

RECOMMENDATION FOR USE OF
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK
(CMAR)

DELIVERY METHOD FOR
TWO PUBLIC SAFETY CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS

February 2, 2026



INTRODUCTION

Wake County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) currently includes two large and complex Public Safety projects that are early in the design process or about to begin. These projects include:

- Wendell North Public Safety Station
- Lynn Road Regional EMS Station

These projects have complexities, unique characteristics, and anticipated need for design input, cost control, quality assurance, and expertise where they can benefit from the CMAR method.

Project Overview: Wendell North Public Safety Station

The Wendell North Public Safety Station is a co-location of Wake County EMS and Town of Wendell Fire. This 17,700 square foot facility will be a regional EMS station with bay spaces for eight ambulances; and it is a replacement station for Wendell Fire Department #2 with four fire apparatus bay spaces. The facility is contemplated in the County's CIP with funding for site selection, analysis, and design in the current fiscal year and construction planned in FY 27. Besides deployment bays for emergency vehicles, the building will have dayrooms for each company, dormitory rooms for fire staff, kitchen, dining, exercise, meeting, offices, gear storage, wellness, support spaces, and state of the art communications systems. Sustainability considerations include solar photovoltaic system, electric vehicle charging, stormwater management practices, and native drought tolerant landscape plant materials. The anticipated site is located on the far northwest corner of the Sandy Pines Preserve within the desired call area, but not immediately proximate to park operations so that guests will not be impacted by facility operations, but response vehicles will be able to easily respond to calls within the park, if needed.

Project complexities include the development of property in rural Wake County where public water, sewer, and natural gas are not available. Therefore, this will be an all-electric station with septic system for sewer and a well with storage tanks and pumps for water service and fire protection. This multi-company facility is expected to exceed a minimum cost range where CMAR delivery typically does not add project costs and there are efficiencies gained in schedule compliance, cost controls, quality control and assurance, and local subcontractor participation. Schematic Design is expected to go before the Wake County Board of Commissioners in March or April 2026.

Project Overview: Lynn Road Regional EMS Station

The Lynn Road Regional EMS Station is a planned replacement of the Lynn Road EMS Station at the corner of Leadmine and Lynn Roads. Additionally, this project incorporates the planned replacement of the North Hills EMS Station project on Six Forks Road. Together, these stations will be combined into one regional EMS station that will improve operational efficiencies, consolidate and stagger staff shifts, and leverage vehicle utilization. The anticipated station will be approximately 18,000 square feet with bay parking for ten ambulances. The facility will be a two-story building with elevator to minimize building footprint while maximizing site parking for staff shift changes. Besides deployment vehicle bays, the facility will have a large training room, staff offices, breakroom, showers, exercise, meeting, wellness, and support spaces. Funding for the Lynn Road Regional EMS Station is available for land acquisition, site analysis, demolition, and design in the current CIP, and the balance of funding for Construction is anticipated in subsequent fiscal years. Schematic Design is expected to go before the Wake County Board of Commissioners later this fall.

Project complexities include the development of a difficult site on Lynn Road that will require significant retaining walls, in-ground stormwater management, and maximization of buildable areas while also protecting stream buffers and tree conservation areas. In addition, this two-story facility will be more complicated than the County's typical one-story public safety construction models and it will most likely exceed \$13M in construction costs.

CMAR Delivery Method - Recent State Statute Changes

June 2014 - NC Legislature – HB 1043:

- **Advance justification by public bodies now required for alternative project delivery approaches, such as CMAR or Design-Build (other than Multi-Prime, Single Prime, or Dual Bidding)**
- **Public Entity must conclude that CMAR is in the best interest of the project after comparing advantages and disadvantages of this method over traditional methods of construction project delivery**
- **This report will summarize the CMAR Delivery Method and how it compares to traditional competitive bid methods.**

CMAR Delivery Method - Summary of Delivery Methods

Traditional Competitive Bid Methods

- Bids are publicly advertised, and prices submitted on required date.
- Contract is awarded to lowest responsible, responsive bidder
- No involvement by contractors in design phase of project
- Owner has no information about price or bid cost drivers until project is bid
 - A. Single Prime Construction – all work performed as single package – one GC to Owner
 - B. Multi-Prime Construction – 4-6 separate trade packages are bid to Owner
 - C. Dual Prime – Options A & B bid concurrently

Alternative Methods

- **Construction Manager at Risk**
 - CM responsible for coordination and complete construction
 - Involvement begins in design phase
 - Prequalifies & publicly bids all subcontracts with enhanced MBE outreach
 - Quality based selection – similar to that of designers
- Design – Build
 - Similar to CMAR except design/construction by single entity, usually General Contractor (new to NC in 2013)

