

TITLE VI EQUITY ANALYSIS: TRANSFER CENTER AND OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE FACILITY RELOCATION

Link Transit Facility Feasibility Study

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Background and Project Description

Link Transit operates five fixed-route services, as well as paratransit service, in Alamance County and portions of Guilford County. Link serves areas including Burlington, Elon, Gibsonville, Mebane, Alamance County Offices, Alamance County College, and destinations in between. Riders can also connect directly to the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), GoTriangle, Orange County Public Transportation, and the Elon Express. Service operates Monday through Friday, from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., excluding major holidays. The current fleet includes five GILLIG buses and two standard size electric buses for fixed-route service as well as three vans for paratransit service. During FY 2022, Link Transit provided 101,401 fixed-route passenger trips and 6,051 paratransit trips. The City of Burlington has an estimated population of 56,951. Link Transit service extends beyond the City and serves a population of over 66,000 people over 35 square miles.

Link Transit is looking to relocate its Transfer Center and provide new customer amenities as well as relocate its Operations and Maintenance Facility (O&M). The current Transfer Center, located at 212 N Worth St, Burlington, North Carolina, serves as the convergence point of all of its routes but is lacking customer amenities. With only curb space, the Transfer Center only provides shelters, benches, and bike racks. Link Transit plans to relocate the Transfer Center and construct a new off-street passenger facility with additional customer amenities such as customer service, bathrooms, and indoor waiting space. The current O&M is leased by Transdev at 2801 Troxler Rd, Burlington, North Carolina and is a 5 mile drive from the existing Transfer Center. Link Transit plans to purchase land to construct a new Operations & Maintenance facility that improves operational efficiency and does not rely on leased property.

In order to properly identify the optimal site(s) for the new facilities, Link Transit began a feasibility study with the goal of identifying potential sites for a new Transfer Center and O&M, either on the same or separate site, that meet operational requirements of existing Link Transit service and also provide adequate space for the future expansion of service.

Title VI Compliance

Per FTA C 4702.1B, Title VI equity analysis for the location of facilities must be completed during the planning stage before the selection of the preferred site. Sites have been identified and evaluated as part of the Link Transit Five-Year Transit Development Plan and Transit Facility Study process.

Title 49 CFR Section 21.9(b)(3) states, “In determining the site or location of facilities, a recipient or applicant may not make selections with the purpose or effect of excluding persons from, denying them the benefits of, or subjecting them to discrimination under any program to which the regulation applies, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin; or with the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the Act or this part.” Title 49 CFR part 21, Appendix C, Section (3)(iv) provides, “The location of projects requiring land acquisition and the displacement of persons from their residences and businesses may not be determined on the basis of race, color, or national origin.”

This analysis was conducted in compliance with FTA 4702.1B which requires Link Transit to ensure a location is selected without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Site Search Process

To identify viable parcels as potential locations for the future Link Transit O&M and Transfer Center, a methodological approach was established using GIS data and ArcGIS analysis tools. This process was completed with three rounds of data analysis, described below.

DEFINING SEARCH AREA PROCESS

Round 1 – Initial Search Area

At the beginning of the site search process, the preferred site would accommodate a joint O&M and Transfer Center. Using GIS analysis, viable parcels were identified based on the following criteria:

- Applicable Zoning
- Within Burlington City Limits, .5 miles of I-40, and .5 miles of Alamance Crossing
- Acreage minimum: 5-acres

The initial site search resulted in 117 viable parcels; however, many were not within a reasonable distance from the existing Link Transit Transfer Center in downtown Burlington (212 N Worth Street) where the current routes converge.

Round 2 – Refined Search Area

Based on staff feedback from the initial search area – interest in locating closer to the existing Transfer Center, refined acreage requirements, and the desire to consider separate properties for Transfer Center and O&M use – the consultant team identified a new search boundary and acreage requirements. Using GIS analysis, viable parcels were identified based on the following criteria:

- Applicable Zoning
- Within .5 miles of existing Transfer Center
- Acreage minimum
 - Transfer Center only: 1.2-acres
 - O&M only: 3-acres
 - Joint O&M and Transfer Center: 4-acres

The refined site search significantly reduced the number of viable parcels (30 parcels – 27 Transfer Center only, 1 O&M only, 2 joint Transfer Center and O&M); however, it left only three viable parcels for the O&M.

