MERGE WITH TRAFFIC AHEAD  
 STOPPING ON SHOULDER ONLY FOR EMERGENCIES  
 WATCH FOR BUSES MERGING WITH TRAFFIC  
 SHOULDER TRAVEL FOR AUTHORIZED BUSES ONLY  
 VEHICLES LEFT UNATTENDED WILL BE TOWED  
 ACCIDENT AHEAD: SHOULDER CLOSED TO BUS TRAVEL  
 ABANDONED VEHICLES WILL BE TOWED  
 BUS ON SHOULDER TRAINING NOW IN EFFECT  
 TRAINING NOW IN EFFECT FOR BUS ON SHOULDERS

NOTE: The above DMS messages are samples and optional. The display of travel time and other information on dynamic message signs may take priority over the above sample messages at various DMS locations along the corridor. Existing NCDOT policies, procedures, and priorities must be followed.



### **STATEWIDE BOSS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The most common reason for considering bus on shoulder operations along any corridor in any region will likely be to provide a means for transit operators to avoid recurring congestion in order to improve the attractiveness and operations of transit service during commuting periods. However, any route can experience non-recurring congestion situations due to crashes, weather, road work, etc. – any of which could impact the overall reliability and attractiveness of transit service whenever the travel demand exceeds roadway capacity or otherwise creates unreliability in trip times. Therefore, since nearly 50% of congestion is non-recurring, the only absolute NCDOT requirements for considering BOSS along a freeway or expressway corridor shall be full or partial control of access and the presence of scheduled fixed-route transit service now or within a ten year planning horizon for that corridor, as shown in the simplified eligibility framework as outlined in **Exhibit 9**.

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#### **Exhibit 9 - North Carolina Statewide Minimum Eligibility Criteria for Potential BOSS Corridor Designation**

##### **Eligibility for potential immediate designation as a BOSS corridor**

- Roadway must be an existing freeway or expressway
- Facility must have full or partial control of access
- At least one fixed-route transit bus must currently use the corridor each weekday

##### **Eligibility for shoulder improvements to enable or enhance future BOSS service along a corridor**

- Roadway must be an existing or proposed freeway or expressway
  - Facility must have or be planned for full or partial control of access before BOSS implementation
  - Corridor must be planned for scheduled public transit service within the next 10 years
-

## PILOT IMPLEMENTATION IN RESEARCH TRIANGLE REGION

### I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle Region (I-40/Research Triangle)

The I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle region has served as the impetus for advancing BOSS in the area and provides an ongoing coordination mechanism through a regional BOSS Team. The members of the I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle region who have focused on the implementation of BOSS and other potential improvements to the I-40 corridor include:

- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Triangle Transit
- City of Durham / Durham Area Transit Authority
- City of Raleigh/ Capital Area Transit
- Town of Cary / C-Tran
- Town of Chapel Hill / Chapel Hill Transit
- NC State University Department of Civil Engineering
- NC State University / Wolfline
- Duke University / Duke Transit
- Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority
- Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO
- Capital Area MPO
- Durham, Orange, Wake counties
- Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina
- Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA)

In the Research Triangle pilot region, Triangle Transit, which serves as the area's regional transit agency, has had an existing short-term improvement plan that includes a demonstration bus on shoulder project (unfunded TIP project TD-4944). The I-40/Research Triangle Regional Partnership has been examining the potential for implementing a pilot implementation of Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) since 2010. Representatives from the I-40 Regional Partnership visited the Twin Cities region at the end of October and beginning of November, 2011 to observe first-hand the operation of the bus shoulder system there.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation and Triangle Transit, in cooperation with several I-40 Regional Partnership members including the Federal Highway Administration, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Regional Transportation Alliance, and other local and regional partners, have worked together to develop a pilot installation of a Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) in the Research Triangle area. The implementation of BOSS is expected to help provide transit vehicles and transit patrons in the Research Triangle region a cost-effective and time-efficient alternative to both recurring and non-recurring congestion along the pilot corridor.

The hard costs associated with the 2012 initial BOSS pilot implementation in Durham County are approximately \$2,000 / shoulder-mile. The pilot will commence during 2012 and last at least a year. Should the pilot program in the Research Triangle region be successful, BOSS may be expanded to other warranted areas in North Carolina.

## REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS

### Overall Implementation Process

The deployment of the pilot BOSS project for the Research Triangle region and for any future implementation in that region or elsewhere will follow a systematic approach. **Exhibit 10** outlines a suggested process, grouped into five focus areas, each with multiple elements. Of course, each region of the state is different and not every element or step of the process may be required or appropriate for each region. In addition, many of these focus areas and elements can occur simultaneously.

---

### Exhibit 10 – Regional BOSS Implementation / Enhancement Process

#### 1. INITIAL PREPARATIONS FOR REGIONAL BOSS IMPLEMENTATION

- Establishment or expansion of regional BOSS Implementation and Operations Team (BOSS Team)
- Review of BOSS North Carolina Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) by regional BOSS Team
- Outreach to other areas with bus on shoulder operation for current lessons learned and guidance
- Update of BOSS North Carolina Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) as needed
- Development of specific implementation plan and timeline for region
- Incorporation into regional and statewide transportation planning and programming processes as needed
- Incorporation into regional congestion management processes as needed

#### 2. REGIONAL BOSS CORRIDOR SELECTION, PREPARATION, AND APPROVAL

- Statewide eligibility criteria
- Establishment of BOSS corridor prioritization criteria by regional BOSS Team
- Regional BOSS Team receives, compiles, reviews, and prioritizes requests for candidate corridors
- Field review and analysis of leading candidate BOSS corridors
- NCDOT determination of required infrastructure improvements and/or segment restrictions
- Funding review and implementation of needed infrastructure improvements
- Confirmation by NCDOT Division that all required improvements have been met and restrictions identified
- Final approval by NCDOT of corridor for BOSS operation
- Placement of signage, pavement markings, tactile warning devices, etc. along corridor, including locations of “pinch points” where bus on shoulder operation will be restricted

#### 3. COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT/UPDATE OF REGIONAL BOSS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Operational policies, strategies, and procedures
- Maintenance policies, strategies, and procedures
- Enforcement policies, strategies, and procedures
- Public outreach policies, strategies, and procedures

#### 4. DRIVER TRAINING FOR BUS ON SHOULDER OPERATION

- Development of BOSS driver training program in region and/or update for new BOSS corridors
- NCDOT collaboration of BOSS driver training program or program update
- Driver training for BOSS program and/or update for new BOSS corridors
- Agency approval of individual drivers for operation on specific BOSS corridors

#### 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF BOSS PROGRAM

- Implementation/enhancement of BOSS in region
  - Operational, maintenance, enforcement, and public outreach adjustments as needed
  - Recommendations for changes to BOSS statewide IOP
  - Ongoing monitoring and review of regional BOSS program by BOSS Team
-



**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS:**

**1. INITIAL PREPARATIONS FOR REGIONAL BOSS IMPLEMENTATION – details of selected items**

**Establishment or Expansion of Regional BOSS Implementation and Operations Team (BOSS Team)**

Implementation of BOSS in each region shall be coordinated by a regional BOSS Implementation and Operations Team (BOSS Team), which will exhibit primary coordinating responsibility for several elements including corridor selection, implementation guidelines, and driver training. While the membership of each BOSS Team will vary depending on the needs of the region and the location of candidate BOSS corridors, a sample invitee list can be found in **Exhibit 11** below. A primary responsibility of the regional BOSS Team is to become familiar with this statewide BOSS Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) – including the regional BOSS implementation / enhancement process outlined in Exhibit 10 – and then to establish an implementation timeline consistent with that process and this IOP. It will also be useful to reach out to other areas in North Carolina and elsewhere that utilize bus on shoulder operation for current lessons learned and guidance.

**Exhibit 11: Potential Membership in Regional BOSS Team**

- NCDOT Division staff, including division engineer and assistants (operations and maintenance)
- NCDOT Central office staff – roadway design, transportation mobility and safety including statewide operations, traffic safety, and signing, public transportation, etc. staff
- NCDOT IMAP staff
- NCDOT Statewide Transportation Operations Center (STOC) / Transportation Management Center (TMC) staff
- NCDOT Communications / External Affairs staff
- NCDOT Planning staff
- Federal Highway Administration staff
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff
- Regional transit agency staff – operations, planning, and TDM, etc.
- Any municipal, university, or community transit provider with interest in the program
- State Highway Patrol
- Any other law enforcement agency with jurisdiction on the pilot corridor
- Any county government with interest in the program
- Any appropriate private sector partners with interest in the program

**Incorporation into regional transportation planning processes and MPO congestion management process**

Before a Bus on Shoulder System can be deployed or expanded in each region, BOSS must be incorporated into the Transportation Planning process for the area and the region’s planned implementation of BOSS must result from that process. If incorporation into Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) or Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTPs) is required, those steps must be completed prior to implementation of BOSS on any corridor. In addition, for any BOSS segments that require infrastructure improvements, any corresponding projects should be included into the statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and/or metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (MTIP) where necessary.

Most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in North Carolina have an active Congestion Management Process in place. BOSS is a tool that may serve as a response to the challenge of congestion in many of the state’s growing regions, and incorporating BOSS into a region’s existing Congestion Management Process will maximize the benefits of BOSS and improve harmonization with other congestion management techniques.

**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS** *(continued)*:

**2 – REGIONAL BOSS CORRIDOR SELECTION, PREPARATION, AND APPROVAL – details of selected items**

**Establishment of Regional BOSS Corridor Prioritization Criteria**

While all freeway and expressway corridors with full- or partial-control of access and with fixed-route transit service are theoretically eligible as a BOSS corridor based on the statewide eligibility criteria discussed previously in Exhibit 9, that eligibility does not mean that a corridor will be immediately approved for bus on shoulder operation, and eligibility does not automatically translate into funding for any improvements needed to implement BOSS on a corridor. Since resources are necessarily limited and since the needs and characteristics of region are different, each region in the state that considers implementing and expanding BOSS should cooperatively develop a set of prioritization criteria or factors to help determine which corridors to evaluate in more detail. These criteria or factors could include degree of roadway congestion, level of existing/near term bus usage, current shoulder width and obstructions, cost for BOSS implementation, etc. A sample list of possible criteria or factors for potential corridor review and prioritization is shown in **Exhibit 12**. Each region can use some or all of the sample factors outlined in the Exhibit or choose other factors that they wish to use. Each region may choose whether or not to provide a specific fixed weight for each criteria or factor.

**Exhibit 12 - Sample Regional Prioritization Criteria for Bus on Shoulder Corridor Designation (partial list)**

**Possible Prioritization Criteria**

Assuming the corridor meets the eligibility criteria listed in Exhibit 9, regions may cooperatively prioritize eligible projects based on factors including the following:

- Duration of congestion each day
  - *Freeway or expressway speeds below 35 MPH*
- Frequency of congestion per week
  - *Days with congestion or backups*
- Number of buses per day, regardless of travel speed
- Cost to upgrade and ease of construction
- Length of continuous shoulder width of 10 feet or more
- Anticipated level of time savings, in seconds per mile per day
- Number of buses per day that experience congestion today or anticipated in future
- Connectivity to existing bus-on-shoulder segment to gain Bus on Shoulder Systems benefits
- Connectivity to transit hub, park-and-ride location, etc.
- Availability of funding

**Regional BOSS Corridor Review and Prioritization**

The regional BOSS Team shall then review and rank each eligible corridor based on the criteria and factors established for the region. A map showing all candidate corridors, with annotations showing individual bus routes or buses per day along the corridor, could be created to facilitate communication. The output of this process is a working priority list of potential regional BOSS corridors to examine further.

Note that project implementation may not occur in precisely the ranking order due to funding and other constraints and opportunities. For example, corridors with lower levels of transit service or recurring congestion could still be added sooner if the cost to upgrade is minimal, and/or corridors ranked as high priorities by a regional BOSS Team may have obstructions that render them infeasible for BOSS operation in the short-term.

### **Field Review and Analysis of Leading Candidate BOSS Corridors**

Once a manageable list of potential BOSS corridors has been identified by the regional BOSS Team, NCDOT and appropriate partner agencies shall designate appropriate staff to conduct a field review and analysis of one or more priority corridors in cooperation with other partners. The following paragraphs provide examples of the possible scope of that work.

The appropriate transit agency or agencies shall provide the Department with current or expected daily transit use along the corridor.

NCDOT shall conduct a field review of the roadway elements along the proposed BOSS corridors including shoulder width, vertical clearance, shy distance, existing bridge and drainage structures, etc. in order to determine existing conditions and initial compatibility with statewide geometric design criteria for BOSS.

NCDOT shall Review the corridor for compliance with geometric design criteria. Additional analysis can occur as needed, for example, a review of structural design of bridges and drop inlets and an examination of possible drainage impacts due to an increase in overall impervious surface area associated with any potential shoulder width expansions or any related needs for right-of-way modifications, utility relocations, permits, etc.

The appropriate staff from NCDOT Transportation Mobility and Safety, the regional Transportation Management Center (TMC) and the Division Traffic Engineering staff shall examine the proposed BOSS corridors for potential traffic operational issues and opportunities that may emerge under BOSS operation. This may include a review of existing speed and congestion data and crash history, an examination of those locations that may require special attention under BOSS operation including interchange areas and restricted shoulder width areas, and other factors as appropriate. The potential for restriping mainline roadways in restricted shoulder width areas can be examined, along with the capacity, operational, and safety impacts of such a possible change. The review may also include the locations of existing or potential dynamic message signs, speed detection units, and other ITS devices.

### **NCDOT Determination of Required Infrastructure Improvements and/or Segment Restrictions**

Upon completion of all field reviews and analyses for the proposed corridors, NCDOT Division and central office staff shall cooperatively compile a list of any required infrastructure improvements, pavement rehabilitation, drainage structure strengthening, relocations of existing signs or other roadside hazards as needed to avoid conflicts with bus mirrors, guardrail adjustments, restriping, permits, etc. that would be required in advance of any implementation of BOSS along the corridor.

The Department shall also identify specific recommended start and end points for the various segments and mark them with signing, and identify any locations where BOSS shall be restricted due to insufficient shoulder width or other factors. This information shall be provided to the regional BOSS Team for its information.