CMAR Delivery Method

Features of CMAR Delivery Method

- **Involvement Throughout Project – Design Thru Construction**
- **Level of Transparency of Cost Information**
- **Subcontractor Prequalification**
- **Minority Business Enterprise Utilization**
- **Schedule Control & Efficiency**
- **Overall Quality Control**

CMAR Delivery Method Summary of Services – Design/Preconstruction

Preconstruction Phase (Consultant Role)

- **Construction Budgets Developed w/ Detailed Cost Estimates**
- **Constructability Reviews (recommending most efficient methods)**
- **Value Engineering Analysis**
- **Schedule Development, Coordination & Tracking**
- **Develops Site Utilization & Phasing Plans**
- **Prequalification and Competitive Public Bid of Subcontracts**

CMAR Delivery Method

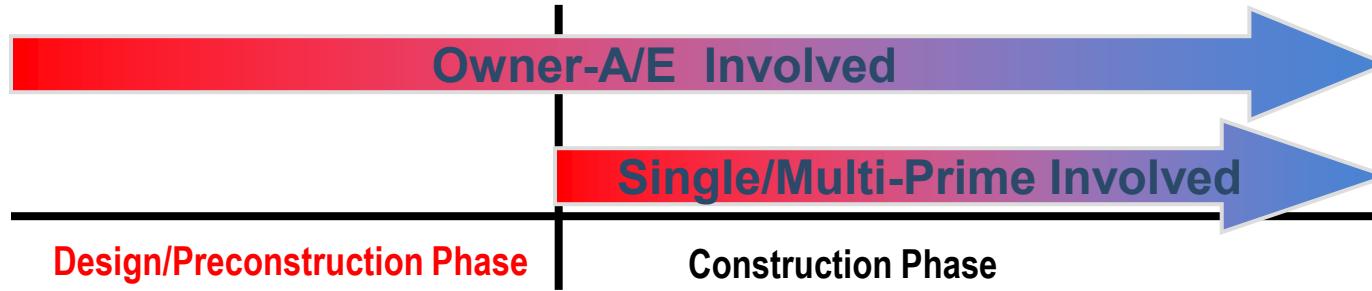
Summary of Services – Construction

Construction Phase (Contractor Role)

- **Guaranteed Maximum Price Contract – (“GMP”) – for defined scope**
- **Prequalified/Bonded Subcontractors**
- **Overall Management of Construction**
- **Constant Management of Schedule and Cost**
- **Assists Owner with Occupancy Transition and Move Management**
- **Acts as Owner’s “Fiduciary” (acts in best interest of the Owner)**

CMAR Delivery Method Involvement Throughout Project

Single or Multi-Prime Bid



CM At-Risk



CMAR Delivery Method - Level of Transparency

CMAR – Transparency in the overall process

- Contract is Open Book; easily checked
- Subcontractors prequalified
- Sub bids publicly opened and lowest responsive selected

Single Prime – Very limited transparency

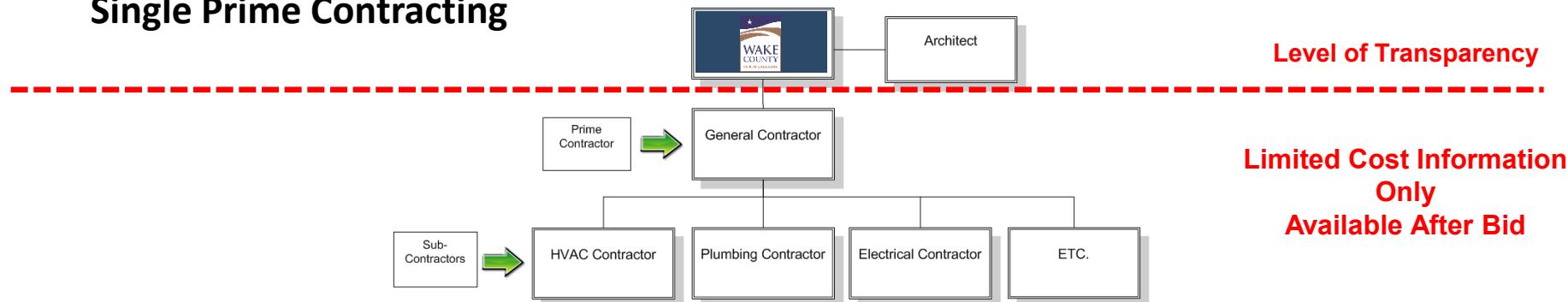
- Only the total project bid amount is provided
- Method of subcontractor selection is not disclosed
- Cost assumptions are not disclosed
- Unqualified subcontractors may be used

CMAR Delivery Method - Level of Transparency

Comparison in Level of Transparency Illustrated here:

*Level of Transparency – point beyond which contractor's cost drivers and impacts are shared with Owner.

