

TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Board of Aldermen

Carrboro Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

Steve Stewart, Town Manager

From: Dale McKeel, Transportation Planner

Date: March 5, 2004

Subject: Summary of Public Comments from 2004 Public Transit Forum

The 2004 Carrboro Public Transit Forum was held on February 12, 2004. Please find attached to this memo a copy of written public comments received in conjunction with the Forum. In addition to these comments, the TAB received oral comments from several speakers at the forum. Among their comments were the following:

- Austin Brown asked what TTA is doing to promote more dense development around station areas. Patrick McDonough of TTA discussed the strategies that TTA is using to work with local governments to promote density in station areas.
- Gary Barnes, a resident of Meadowmont, expressed concern that the V route puts him on campus at six minutes after the hour or half-hour. Since most activities on campus begin on the hour or half-hour, he requested that a change be made to the schedule. Mary Lou Kuschatka of Chapel Hill Transit (CHT) stated that she would look at this route and also noted that the system currently lacks a central transfer area.
- Deneal Smith requested enhancements to the bus schedule information that is currently provided at bus stops. Mary Lou Kuschatka stated that system maps have been placed in all shelters this year and that CHT is working to install more round tubes holding schedule information at bus stops. Heidi Perry noted that some of the tubes are too high, making them difficult to read.
- Steve Ortman requested information about the consolidation of transit systems in the region. Diana McDuffee discussed the reasons why the transit partners are not pursuing consolidation at this time.

- Kyle Gray stated that even though the system is fare-free he would like the opportunity to deposit money in the fare box so as to provide additional revenue to CHT.
- Rickie White complimented CHT and TTA for the remarkable job of providing service during the snow storms this year. He asked how TTA and CHT were planning to serve Carolina North. Mary Lou Kuschatka noted that Chapel Hill and Carrboro have extensive development review processes and plan to review Carolina North as a transit-oriented development and that the University is also interested in a transit-oriented development. Patrick McDonough noted that there are currently no dedicated funding sources for transit projects in the region other than the TTA Phase 1 project between Raleigh and Durham.
- Arlen Bridges said that CHT works well for her but asked what can be done to convince people who do not work at UNC to use the buses. Mary Lou Kuschatka said that CHT is hiring a marketing person to provide more information on the transit system and to make presentations at worksites. Patrick McDonough stated that many persons who do not grow up in a transit-oriented area are not familiar with reading time tables, and noted that gotriangle.org is easier than working with printed timetables and maps.
- Andy Ingham requested bus service or feeder service to Lake Hogan Farms. Mary Lou Kuschatka and Diana McDuffee discussed the process by which the partners consider new routes and added services.
- Steven Waters asked when TTA would begin providing service to Carolina North. Patrick McDonough provided an overview of the process for planning and funding new fixed guideway transit services. Heidi Perry recommended that Mr. Waters visit the Carolina North website and submit this request.

From: Amanda Lail [alail@selcnc.org]

Sent: Monday, February 09, 2004 12:55 PM

To: zzTransitForum

Subject: comments

I live in Carrboro and work in downtown Chapel Hill. Since I will not be able to attend the forum, I would like to submit the following comments. Thank you very much for your consideration.

- Please add an F bus that departs the Weaver Street area going eastbound between the 8:15am and 9am buses. There used to be an 8:45. The 8:45am was great! The 9am is crowded, and there is a great demand for a bus that gets downtown at or just before 9am for those of us who work downtown or on north campus.

- Please improve the sidewalks on N. Greensboro Street that cross the Harris Teeter driveways (the driveway that is beside Southern States is especially bad). I have almost been hit many times by cars coming and especially going from the Harris Teeter/Car Mill parking lot. I also have several friends who have almost been hit there. Cars don't look for pedestrians there, and the Harris Teeter driveway beside the Southern States is poorly lit. Some stripes on the pavement stopping cars short of the road (to leave room for pedestrians) and signs saying to watch for pedestrians would help a lot.

Please improve the road (especially in the bike lane area) that goes over the railroad tracks there between the Harris Teeter drive and the Southern States. It's treacherous for bike commuters.