### **Funding Review and Implementation of Needed Infrastructure Improvements**

Members of the regional BOSS Team shall explore funding opportunities for each of the improvements needed as well as additional improvements that may enhance the performance of the corridor. A review of existing or upcoming TIP projects could be one example of a potential funding opportunity. Once funding is secured, the Department will begin the implementation of the needed infrastructure improvements with the BOSS Team.

**Placement of Signage, Pavement Markings, Tactile Warning Devices, etc. along Corridor, Including Restrictions**

Whether or not a segment requires additional infrastructure improvements or has any BOSS-restricted locations, each segment will require the installation of signage and potentially audible and tactile warning devices, etc. before operation of BOSS. The Division Traffic Engineer and appropriate Transportation Mobility and Safety staff will determine the appropriate installation locations for signage and audible and tactile warning devices.

**Confirmation by NCDOT and Corridor Approval for BOSS Implementation**

The appropriate NCDOT Division staff will confirm that all required improvements have been implemented, signage and related traffic control devices installed, and restrictions identified. At that point, NCDOT will approve the corridor for BOSS implementation, pending the completion of other elements in the Regional BOSS Implementation / Enhancement Process outlined in **Exhibit 10**.

**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS** *(continued)*:

**3 – COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL BOSS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES – details of selected items**

**Operational Policies, Strategies, and Procedures**

Each region will need to establish policies and procedures – including interagency and intra-agency communication protocols – to ensure effective operation of BOSS under normal, congested, emergency situations, adverse weather, and other traffic incidents. Examples might include communicating about vehicles or debris in the shoulders, enforcement activity, other traffic incidents, trees or signs that are posing a hazard to bus operations, paving/stripping projects, etc. The regional BOSS Team will establish, implement, monitor, and modify the operational policies, strategies, and procedures as needed. **Selected documents associated with the pilot BOSS installation shall be included as an appendix at the end of this document as they are developed.**

**Maintenance Policies, Strategies, and Procedures**

The regional BOSS Team will establish, implement, monitor, and modify the maintenance policies, strategies, and procedures as needed. These may include items such as:

- A shoulder cleaning strategy to ensure that the shoulder is kept clear of debris
- An inclement weather strategy to ensure safe operations of BOSS
- A pavement preventive maintenance strategy to ensure pavement integrity in a cost-effective manner

**Enforcement Policies, Strategies, and Procedures**

Members of the regional BOSS Team, including NCDOT, NC State Highway Patrol or other law enforcement agencies and the NCDOT Incident Management Assistance Patrol (IMAP) will coordinate concerning the implementation of an effective enforcement program to ensure the safe operation of freeway and arterial BOSS corridors. These may include items such as:

- Awareness of applicable statutes and operational policies
- Enforcement procedures for speeds, speed differentials, and yielding right-of-way
- Enforcement of unauthorized use of shoulders by motorists
- Enforcement of unauthorized bus on shoulder operation for shoulders not designated for BOSS, etc.
- Coordination with other emergency response vehicles and agencies

**Public Outreach Policies, Strategies, and Procedures**

As the BOSS pilot implementation in Durham County constitutes the first bus on shoulder installation within 200 miles of North Carolina, an effective public outreach campaign in advance of the pilot implementation as well as future expansion will be critical to the success of the BOSS program. Each regional campaign should be a cooperative effort of NCDOT, local and regional transit agencies, and other public and private partners in each region.

While the specifics of each program will depend on the region, each outreach program should utilize multiple communication channels well in advance of the implementation as well as upon commencement of BOSS operation or expansion. The regional BOSS Team will establish, implement, monitor, and modify the public outreach policies, strategies, and procedures as needed.

**Selected documents associated with the pilot BOSS installation shall be included as an appendix at the end of this document as they are developed, including sample Frequently Asked Questions initially developed for the BOSS pilot implementation in Durham County.**



**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS** *(continued)*:**4 - DRIVER TRAINING FOR BUS ON SHOULDER OPERATION – details of selected items**

The success of bus on shoulder operation in North Carolina will depend in large measure on the efforts of the individual professional transit drivers who will operate transit vehicles on the shoulder. Therefore, each agency or region must develop a driver training program in collaboration with NCDOT, and each bus driver must be trained on bus on shoulder operation on an overall policy basis as well as on an individual corridor basis. Each transit agency must provide for the training of its drivers. An example of the elements of a possible driver training program curriculum is shown in **Exhibit 13**. Individual agencies will approve their drivers for bus on shoulder operation on a corridor-by-corridor basis.

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**Exhibit 13 – Sample Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) Driver Training Program Elements**
**Core Elements**

- Purpose of bus on shoulder program
- Operating guidelines
  - Speed and speed differential
  - Yielding right-of-way
  - Interchange areas
  - Staying on paved shoulder
- Judging operating speeds of mainline traffic
- Signs, pavement markings, and audible warnings
  - Motoring public
  - Specific information for bus drivers
- Applicable statutes and enforcement
- Communications
  - Intra-agency
  - Inter-agency
  - Driver to motorist/driver courtesy
- Emergency communication

**Corridor-by-Corridor Elements**

- Start and end points
- Interchange and/or intersection locations
- Shoulder widths
- Special attention locations
- Restricted locations

**Additional Elements**

- Agency-specific policies (e.g., evening operation)
- 

As noted in the utilization framework outlined in the statewide operational policies from Exhibit 3, each approved driver still decides whether or not to travel on all or a portion of an available BOSS corridor on a trip-by-trip basis, and each agency can establish additional restrictions on BOSS usage – for example, on nighttime operation – as long as those additional policies are identified and included in initial or follow-up driver training.

**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEPLOYMENT OF BUS ON SHOULDER SYSTEMS** *(continued)*:

**5 - IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF BOSS PROGRAM – details of selected items**

**Implementation or Enhancement of BOSS in Region**

When all prior elements of the Regional BOSS implementation process outlined in Exhibit 10 have been completed, bus on shoulder is ready for implementation. As implementation day approaches, a more detailed timeline and action steps for each partner should be established, with a particular focus on communications within agencies, among agencies, and with the public.

**Operational, Maintenance, Enforcement, and Public Outreach Adjustments as Needed**

Adjustments to operational, maintenance, enforcement, and public outreach strategies or policies will almost certainly be needed as the BOSS program moves from planning to implementation in a region. The BOSS Implementation and Operations Team (BOSS Team) in each region should continue to meet on a periodic basis to share information, identify potential improvements, and cooperatively implement those improvements.

**Recommendations for Changes to BOSS Statewide IOP**

This NC BOSS IOP seeks to cover a number of preparatory, operational, and maintenance areas associated with the deployment of bus on shoulder operation in North Carolina. However, nothing substitutes for actual experience, and the regional BOSS Team should compile a list of recommended changes, additions, or improvements to the BOSS (NC IOP) so as to improve information sharing across the state and with jurisdictions beyond North Carolina.

**Ongoing Monitoring and Review of Regional BOSS Program**

The pilot project in the Research Triangle region is in essence the initial field research project for the implementation of Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina. The NCDOT Transportation Mobility and Safety Division shall develop a plan to effectively monitor the performance of the initial pilot project and any subsequent BOSS installations that may include:

- Start and end dates for the evaluation of the program
- Designation of “treatment” (i.e., pilot implementation) and “control” (no BOSS implementation) sections
- Data collection and evaluation criteria
- Timeline for reporting results
- Communication with BOSS Team partners about issues that may arise

The results of the research of the pilot BOSS implementation shall be compiled and shared with regional, state, and federal partners to inform the potential next steps for the implementation of BOSS in the region and elsewhere in North Carolina.

## REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Minnesota DOT / “Team Transit”**

Many elements of this implementation and operations plan for the development of BOSS in North Carolina rely on extensive experience of Minnesota with bus on shoulder operations in terms of both duration of program (more than two decades) and extent of system (nearly 300 shoulder miles). NCDOT and other partners gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of “Team Transit” – a partnership of regional transit agencies and the Minnesota Department of Transportation that provides overall coordination for bus on shoulder operations in Minneapolis-St. Paul and vicinity. Representatives from the I-40/Research Triangle Regional Partnership visited the Twin Cities region in October and November, 2011 to observe first-hand the operation of the bus shoulder system there.

For more information on Team Transit in Minnesota, visit the following links:

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/operating\\_rules\\_on\\_shoulder.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/operating_rules_on_shoulder.pdf)

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/bus\\_only\\_shoulder\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/bus_only_shoulder_guidelines.pdf)

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/mn\\_statutes\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/mn_statutes_2006.pdf)

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/visual/Training%20For%20Bus%20Drivers%20.wmv>

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/bus\\_only\\_shoulder\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/teamtransit/docs/bus_only_shoulder_guidelines.pdf)

**I-40 Regional Partnership** The I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle region has served as the impetus for advancing BOSS in the area and provides an ongoing coordination mechanism through a regional BOSS Team. The members of the I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle region who have focused on the implementation of BOSS and other potential improvements to the I-40 corridor include those listed on page 12 of this document.

### **RTA Volunteers**

The RTA would like to acknowledge the assistance of several FAST member firms that have provided past or ongoing assistance with the implementation of BOSS in our region, including CDM Smith, PB Americas, Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, PC, AECOM, and WSP SELLS, as well as all members of the I-40 Regional Partnership in the Research Triangle region.

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**APPENDICES**



**Appendix – NCDOT Design Criteria for Bus on Shoulder Systems Implementation**

**Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS): Geometric Design Criteria**

**Type of Highway: Urban Multi-Lane Freeway and Expressway; Buses on right shoulders only**

<b>CONTROLLING GEOMETRIC DESIGN CRITERIA</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Design Speed, mph	35	Maximum speed for busses traveling on shoulder, as per operational policy
Shoulder Width, ft	10.0 12.0	10.0 ft minimum, 12.0 ft desirable 12.0 ft in areas of new construction or reconstruction
Bridge Width, ft	10.0 12.0	10.0 ft minimum width, 12.0 ft desirable 12.0 ft in areas of new construction or reconstruction
Grades, max. %	nc	No change (nc) match existing roadway
Front Slopes	6:1	If front slopes are not steeper than 6:1, they may be steepened to 6:1. If front slopes are steeper than 6:1, match existing, except in the following cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If fill slope is steeper than 3:1 and higher than 2 ft, provide guardrail.</li> <li>• If fill slope is steeper than 3.5:1 and higher than 5 ft, provide guardrail, unless there is 18 ft between the edge of shoulder and the point where the fill slope becomes steeper than 3.5:1.</li> </ul>
Structural Capacity	HS25	For new bridges. For existing bridges to allow shoulder use the shoulder must be structurally adequate (capable of carrying legal loads and does not appear on the inventory of inadequate bridges).
Horizontal Alignment, radius, ft	nc	No change (nc) match existing roadway
Vertical Alignment, Minimum K value	nc	No change (nc) match existing roadway
Stopping Sight Distance, ft	250	Stopping Sight Distance based on 35 mph design speed
Cross Slope, ft/ft	0.02 – 0.04	NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawing 560.02
Superelevation max, ft/ft	nc	No change (nc) match existing roadway
Vertical Clearance, ft	14	AASHTO’s A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway & Streets 2011: Chapter 8, pg. 8-4 Tallest Design Vehicle 10’-9”
Horizontal Clearance to Obstructions, ft	0	AASHTO’s A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway & Streets 2011: Chapter 8, pg. 8-5 2 ft beyond edge of shoulder is preferable, as a minimum, place at the edge of shoulder.

**Appendix – Selected Operational Policy Documents**

**BOSS Pilot: Reporting & Relaying Incident Details**

**Purpose:**

The following are guidelines to assist communication between the NCDOT’s Statewide Transportation Operations Center (STOC), the Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) as well as the North Carolina State Highway Patrol (NCSHP) and Durham Police Department (DPD) in regards to the detection of traffic incidents and how they are relayed to various partners within the Pilot Program of the Bus on Shoulders System (BOSS).

**Emergency and Urgent Incidents:**

Traffic incidents vary widely in terms of response as well as the level of impact that they have on the mobility and safety of the roadway. For the purpose of the BOSS pilot, the following two categories are proposed in order to assist BOSS partners in distinguishing one incident type from another and determining who the report needs to be delivered to:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emergency Incidents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vehicle Accidents</li> <li>○ Disabled Vehicles involving a medical emergency</li> <li>○ Toxic or Hazardous Materials</li> <li>○ Fire-related Incidents</li> <li>○ Any incident impacting a travel lane</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Urgent Incidents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disabled or Abandoned Vehicles</li> <li>○ Large or potentially hazardous debris</li> <li>○ Damage to shoulder or structures</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**TTA Bus Drivers & Dispatchers:**

In the course of traveling on the shoulder for BOSS, TTA Bus Drivers will frequently come across traffic incidents that not only impede their use of the shoulder but also have an impact on regular commuter traffic as well. As trained transportation personnel, TTA drivers possess the knowledge and experience to recognize traffic incidents and to accurately report their location and possible impact to traffic. Just like NCDOT and Law Enforcement personnel, this information can be received and acted upon with confidence.

- **Emergency Incidents:** Upon detection of any of the emergency incidents listed above, TTA drivers may report the incident to their Dispatchers who, upon receipt of this information, should contact the appropriate Law Enforcement telecommunications centers for DPD or NCSHP.
- **Urgent Incidents:** Upon detection of any of the urgent incidents listed above, TTA drivers should report this information to their Dispatchers who, upon receipt of this info, should notify the STOC of the incident. STOC 24/7 phone number: 877-627-7862

**Law Enforcement Personnel:**

As incidents occur on the roadway, they are often relayed to Law Enforcement personnel very shortly after they have occurred. Law Enforcement personnel (including DPD and NCSHP) have a primary responsibility to respond to many of these incidents in order to assure public safety and proper adjudication.