Round 3 – Final Search Area

To increase the pool of viable O&M sites, the consultant team reevaluated the acreage minimum for a joint O&M and Transfer Center and extended the search distance for the O&M. Using GIS analysis, viable parcels were identified based on the following criteria:

- Applicable Zoning
- Transfer Center only: 1.2+ acres within ½ mile of existing Transfer Center
- O&M or Joint Transfer Center and O&M: 3+ acres within 1 mile of existing Transfer Center

The final site search resulted in 26 viable parcels for a Transfer Center only and 44 viable parcels for a O&M or joint O&M and Transfer Center. Parcels were then eliminated using the process described below.

PARCEL SCREENING PROCESS

To create a manageable pool of potential parcels to evaluate for the future Link Transit O&M and Transfer Center, parcels were filtered using criteria based on the criteria listed below. Parcels were eliminated during three rounds of searches through a manual review, and then evaluated using a number of resources including Google Maps, GIS data, and local real estate data.

Round 1

Parcels remained based on the following criteria:

- No apparent active use (using Google Maps)
- Size layout would accommodate required operational elements

Results

- Transfer Center only = 7 parcels
- O&M only or Joint O&M and Transfer Center = 7 parcels

Round 2

In addition to the criteria used in Round 1, the following criteria were added to the site search:

- No apparent active use (using in-person site visit and local real estate knowledge)
- Nearby land use complements planned use (i.e., Transfer Center near key destinations, O&M near other industrial uses)
- Property was not recently sold (using local real estate knowledge)
- Link Transit staff support

Results

- Transfer Center only = 4 parcels
- O&M only or Joint O&M and Transfer Center = 2 parcels

Round 3

The third round involved coordination meetings with City Staff and local real estate partners to discuss the remaining parcels after Round 2 and document any additional intel on the sites. During this round, one potential site for the Transfer Center was eliminated along with one potential site for the O&M facility. An additional site for the O&M was re-added to the evaluation. Figure 1 shows the general area of parcel search and resulting compatible parcels.

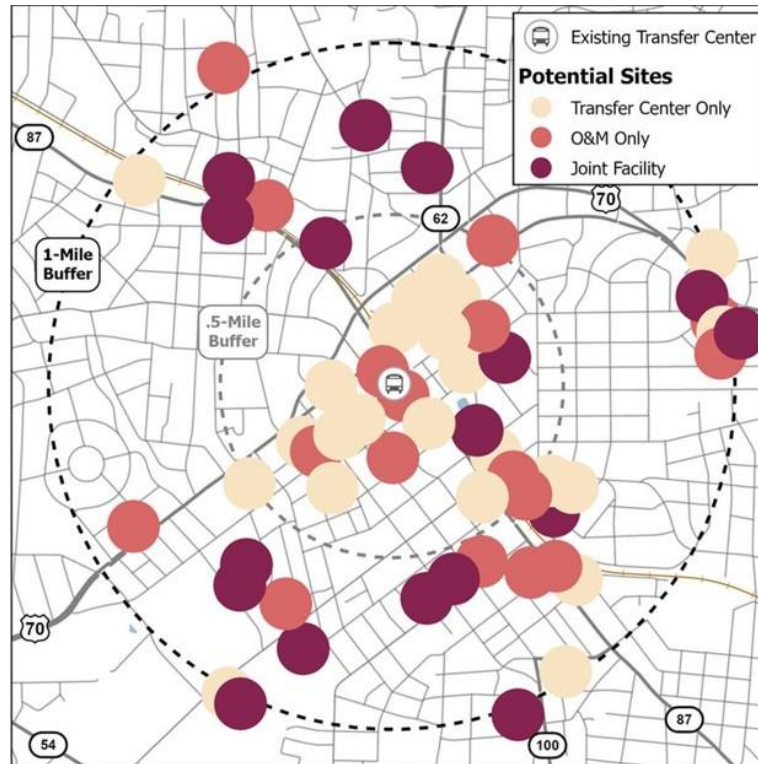


Figure 1: Potential Parcels – Transfer Center and O&M

SITE EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation metrics for each goal area were developed to compare potential sites to one another and identify which are the most viable. The effort to evaluate and score each potential site allowed for a data-driven, quantifiable comparison between sites.