Amanda Lail Carrboro Homeowner

506 N. Greensboro Street #25 Carrboro, NC 27510

From:

Diana McDuffee [mcduffee@email.unc.edu]

Sent:

Monday, February 09, 2004 4:31 PM

To: Subject:

Dale McKeel; Chris van Hasselt [Fwd: bus woes for the forum]

Dale and Chris,

Here is a comment about bus service that I received from a co-worker.

Diana

----- Original Message -----Subject: bus woes for the forum

Date: Mon, 09 Feb 2004 16:21:45 -0500

From: Christie Silbajoris <silbc@email.unc.edu>

Organization: Health Sciences Library

To: Diana C McDuffee <mcduffee@email.unc.edu>

Diana,

Here are a few of my observations after using the Chapel Hill Transit Park and Ride program the past 2 years. It's wonderful that it is free! The drivers are usually very courteous.

I use the Friday Center Park and Ride lot. The City lot there is always full early, so most folks use the Friday Center lot. Even though that lot was recently built, it seems to be reaching capacity already. Getting to this lot is always problematic as the traffic on 54 is usually very heavy. Lately, the left turn lanes onto Friday Drive have backed up too adding even more time to the commute. We need the buses to run more frequently at least until 9 am. More often than not, a completely full bus will leave 10 or so riders behind. These buses are consistently, uncomfortably full. Because this route goes down South St., there is always a long wait at the crosswalk near the Bell Tower. We've waited as long as 7 minutes to get through.

I live about 13 miles from campus and it takes approximately 50 minutes for me to get to work. I have tried to be a good UNC citizen by utilizing the Park and Ride service, but if the long amount of time it adds to my commute doesn't improve soon, I'm going to request a parking space.

Christie

Christie Silbajoris Project Director, NC Health Info Health Sciences Library CB #7585 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7585

Phone: 919/843-6236

Email: Christie Silbajoris@unc.edu http://www.nchealthinfo.org/

From: Zachariah Kohn [zwkohn@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2004 4:59 PM

To: zzTransitForum

Subject: Bus service comments

Hello,

I will be unable to attend the forum on the 12th but wanted to comment. I believe the town is doing itself a disservice by not providing a direct route for residents living in the Smith Level Road area (Village apts, Rock Creek apts, Culbreth Rd, etc) to get into downtown Carrboro. The only way to currently do this is to ride the J Route into Franklin Street and back out to Carrboro. A route that brings these residents (primarily students) into downtown would make a lot of sense and have a lot less people driving (elsewhere) to dining, music and shopping.

Thank you, Zac Kohn 106 Woodcrest Drive

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From:

Andy Ingham [ingham@email.unc.edu] Tuesday, February 10, 2004 9:09 PM

Sent: To:

zzTransitForum

Subject:

Plans for CH Transit bus service to Lake Hogan Farms subdivision?

To whom it may concern --

I will try to attend the Forum on Thursday evening, but may be unable. In either case, I'd like to ask about plans for Carrboro to lobby for Chapel Hill Transit service to the Lake Hogan Farms subdivision. Simply having a stop *at the entrance* to the subdivision (on Homestead Rd.) would be a boon for residents. It seems that this could be accomplished pretty easily by extending either the F or the HS route by less than 2 miles in either case. If that is not immediately possible, are there plans to make Lake Hogan Farms a "feeder" zone for CH transit?

If I am not able to attend the forum, can this constitute a formal request for such service to be considered?

Thanks in advance for your response,

Andy

Andy Ingham Systems Librarian University Libraries UNC-Chapel Hill 919-962-1288 andy_ingham@unc.edu

From:

kmwarren@email.unc.edu

Sent:

Wednesday, February 11, 2004 12:58 PM

To:

zzTransitForum

Subject:

Question for the forum

Hi!

I am a student at UNC-Chapel Hill and I was wondering if there is anyway there could be an RU bus running on the weekends. I believe I speak for all students on South Campus because this would be very beneficial for us all. It is so difficult to get to North Campus on the weekend especially during inclement weather. A U and NU bus runs, so why not an RU?

