



CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT  
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**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE**  
**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING AND AGENDA**  
**FEBRUARY 22, 2022 – 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. (VIRTUAL MEETING)**  
**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT – FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**

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8. Adjourn	

## MEETING SUMMARY OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE

January 25, 2022 at 11:00 AM

Present: Michael Parker, Chapel Hill Town Council  
Ranee Haven-O'Donnell, Carrboro Town Council  
Cheryl Stout, UNC Transportation & Parking  
Cha'ssem Anderson, UNC Associate Director of Transportation Planning  
Zachary Hallock, Carrboro Transportation Planner  
Gordon Merklein, UNC Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Campus Enterprises  
Anne-Marie Vanaman, Town of Carrboro Management Specialist  
Damon Seils, Carrboro Town Council  
Loryn Clark, Chapel Hill Deputy Town Manager  
Tai Huynh, Chapel Hill Town Council

Absent: Adam Searing, Chapel Hill Town Council

Staff present: Brian Litchfield, Transit Director, Rick Shreve, Budget Manager, Nick Pittman, Transit Planning Manager, Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager, Jeffrey Sullivan, Community Outreach Manager, Josh Mayo, Transportation Planner Town of Chapel Hill, Mark Rodgers, Joseph McMiller

Guests: Fred Lampe, Ivan Arrington, Jennifer Green, Tina Moon, Bergen Watterson

1. The Meeting Summary of November 16, 2021 was received and approved.
2. **Employee Recognition**
  - A. Team Members of the Year – **Demand Response:** William Barnett, George Coutinho **Fixed Route:** Stephanie Baldwin, Marcus Campbell **Maintenance:** Anita Hackett, Wesley Keeler
  - B. Joe McMiller completed the Local Government Federal Credit Union Fellows Leading for Results program in October 2021. Travis Parker completed the 2021 Transportation Mid-Manager Program and Nick Pittman completed the 2021 Transportation Senior Executive Program.
3. **Consent Items**
  - A. December Financial Report– Provided for Partners information. A committee member asked where the 10 million came from that is in the financial report and is there a reason why we don't show revenue instead of just expenditures? Over 8 million of it came from Rescue funds. We show only expenditures due to a big chunk of the revenue coming from our partners, taxes from the Town, and grants as well, this would lead to the reports seeming to be unbalanced most of the year.

A committee member asked why our Fixed Route expenditures have not been reduced even though we are running reduced service? Even though our services have been reduced we are still getting the same amount of expenditures due to paying for overtime to balance out where we are missing staff members as well as our contract with Carolina Livery to cover some of our routes.

**4. Discussion Items**

- A. Request to provide Transit Service to Ironwoods Neighborhood – Provided for Partners information. Guest Speaker Ivan Arrington presented the petition to add service back to this neighborhood.

A committee member asked how this request measured against our service performance standards? The response was that there have been some changes in this neighborhood since we last looked at the ridership but due to years of experience with the route, we know that it wasn't a high frequency service which impacts the ridership. We have at least \$14 million worth of other needs that have been identified currently. If the partners are interested, we can continue to review this and look at adding it to the list.

- B. Covid Response Update – Provided for Partners information.

**5. Information Items**

- A. December Performance Report – Provided for Partners information.

**6. Departmental Monthly Reports**

- A. Operations Report - Provided for the Partners information.
- B. Community Outreach – Provided for the Partners information.
- C. Director's Report – Provided for the Partners information. The partner's will be providing their comments on the transit plan updates. A guest asked for an update on the solar canopy project. The response was that the contract is signed and the consultants are engaged, the evaluation effort is underway. We will provide another update when we receive something on paper.

- 7. **Next Meeting** – February 22, 2022 (11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Chapel Hill Transit)

- 8. Adjourn

The Partners set a next meeting date for February 22, 2022
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3A. January Financial Report

Prepared by: Rick Shreve, Senior Management Analyst

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**January 2022**

- The January Financial report will be distributed during the February 22, 2022 Partners Meeting.

4A. FY 2022-23 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development  
Action: 1. Receive information and provide staff with feedback.