The indicators used to evaluate each of the goal areas are described below. Each indicator was given a score of 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best. Indicators were not assigned weights to indicate relative importance over another category.

Operational Efficiency

Sites were evaluated based on their proximity to the existing Transfer Center at 212 N Worth St – the convergence point of all five routes. Closer proximity to the existing Transfer Center would reduce the route revisions required to access the future Transfer Center as well as maintain its' downtown location. Close proximity of the O&M reduces the time spent by buses traveling to-and-from the O&M to start service at the Transfer Center, increasing overall operational efficiency. Sites with a lower travel distance to the existing Transfer Center scored higher.

Ease of Acquisition and Constructability

Sites were evaluated based on the current market status of the property, redevelopment plans, whether there is an existing major structure on the site, and the estimated market cost. Sites that scored higher were listed for sale or publicly owned, planned for future redevelopment, undeveloped, and had a lower estimated market cost.

Accessibility

Transfer Center only sites were evaluated based on the surrounding population and jobs within a .5-mile radius of the site as well as access to public facilities/key destinations. Sites located in a more population and job dense area with close proximity to public facilities/destinations scored higher. Both Transfer Center and O&M sites were evaluated based on access to sidewalks. Sites located in areas with a more complete sidewalk system scored higher.

Community

Sites were evaluated based on surrounding land uses within a 1-mile radius of the site, with sites scoring higher for being located in mixed-use areas and lower for being located in primarily residential areas. Sites were also evaluated based on the densities of racial and ethnical minorities, low-income households, and zero-vehicle households within a .25-mile radius of the site. The Transfer Center could increase transit mobility for the studied populations and therefore, sites scored higher for being located in areas with higher densities. Due to environmental justice considerations, the O&M scored lower for being located in areas with higher densities.

While several sites were examined for a potential transit facility, based on analysis and market due diligence, two sites moved into the final evaluation and scoring phase. Table 1 shows the final results of the parcel scoring process.

Matrix Framework		Parcels			
Goals	Indicator	Transfer Center		O&M	
		Municipal Lot 8	Parcel No. 4	1155 N Church St	Parcel No. 5
Operational Efficiency	Proximity to existing Transfer Center	5	5	4	5
Ease of Acquisition and Constructability	Listed for sale or publicly owned	5	1	1	1
	Planned for redevelopment	1	1	1	1
	Existing structures	4	1	4	1
	Estimated market cost per acre	4	3	4	1 ¹
Accessibility	Number of jobs within ½ mile	5	5	n/a	n/a
	Population within ½ mile	5	4	n/a	n/a
	Access to sidewalks	5	5	n/a	n/a
	Access to public facilities/key destinations	4	4	n/a	n/a
Community	Land use within 1 mile	5	5	5	5
	Proximity to potential future development	3	5	n/a	n/a
	Minority population within ¼ mile	5	4	1	5
	Hispanic/Latino Population within ¼ mile	4	1	1	1
	Low-income Households within ¼ mile	4	1	4	4
	Zero Vehicle Households within ¼ mile	5	4	4	1
Final Score		65	50	29	25

Table 1: Link Transit Transfer Center and Operations and Maintenance Facility Evaluation Matrix

¹ This estimate includes demolition but does not include anticipated abatement

Community Outreach

Community outreach for the Link Transit Facility Feasibility Study was conducted in two phases. Phase I and Phase II involved a printed survey that was distributed at public facilities, on board Link Transit buses, as well as through an online survey link that was posted in bus stops, on board buses, and distributed on social media. The surveys provided information related to the facility study process and given the opportunities to provide input regarding desired amenities at a new passenger transfer hub and the search for a permanent operations and maintenance facility site.

Focus groups were also conducted with community stakeholders related to healthcare and social service provision, education, and major employment centers, as well as neighboring communities. Focus group participants were informed about the facility study, the overall process, and asked to provide input.