Just curious! Thanks!



Ellen Perry, Coordinator Orange, Person and Chatham Counties

To the Carrboro, Chapel Hill Transportation Advisory Board;

Robyn Dorton, Coordinator Orange County

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen RANE, which stands for Real Advocates Now Emerging, feels the need to express concerns that have come to our attention.

Coordinator Person County

In regards to the treatment of one of our members who is a consumer of shared ride. This member feels like drivers are ignoring him because he is non-verbal. Several drivers choose not to speak to or even greet him because he does not answer back verbally. This makes him feel like less of

Self Advocates:

Wilson Finks

a person & damages his self-esteem.

Dani Kinert **Emily Russell**

Anthony Stevenson

Chris Walzer

Timothy Ward

Thomas Young

Another member of our group has tried to book rides on Sundays and been told that this was unavailable. Or she books the ride and the van never shows up. This has happened at least two or three times to our knowledge. We have experienced this on weekdays as well, especially in the afternoon. This problem would be rectified by hiring a new part time driver their position could be later expanded to full time to lighten the load on other drivers.

ADDRESS 119 A-5 Fidelity St. Carrboro, NC 27510 919-942-5602 dgirlscout@bellsouth.net

We also have serious safety concerns regarding the regular bus system, which we also ride.

Drivers on the buses must be more thoroughly trained in securing wheelchairs of all varieties & sizes. There should be absolutely no movement of the chair while your bus is in motion. Frequently a member is sliding around while she is supposed to be secured down & with her brakes on. I don't need to tell you this is very dangerous. The Reason for this was the securing straps were caught on something or in poor repair. So not all the necessary ones where used.

RANE Real Advocates **Now Emerging**

Ramp and securing equipment need to be examined thoroughly at least once a week.

Yet another member came across another problem. On several occasions she has boarded the bus and the driver will pull away from the curb before she has even passed the yellow line. She has a physical disability in her left leg & this seriously endangers her as well as other riders.

This is also not good for the reputation of your bus system. Should the driver pulling away injure her or any other rider too soon you could be at risk for a lawsuit. I'm sure you would not want this.

We would also like to voice a few concerns about your schedule.

The first one is simply formatting. You have information about fares for shared-ride, which are no longer in effect. This space could be better used to produce a larger space for the EZ Rider information and numbers, which could be bigger. While not everyone needs a fully large print version of your schedule it is easier to focus on a larger or more boldly typed section of information. By enlarging the calling time lines you with end up with a more readable schedule and less unhappy callers.

Several Members have called and gotten EZ riders answering machines asking them to leave a message and they would be called back, yet frequently they never do get called back. This leaves them frustrated especially when they put their lives on hold waiting for a call that never comes.

Some consumers due to hearing loss, speech problems or social anxieties or are non-verbal booking a ride by telephone is difficult. Some people just prefer a computer over a telephone. It would be much easier for all concerned if they could book an EZ Rider trip by email.

EZ rider booking times need to expand to ten pm. Also booking operators need to be made more available during all business hours. We would strongly suggest you hire at least one more part time operator. This will relieve stress on both the employees and the consumers. There are over 1200 consumers who require your services. Expanding both hours and adding another employee would be both stress reducing and in the long run more cost efficient.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Megan Jones

RANE

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Cc: Dick Harmsen

From: A UNC Student [highly_upset@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2004 11:22 PM