- **Emergency Incidents:** Upon receipt of a report of any of the previously listed emergency incidents, personnel at the appropriate law enforcement telecommunications center should contact the STOC to relay the incident details such that appropriate response measures can be implemented including
  - Dispatching IMAP to the scene
  - Activating Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) to warn or redirect motorists
- **Urgent Incidents:** As law enforcement units in the field detect or receive reports of any of the previously listed urgent incidents, they should relay this information to their Dispatchers who should notify the STOC such that the appropriate response measures can be implemented including
  - Activation of Signal 4 (rapid recovery/removal) procedures

**STOC Operators:**

As incidents are received from any of the BOSS partners previously discussed, STOC Operators should assure that all appropriate response measures are implemented and should keep in regular contact with the reporting agency as well as responders in order to provide updates including:

- Possible ETAs for DOT responders
  - Progress of response efforts
  - Cancellation or suspension of response measures
-

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**Appendix – Selected Maintenance Policy Documents**  
*(to be added)*

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**Appendix – Selected Enforcement Policy Documents**  
*(to be added)*

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**Appendix – Selected Public Outreach Policy Documents**  
*(to be added; see also subsequent pages)*

**Appendix – Sample BOSS One-Pager**

**Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) Pilot in North Carolina’s Research Triangle Region**

Bus on shoulder operation is a low-cost, fast-implementation treatment that can provide immediate benefits to transit whenever mainline travel is experiencing moderate to heavy degrees of congestion. Bus on shoulder operation will allow transit buses with trained drivers to operate on the shoulders of selected freeways and expressways in order to bypass congestion and maintain transit schedules.

Bus on shoulder operations were first implemented in Minnesota more than 20 years ago, with nearly 300 shoulder-miles in use today. More than 10 states now use bus on shoulder, and no state has discontinued an operating bus on shoulder program for operational or safety reasons once commenced.

In North Carolina, transit buses will only be able to use shoulders when travel speeds are below 35 MPH in the main lanes in the direction of travel, and buses will only travel up to 15 MPH faster than other vehicles in addition to the 35 MPH limiting speed. However, the shoulders will retain their primary use as a breakdown or emergency area, and buses will have to yield to all other vehicles when using the shoulder.

Expected benefits of the program for North Carolina are similar to those identified by Minnesota and other states, and are expected to include some or all of the following:

- Shorter transit travel times
- More predictable and reliable transit schedules
- Fewer missed transfer connections
- Increased transit ridership
- Reduced driver overtime
- Decreased operational costs

The first BOSS pilot implementation in North Carolina will occur on I-40 in the Research Triangle area during 2012. If successful, the program could be expanded to other routes, with the goal of creating a regional Bus on Shoulder System.

<b>Bus on Shoulder Guidelines for North Carolina</b>	
<p><b><u>If travel speeds in main lanes in direction of travel are:</u></b>                      65 MPH, 55 MPH, even 35-40 MPH                      Below 35 MPH, 30 MPH, 25 MPH, 20 MPH                      15 MPH                      10 MPH                      5 MPH                      Stopped (0 MPH)</p>	<p><b><u>Then transit buses on adjacent right shoulder:</u></b>                      N/A: Cannot use shoulder                      Can go up to 35 MPH                      Can go up to 30 MPH                      Can go up to 25 MPH                      Can go up to 20 MPH                      Can go up to 15 MPH</p>





## **Appendix – Sample FAQs for Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina**

### **Sample FAQs for Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina**

*Note: The FAQs that follow were initially developed for the pilot implementation of BOSS in Durham County in 2012.*

#### **Q. What is bus on shoulder operation?**

A. Bus on shoulder operation allows authorized transit buses with trained drivers to operate on the shoulders of selected freeways at low speeds during periods of congestion in order to bypass congested traffic and maintain transit schedules. Bus on shoulder operation is a low-cost treatment that can provide immediate benefits to transit whenever mainline travel is experiencing moderate to heavy degrees of congestion.

#### **Q. What is a Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS)?**

A. A regional Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) is a network of freeway shoulders available for travel by authorized transit buses under congested conditions. North Carolina is seeking to develop such a system in the Research Triangle region and potentially other regions of the state, commencing with a pilot installation on I-40 beginning in 2012.

#### **Q. Where will the Bus on Shoulder System initial pilot segment be located?**

A. The pilot section will be located on Interstate 40 in southern Durham County in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina.

- On westbound I-40, the pilot will begin just west of the NC 147 interchange (exit 279) and continue to the US 15-501 interchange (exit 270).

- On eastbound I-40, the pilot will begin at the US 15-501 interchange (exit 270) and continue to the Page Road interchange (exit 282).

- The total length of the pilot is approximately 20 shoulder-miles.

#### **Q. When will buses be able to travel on the shoulder?**

A. When traffic in the main lanes in the direction of travel is traveling below 35 MPH, authorized transit buses will be able to travel in the adjacent right shoulder at speeds up to 35 MPH, as long as the bus stays within 15 MPH of general purpose travel speeds. This means that buses can travel up to 35 MPH as long as speeds in the main lanes are between 20 MPH and 35 MPH.

#### **Q. Will there be time-of-day restrictions for bus on shoulder operation, for example, only during "rush hours"?**

A. No. Approximately 50% of all congestion is "non-recurring", that is, outside of predictable travel periods. Congestion can arise due to either heavy traffic volumes or capacity reductions associated with weather, incidents, and the like. Authorized transit buses will be permitted to travel on bus shoulders in the pilot area during any period of congestion as long as maximum speed thresholds are met.

#### **Q. If I have an emergency, will I still be able to use the shoulder? What if I can't get out of the way of a bus?**

A. Shoulder use for emergencies will continue to take precedence over bus on shoulder operation. BOSS operation on the shoulder during peak periods is a subservient use of the shoulder, which means that authorized transit buses traveling in the shoulder will have to yield to all other vehicles. That having been said, unattended vehicles will be rapidly towed away from shoulders in the pilot area.

**Appendix – Sample FAQs for Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina (continued)**

**Q. Will all transit buses travel on the shoulders in the pilot section when speed thresholds are met?**

A. No. Only authorized transit buses with trained drivers will be permitted to travel on the shoulders during periods of congestion. These drivers will have the option, but not the requirement, of operating on the shoulders in congested conditions. Even when speeds in the main lanes permit shoulder travel, trained bus drivers may always elect to use only portions of the shoulder mileage, or none at all, depending on their professional judgment of the conditions at that time.

**Q. Will any signs be installed on I-40 or on the on-ramps to I-40 in the pilot area to alert motorists to the Bus on Shoulder System?**

A. Yes. "Shoulder: Authorized Buses Only" and "No parking -- tow away zone" signs will be installed on I-40 in the pilot area. "Watch for buses on shoulder" signs will be installed at I-40 on-ramps in the pilot area. All sign installations will occur in March 2012, prior to the commencement of pilot BOSS operations on I-40 in 2012. In addition, other public outreach will be conducted, including the use of selected overhead dynamic electronic message signs on I-40.

**Q. If buses are limited to 15 MPH faster than other vehicles, does that mean that when traffic is stopped on I-40, buses will only be able to travel up to 15 MPH on the shoulder?**

A. Yes. While 35 MPH is the maximum shoulder operating speed, buses must also keep within 15 MPH of general purpose travel speeds, and that limitation controls when traffic speed in the main lanes drops below 20 MPH. Therefore, if traffic is stopped, 15 MPH is the limiting speed for bus travel on the shoulder. See the table below for specific speed thresholds under bus on shoulder operation.

**Travel Speed examples associated with maximum BOSS operating speeds**

<b>If travel speeds in main lanes in direction of travel are:</b>	<b>Then transit buses on adjacent right shoulder:</b>
65 MPH, 55 MPH, even 35-40 MPH	N/A: Cannot travel on shoulder
Below 35 MPH, 30 MPH, 25 MPH, 20 MPH	Can go up to 35 MPH
15 MPH	Can go up to 30 MPH
10 MPH	Can go up to 25 MPH
5 MPH	Can go up to 20 MPH
Stopped (0 MPH)	Can go up to 15 MPH

**Q. Will urban Interstate speed limits need to be lowered below 65 MPH, 60 MPH, or 55 MPH in order to implement the BOSS program?**

A. No. Since bus on shoulder usage only applies during congested conditions when travel in the main lanes is below 35 MPH, no speed limit changes will be needed to implement bus-on-shoulder operation in North Carolina.

**Q. If traffic is moving at say 40-45 MPH, my understanding is that the buses cannot travel on the shoulder. How will buses stay on schedule?**

A. The goal of the bus on shoulder program is to provide a low-cost way of improving schedule certainty for transit under congested conditions while maintaining a high degree of safety on our freeway system. Bus travel on the shoulder is indeed limited to 35 MPH speeds and below. Once buses can travel at or above 35 MPH in the main lanes they can largely stay on schedule.

**Appendix – Sample FAQs for Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina (continued)**

**Q. How much will it cost to get Interstate 40 ready for bus-on-shoulder operation in the Research Triangle region?**

A. The direct costs of implementing a pilot Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) along approximately 20 shoulder-miles of I-40 is approximately \$2,000/shoulder-mile, with those costs primarily for signage. This is an incredibly cost-effective improvement to enhance transit reliability. In addition, it may also save area transit agencies money in terms of reduced operating costs.

**Q. Allowing buses to travel on the shoulder during peak periods seems like a good idea. Why is this limited to a small section of freeway in one area of the state?**

A. More than ten states have implemented bus on shoulder usage during peak periods, and this is North Carolina's first pilot project. The pilot will begin in 2012, and an end date has not been determined, although it is planned to last at least one year. However, if the pilot is successful in terms of both operational and safety performance over time, expansion of bus shoulder operation to other portions of I-40, Wade Avenue Extension, and other freeways in Durham, Orange, and Wake counties will be considered. In addition, other areas in North Carolina may pursue the creation of a Bus on Shoulder System on freeways in their area.

**Q. While bus on shoulder may be new to North Carolina, I understand that it has been used elsewhere with success. Which other states are using bus on shoulder operation?**

A. More than ten states currently use bus on shoulder operation on one or more roadways, including the following:

- South region: FL, GA
- Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region: NJ, DE, MD, VA
- Midwest region: OH, MN, IL, KS
- West region: CA, WA

The Minneapolis-St. Paul region alone has nearly 300 shoulder-miles of bus shoulder in operation. The Minnesota program began approximately 20 years ago. The North Carolina BOSS program is modeled after the successful bus shoulders program in Minnesota.

**Q. Virginia allows all vehicles to travel on the shoulder during peak periods in both Northern Virginia (e.g., I-66) and Hampton Roads (e.g., I-64). What is the reason that North Carolina will restrict shoulder travel during congested periods to just transit buses rather than allowing all vehicles to travel on the shoulder to avoid congestion?**

A. North Carolina is pursuing a pilot Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) program for the Research Triangle region that will improve transit operations during congested periods and enhance the viability of transit as a travel option. BOSS is a low implementation cost program with a number of unique travel, safety, and cost benefits. Some of the benefits associated with BOSS include:

- Small number of vehicles, operated by trained, professional bus drivers
- Slow travel speeds (35 MPH or less)
- High visibility of buses by motoring public and higher vantage point for drivers
- Increased transit schedule reliability and improved attractiveness of transit as a travel option
- Reduced travel time impact of congestion which lowers transit operating costs
- Low implementation cost

NCDOT has previously explored the potential of allowing all vehicles to travel on freeway shoulders such as on I-485 in south Charlotte and may consider doing so again in the future. Any consideration of all allowing all vehicles to travel on freeway shoulders in the future will examine the impact on freeway operations, travel safety, transit schedule reliability, and overall cost.

**Appendix – Sample FAQs for Bus on Shoulder Systems in North Carolina** *(continued)*

***Q. What are the reasons that the Research Triangle region is examining bus-on-shoulder operation for I-40, as opposed to adding an HOV (high-occupancy vehicle), express toll, or other premium lane on the Interstate?***

A. Bus on shoulder operation can be implemented much more quickly and less expensively than the creation of a new travel lane since a BOSS uses the existing the freeway shoulder. In addition, the implementation of BOSS now will not preclude the future addition of express lanes on I-40 or other freeways. In fact, successful implementation of BOSS can create a larger base of transit ridership that could use a future express lane.

***Q. I don't plan on using transit. How will I benefit from the creation of a regional Bus on Shoulder System?***

A. Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) are a very cost-effective way to make bus travel more attractive as well as more efficient, which can increase transit ridership while saving public transit operators money and/or allowing them to provide more transit service options. If more people use transit as a viable and reliable travel option that will improve the performance of our overall transportation system.

***Q. Is this initiative primarily being led by NCDOT or are other agencies involved?***

The two primary implementation partners for the BOSS initiative are NCDOT and Triangle Transit, which provides regional public transportation services for the Research Triangle area in cooperation with local transit providers.

The Bus on Shoulder System program in the Research Triangle region is an initiative of the I-40 Regional Partnership. The Partnership is a cooperative initiative of the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO, cities and towns along the corridor, Triangle Transit, RDU Airport, the Research Triangle Park (RTP), the North Carolina State Highway Patrol (SHP), local law enforcement, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA), and other partners. The Partnership is designed to provide an ongoing focus on the Triangle's most critical freeway in order to maintain its long-term viability. Meredith McDiarmid, PE, NCDOT State Systems Operations Engineer, serves as the corridor executive for I-40 in the Research Triangle area (between I-85 and I-95).

## Appendix – Sample BOSS Team Documents

### Sample Boss Team Invitation

Dear Regional Transit Partner,

The NC Department of Transportation, Triangle Transit, and other members of the I-40 Regional Partnership are focusing on an expected pilot implementation of a Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) project on I-40 in the Research Triangle region later this year. The I-40 Regional Partnership is initiating a regional BOSS Implementation/Operations Team (BOSS Team) which will exhibit primary coordinating responsibility for several elements of the BOSS program including corridor selection, implementation guidelines, and driver training.

The Team's initial focus will be the successful development and execution of a pilot BOSS implementation on the corridor. However, the Team will continue to meet periodically even after the conclusion of a successful pilot in order to maintain the effectiveness of the program and to consider expansion of BOSS to other locations in the region.

We would like to invite you and/or a designee from your organization to become a member of the regional BOSS Team. We will have an optional orientation meeting to what Bus on Shoulder Systems are on Thursday, March 24th, and then our first BOSS Team meeting on Thursday, April 14th. Each meeting will be at 2:30pm at Triangle Transit headquarters in southeast Durham - 901 Slater Road. An expected future meeting schedule can be found below.