Public Outreach Phase I: November 17, 2023-January 19, 2024

Public Outreach Phase II: January 7, 2025 – May 28, 2025

Survey respondents in both phases expressed a preference for indoor customer comfort facilities and off-street boarding to be available at a new passenger transfer hub.

The results of the facility study and the proposed locally preferred alternative sites were shared with the public at a Burlington City Council meeting held on May 6, 2025. A meeting agenda and technical study materials were posted online ahead of the meeting and available for public review. There were no public comments regarding the facility study during the meeting. City Council confirmed a locally preferred alternative for the Link Transit Passenger Transfer Hub and Operations and Maintenance Facility sites.

PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED

No public comments received related to the final, locally preferred Transfer Hub and O&M Facilities.

Benefits and Burdens Analysis

Link Transit reviewed the benefits and burdens of several potential sites to determine the potential impact of a new facility. There were various benefits and burdens to each location. None of the potential sites would involve the displacement of residences. Table 2 details the benefits and potential burdens that would result from site relocations to each of the potential site options.

Parcels	Benefits/Positive Impacts	Burdens/Adverse Impacts
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Parcel No. 1 <i>Transfer Center only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would not require a rezoning. Would provide increased transit access and passenger amenities for surrounding residential areas and downtown. Would require minimal re-routing of existing routes. Would not require displacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is occupied by satellite tower. Co-location may present issues. Would require a combination of parcels for the construction of a new Transfer Center. Site shape and size is not ideal for facility siting.
704 S Spring St /Municipal Lot 8 <i>Transfer Center only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property is publicly owned. Would not require a rezoning. Compatible with surrounding uses. Would provide increased transit access and passenger amenities for surrounding residential areas and downtown. Would not require displacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would reduce available parking in downtown.
Parcel No. 3 <i>Transfer Center only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would not require a rezoning. Compatible with surrounding uses. Would provide increased transit access and passenger amenities for surrounding residential areas and downtown. Would not require displacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would require transit uses to cross under active rail and across 4 lanes of traffic to access downtown. Would require extensive site grading work. Requires demolition of a small building.
1155 N Church St <i>O&M only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would not require a rezoning. Compatible with surrounding uses. Increases operational efficiency of system. Would not require displacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential brownfield site candidate.
Parcel No. 5 <i>O&M only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would not require a rezoning. Compatible with surrounding uses. Increases operational efficiency of system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would require demolition of an existing 150,000 sq. ft. industrial facility. Would displace existing leased tenants.

Table 2: Benefits and Burdens Analysis

Demographic Analysis

Table 3 provides a comparison of the demographics for the census block groups that the final preferred potential sites are located in, the census block groups the existing

Transfer Center and O&M sites are located in as well as the demographic characteristics for the City of Burlington as a whole.

	Existing Transfer Center and Municipal Lot 8 Block Group 4; Census Tract 201; Alamance County	Existing O&M Block Group 3; Census Tract 217.03 Alamance County	1155 N Church St Block Group 2; Census Tract 202; Alamance County	Parcel 5 Block Group 3; Census Tract 202; Alamance County	City of Burlington
Total Population	677	1,132	432	771	56,951
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	426 (63%)	602 (53%)	86 (20%)	96 (12%)	27,334 (48%)
Non-White alone	251 (37%)	530 (47%)	346 (80%)	675 (88%)	29,617 (52%)
Population under Poverty Line	130 (19%)	42 (4%)	62 (14%)	323 (42%)	10,560 (19%)
Median Household Income	\$58,409	\$68,846	\$78,844 2021\$	\$22,500	\$52,963
Limited English Proficiency Households	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (3.2%)	780 (3%)

Table 3: Demographic Comparison Analysis of Potential Sites (2022)

All locations identified and evaluated as potential sites for the future Transfer Center and O&M were selected without regard to race, color, national origin, or other socio-demographic traits.

An evaluation of the poverty rate, non-white population, household median income, and households with limited English proficiency was performed for the five potential sites as well as for the existing site of the Transfer Center and O&M. This was compared to the same demographics of the City of Burlington as a whole.