To: zzTransitForum

Subject: Questions/ Comments about transit

Hi. I'm a very, very frequent rider of chapel hill transit buses. I live on south campus at unc...Ehringhaus to be exact and i have lived here for 3 years. I take full advantage of the fare free buses. First off, is it feasible to have the "HU" express bus not stop in front of Morrison Dorm/UNC Public Safety bus stop? After all, the bus has a "U" in its name denoting a campus route, i.e. the "U" bus, "RU", "NU", former "EU". This bus passes this stop, when at times, there are 15-20 or more people waiting to ride and it goes right into the heart of campus, something that the "U" bus or other buses (other than the S) that serve this route do not do. If the "U" bus is full, why should riders be passed by the near empty "HU" while they wait for the next available bus to stop? Despite being express, wouldn't it make sense to pick up riders during high ridership times? Secondly, the bus stop in front of my dorm, Ehringhaus, is only served by two bus routes, the A and RU. While this may be sufficient for most of the day, during early morning hours when students are trying to go to class (especially on rainy or cold days), if the RU gets full at the previous stop on Bowles Dr, students will either have to wait for the next RU which may be full, walk 1/4 mile to the U bus stop (which was moved from in front of Chase Hall) where they may also be passed over, or hope that the periodic A bus comes along. The NU previously served this stop before the closure of Stadium Dr. in one direction. Is there any possibility of another bus that doesn't go on Bowles Dr. could serve this stop or a more frequent RU b/w 8-11? Also, why is it that, at certain times, 3 buses will arrive at a stop and at other times 20 mins will pass without one bus? Finally, on campus routes, why do bus driver changes often occur right in the middle of the route right before class time, such as the RU driver change across from Woolen Gym on South Rd at 10:55 when riders are trying to get to 11am classes. Despite my seemingly multitude of complaints, I really do appreciate Chapel Hill transit service and enjoy using it to get around the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area. I think that making the service a part of our fees so that it could be fare-free was a wonderful initiative and will continue to make use of the buses.

Thanks, Anony-Ms.

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From: James Carnahan [jcarnahan@mindspring.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2004 10:24 AM

To: Dale McKeel

Subject: comments for Transportation Forum

Dale - the following are some points I would be making tonight if I were able to come to the Forum:

1) A general comment about the Fare-Free Buses. This is an incredible gift we give ourselves; I would hope other communities will take heed. The convenience of *not ever* having to think about whether I've got enough change in my pocket is immeasurable. I use the bus frequently for short trips into Carrboro and Chapel Hill; if I had to dig into my pocket every time for change, or had to deal with transfers, I would be making many of those trips by car.

This convenience is a critical component of making public transit competitive with the private automobile, and as a taxpayer I would be happy to contribute more in order to have more weekend service and service that ran later on weekday evenings.

I believe Public Transportation must be viewed as a necessary municipal service that everyone pays for, as we do for schools, water & sewer, road maintenance and recreational facilities. The preponderant use of the private automobile places a heavy burden on us - costs of emergency services, new roads and road maintenance, public health costs of diseases that result from emissions and lack of exercise, global impacts like crop yields declining due to CO2 emissions, and the enormous tax burden we pay to secure our nation's access to petroleum. In addition, lack of convenient, reliable and comfortable public transportation alternatives mean that much of our workforce is spending from 20% to 40% of annual income on transportation because the car is their only alternative.

In a nutshell, then: please work to keep the bus system fare free, and to expand weekend and weekday evening service, by raising property taxes if necessary, or instituting a special district fee such as we use to fund our schools.

- 2) We need more crosswalks everywhere I walk and I'm sure that many others have the same experience of often having to cross mid-block not just downtown but out in the neighborhoods. Our sidewalk bonds are mostly paying for walkways on one side of the street only, so marked crosswalks are important. There needs to be some kind of town-wide assessment to identify and prioritize marking of crosswalks.
- 3) Enforcement of the Crosswalk rules for motorists. I don't know exactly how NC statutes read in this regard. In New England states I have visited there are signs everywhere in heavily traveled areas: "Yield to Pedestrians in the Crosswalk." And I know they have good enforcement, because everyone yields. I think we need similar signage, and equally important we need *vigorous* enforcement. I feel much safer as a pedestrian in New York City and Burlington, Vermont, than I do in downtown Carrboro. If our statutes in this regard are not as strong, then we need to work to strengthen them, locally or at the state level, whichever has jurisdiction. And we need to work with our local law enforcement folks to provide the kind of enforcement that will make walking safer in our community.
- 4) I know the bus system is organized primarily for students. In fact much of our local blue-collar workforce uses it as well. I think there may be many in our community who could and would use it if they knew more about it and were encouraged to use it. I think we need much stronger marketing of the

bus system.

