

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: October 6, 2009

TITLE: Report on the Chapel Hill and Carrboro 2035 Long Range Transit Plan

DEPARTMENT: Planning	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ____ NO <u>X</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Long Range Transit Plan timeline	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329 David Bonk – 968-2728 Stephen Spade – 969-4900

PURPOSE

A Final Draft 2035 Long Range Transit Plan for Chapel Hill and Carrboro is available for public review. David Bonk, long range and transportation planning manager for the Town of Chapel Hill, will be making a presentation on the details of the plan. This presentation has been scheduled so that the Board of Aldermen may receive information about and discuss the plan. A resolution referring the plan for public comment and advisory board review is recommended for the Board's adoption.

INFORMATION

In 2005, the Public Transit Committee (PTC, a.k.a. Partners Committee), which includes representatives from Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and UNC, received a discussion paper prepared by John Bonsall outlining an approach to develop a transit master plan for Chapel Hill and Carrboro. The Committee endorsed the approach outlined in the discussion paper and agreed to arrange a presentation by John Bonsall.

Following a presentation by Bonsall in September, in November 2005, the PTC received a discussion paper from the staff proposing a process to develop a long range transit plan. The PTC agreed on the recommended approach and requested the staff to prepare a draft scope of work to undertake the development of the long range transit plan. A \$522,000 planning process was developed and funding commitments subsequently obtained from the transit partners and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization. A request for qualifications was released in June 2006; a consulting firm was selected later that year. On February 6, 2007, the Board of Aldermen approved the Town's participation in the project as articulated in a Memorandum of Agreement with Chapel Hill and a Scope of Work. In summary, the planning process sought to produce the following for Chapel Hill Transit:

- Definition of the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Transit Market through 2035
- Transit Service Concepts
- Transit Supportive Land Use Guidelines
- High Investment Transit Projects and Recommend Implementation Schedule
- Financial Plan

The first meeting of the Transit Study Policy Committee was held February 7, 2007. Regular meetings of this group occurred through mid-2008. Meetings of the Technical Study Committee, comprised of staff from local

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jurisdictions and relevant agencies in the area, were held intermittently during this time. The Final Draft plan was released in July 2009. Links to the draft plan can be found here: <http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.aspx?page=560>

Overview of the Plan

The plan's core recommendations include introduction of higher level transit services along six "gateway" corridors, expansion of local bus service to support the gateway services, and further study of the impact of parking policies and land use policies to support transit growth.

The plan's proposed gateway corridors include "high investment corridors" (HIC), identified as major entry points into Chapel Hill from the east (NC-86, US 15-501 N, and East NC-54), and "enhanced express bus" (EEB) corridors (serving three gateway nodes), including Homestead Rd., Hillsborough Rd./Greensboro St., West NC-54/Main St., and US 15-501 S/Columbia St. Different types of transit service are proposed for HIC versus EEB due to higher modeled travel demand for the former. For example, HIC includes potential rail investment, while EEB does not. The plan also includes a fixed guideway (i.e. rail or bus rapid transit) concept on the Norfolk Southern rail line between Chapel Hill and Carrboro, passing the Carolina North site.

For Carrboro, the preferred service concept (after considering service characteristics and ridership) includes:

- Express bus service on Hillsborough Rd., originating at the intersection of Hillsborough Rd., Homestead Rd., and Old NC-86 and traveling through downtown.
- Express bus service on West NC-54, going through Carrboro Plaza, and following a route on the NC-54 bypass, Greensboro St. through downtown, and Estes Dr. Extension to Carolina North.
- Enhanced local bus service on major Town arterials.

The plan prioritizes corridor investment into two categories: priority/initial implementation and future implementation. The gateway nodes in or adjacent to Carrboro are identified as future implementation corridors.

In order to model transit ridership, the consultants assumed future parking restrictions at two locations: UNC's main campus and at Carolina North. Parking restrictions were associated with higher transit ridership. The plan also considered the effects of future transit-supportive development (TSD) for 20 potential sites. Three (3) of the 20 identified sites were located in or near Carrboro (excluding Carolina North): NC-86 and Homestead Rd., NC-54 and Old Fayetteville Rd. (Carrboro Plaza area), and NC-54 and Jones Ferry Rd. (The plan also identified Franklin St./Main St. as a TSD corridor.)

FISCAL and STAFF IMPACT

Minimal fiscal impacts accrue from referring the Long Range Transit Plan for public and advisory board review. The fiscal impact associated with the plan and any actions included within will be determined at a future time.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to receive a presentation, provide questions or comments and adopt the resolution setting a public hearing for public review and referring the draft Long Range Transit Plan for review by advisory boards.