Staff Resource: Rick Shreve, Senior Management Analyst  
Brian Litchfield, Director

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### **Overview**

Chapel Hill Transit staff have begun work internally and with the Town's Business Management Department (BMD) and Manager's Office towards developing our FY22-23 budget proposal. We are meeting over the next several weeks to go over preliminary expenditure numbers, and to hone in on revenue expectations for next year.

At this point in the typical budgeting process, major areas of identifiable increases or decreases are assessed (e.g., a large swing in the markets for fuel, a spike in employee medical insurance costs, a change in a major source of revenue), and we are beginning to sharpen the details in our key areas. Staff will provide a presentation at the meeting that will cover the budget process and timeline, federal/state revenues, Partner contributions and key challenges.

### **Transit Fund and Fund Balance**

Chapel Hill Transit is an enterprise fund for the Town of Chapel Hill, meaning the fund was created for the purpose of dedicating and protecting funding for the provision of public transit services for Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the University. All annual revenues and expenses for the system are accounted for in the fund. The Transit Partners recommend an annual budget, including Partner contributions and that is included in the Manager's Recommended Budget when submitted to the Chapel Hill Town Council for consideration.

#### **Fund Balance**

- We will discuss the fund balance in more detail as part of the audit discussion. This section is provided to give some context on how fund balance has been used on occasion to assist with balancing the annual budget.
- Chapel Hill Transit maintains a fund balance to assist with cash flow (90-day reserve) to operate as a reserve in case of losses of or volatility of state or federal revenues, assist with multiyear contracts/projects, cover grant matches, reserve against claims not covered by insurance, and assist with capital purchases.
- Since 2008 the Transit Partners have agreed to roll annual budget surplus amounts into fund balance to assist with capital and other grant matches.
- The Partners have also agreed from time to time to budget fund balance to help balance the budget and maintain annual Partner contributions. In the current year, \$446,494 was

allocated to balance the budget – typically when this was done in previous years, the funding has not been spent, as lapsed salary or other savings assist with the difference.

- Fund balance allocations must be approved by the Chapel Hill Town Council. Prior to recommending an allocation from fund balance to Council, Transit staff provides a recommendation to the Transit Partners Committee for consideration. Outside of the annual budget, these allocations have been done to purchase buses and/or provide match on large federal/state grants.

### **Potential Challenges and Contributing Elements**

While the presentation will provide more details, we wanted to share with you in advance of the meeting some of the challenges and elements that will influence next year's budget. Chapel Hill Transit has benefitted substantially over the past several years due to very favorable fuel contracts, emergency relief/CMAQ grants and using lapsed salaries to assist with salary increases for Operators. The previously unanticipated grant funds were critical towards helping us bridge the gap caused by losses in State grant funds (SMAP) and cover the cost of capital expenses. Without these external funds, we would have had to engage the Partners with more options towards some combination of increased Partner contributions, greater use of fund balance, and / or reduced services, including maintenance and repair issues that are not readily apparent in the day-to-day experience of the Transit system. Additionally, for the last two budget years, the Partners have agreed to not make capital investments in replacing buses, as a way to keep Partner contributions from increasing as we were not certain about the impacts of the COVID pandemic on revenues and other key expense areas.

Some of the potential challenges we see for the upcoming budget year include:

- Fuel – peak COVID contracts and service levels have helped us (\$1.40-\$1.50/gallon for ULSD and \$.78/gallon for gas: current prices are \$2.95/gallon for ULSD and \$2.55/gallon for gas). On average, each \$.05/gallon change in fuel impacts our budget by \$40,000 or around \$1.2M on a \$1.55/gallon increase.
- Other key budget areas including compensation, health insurance, and parts/materials are all likely to see large increases.
- Contract with GoTriangle for the 420 routes to Hillsborough. Due to staffing challenges, staff is considering notifying GoTriangle that we will not be able to operate this service for FY22-23, which will lead to lost revenues and some reduction in expenses.
- No additional capital funding available from Orange County Transit Plan or the ability to increase cost of existing services.
- The adopted 2019 Capital Replacement Plan identifies the need to replace between 6-7 buses each year to effectively maintain our fleet. Over the past two years we have delayed bus replacement purchases and need to replace 19 buses in FY22 and an additional 6

buses in FY23. The 19 buses for FY22 included our 5 articulated buses (~\$900K for diesel and ~\$1.6M for electric). While our recent electric bus grant will help with around 6 of these buses, if we do not invest in replacement buses soon, the fleet and customers will be impacted.