Please reply by Monday, March 7 as to whether you and/or a designee would be willing to participate in these Team meetings, and your availability (and/or the availability of your representative/designee) for both the optional orientation meeting in March and the first Team meeting in April.

Thank you for your commitment to regional transportation!

Meredith McDiarmid, PE  
NCDOT State Systems Operations Engineer  
Corridor Executive, I-40/Research Triangle

John Tallmadge  
Director of Commuter Resources  
Triangle Transit

Joe Milazzo II, PE  
Executive Director  
Regional Transportation Alliance

Expected schedule of initial meeting dates (all meetings at Triangle Transit, 901 Slater Rd at 2:30pm)

- Th Mar 24 -- Optional orientation
- Th Apr 14 -- First BOSS I/O Team meeting
- Th May 12 -- Second meeting
- Th June 9 -- Third meeting
- Th July 14 -- Fourth meeting
- Th August 11 -- Fifth meeting
- Th August 25 -- Sixth meeting
- Th September 8 -- Seventh meeting

**Appendix – Sample BOSS Team Documents** *(continued)*

**Sample Boss Team Meeting Agenda**

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**I-40 Regional Partnership  
Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) Team Meeting  
Meeting 6 -- Friday, December 9, 2011  
9:00 - 11:30 am, Triangle Transit**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome, introductions, and thank yous** -- *Meredith McDiarmid, PE, NCDOT*
- 2. BOSS status update** -- *Meredith McDiarmid, PE, NCDOT*  
-- **Progress to date, critical path items, pending tasks**
- 3. Revisions to Implementation and Operations Plan**
- 4. Field visit via bus of pilot corridor** – *Tammy Romain, Triangle Transit & Battle Whitley, NCDOT*
- 5. Driver training** -- *Tammy Romain, Triangle Transit*
- 6. Signage plan preparations** -- *Ron King, PE, NCDOT*
- 7. Update on similar initiatives in other states:**
  - Metro Chicago, IL: I-55
  - Metro Kansas City, KS: I-35
- 8. Public outreach and education** -- *Steve Abbott, NCDOT and Brad Schulz, Triangle Transit*  
-- Media coverage this week: *Raleigh News & Observer 'Road Worrier' column and editorial*
- 9. Operations, Communications, and Enforcement Protocols** -- *NCDOT Transportation Mobility and Safety staff*
- 10. Other outstanding items**
  - Review of drainage structures -- *NCDOT*
  - Other corridor preparation items -- *NCDOT*
  - Potential pilot corridor extensions -- *NCDOT*
  - Pilot evaluation framework -- *Triangle Transit and NCDOT*
  - Other items as identified by BOSS Team
- 11. Key milestone dates**
- 12. Confirm next two meeting dates:**
  - Friday, January 6, 2012
  - Friday, February 3, 2012

**Adjourn**

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## Appendix D: NCDOT BOSS Constructability Review

# Memorandum

TO: Patrick McDonough, AICP and Jeff Dayton, PE (HDR)

FROM: Alpesh Patel and Feng Liu, Ph.D. (Cambridge Systematics, Inc).

DATE: March 24, 2021

RE: CAMPO BOSS – Task 6, BOSS Constructability Review

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This memorandum summarizes the analysis and associated findings for Task 6 – Review of BOSS Deployment based on the Regional Network and Constructability Considerations.

The objective of this task is to provide a qualitative review of BOSS deployment from prior steps (Peer Review, Subject Roads) and Task 5 Suitability screened through infrastructure feasibility and future NCDOT project commitments. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate due to existing data limitations and the importance of assessing BOSS deployment through a regional framework. The analysis involved the following work activities:

- Prepared maps of BOSS Suitability miles (Tier 1, Tier 2) within defined constructability “screens”.
- Evaluated each “screen” for BOSS supportive, coordination elements including pavement infrastructure, regional traffic system operations, 2020-2029 STIP commitments and SPOT projects.
- Evaluated incremental service opportunities along corridors which facilitate BOSS within a regional framework.
- Shared Task 6 findings with Technical Steering Committee (TSC) in February 2021. TSC feedback is reflected in this memo.

## BOSS Suitability within Defined Constructability Screens

The conclusion of Task 5 identified 75 miles of Tier 1 (most suitable) and 139 miles of Tier 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> most suitable) for BOSS implementation suitability (**Figure 1**). Tier 1 and Tier 2 miles formed the basis of “screening” BOSS supportive infrastructure and project specific improvements. The analysis of each successive screen (starting on page 4) narrowed the focus of optimal locations to coordinate and implement BOSS through NCDOT, CAMPO, DCHCMPO, GoTriangle and other regional partner commitments.

- **Pavement Profiles** – limitations in underlying GIS infrastructure information resulted in an incomplete picture of locations to expand shoulder width to accommodate BOSS. **Figure 2** highlights segmented vs continuous locations with adequate shoulder width along Tier 1 and

Tier 2 roadways. Field verification of underlying conditions is outside the scope of this study but recommended to inform future decision making.

- **Managed Motorways** – two phases of Managed Motorways are expected to optimize highway capacity and throughput on major Triangle roadways in the future. Managed Motorways is a Traffic System Management and Operations (TSMO) approach combining roadway, interchange and traffic management technologies to enhance travel time reliability. Phase 1 is 71 miles implemented over the next decade through STIP projects along I-40, I-440, I-87, and US 1. Phase 2 is implemented beyond the next decade encompassing 120 more miles resulting in an expanded, broader regional network along all of I-540 and parts of US 1, US 64, and US 70.

Deploying BOSS within the regional “ecosystem” of Managed Motorways was determined appropriate to facilitate joint visioning and coordinated decision making to serve a cross section of state and local partner interests. Integration with Managed Motorway phases also serves to position BOSS deployment to serve core and secondary transit markets within the region. **Figure 3** highlights both phases of Managed Motorway miles overlapping Tier 1 and Tier 2 BOSS Suitability facilities. **Table 1** highlights the number and percentage of Suitability miles within both phases of Managed Motorways.

- **STIP and SPOT** – **Table 2** highlights the number of STIP and Prioritization 6 (P6.0) projects which fall within Suitability Tiers and Managed Motorway screens. Eight out of the 18 STIP projects have Right of Way (ROW) dates which fall beyond 2026 meaning they could be subject to reprioritization and potentially reviewed for rescoping to accommodate BOSS supportive elements. Seven of the 18 STIP projects (**Figure 4**) fall within both Suitability Tiers and phase 1 of Managed Motorways. Four of the 19 P6.0 projects which fall on the Suitability Tiers also fall within phase 1 of Managed Motorways.

The combination of these future STIP and submitted project priorities represent infrastructure, widening and operational improvements conducive to BOSS. The schedule for these improvements also provides adequate lead time for NCDOT and local planning staff (CAMPO and DCHC) to jointly evaluate, coordinate and refine the approach for regional BOSS deployment. Steps to review or adjust submitted P6.0 project scopes should be weighed carefully within the parameters of NCDOT’s prioritization and programming process.

## Incremental Service Evaluation – Average Costs

Nesting BOSS within the Managed Motorways regional framework widens the range of incremental service opportunity particularly along arterial roadways which serve the Managed Motorway network. BOSS implementation along the shoulders of these facilities (state or US routes) can provide a high value, low-cost solution depending on existing pavement, striping, access and design conditions. **Figure 5** illustrates a spectrum of peer state average per mile costs to implement BOSS – from installing signs (low end of range) to shoulder and structure widening (high end of range). These costs were generated as part of the peer review assessment conducted earlier in the CAMPO BOSS study.

**Figure 6** illustrates a high-level application of weighted average costs to improve sections of NC 147 (Durham Freeway) and US 1 (Capital Boulevard) for near term BOSS operation. These sketch level estimates reflect a combination of low to medium level improvements (signs, access management, drainage) based on desktop analysis. These estimates are subject to

further field investigation to confirm “real world” costs. Improvements to 11 miles of the Durham Freeway (from US 15/501 to I-40) are estimated at just under \$450K. BOSS Improvements to 12 miles of Capital Boulevard (from NC 98 in Wake Forest to I-440) are estimated at just under \$785K. These BOSS improvements to existing conditions along this stretch of Capital Boulevard are independent of any future corridor freeway improvements proposed by the City of Raleigh between I-540 and I-440.

Similar analyses to identify near term, low cost and low risk opportunity to deploy BOSS could be evaluated for other arterials in the Triangle.

## Findings

- **Deploy BOSS within an operational “ecosystem”** – the development of a region-based Managed Motorway network combined with state/local coordinated infrastructure improvements provides an effective framework and common vision for BOSS. Coordinated improvements allow BOSS to scale over time, serving core and secondary transit markets within and outside the CAMPO planning area. Coordinated planning will facilitate joint reviews of project scoping and opportunity for BOSS accommodation as NCDOT’s prioritization and programming process allows.
- **Explore Incremental Service Opportunities** – the review of other arterial improvements (signs, shoulder repair, access management, drainage) along corridors which connect to Managed Motorways can inform low cost, near term BOSS feasibility. The evaluation of the Durham Freeway and US 1 provides a high-level approach which through field verification can translate into a more tailored planning level methodology to determine localized per mile construction costs.

Figure 1. Suitability Tiers

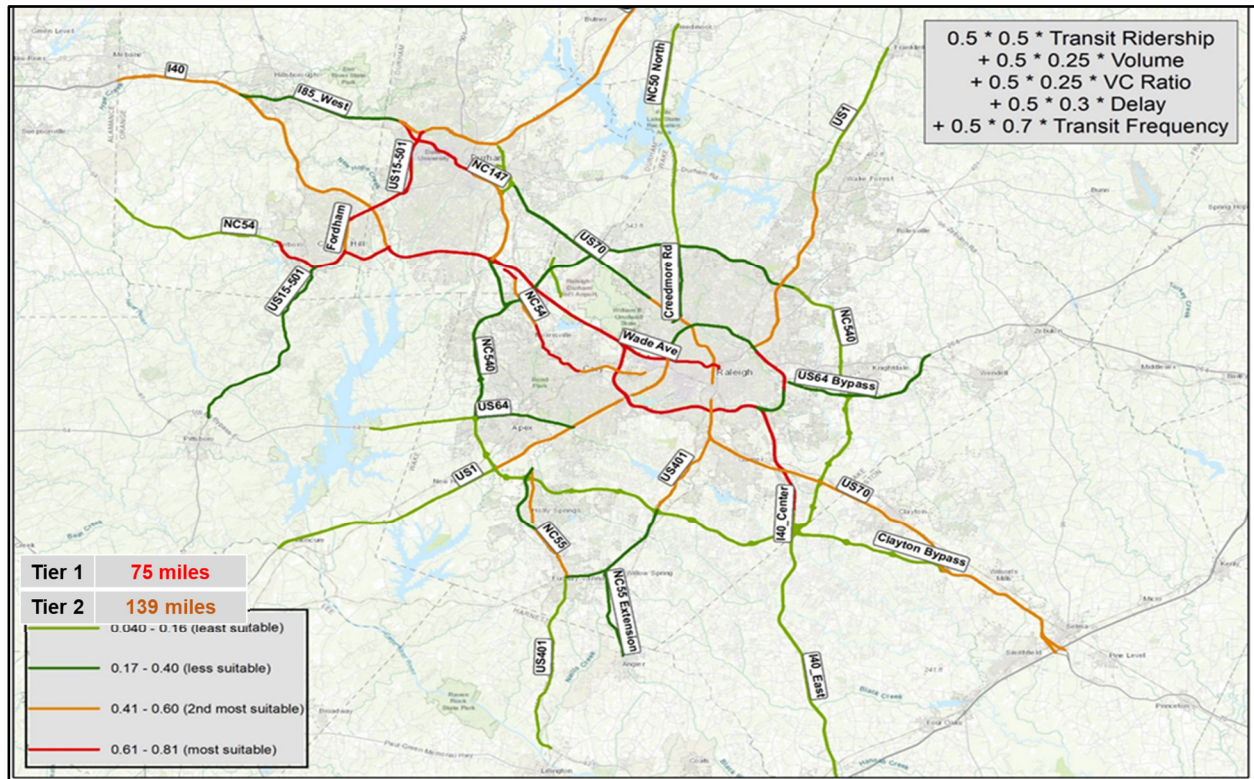
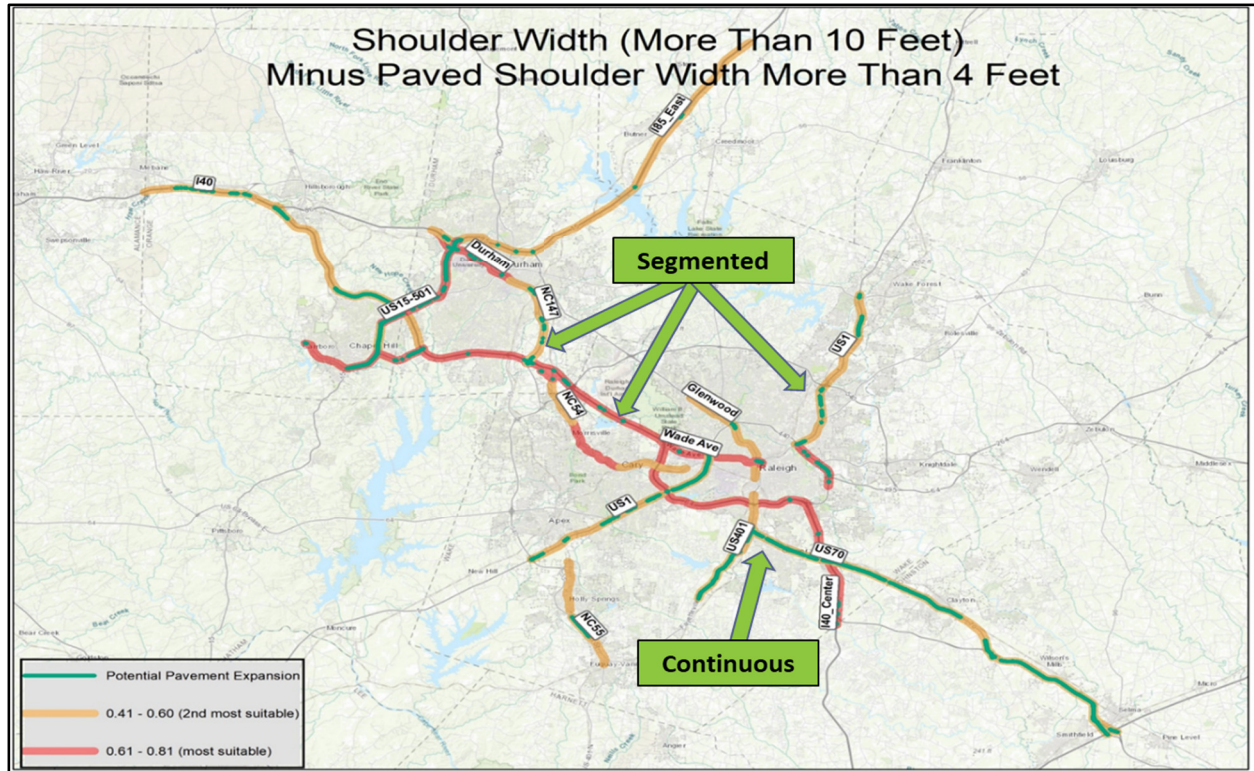
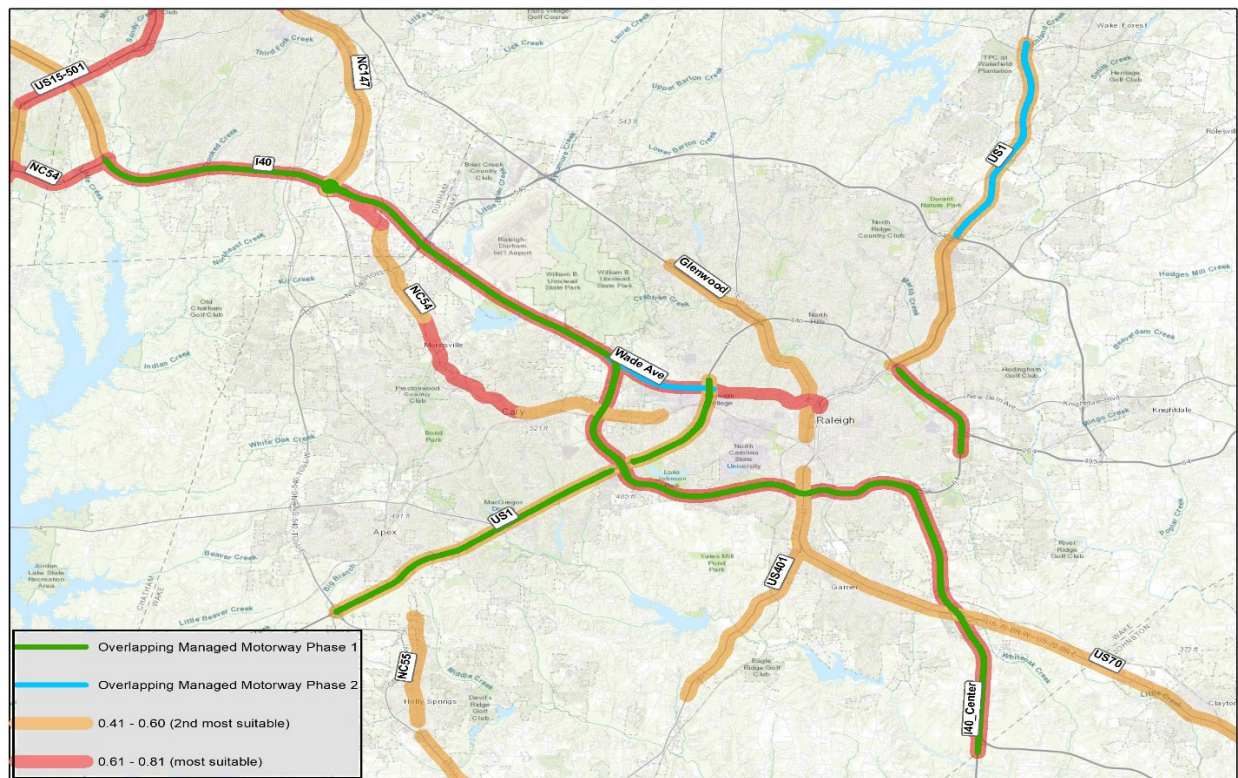