5) A piece of the marketing that I think would help is better designed and more convenient route map/schedule materials. I find the pamphlet difficult to use. Also, it is not exactly pocket-sized. I suggest a plastic card could be created for each route, perhaps a bi-fold card that could fit in a wallet, with the map on one side and schedules on the other. I would be willing to pay for this convenience. I would like to have the option of buying just the cards for the routes that I used - they could be sold at book stores, at the grocery, etc. In any case I think the pamphlet needs better design and could be sized better for carrying.

Thanks! James Carnahan 122 Oak St Carrboro, NC 27510

From: Sent: Carrie Senter [cooki_senter@med.unc.edu] Thursday, February 12, 2004 12:54 PM

To: Subject: zzTransitForum Forum topic

I regret that I will not be able to attend the forum tonight. I do not know if there is a set agenda or not but wanted to ask that the group explore the need to provide more frequent access to Carrboro and the Park and Ride lots from the University during the midday hours. Many residents either work part time or take morning or afternoon classes and find the current one trip an hour (50mins) schedule on the CM and CW routes very difficult to deal with. The J and F buses do provide additional access to Carrboro but not the Park and Ride lots at Carrboro Plaza or Jones Ferry. It is well advertised that riding the bus is free. Maybe so in terms of ticket price, but the fact is that it is not free to take a bus once you consider how much it costs to leave work earlier than needed in order to catch the one and only bus servicing the area you need to get to. For many of us, our midday destination is one of the elementary schools or a Park and Ride lot where we jump in our cars and go pick up our children at school. The need to pick up our children at a certain time is not negotiable and depending on the bus to be on time is very stressful and often in vain. Carrboro and UNC's part time workers/students, full time parents would benefit greatly from increasing the frequency of the midday trips on the CM and CW routes. The CM and CW midday buses are typically full of riders so close to full that it appears there are enough riders to justify an increase in service. Thank you for your consideration. Carrie Senter

From:

Susan T. Williams [SusanT_Williams@unc.edu]

Sent:

Thursday, February 12, 2004 2:23 PM

To: Subject: zzTransitForum transit forum



Card for Susan T. Williams (40...

I ride the bus daily. I would like to request service to the following areas: *Weaver Dairy Road extension to Homestead Road. This would be a great benefit for Vineyard Square and the other housing areas.

*It would also be good to have service to Downing Creek which is just past the Friday Center on highway 54.

*The Townes at Governor's Village would also benefit from bus service. This development is located off Mount Carmel Church Road.

Thank you. Susan

From: Sent: Catherine Cross [cathy_cross@unc.edu] Thursday, February 12, 2004 3:08 PM

To:

zzTransitForum

Subject:

coordination of TTA & CAT buses

Hi:

I am a 20-year Chapel Hill resident and a regular CH Transit & TTA rider. I ride CH Transit daily and TTA 3-4x per week. I also use CAT & DATA periodically.

Since Triangle transit organizations are working toward a future merger, coordination of service issues seem particularly relevant at this time. The Carrboro forum may not be the ideal place for my queries, but I'll send them anyway. If deemed inappropriate for this forum, could someone please see that they are forwarded to the appropriate office?

- 1. I sometimes ride TTA to Raleigh on Saturday morning, and have noticed that TTA & CAT connections to two of the most common destinations are extremely poor. For example, the TTA bus from RTP is scheduled to arrive downtown Raleigh (Moore Square) at ##:55, but:
- #6 bus to Crabtree Valley Mall departs DT Raleigh at ##:45
 (a 50-minute wait)
- #1 bus to Triangle Town Center departs DT Raleigh at ##:50
 (a 55-min wait)

Afternoon return connections aren't much better. The TTA bus to RTP departs downtown Raleigh at ##:57, but:

- #6 bus (limited stops) from Crabtree arrives DT Raleigh at
 ##:55 (a 2-min connection)
 [In 2 years, I've made this connection just ONCE--and then
 only because TTA was running 10 min behind schedule. (The
 #6 limited stop CAT rarely runs on time.) This missed
 connection results in a 1-hour wait for the next TTA bus.]
- #6 bus (regular service) from Crabtree arrives DT Raleigh
 at ##:15 (a 32-min wait)
- #1 bus from Triangle Town Center arrives DT Raleigh at ##:55 (another 2-min connection)
- 2. A related issue concerns transfers between systems. All TTA transfers are valid for *1 hour* after TTA buses depart from RTP. This can cause problems when transferring to CAT on Saturday. If #6 or #1 CAT buses are late departing DT Raleigh (see departure times in item 1 above), CAT drivers do not always honor the TTA transfer--since the 1-hour transfer period has expired.