- The debt purchase we completed in FY17 has worked well for Chapel Hill Transit and our Partners. We estimate it would cost around ~\$600K/year to lease purchase 12-14 diesel buses (40') and ~\$900K/year for 12-14 electric buses (40'). These numbers may vary based on the mix of bus lengths and interest rates. Interest rates are favorable at this time and debt purchase would allow Partners to spread the cost of these vehicles over several years, instead of taking on a large increase/payment for a single fiscal year.
- As our facility continues to age, capital needs will continue to occur. The 2019 Capital Replacement Plan calls for an annual investment of ~\$435,000 for facility repairs, preventative maintenance and bus stop improvements. Current items in need of significant repair/replacement include, high pressure water tanks, facility generator and fire/carbon dioxide alarm system.

### **Emergency Relief Funding**

Chapel Hill Transit, like most public transit systems in the country, has received a series of emergency relief funding grants. Over the past two years the Partners have discussed potential and appropriate uses for these one-time funds. Thanks to federal stimulus grants we were able to cover last year's loss (\$3M) in SMAP and invest in COVID safety measures. Three relief grants have been provided by FTA:

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act - \$5.7M
  - Current Status: Grant adopted by Council in FY21.
  - Uses: Offset SMAP elimination and COVID expenses. Funding was drawn down and included as part of FY21 budget and offset other expenditures.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding - \$8.7M
  - Current Status: Adopted by Council into FY22 budget.
  - Uses to date: Carolina Livery Contract (\$700,000), replace NextBus modems (\$300,000), facility camera repairs and upgrades (\$350,000), reserved \$1.6M to assist with compensation and recruitment/retention proposal for FY22 and FY23. We are in the process of drawing down funds, based on federal requirements, to avoid issues with recission or reallocation.
  - Suggested Uses: Reserve \$1.5M for NextBus Replacement, reserve \$1M for radio system replacement and reserve remaining funds for bus purchases or other

capital needs. Note: due to spending requirements in the funding legislation, FTA has asked systems to obligate ARPA funds prior to using CRRSAA funds.

- Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) - \$5.3M
  - Current Status: Waiting for FTA grant and will need to be adopted by Council in FY23.
  - Suggested Uses: Reserve \$2M to assist with compensation and recruitment/retention. Allocate \$1.5M for small capital needs including UV systems and replacement bulbs, bus shelters, and stops. If funding is not needed to cover compensation, allocate remaining funds to bus capital purchases and bus simulator for training.

### **Next Steps**

- Staff will develop a timeline for additional discussions with the Partners Committee after the Town releases its budget calendar. We anticipate this will follow a traditional timeline with work sessions in March and April, the presentation of the Manager's Recommended Budget in May and consideration of adoption in June.

### **Recommendation**

- That the Partners Committee receive the information and provide staff with feedback.



**4B. FY 2020-21 Audit Report****Action: 1. Receive information and provide staff with feedback.**

Staff Resource: Rick Shreve, Senior Management Analyst

Brian Litchfield, Director

Amy Oland, Director of Business Management – Town of Chapel Hill

**Overview**

The Town of Chapel Hill completed the audit process for FY2020-21 with full results of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report posted here: <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument/50530/637769826016070000>. This report is typically shared with the Partners, in January or February, after it is presented to Council.