Figure 2. Potential Pavement Expansion Locations





**Figure 3. Suitability Tiers within Managed Motorways (Phase 1, 2)**





**Table 1. Miles and Percentage of Suitability within Managed Motorways (Phase 1, 2)**

<b>Phase 1 – Managed Motorways (71 miles)</b>		
BOSS Suitability	<b>Tier 1</b> (75 miles)	44 BOSS Tier 1 miles (or 59%) included in MM 1
	<b>Tier 2</b> (139 miles)	13 BOSS Tier 2 miles (or 9%) included in MM 1
<b>Phase 2 – Managed Motorways (120 miles)</b>		
BOSS Suitability	<b>Tier 1</b> (75 miles)	3 BOSS Tier 1 miles (or 4%) included in MM 2
	<b>Tier 2</b> (139 miles)	10 BOSS Tier 2 miles (or 7%) included in MM 2

**Table 2. STIP and P6.0 Projects within Suitability and Managed Motorways (Phase 1, 2)**

<b>Screen</b>	<b># of STIP Projects</b>	<b># of P6.0 Projects</b>	<b>Improvement Type</b>
BOSS Suitability (Tier 1, 2)	18	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pavement Rehab</li> <li>• Widening</li> </ul>
BOSS Suitability (Tier 1, 2) + Managed Motorways (Phase 1, 2)	7	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert to Freeway.</li> <li>• Upgrade Arterials to Superstreet</li> </ul>
BOSS Suitability (Tier 1, 2) + Managed Motorways (Phase 1)	7	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Operational improvements</li> </ul>

**Figure 4. STIP Projects within Suitability and Managed Motorways (Phase 1)**

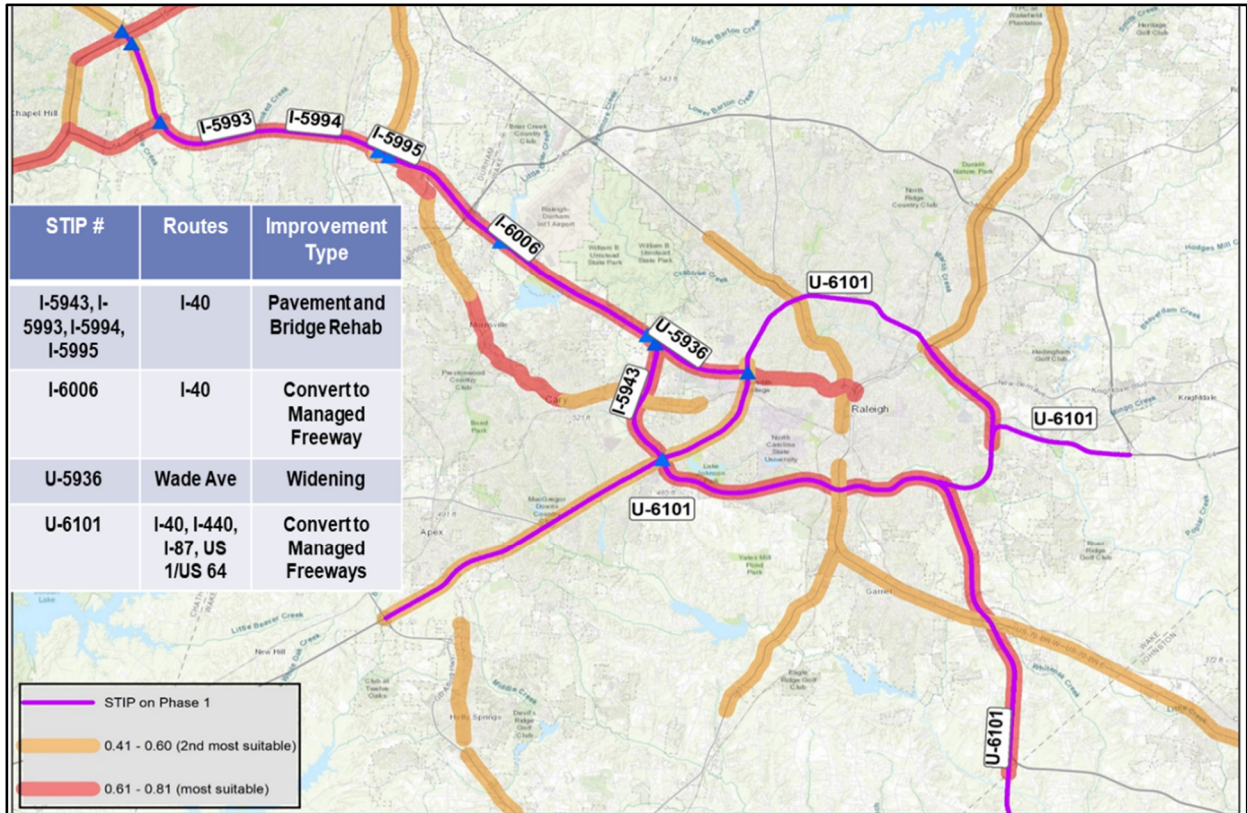


Figure 5. Incremental BOSS Implementation – Average Costs / Mile

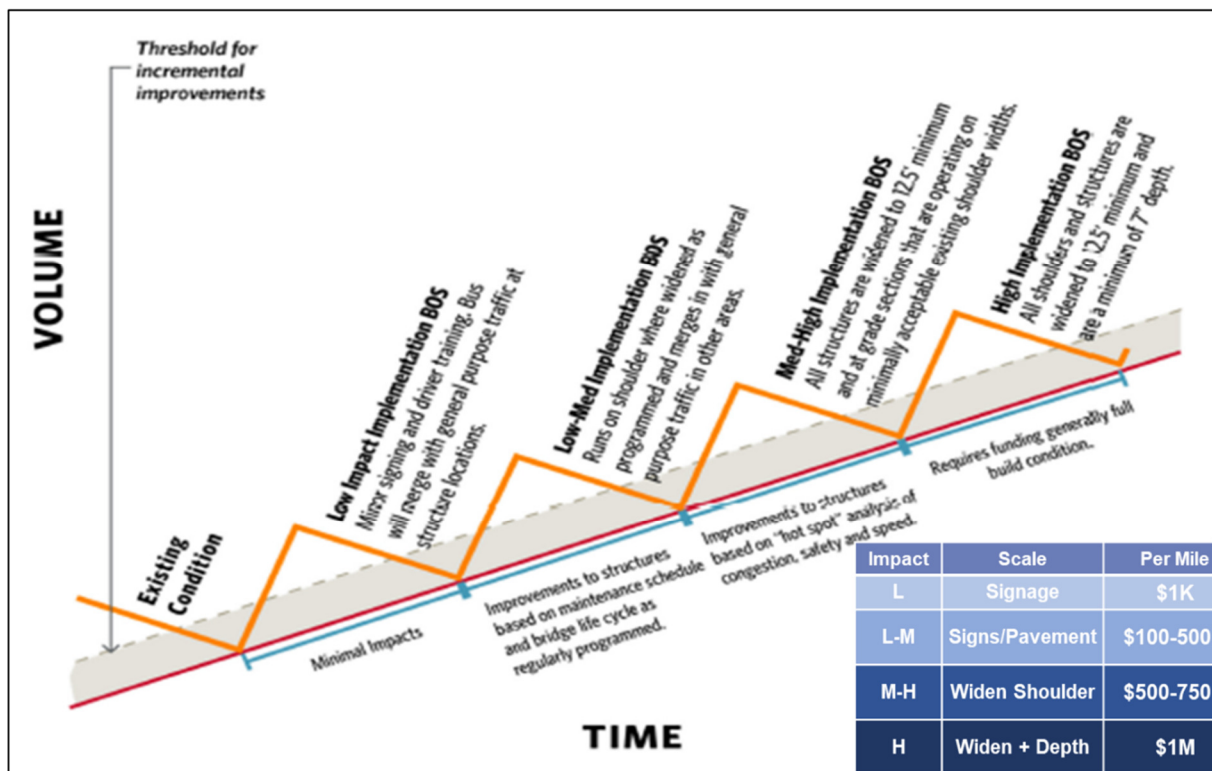
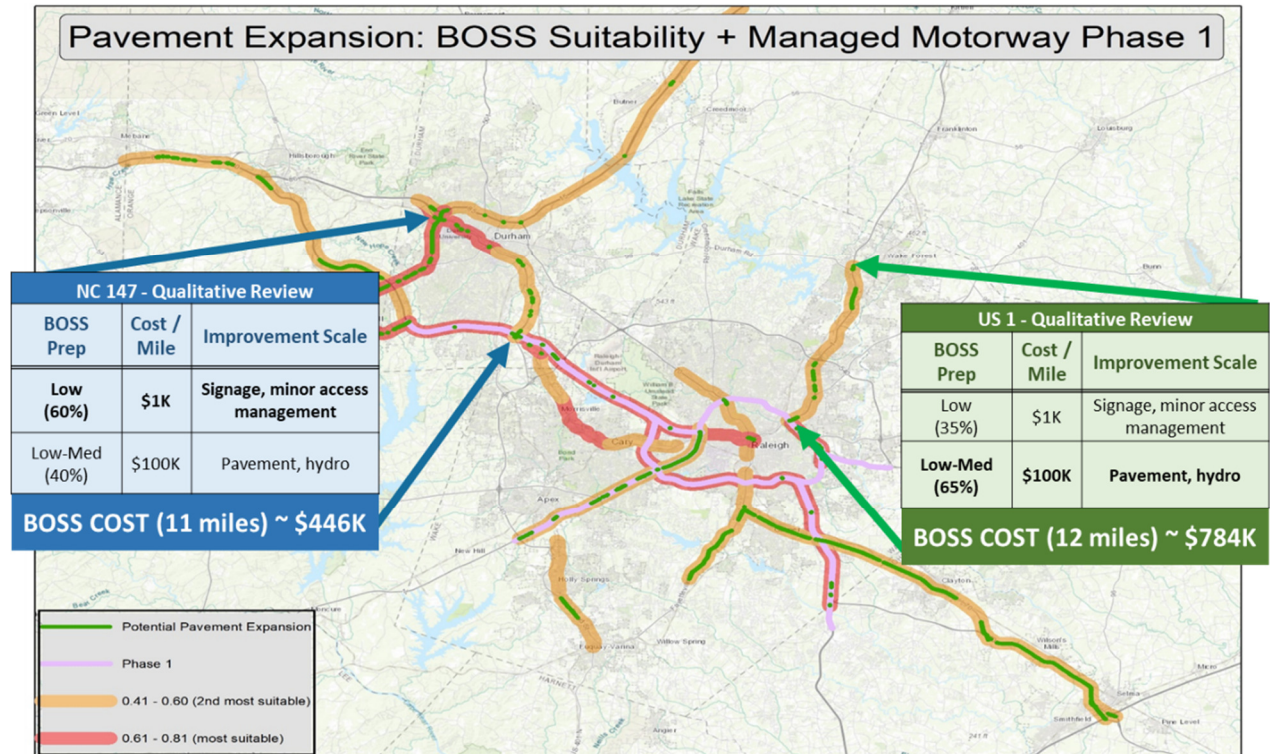


Figure 6. Incremental Service Costs – Capital Boulevard and Durham Freeway



## Appendix E: BOSS Messaging Strategies



# Bus On Shoulder Study Messaging Recommendations

Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Prepared By HDR, Inc.