The same can happen when tranferring the other way (CAT to TTA). If the #6 (limited stop) or #1 CAT buses are late arriving DT Raleigh (and you don't make the 2-min connection to TTA), the CAT transfer is not always honored by the driver of the next TTA bus, especially if it's running late--since the 1-hour transfer period has expired.

I hope that a solution to these problems will be found when coordination of all Triangle transit services is finally addressed in a comprehensive manner. More people, particularly students, would travel via public transit outside their local community to Triangle Town Center, Crabtree Valley, South Point, Northgate and University Malls, as well as other major attractions) if connections between systems were better, transfers between systems were always honored, and drivers were knowledgable about other services (or at least had schedules on hand for reference).

I realize that you may have only just begun to grapple with these sorts of coordination issues. But I thought the time was right to point out these problems in particular since they are a formidable obstacle to anyone wishing to travel outside their local community via public transit. Even though most Triangle communities are now at least minimally served by a transit system, you must be a very savvy, highly motivated, and incredibly patient student of public transit systems to make these systems work for you. Most people aren't willing to do this.

We will never persuade people to get out of their cars and onto a train, bus, or bicycle until we make it easy, convenient and economical for them to do so. Chapel Hill/Carrboro is already leading the way on the latter. Imho, the other two remain a formidable challenge for the Triangle area.

Many thanks for your attention.

Catherine

Catherine E. Cross
Analyst Programmer
Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina
cathy_cross@unc.edu

From:

Sam [goodstei@email.unc.edu]

Sent:

Thursday, February 12, 2004 5:05 PM

To: Subject: zzTransitForum
Keep up good work, add more buses to the routes

I am glad to hear that transport is on the agenda. Unfortunately, I depend on public transport and getting to an evening meeting is exceedingly time consuming for me, though possible now with the routes added in recent years. Please continue to support and expand the system whenever possible. More parking is not the solution, more buses might be one. Add more buses to the routes, that would be the main thing. Sam Goodstein Chapel Hill

From:

Erika Beyer [e_beyer@hotmail.com] Thursday, February 12, 2004 6:43 PM

Sent:

zzTransitForum

To: Subject:

F Bus

Dear Transit Forum,

Thank you for accepting citizen comments on the Carrboro bus routes. I ride the "F" bus nearly every day and while I am generally quite pleased with the service, I would love to see the return of the bus that would arrive at the Century Center at 8:45 a.m. This bus filled the gap that is currently left between the 8:15 a.m. bus and the 9 a.m. bus.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Erika Beyer 506 N. Greensboro St. #25 Carrboro, NC 27510

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From:

Tom Arnel [tarnel@email.unc.edu]

Sent:

Tuesday, February 17, 2004 8:53 AM

To: Subject: zzTransitForum Carrboro Routes

My question pertains to all the buses that come from Carrboro, especially the CW/CM and J routes. I was wondering if they could eventually either cross South Road, or Cameron? Many people work in the middle of campus and have to walk an extra 10 minutes in order to get to their workplace. It would be nice if one of these buses could do more a loop around campus. I know you can transfer to the U bus, but that even takes more time.

Tom Arnel Carrboro, NC

From: Carol Troutner [ctroutner@intrex.net]

Sent: Friday, February 27, 2004 8:54 AM

To: zzTransitForum

Subject: Pedestrian Traffic Light

I would like to see a pedestrian traffic light at Stateside Drive and Airport Road so that everyone (those visually impaired, park users of all ages, and bus riders of all ages) crossing Airport Road can get across safely.

Carol Troutner 108 Highland Drive Chapel Hill, NC 27514 933-2989