Traditional Single Prime Contracting

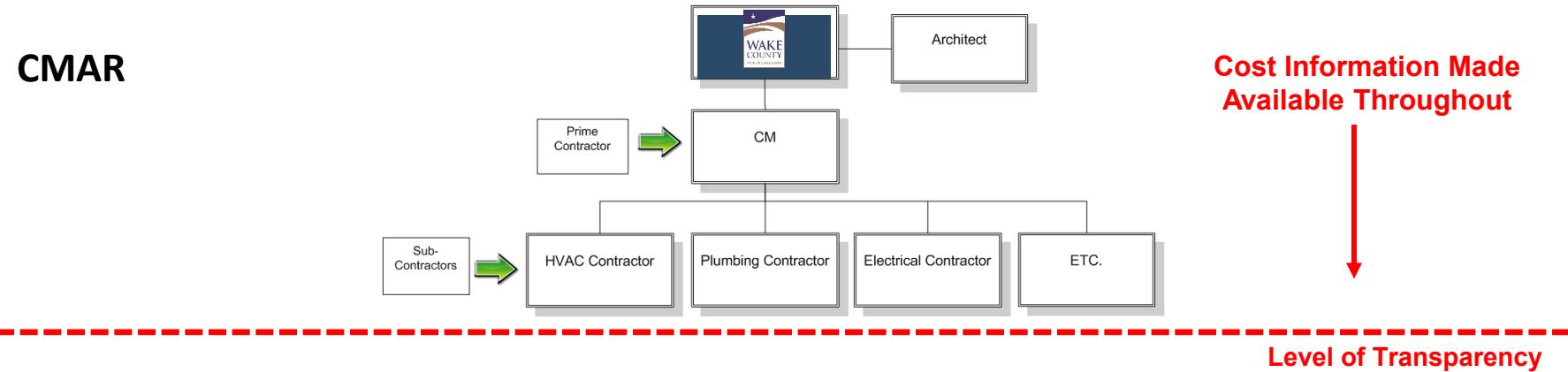


For Single Prime – no cost info before bid
– only limited cost information (closed book) after bid

CMAR Delivery Method - Level of Transparency

Comparison in Level of Transparency Illustrated here:

*Level of Transparency – point beyond which contractor's cost drivers and impacts are shared with Owner.



For CMAR – cost information made available during design (open book) and throughout bid process

CMAR Delivery Method Subcontractor Prequalification

- **Subs are identified and evaluated**
 - approved as capable and qualified
- **On average – majority of subs are same as Single Prime**
- **Typically, CMAR's have well developed sub relationships**
- **Over 95% of subcontracting dollars go to NC subs**
- **90% of CM cost goes to the subcontractors**

CMAR Delivery Method Minority Business Enterprise Utilization

CMAR method provides:

- **extensive MBE recruitment plans**
- **effort made to create small work packages that MBEs can bid**
- **more work contracted out since they cannot self-perform**
- **MBE business mentoring**
- **MBE Utilization consistently higher with CMAR (15 – 30%+)**

Under Single Prime Contracting - minimal MBE outreach effort

- **MBE Utilization Typ. Ranges from 0-15%**
(Wake County Verifiable Goal is 10%)