TRANSFER CENTER SITES

Sites being considered for the future Transfer Center are located within the same census block group as the existing Transfer Center. Compared to the city as a whole, these parcels are located in an area with a lower percentage of non-white individuals and limited English proficiency households. The percentage of population living below the poverty line is the same and the median household income is slightly higher than the city. The proposed use would not pose a disproportionate burden on minority or low-income populations and conversely could provide increased transit access and enhanced customer amenities to the surrounding area, including transit dependent populations within the immediate vicinity.

O&M SITES

The final sites evaluated for the future O&M facility are both located in census block groups with higher percentages of non-white individuals compared to the city as a whole as well as the existing site. The site at 1155 N Church St is located in an area with a lower percentage of individuals below the poverty line compared to the city and a higher median household income compared to both the city and the existing site. Parcel 5 is located in an area with a higher percentage of individuals living below the poverty line and a lower median household income compared to the city and the existing site.

The site at 1155 N Church St is currently zoned Commercial – General Business which permits the proposed use – Government Maintenance, Storage, Distribution. This site is cleared, but currently not developed. There are existing curb cuts and surrounding utilities located between US Highway 70 and N Main St both of which provide connections to downtown. There is no risk of displacements but there are some surrounding residential uses along with other commercial and industrial uses. The construction of an O&M facility on this site would not pose noise, air, or traffic concerns, when compounded with other nearby uses, as the proposed use is compatible with surrounding land use. Therefore, the proposed use would not pose a disproportionate burden on minority or low-income populations.

Parcel No. 5 is currently zoned Heavy Industrial which also permits the proposed use. This site contains an existing 150,000 square foot industrial facility that is currently leased to multiple tenants and would need to be demolished for construction on the O&M facility. The demolition of this property would displace existing tenants and may release a significant amount of dust, debris, and pollutants into the air or groundwater, posing a risk to air quality and public health for surrounding population, including a high percentage of minority and low-income people. The level of environmental mitigation necessary for the parcel is unknown and may be costly. Once in operation, the O&M

facility would not pose additional noise, air, or traffic concerns, when compounded with other nearby uses, as the proposed use is compatible with surrounding land use.

Locally Preferred Alternative

On May 6, 2025, Burlington City Council members confirmed Municipal Lot #8 as the locally preferred alternative for the construction of a new Passenger Transfer Center and the site at 1155 N Church St as the locally preferred alternative for the construction of an O&M Facility. Once funding is secured, NEPA processes

TRANSFER CENTER

Municipal Lot #8 is a publically owned parking lot located on S Spring Street in downtown Burlington. The site is 1.45 acres and .5 miles from the current transfer point. Figure 2 shows the current conditions of the site and Figure 3 shows the site concept developed for the Transfer Center and illustrates how the site layout accommodates the established program for the proposed off-street passenger facility.