May 12, 2021



## Contents

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## Introduction

Since the Bus on Shoulder System (BOSS) introduction, the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Public Information Plan has been successful in sharing program messaging with key stakeholders. The Plan introduced how the system operates, shared the benefits -- including reliability, safety, and cost savings -- and encouraged ridership.

As the system approaches its 10-year operational anniversary, and new corridors are considered for BOSS implementation, a new set of strategies should be introduced to build upon the foundation established over the past years and ensure the system's long-term success.

The next phase of the public information plan will refresh and elevate the program's brand and messaging (Appendix A) to help increase public awareness of the system and move the targeted audiences closer to a place of familiarity and normalcy with BOSS operations.

## History of BOSS Public Communications in The Triangle

In 2012, NCDOT, GoTriangle and the business community organization, the Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) – all played a role in getting the word out about the introduction of Bus On Shoulder on I-40.

NCDOT's public information office held a press conference at the District Drive Park and Ride lot, where Raleigh residents who ride the CRX and DRX buses to Chapel Hill and Durham board every day. Press releases were sent before and after the beginning of BOSS operations.

Using an earned media approach for visuals, NCDOT reached out to WRAL and WTVD when BOSS operations were first activated, giving the television station helicopters an opportunity to film BOSS operations from above.

GoTriangle also conducted its own promotional campaign, and engaged the media with ride-along events for television crews, and interview opportunities with those who were training the bus operators to use BOSS, and the bus operators themselves.

Joe Milazzo, Executive Director of the Regional Transportation Alliance, spoke regularly about the coming of BOSS at transportation leadership meetings throughout the region to spread the word.

The key message in these events was that BOSS had been successful and safe in other states, with a particular focus on the success achieved in Minneapolis.

Beyond the initial segment opening in Durham County and similar publicity for the expansion into Wake County, the primary channel for BOSS operations has been the BOSS webpages on the NCDOT and GoTriangle websites, which contain general information about BOSS:



- NCDOT webpage: <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/public-transit/Pages/bus-on-shoulder-system.aspx>
- GoTriangle webpage: <https://gotriangle.org/news/faqs-about-boss>

The remainder of this document focuses on communication strategies and tactics for introducing BOSS in new corridors in North Carolina.

## The Three M's: Milestones, Moments, and Modifications

These new strategies should be implemented as the system approaches key milestones, moments, and modifications. Leveraging these opportunities will offer timely and relevant awareness and education for key audiences.

Examples of the three M's include but are not limited to:

**Milestones:** New BOSS segment opens for operation

**Moments:** Safety and operational campaigns

**Modifications:** The BOSS to be used temporarily during a construction project and become more visible on an existing segment due to frequency increases in transit service



# Recommendation

*Develop a targeted information and engagement campaign that supports specific milestones, moments, or modifications.*

Below are examples of two concepts. Concept #1 is a milestone campaign raising awareness of a new BOSS segment opening for operation. Concept #2 is a moment campaign promoting the benefits of a new BOSS line that is in operation.

## Concept #1: Milestone

**Milestone:** Promoting a new BOSS segment that is opening

**Timing:** 12-month campaign (begins six months before operation and continues for six months after the opening of a new segment)

**Campaign Theme:** Share the Road with the BOSS

### Goals

- Educate motorists on the BOSS and what they can expect when sharing the road
- Create a sense of normalcy and comfort for motorists
- Empower motorists to feel safe on the road

### Target Audience

- Motorists currently using the highway system
- New motorists who have relocated to the area
- Motorists in geographic submarkets who were unlikely to have exposure to the BOSS program

### Key Messages

It is recommended to develop a series of new key messages that will be shared consistently using a variety of the communication tactics listed below. Key message themes will include:

- When you share the road with the BOSS you can expect...
- When you share the road with the BOSS you will see...
- Why sharing the road with the BOSS is safe...
- Why our region needs to share the road with the BOSS...
- How you benefit from sharing the road with the BOSS...

### Communication Tactics

A refresh of communication tactics that were implemented during the pilot and the first public information phase will prove to be an effective and efficient approach to achieve the recommended goals outlined in this memo.

### Media Strategy

Create a year-long media strategy that builds off the initial media approach. The media strategy will begin six months before the BOSS system enters full operations on the new route to create timely content for media partners and kick-off the awareness campaign. It is recommended to create one-of-a-kind pitches and engagement activities for regional, local, and hyper-local media. Concepts include:

- Offering media ride-alongs
- Pitching behind the scene interviews with drivers



- Giving on-location access to film
- Distributing prepackaged video segments for digital release

Media communication and engagement will begin six months before operation and continue six months into operations.

### Social Media

Following the timing of the media campaign, it is recommended to leverage NCDOT's existing social media platforms to bring key messages to life. A few recommended strategies that can increase engagement on these platforms include:

- Facebook Live: offer an "on-location" Share the Road with the BOSS experience
- Memes: Create a Share the Road with the BOSS meme
- Videos: capture the BOSS live in action
- Augmented/Virtual Reality: create real life experiences that show instead of tell
- Paid and Targeted Advertisement: small investment with huge returns
- Facebook/Instagram Stories: Share the Road with the BOSS series from the perspective of a car

In addition, social content creates connections with community partners, which result in reaching more followers.

### Webpage

All communication efforts should drive traffic back to the webpage(s). Therefore, it is critical that a web strategy document be created to guide the coordinated efforts of NCDOT and transit providers. The strategy document will address a variety of topics from the development and management of web content to search engine optimization. The BOSS team can work together to identify a primary webpage.

### FAQ Document

Remember the audience. Simplify and update the FAQ document to connect with the public. It is recommended to reduce the document to one page, front and back, and prioritize the content. Content should focus on the five key messages.

Content created for the FAQ can be repurposed in many ways. FAQ Fridays on Social Media offer an opportunity to share some of these questions and answers. Media moments and local bloggers will welcome unique pitches to share questions and clarifying answers via their respected outlets.

### BOSS One-Pager

Update the one-pager to compliment the campaign theme and messaging. Updated key messages supported by powerful imagery should be included. Visuals and content created for the one-pager can be repurposed in many ways including posting on the webpage, sharing on social platforms, and distributing to partners with the ask that they share and post via their communication channels.

### On-Site Signage

Revisit opportunities to augment overhead boards, with strategically placed portable boards along BOSS routes. Temporary boards provide a canvas to share a message.

## **Concept #2: Moment**

**Moment:** Promoting the benefits of a new BOSS line that is in operation to educate and attract potential riders



**Timing:** 12-month campaign that begins after a new BOSS segment has been operational for at least 6 months.

**Campaign Theme:** My BOSS

**Tagline:** When I am commuting, my BOSS works for ME

### Goals

- Elevate awareness of the system with a focus on reliability, safety, and cost savings
- Educate new audiences on who rides, how to ride and why to ride
- Celebrate the system and its positive impacts to the community.
- Call to Action: Get access to tools that help plan a trip (website, app)

### Target Audience

- Potential new riders
- New motorists who have relocated to the area
- Motorists in geographic submarkets who were unlikely to have exposure to the BOSS

### Key Messages

Key messages will be developed from BOSS riders -- real, authentic and in their voice.

### Communication Tactics

Concept #2 will take an authentic approach, focusing on highlighting BOSS riders. By identifying and using current BOSS riders to tell why and how they use the system, NCDOT will set the stage for achieving the campaign goals. To complement the communication tactics shared in Concept #1, this concept will focus on making BOSS more relatable through the positive experiences of current users.

### Partnerships

Establishing strong partnerships with local service providers can elevate the impact of a campaign. Regional partnerships, especially with Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities, provide an opportunity to incorporate the My BOSS campaign into annual programs and events.

### Visual Assets

Images, testimonials, and videos will take center stage and will be distributed through a variety of existing communication channels including a robust digital effort on social media (paid and organic) and local media like newspapers, radio, and website. This humanizing approach will show that a broad spectrum of people across the community ride the bus already and love it. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss the personal benefits of the system, showcase the communities the system serves, and speak to individuals not currently interested in using the system.

Additionally, throughout the year, this phase will have a call to action built into every key message and visual. This action item will drive traffic to the website where information about the BOSS is easily accessible.

### Community Celebration: MY BOSS- 10 Years of Riding with MY BOSS

Applying a community celebration to a variety of moments is a wonderful way to actively engage the community and NCDOT's partners. An example of an appropriate moment is the upcoming 10-year BOSS anniversary on July 16, 2022.

There are numerous ways to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the BOSS including:

- Pop-up bus events



- Free fare day
- Celebrity bus drivers
- Stuff the Bus -- an event in partnership with local food bank
- Bus shelter art projects
- Media ride-along
- My BOSS, MY RIDE -- sign up and ride for free. (link takes them to website), #MYBOSS

Community events provide an opportunity to capture strong visuals to support ongoing marketing efforts. In addition, they offer an opportunity to re-engage the regional BOSS team/transit partners. The regional BOSS team and transit partners played an important role during the pilot program. As the program approaches its 10 years of service, this welcomes a unique opportunity to reengage these individuals and organizations to assist with outreach and communication. Pulling this group together to assist with the planning and ultimate launch of the 10-year celebration will send a powerful message to the community regarding the success of the BOSS.

## Summary

Both concepts provide examples of how-to build off the foundation that was laid during the first phase of messaging. Tailored campaign themes around the BOSS milestones, moments and modifications keep content fresh, interesting, relevant and attract target audiences.



## **Appendix F: Environmental Assessment Letter**



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE  
GOVERNOR

EUGENE A. CONTI, JR.  
SECRETARY

May 4, 2012

John F. Sullivan, III  
Federal Highway Administration  
NC Division Office Administrator  
310 New Bern Avenue  
Suite 410  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1418

Dear John,

As you are aware the I-40 Regional Partnership has been working on an operational strategy providing a transit advantage by improving arrival predictability and scheduling and lowering cost for transit buses that use the I 40 corridor in/near the Research Triangle Park. This operational strategy is Bus on Shoulders operations (BOSS).

BOSS allows authorized transit buses with trained drivers to operate on the shoulders of selected freeways at low speeds during periods of congestion in order to bypass congested traffic and maintain transit schedules. Bus on shoulder operation is a low-cost treatment that can provide immediate benefits to transit whenever mainline travel is experiencing moderate to heavy degrees of congestion. This use of the shoulder is subservient to the use of the shoulder as a breakdown lane or for emergency operations and buses must yield to everything in the shoulder. In the case of the BOSS program, buses will not be allowed to travel greater than 35 mph on the existing shoulder and will only be allowed when operating speeds drop below 35 mph. Our intention is to pilot this operations strategy that has proven to be very successful in other states.

One of the primary items that remain to be completed is determining how 23 CFR 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise applies to this activity.

We have reviewed Section 772 and believe that operational strategies and activities fall into what is defined as a Type III project and therefore does not require a noise analysis or abatement measures. The following provides supporting information on how we come to this conclusion and the purpose of this letter is to request your concurrence.

It is clear that Section 772 will typically apply to this type of activity based on the 772.7 because we will likely use Federal-aid highway funds to carry out a variety of operational strategies. When reviewing the definition of a Type I project we find the following:

- (1) The construction of a highway on a new location. BOSS will not involve construction of a highway on new locations, only signs installed on u-channel posts will be added.
- (2) The physical alteration of an existing highway that includes a substantial horizontal or vertical alteration. We will not be changing the horizontal or vertical alignment of I 40 and no physical alterations will be made other than adding signs. BOSS will horizontally shift noise sources (buses) no more than 12 feet closer to any noise receptor; therefore, it will not halve the distance between the traffic noise source and any noise receptor. We do not believe BOSS meets the definition or intent of this definition of a Type I project.
- (3) The addition of a through-traffic lane(s). This includes the addition of a through-traffic lane that functions as a HOV lane, HOT lane, Bus Lane, or truck climbing lane. We will not be adding an additional lane. We will allow transit busses with trained drivers to use the existing paved shoulder for subservient use only

MAILING ADDRESS:  
TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND SAFETY DIVISION  
1561 MAIL SERVICE CENTER  
RALEIGH NC 27699-1561

TELEPHONE: 919-773-2800  
FAX: 919-771-2745

WEBSITE: [WWW.NCDOT.ORG](http://WWW.NCDOT.ORG)

LOCATION:  
750 NORTH GREENFIELD PARKWAY  
GARNER NC 27529

John Sullivan, III, PE  
 May 4, 2012  
 Page 2 of 2

when traffic speeds drop below 35 mph. Since we are not adding a lane, we do not believe BOSS meets the definition or intent of this definition of a Type I project.