CMAR Delivery Method

Relative Cost of Delivery Methods

CM At Risk - Fee is negotiated and set in the contract

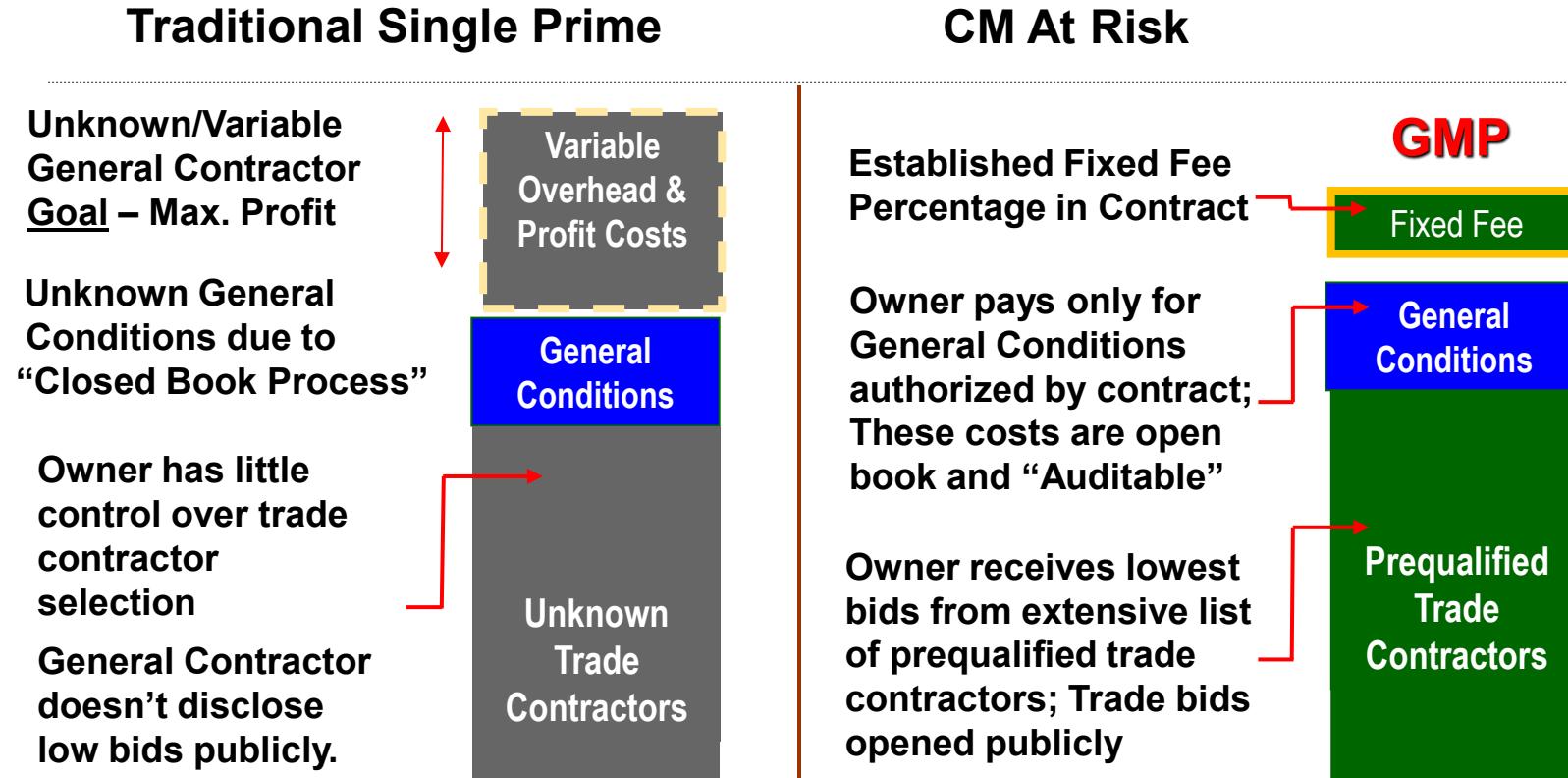
- **On bid Day, CM does have the possibility to have higher cost due to:**
 - More onsite personnel than Single Prime
 - More subs bonded with CM
 - MBE outreach effort
 - Effort required to pre-qualify subs as directed by Statutes
 - Preconstruction services

Single Prime Contracting

- **Amount of profit included in bid determined by current market conditions**
- **Potential for Fee/ Profit Increase during project**
- **Lowest Bid may include unqualified subcontractors**

CMAR Delivery Method

Relative Cost of Delivery Methods



*Conclusion – Owner knows where cost impacts are beginning in design and has opportunity to adjust design/scope to reduce cost before bid.

CMAR Delivery Method Summary & Conclusions

	CMAR	Single Prime
Ability to Select Prime Contractor	Advantage	
Integrated Team Involvement in Design Process	Advantage	
Prequalified Subcontractors	Advantage	
History of MBE Participation	Advantage	
Best Schedule Control – Faster Overall Delivery	Advantage	
Control of Fee/Profit Increases – Change Flexibility	Advantage	
Transparency of Overall Process	Advantage	
Owner Advocate vs. Adversary	Advantage	
Basic, Traditional Process Requires Less Planning		Advantage
Advance Public Justification of Use Not Required (per HB1043)		Advantage
Overhead Cost Applicability for Smaller Projects		Advantage

CMAR Delivery Method - Conclusion

- As described throughout this report, the Construction Management at Risk delivery method brings owner, design team and construction professional together during the design phase of the project, in a collaborative effort that carries the project forward through the construction process in an open, and transparent manner.
- The CMAR is selected by the Owner through a qualification based process, and is therefore committed to the Owner as an advocate, vested in the project during its design, rather than only being introduced to the project in a low bid competition, with no prior knowledge of the project goals, objectives, constraints and challenges.
- For these three projects, the CMAR delivery method is clearly the most appropriate approach. The CMAR model allows for early collaboration between the County, designers, and the construction manager, which is critical to developing workable logistics, ensuring constructability, maintaining tight schedules, and managing cost risk in a high-security environment.

CMAR Delivery Method - Conclusion

- The CMAR approach provides other advantages, including the flexibility to bid components of the project at different times, such as an early bid package for site work, which may enable fast-tracking of the schedule. While there is some additional cost for preconstruction phase services during design, the cost and schedule planning expertise these services provide, brings value to the project which will ultimately yield a higher quality product and enhanced timeliness in project delivery as well as predictable cost control. Therefore, staff recommends the CMAR approach for this project.



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