Figure 2: Current Conditions of Municipal Lot #8

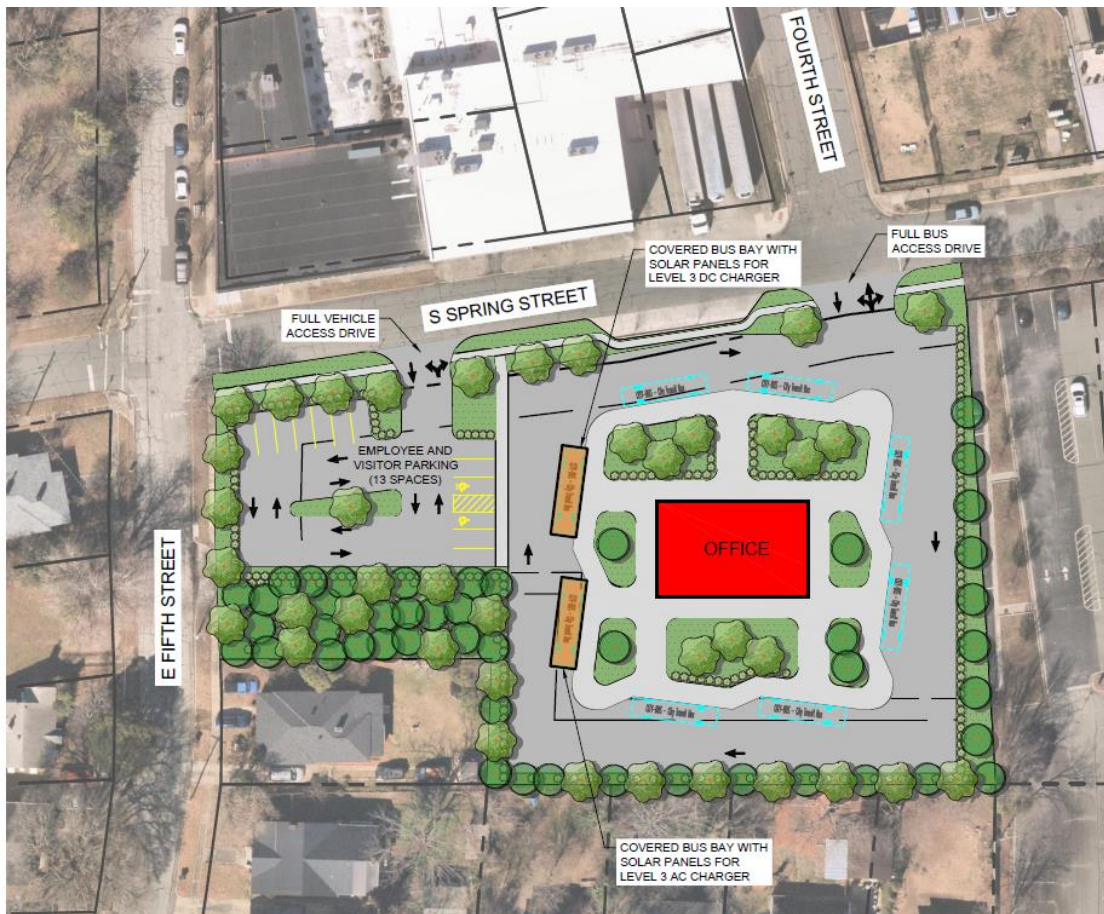


Figure 3: Site Concept for Passenger Transfer Hub

The site concept shows the planned eight bus bays, 13 public parking spaces, and the building large enough to accommodate customer service and administrative functions.

O&M

The site at 1155 N Church St is a privately owned commercial site in the City of Burlington. The site is 3.4 acres and 1 mile from the current transfer point. Figure 4 shows the current conditions of the site and Figure 5 shows the site concept developed for the O&M facility and illustrates how the site layout accommodates the established program.

