

# £5.5m Wilton Parkway station planned

DESIGNS have been unveiled for a new Wilton Parkway station, near Salisbury in Wiltshire.

The station would be built alongside an existing bus park and ride site, close to the former Wilton North station that closed in 1955. It would be on the Salisbury to Bristol line, and be part of the TransWilts route across the county (RAIL 781).

A brochure funded by Wilton Town Council claims it could open by 2019, and would "provide new capacity for passengers using direct trains to London, Southampton, Swindon, Bristol and Cardiff, and support sustainable access to Salisbury with a highly attractive five-minute journey time".

The new station would also offer a bus link to Stonehenge, six miles away. It would have two platforms, be able to accommodate six-car trains, and be fully accessible with lifts and a footbridge. The cost is put at £5.5 million.

The brochure says discussions with stakeholders have started, including Wiltshire Council, the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, English Heritage, Network Rail, the Department for Transport, Great



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Western Railway and South West Trains. A business case will be developed, along with an assessment of the scheme's economic benefits, during 2016.

"Wilton Parkway is not justified by any one single traffic flow. But we think the combination of several different routes more than stacks up," said Graham Ellis of the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership.



"The GWR services on the corridor north from Salisbury are frequently overcrowded. We have seen a ten-fold increase in four years on the TransWilts service, which links West Wiltshire to Swindon. Extending to Salisbury and beyond is a logical way to increase that further. There are large commuter flows from the south into Trowbridge, and well-proven demand from Salisbury both north and south.

"Class 165/6 Turbos are due on the route in a couple of years. And the Class 158 Salisbury to Romsey service sits in the bay platform at

Salisbury for much of each hour. Sourcing suitable rolling stock on a combination of services should be both possible and affordable.

"No services through north or west Wiltshire, or from Bath, currently serve any airports. A route which takes passengers to within a two-minute walk of Southampton Airport would be very attractive."

Jan Halliday, marketing and communications director for Southampton Airport, said: "We are keen to support it. We are keen for the link for inbound tourists

to Stonehenge, and also for businesses in Wiltshire which want to use our services."

It is proposed that GWR's hourly Southampton-Salisbury-Bristol-Cardiff trains would call at Wilton Parkway. The TransWilts route between Swindon, Chippenham and Westbury would extend via Southampton Airport to Eastleigh. Potentially SWT could operate a route from Bristol via Salisbury to Waterloo, making Waterloo 1hr 35mins away and Bristol 1hr 5mins

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An artist's impression of the planned Wilton Parkway, near Salisbury, which it is claimed could open in four years' time. FEREDAY POLLARD.