- (4) The addition of an auxiliary lane, except for when the auxiliary lane is a turn lane. We are not adding an auxiliary lane. Nothing will be added except for signs. BOSS is subservient use of an existing shoulder; therefore, we do not believe BOSS meets this definition of a Type I project.
- (5) The addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps added to a quadrant to complete an existing partial interchange. This is not applicable to the BOSS activities.
- (6) Restriping existing pavement for the purpose of adding a through-traffic lane or auxiliary lane. We will not be restriping to narrow travel lanes in order to add additional capacity. The number of travel lanes and shoulders will remain constant and the pavement markings will remain in place. We also believe this definition applies where the existing pavement is used to add substantial new capacity. The BOSS program will not add to the overall capacity of the roadway; however, it will provide an operational advantage to mass transit.
- (7) The addition of a new or substantial alteration of a weight station, rest stop, ride-share lot or toll plaza. This is not applicable to the BOSS activities.

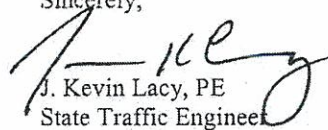
The definition of a Type II project is a Federal or Federal-aid highway project for noise abatement on an existing highway. NCDOT does not have a Type II Traffic Noise Policy and does not participate in Type II projects. This definition is not applicable to the BOSS activities.

In addition to our understanding that BOSS does not meet the definition of a Type I project, we also considered the overall intent of the noise abatement, which we believe is to identify and reduce increased noise impacts resulting from highway projects. In the case of the BOSS program, buses will not be allowed to travel greater than 35 mph on the existing shoulder and will only be allowed when operating speeds drop below 35 mph. Through discussions with Greg Smith, NCDOT's Traffic Noise & Air Quality Group Leader, we understand that the level of traffic noise generated at 35 mph is approximately half of that produced with the same traffic mix at 65 mph. Consequently, when BOSS becomes active, traffic noise levels are approximately half of those under normal traffic operating speeds. Any traffic noise analysis performed for BOSS operational conditions would certainly indicate a significant decrease in predicted noise levels, not a predicted increase, for which 23 CFR 772 was intended to address.

In summary, we believe that the BOSS program is an operational project that does meet the 23 CFR 772 definition or requirements of a Type I project. Therefore, BOSS and other operational projects are Type III projects and do not require a noise analysis or abatement consideration under the same CFR.

Thank you for reviewing our findings. Let me know if you concur or if you need additional information concerning our review of the BOSS program.

Sincerely,



J. Kevin Lacy, PE  
 State Traffic Engineer

JKL

- cc: Wally Bowman, PE,  
 Deborah M. Barbour, PE  
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5/9/12 Clarence W. Cole Jr.

## **Appendix G: BOSS Peer Review**





# Triangle Region Bus on Shoulder Study Peer Review Technical Memorandum



October 2020

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## Introduction

The North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and its partners, GoTriangle, , the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) initiated a study to create a programmatic approach for identifying, prioritizing, and developing best practices for Bus on Shoulder Systems (BOSS) deployment in the Triangle, and across North Carolina. The initial task involved soliciting feedback from the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) to understand how the current BOSS corridor is functioning - including what is working, what is not working, and what are some of their interests for expanding and enhancing the BOSS. Additionally, the TSC selected three peer review states to research—California, Florida, and Minnesota. This Technical Memorandum (TM) is the result of the peer reviews of California, Florida, and Minnesota, guided by the topics and questions generated from the initial TSC meeting as well as innovative design and operating concepts. The TM concludes with a discussion of the implications of this peer review for North Carolina, and some early insights that may be explored in detail in later portions of this study.

## California

California has been evaluating the feasibility of freeway and arterial bus on shoulder strategies since the early 2000s. For a variety of reasons, pilot programs for Bus on Shoulder have been the state's focus rather than the implementation of permanent BOSS strategies. The San Diego region implemented a successful Pilot in San Diego in 2005-2009. This Pilot was initially intended to temporarily provide transit service as a permanent passenger rail solution was under construction. Once the passenger rail was implemented and operating, the BOSS Pilot was discontinued. The success of the initial 2005-2009 pilot project prompted both state and regional agencies to consider other BOSS pilots. This Pilot was also the impetus for generating more statewide interest in the potential for BOSS solutions, not only in San Diego but across the state. In 2020, regional and state agencies across California are evaluating and implementing BOSS Pilots, evaluating the BOSS and corridor feasibility, and implementing permanent BOSS solutions to bypass congestion, enhance person throughput, and improve travel time reliability. Because BOSS is a low-cost solution to improving travel time, California is utilizing BOSS to complement longer-term and higher-cost corridor solutions such as managed lanes and bus rapid transit (BRT) projects. The placement of park and ride lots, the combination of street-level and freeway bus stops, use of ramp metering, and vehicle-to-infrastructure technology are examples of how California has enhanced their BOSS systems.

## Design

**Design Standards:** California does not have currently have official statewide or regional standards for all elements of BOSS design. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is currently developing statewide guidelines, while regional agencies such as the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and (San Francisco Bay Area) Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) have developed or are currently developing BOSS feasibility documents for corridors and systems. Without legal authority, California's state and regional agencies are treating all BOSS strategies as Pilots which allow the temporary use of shoulders on California's state transportation system. Due to the lack of standards and legal authority, BOSS design studies for pilots tend to be regionally-specific about all design elements. Shoulder widths range from 10 ft. to 12 ft., BOSS strategies predominantly consider outside shoulder use, and corridor strategies tend to be low-tech using static signage and some striping to note shoulder usage by buses.

## Operations

**Operating Protocols:** Due to the lack of BOSS standards at both the statewide and regional levels in California, BOSS operating protocols and features tend to be developed independently by agencies as part of their system or corridor study analysis. While this tends to be the case, California agencies use the



Minnesota DOT BOSS Program as the guidance for developing BOSS operating protocols for pilot programs developed statewide. In this process, California agencies also ensure that the unique characteristics of the traveling public and facilities under evaluation are integrated into the system or regional BOSS under analysis. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area, bus operators can move to the shoulder when the general purpose lanes are traveling at less than 35 miles per hour, which is the Minnesota BOSS standard. However, the operating hours for a BOSS corridor under design in the San Francisco Bay Area are 5 AM to 8 PM to be consistent with the region's managed lanes hours. The operating hours for BOSS in Minnesota are focused on the morning and afternoon peak commuter periods of travel.

## Funding, Prioritization, Implementation

**Pilot to Permanent:** To date, the BOSS strategies in California have included the 2006-2009 transit-only lane pilot in San Diego, which was discontinued after the permanent passenger rail project was constructed in the corridor. The current San Diego BOSS Pilot is also considered a Transit-Only Lane strategy with the potential to convert this Pilot into a permanent solution in the future. The San Francisco Bay Area is in the process of designing and implementing BOSS Pilots for two major freeway corridors, currently intended as temporary strategies with the potential to convert to permanent solutions in the future if warranted. The San Francisco Bay Area also recently conducted a BOSS study to identify feasible BOSS corridors for design and implementation which was used to identify several additional locations for BOSS feasibility analysis and planning. Permanent BOSS facility design will soon be underway for a freeway corridor in the Monterey-Santa Cruz region (California's Central Coast).

## Florida

Florida implemented their first BOSS pilot project in 2007 operating on a 9-mile stretch of the Don Shula Expressway and the Snapper Creek Expressway in Miami. Due to the success of the three-year project, it was extended in 2010 and is still in operation today. In 2015, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) initiated a study to develop statewide guidance and criteria for BOSS operations in Florida. The statewide guidance was developed as a one-stop-shop for agencies to use to evaluate appropriate locations for BOSS projects, providing checklists for project justification, design criteria, operating criteria, implementation, and post-implementation of BOSS. Since the statewide guidance has been in place, the state has two planned BOSS projects, one in Tampa which has moved into construction, and a second project in Miami that is slated to move into construction in July 2022.

## Design

### *Shoulder Features*

**Width:** The Statewide Guidance document indicates that the minimum width criteria for BOSS is 10 feet with no barrier and 11.5 feet with a barrier which was determined through a peer review of other systems. However, when designing the pilot projects, the transit agencies suggested that they preferred an 11.5 ft. shoulder minimum to emulate a general purpose lane and ensure safety and comfort for the bus operators. In Tampa, the minimum shoulder width is being accomplished through the shifting of the general purpose lanes toward the median and adding pavement to provide a full-depth shoulder in the existing right-of-way. While the project is more costly than running buses on an existing 10 ft. shoulder, when compared to the construction of a transit-only lane, the BOSS solution is significantly cheaper and less involved.

**Inside versus Outside:** Bus on shoulder operations can utilize the inside shoulder (left) or the outside shoulder (right) and it is dependent upon the corridor features and transit operations. The planned projects in Florida are a primary example. The Tampa project will utilize the outside shoulder due to the length of the route. The bus is operating on the shoulder for five miles to improve regional connectivity from St. Petersburg to downtown Tampa, exiting northbound via a right-hand exit. The bus will make an interim stop at a park and ride lot and merge back onto the interstate continuing to the final stop.

The Miami project will utilize the inside shoulder for similar reasons. The buses will travel on the inside shoulder in the eastbound direction and exit to the left. Although this is a short, three-mile segment across a causeway connecting Miami to Miami Beach, the eastbound travel time is time-sensitive for the commuters during the AM peak period traveling to Miami Beach to work at hotels and restaurants. The bus will be required to maneuver across three lanes westbound to exit via a right-hand exit.

**Rumble Strips:** Rumble strips exist along the shoulder as a safety precaution for vehicles drifting out of the travel lane and therefore should not be removed. However, when planning for BOSS operations, it was decided that the rumble strips would create an unpleasant ride for both the bus operators and riders. The FDOT assessed moving the rumble strips to the center of the shoulder to allow the bus to straddle the rumble strips. After review, it was determined this would result in a safety deficiency for the corridor. FDOT took an innovative approach and plans to install profile thermoplastic along the edge line of the travel lane which provides the safety of the original rumble strips while allowing the bus a smooth ride. The profile thermoplastic will be used installed in Tampa and Miami and is likely to become a standard for future BOSS corridors.

## Operations

**Maintenance:** Maintaining the BOSS corridor is critical to the success of BOSS operations. FDOT suggests that the shoulders used for bus operations be swept and cleared of debris at the same level as the general purpose lanes. The Department has a maintenance contract which will be expanded to include clearing the shoulders as appropriate. Additionally, the FDOT Road Rangers patrol congested areas and high incident locations of the freeway, and provide a direct service to motorists by quickly clearing travel lanes of minor incidents and assisting motorists. The Road Rangers will assist in BOSS operations by ensuring disabled vehicles and debris are removed from the shoulder in a quick and efficient manner.

## Funding, Prioritization, Implementation

**Selection of BOSS Projects:** The FDOT developed a prescriptive approach to selecting BOSS projects which relies on the transit agency to initiate and propose the need for BOSS operations. The Department has established a set of minimum thresholds for consideration of BOSS to ensure it is justifiable for the proposed corridor. The established minimum thresholds for consideration of BOSS are:

- Limited access facility;
- Congested speeds of 35 mph for > 15 minute periods at least one day per week;
- Six buses operating on the facility per day;
- Projected Increase in ridership by >10%;
- Improved travel times along the routes >20%; and
- Minimum 10 feet shoulder width where there is no barrier, minimum 11.5 feet width where there is a barrier.

The minimum thresholds may not be met at the time of proposal but the agency is required to assess the future conditions of the corridor to determine if the thresholds will be met in the next 3-5 years. Once the project justification and thresholds have been met or will be met, the transit agency must develop a concept plan consisting of a general project description, information on potential BOSS segments and preliminary estimates of potential benefits in terms of running time savings, schedule reliability improvements, and increased ridership. The justification and operational analyses can then be taken to the Department to gain support and request approval to proceed with planning for BOSS operations. If approved, the Department will participate on the BOSS team and funding will be programmed for shoulder improvements as appropriate.

**Incremental Implementation:** Bus on shoulder can be implemented as a low-cost solution with minimal impacts to the current infrastructure. A low-impact implementation BOSS would run buses on the existing shoulder, merge at pinch points, and use static signage which would cost roughly \$1,000 per mile. The project can be improved with time and resources which may include adding shoulder pavement during a planned and programmed resurfacing project for a low-medium implementation project or fully build out shoulders and structures for a high implementation project. A high implementation project would cost over \$1,000,000 per mile. The costs are dependent upon the corridor features and are based on the type of signage, technology, structures present, etc. The figure below provides the incremental implementation alternatives.

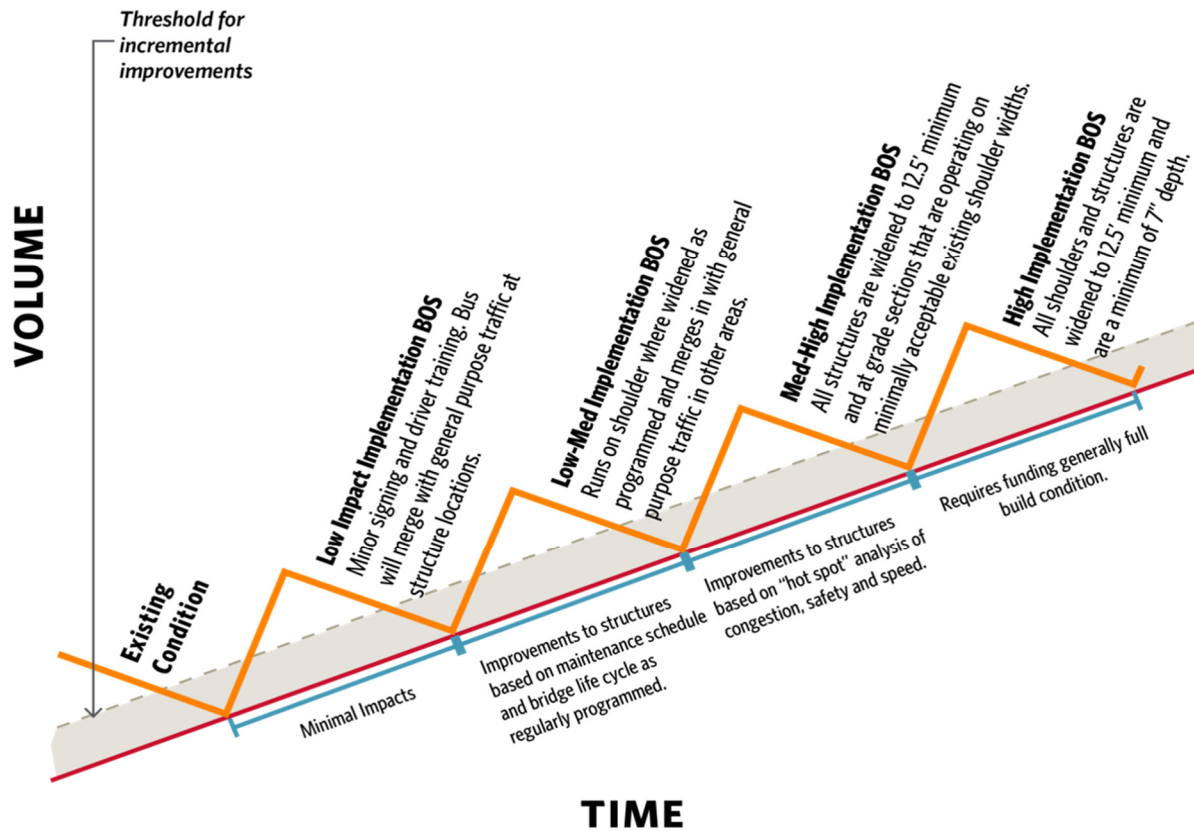


Figure 1. Incremental Implementation Alternatives

*Public Awareness and Engagement*

**Demonstration Video:** There are a variety of strategies to make the public aware of the new BOSS service(s). The FDOT worked with the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) to develop a short video demonstrating how the buses will operate on the 5-mile BOSS segment from St. Petersburg to downtown Tampa. The video provided the justification for running buses on shoulder, basic design characteristics, and operating requirements to ensure the public understood the who, what, when, and why.