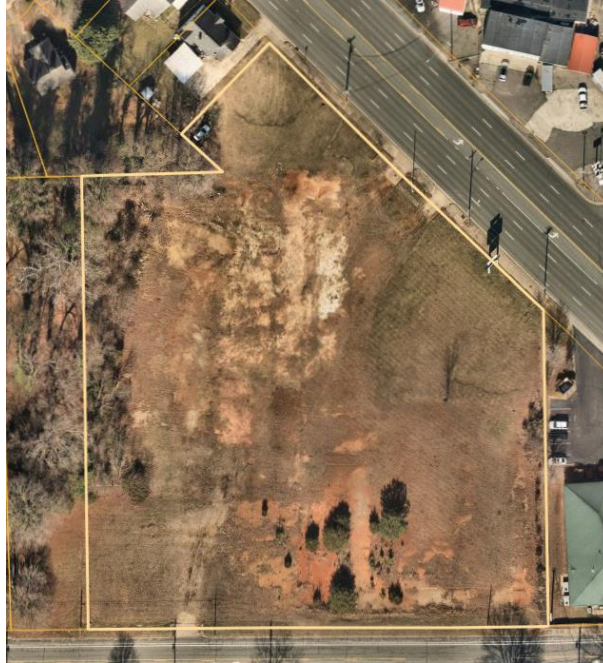


Figure 4: Current Conditions at 1155 N Church St

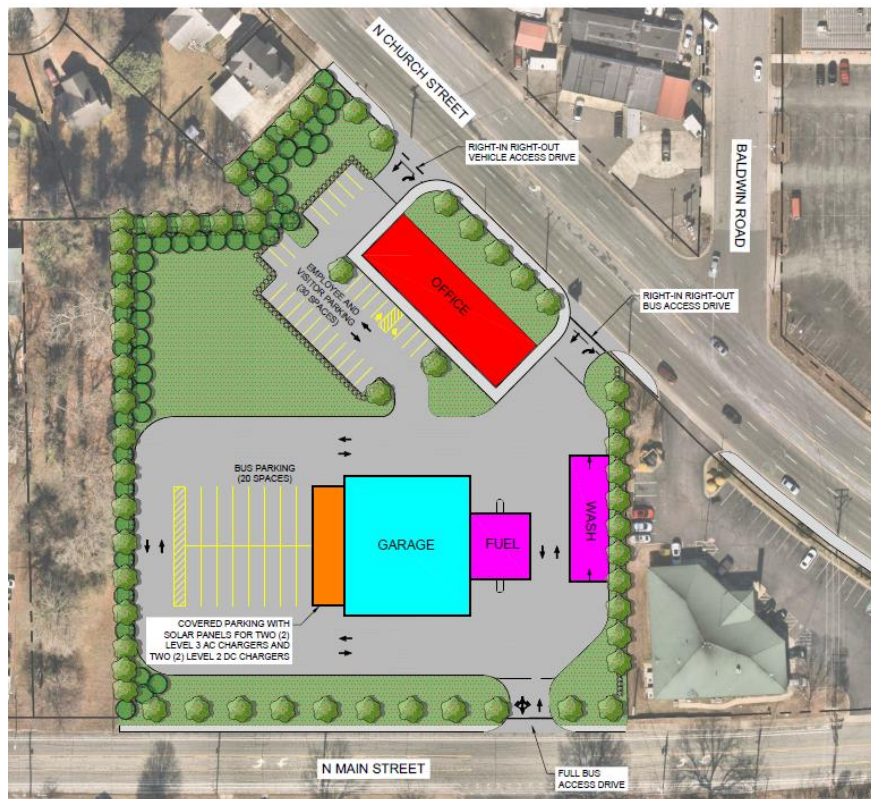


Figure 5: Site Concept for O&M Facility

The site concept shows the planned four maintenance bays, three bus lifts, transit vehicle storage and parking, and building to accommodate administrative, training, and operator comfort functions.

Conclusion

The current location of the Link Transit Transfer Center has a lower percentage of non-white residents and a similar percentage of low-income households compared to the city of Burlington as a whole. All three potential sites for the future Transfer Center are located within close proximity the original facility and therefore are not anticipated to result in a disparate impact to minority and low-income residents. The Transfer Center is the convergence point of all five Link Transit routes, so the proposed improvements to transit amenities would improve the transit experience of all Link Transit passengers.

Transfer Hub

The site evaluation, benefit and burden analysis, and demographic analysis provide justification for Municipal Lot 8 to be considered as the final, locally preferred alternative for the construction of a new Transfer Center, pending Council decision. The site is an existing municipal parking lot and would maintain the downtown Burlington transfer point while also providing an improved transit experience for surrounding residential uses and employment areas. The conversion of this parcel to a Transfer Center would not require any displacement, transfer of property, or a rezoning, and is not assumed to pose a disproportionate burden on minority or low-income households within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

O&M Facility

The site at 1155 N Church St and Parcel No. 5, the two remaining sites under consideration for the O&M facility, both have higher percentages of non-white populations than the city as a whole and the site of the existing O&M facility. Parcel No. 5 also has a significantly higher percentage of population living below the poverty line. Both were located in areas with compatible uses and would improve operational efficiency. However, the site located at 1155 N Church St scored higher in the site evaluation, presents fewer burdens, and shows a lower impact to minority and low-income populations, which provides justification for considering 1155 N Church St as the final, locally preferred alternative for the construction of a new O&M facility, pending Council approval. As potential mitigation for any potential perceived burden on minority, low-income, or LEP households, Link Transt is committed to converting significant portions of their fleet to low/no emission vehicles.