**State Patrol Escort:** The BOSS team for the Florida project includes the state and local police to ensure buy-in from the troops who will be enforcing the BOSS operations. During the first two weeks of BOSS operations, the state highway patrol will serve as an escort for the buses operating on the shoulder.

## Minnesota

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota is often considered the prototype system for bus on shoulder. What began as a low-cost, congestion relief solution on an arterial highway, soon developed into a robust network after a severe flood in 1993 shut down a major bridge that crossed northbound Interstate 35 (I-35). The DOT needed a quick way to gain more access on the alternative route bridges to continue moving people and cars. Realizing the potential of the BOSS concept, the program continued and has expanded over the past 20 years into a comprehensive BOSS network with over 400 miles of roadways, including along four major interstates. Since the beginning, Minnesota has continued to keep the BOSS projects in operation.

### Design

**Outside Shoulders:** Metro Transit, SouthWest Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, Maple Grove Transit and Plymouth Metrolink all use and benefit from the extensive bus-only shoulders in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region. Working side by side with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the State Patrol, bus shoulders were created using the existing shoulder infrastructure as much as possible. Design typically consists of only static signage and reconstruction of catch basins to eliminate the sump and to stiffen up the area around the structure with additional concrete. MnDOT has created a standard plate for this application. Where shoulders have been rebuilt as part of a larger mainline preservation project, and there is a current bus only shoulder, a 7-inch bituminous section is considered, depending on the number and frequency of buses. This provides a thicker section than the standard 3-inch section.

**Bus-Only Ramps:** With a robust bus-only shoulder network, the Minnesota Metro transit agencies along with MnDOT have implemented additional travel time saving measures for bus travel off the freeway system by allowing buses to exit and enter park and rides to/from freeway exit and entrance ramps. These slip ramps have been incorporated at a number of locations, eliminating the wait times at intersections.

**Layover Areas:** Integrating a full range of ideas into the transit network provides a more complete system. Bus layover areas provide opportunities to position the fleet of buses to better serve their customers. By eliminating the need to return to the bus garage after their shift, buses can remain closer to their starting destinations, creating a better work environment for the drivers and less stress. Recognizing these opportunities in the available right of way is a great partnership between agencies.

**Inline Stations:** The Metropolitan Council, the regional planning agency for the Twin Cities area, has been aggressive in implementing arterial and freeway Bus Rapid Transit. With a series of active lines, including the Orange Line designated to run along I-35W and the Red Line running on Trunk Highway 77 (TH 77), a number of "Inline Stations" have been constructed. Two center-running stations on I-35W and one center station on TH 77 have been or are under construction. With a re-thinking of light rail transit (LRT) in many corridors, additional bus amenities such as these make buses using a combination of BRT, BOSS, and mixed traffic facilities a comparable alternative.

### Operations

**Arterial BOSS:** The implementation of bus-only shoulders is not limited to freeways or interstates in Minnesota. Buses running on arterials or expressways with signals also benefit from BOSS operations. Most of the advantages occurring with "queue jumping" at signals. Minnesota has several arterials that are utilizing shoulders with great success and minimal accidents.





Figure 2. Arterial BOSS with Inline Stations

### Funding, Prioritization, Implementation

**BOSS Team:** In the early 1990s, Metro Transit was experiencing decreasing ridership and travel time reliability due to congestion, and MnDOT was faced with the challenge of relieving congestion and providing better service opportunities with little investment. These problems combined with the pressure from the Metropolitan Council to promote transit led to the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota to host a workshop to develop innovative solutions to congestion in the Twin Cities. Stakeholders at the workshop included MnDOT, Metro Transit and other transit agencies, and transit advocacy groups. The workshop led to the development of Team Transit. Team Transit consists of CTS, the Minnesota State Patrol, representatives from the Twin Cities and other municipalities served by transit, MnDOT, and Metro Transit. Initial support for Team Transit came from the Commissioner of Transportation and the former Commissioner of Transportation. These high-level individuals sent the message that bus on shoulder was possible and the focus should not be on identifying obstacles to implementation but rather finding ways to overcome the obstacles. As Team Transit became a permanent entity, involvement and responsibilities shifted to a Team Transit project manager from MnDOT who worked with Metro Transit, primarily Metro Transit Facilities Manager, to identify potential locations and secure funding for bus-only shoulders.

The development of Team Transit required MnDOT to become more involved in transit and changed the philosophy of the Department. In the past, MnDOT was not involved in transit because federal funding could not be allocated to transit projects. With the development of the team, MnDOT and Metro Transit sat at the table and began working together to implement transit advantages. The two entities originally had separate project managers, however, Team Transit realized the need for one contact person for BOSS and a full-time position was funded by MnDOT. The partnership between MnDOT and Metro transit provided the long-term support BOSS efforts needed to become part of the transportation system. Also, MnDOT began considering BOSS during construction and reconstruction of roads which led to a more efficient use of funds. Team Transit continues to work together and emphasizes the need for BOSS champions within all stakeholder groups. The Team meets every three months to discuss transit needs and to review planned MnDOT projects. The transit providers in the Twin Cities continue to identify where transit advantages are needed and if feasible, advantages are integrated into MnDOT projects.

**Dedicated Funding Source:** With several successful projects and showing a willingness to be creative, the State Legislature passed a bill that dedicated a portion of the Transportation Budget specifically to Team Transit projects. Criteria was established for types of projects, with accountability back to the legislature. FTA funding including Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307) and Capital Program for Fixed Guideway Modernization (Section 5309) provided additional funding for operational costs. Metro Transit

received funding through the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), which is jointly administered by the FHWA and the FTA. Money from CMAQ was used for regional transportation improvements that provided transit advantages, including ramp-meter bypasses and park and ride facilities.



## Bus on Shoulder System Characteristics

Table 1. Key Characteristics of BOSS Systems

BOSS System Location (Opening Year)	Type of Roadway	Shoulder Used/Width	Authorized Users	When are BOSS Operations Permitted	Max. Shoulder Operating Speed	Public Education
San Diego, California (2005)	Interstate and arterials	Right shoulder (outside); Minimum 10 ft.	Trained bus operators	When general purpose lanes slow to 35 mph	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes; 35 mph maximum	Broadcast and print media, online information
San Francisco Bay, California (in design)	Interstate	Right shoulder (outside); Minimum 10 ft.	Trained bus operators	When general purpose lanes slow to 35 mph; 5AM-8PM	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes; 35 mph maximum	News media, print media, social media, information on transit agency website
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minneapolis (1991)	Over 400 miles of interstates and state highways; arterials	Right shoulder (outside); Minimum 10 ft.	Metro Transit (fixed route), Transit Team (paratransit), and registered charter buses	When general purpose lanes slow to 35 mph	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes; 35 mph maximum	A public campaign was conducted when the Twin Cities initially implemented BOSS. This involved some short media ads about yielding to buses on shoulders and billboards in the corridors running BOSS. They have not had any new engagement for 10+ years since things are now more common place in Minnesota.
Miami, Florida (2007)	State limited access toll roads (Don Shula	Right shoulder (outside); Minimum 10 ft.	Trained MDT bus operators	When general purpose lanes slow to 25 mph	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes;	News media, print media, social media, press releases on transit agency website

	Expressway and Snapper Creek Parkway)				35 mph maximum	
<b>Miami, Florida (in design)</b>	Interstate	Left shoulder (inside); 11.5 ft.-12 ft.	Trained MDT bus operators and trained Miami Beach Trolley bus operators	When general purpose lanes slow to 35 mph	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes; 35 mph maximum	Broadcast and print media, online information, special mailings to existing SunPass users, as well as a wide variety of targeted strategies to reach people in the communities most likely to use the facility, police escorts during first two weeks of operations
<b>Tampa, Florida (under construction)</b>	Interstate	Right shoulder (outside); 11.5 ft.-12 ft.	Trained PSTA bus operators	When general purpose lanes slow to 35 mph	15 mph faster than general purpose lanes; 35 mph maximum	Broadcast and print media, online information, educational video of bus operating on the shoulder and explaining the rules of BOS as well as the BOS route

## Peer Review Implications and Recommendations for North Carolina

1. **NC Transit Agencies Should Act as BOSS Catalysts:** Drawing on Florida’s example, the study partners should consider establishing a formal process where any North Carolina transit agency can submit a BOSS proposal to NCDOT and their MPO. While there are many facilities in the region that may fit the physical requirements for BOSS, those where a reasonable transit market exists will most likely to be successful. Aligning the interest of the transit agency in the process with travel time savings for their customers should help elevate the most-needed BOSS candidate segments for consideration. If any MPO or NCDOT has a proposal for a BOSS facility, they should bring it to the transit agency that would be the most logical to submit the project, and request that the transit agency make a submittal.
2. **Establish a BOSS Team in Each NC Metro Area with BOSS Projects:** Developing a BOSS team consisting of all area stakeholders including the DOT, Expressway Authorities, transit agencies, MPOs/ TPOs, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), state and local law enforcement, traffic Incident management; and local jurisdiction representatives is key to the success of the project. It is important to get buy-in from all parties to ensure stakeholder responsibilities are defined and agreed upon. To avoid the varying standards by metro area that have emerged as part of California’s experience, once a transit agency has submitted a promising BOSS project, NCDOT should lead the formation of a BOSS team in that region. As in Minneapolis, a BOSS Champion should be identified at all participating agencies. We recommend having both a Highway Division-level BOSS Champion in every active BOSS region, as well as developing a Statewide BOSS Champion, perhaps within the Transportation Planning Branch of NCDOT.
3. **Identify Processes to Screen for “Low Hanging Fruit” BOSS Projects:** BOSS is intended to be a low-cost, easy to implement solution to improve travel time reliability of transit buses. Therefore, corridors should be selected that currently have buses utilizing the roadway facility which encounter congestion frequently, especially during peak periods, and 10 foot shoulders. These corridors will not require infrastructure improvements in the near-term. Static signage and minimal pavement markings can be used throughout the corridor which costs roughly \$1,000 per mile. NCDOT, the MPOs, and transit agencies should identify moments in funding processes, from LAPP at CAMPO or STP-BG at DCHC, to small dollar investments in safety – that can use methods from this study to identify these ultra-low capital implementation opportunities.
4. **Use Highway Scoping Processes to Generate BOSS Pilots:** As California demonstrates, BOSS can be used as a short-term solution to congestion while transit-only lanes, BRT, or managed lanes are being planned and programmed. This provides relief to the corridor quickly with little effort. NCDOT should amend its scoping processes for highway projects to include a consulting step with transit agencies to determine if a temporary BOSS Pilot during a construction project would be appropriate.
5. **Recognize BOSS Benefits in Park and Ride Lot Evaluation in SPOT:** Connecting BOSS systems with park and ride lots encourages use of transit by choice riders. The most effective use of park and ride lots is to have them right off the interstate where the bus can easily exit, stop at the park and ride, and merge back on the interstate facility. In the future, an inline station could be developed to remove the need for buses to exit the interstate to save travel time. In the near term, NCDOT should consider amending the SPOT criteria for park and ride lots to add criteria that take into account synergy with BOSS facilities.

## Conclusion

Bus on shoulder systems have been in operation in the US since the 90s. As the oldest and most developed BOSS network, the Minneapolis- St. Paul system remains the prototype system to date, and most BOSS systems follow the same design and operating criteria. BOSS outside of Minneapolis-St. Paul is often implemented as a short-term, low-cost solution to congestion prior to the construction of BRT and managed lanes. Given the short-term use of BOSS, most systems utilize the existing infrastructure, static signage, and minimal pavement markings. The more advanced BOSS systems have park and ride lots, inline stations, dedicated bus ramps, and vehicle-to-infrastructure technology.

The current North Carolina BOSS system is very similar to the Minneapolis system in terms of design and operating criteria. While the twin cities have a much more robust system with nearly 400 miles of BOSS, NC has the potential to create a larger BOSS network with time and resources. While there have been intermittent engagements on the future of BOSS in the Triangle over the past decade, the current study presents an opportunity to form a more enduring BOSS team. The BOSS team in Minneapolis is the primary reason MnDOT has been so successful in expanding their system. While CAMPO is leading the effort to identify subject roads, the support of the area MPOs, DOT, transit agencies, state patrol, etc. on the technical steering committee, indicates that there are champions for BOSS.

Given the success of the current system which runs on 10-foot paved shoulders, uses static signage and minimal pavement markings, these will remain the minimum design requirements. NCDOT is designing new roadways with fully built out the shoulders (12 ft.) which is desired as it emulates a general purpose lane. As part of the incremental approach which was discussed in the Florida review, NCDOT and partners can advance their network over time with the addition of park-and-ride lots, ramp metering, dedicated bus ramps, and other improvements.

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