The schedule included with this update reflects the Budget to Actual Revenues and Expenditures for the Transit Fund. As of June 30, 2021, the Transit Fund had a positive change in Net Position over the preceding year of \$5,258,709 (see Attachment 1). This amount is unusually high and the result of a number of factors including several projects and grant matches that the Partners approved in March of 2021 (see Attachment 2), drawing down CARES funding and other projects started in 2021 that will be completed in the current fiscal year, including:

- Residual balances from approved grants = \$409,271
- North-South BRT = \$803,193
- Bus Shelters = \$572,040
- Transit Vehicles = \$160,838
- Facility Maintenance = \$490,937
- Outstanding Purchase Orders = \$771,422 (this is a fairly standard amount for invoices and includes carryforward on fuel contracts)
- Total Carryforward of \$3,207,701 - leaving a surplus of around \$2,051,008 (which could be reduced by grants accepted in FY21)

**Fund Balance Overview**

- The Transit Fund currently has an unrestricted fund balance of \$17,744,531. This amount includes:
  - \$3,207,701 in carryforward projects from the previous year.
  - \$6,575,012 for cash flow (90 days).
  - \$3,000,000 as a reserve against loss of or volatility of federal and state funds, major facility and equipment failures and other significant claims (workers compensation, liability, wrongful termination claims, etc.,).

Providing an available fund balance of \$4,961,818 (\$2,051,008 of which was from previous fiscal year), which would be further reduced by potential refunds related to the previous fiscal year. Also, note that we have three grants that have been submitted this year, that if awarded, could require around \$3,00,000 in local match.

- Chapel Hill Transit maintains a fund balance to assist with cash flow (90 day reserve), operate as a reserve and protect the Partners in case of losses of state or federal revenues, assist with multiyear contracts/projects, cover grant matches and assist with capital purchases. When Transit submits federal and state grant applications, we have to show funding match and fund balance allows us to submit these grants without requiring additional contributions or budget allocations from funding partners.
- Since 2008 the Transit Partners have agreed to roll annual budget surplus amounts into fund balance to assist with capital and other grant matches.
  - Longer term considerations for fund balance are to reserve funding to assist with NSBRT, electric bus transitions, major facility repairs and electric bus and solar infrastructure.
- The Partners have also agreed from time to time to budget fund balance to help balance the budget and reduce annual Partner contributions. In the current year, \$446,494 was allocated to balance the budget – typically in years past, this funding has not been spent, as lapsed salary or other savings assist with the difference.
- Fund balance allocations must be approved by the Chapel Hill Town Council. Prior to recommending an allocation from fund balance to Council, Transit staff provides a recommendation to the Transit Partners Committee for consideration. Outside of the annual budget, these allocations have only been done to purchase buses, make capital investments and/or provide match on large federal/state grants.

### **Attachment**

- Attachment 1: FY2020-21 Revenues to Expenditures for Transit Fund
- Attachment 2: March 2021 Financial Report

### **Recommendation**

- That the Partners Committee receive the information and provide staff with feedback.

## 4B. March Financial Report 2021

Prepared by: Rick Shreve, Senior Management Analyst

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**February 2021**

- Expenses for the month of February were \$1,434,148. Along with the encumbrances, which are heavily weighted towards the beginning of the fiscal year, approximately 54.22% of our revised budget has been expended or reserved for designated purchase (e.g. purchase orders created for vehicle maintenance inventory supplies encumber those funds, and show them as unavailable for other uses).
- The revised budget includes \$5.7M in CARES funding and \$640,000 in unanticipated CMAQ funding, along with several smaller grants that have offset operating costs.

***Discussion Points***

- With grant funding, CMAQ funding and savings in overtime and other budget areas, we are anticipating a potential surplus for FY21. In previous years, the Partners have agreed to move surplus funds to capital reserve and this has helped us purchase buses and make grant matches without impacting the operating budget. While things will likely change, as these reports are snapshots in time, we would like to share our thinking and get some directions from the Partners as we move toward the end of the fiscal year.
- We project using around \$7M in direct operating expenses through the end of June. We also have several grants that we need to allocate the local match to from these funds and larger contracts that were delayed with COVID, which would reduce our potential surplus to around \$2.5M:
  - Electric bus grant: \$1,800,000
  - Volkswagen Settlement Grant: \$470,000
  - Bus Stop Improvements: \$500,000
  - TOD Grant: \$205,000
  - STP-BG: \$60,000
  - 5339: \$131,530
    - Total = \$3,166,530
- We have several capital projects and needs that could be completed with a portion of the potential surplus and would like the Partners to consider the following. These projects would need to be funded in the next fiscal year or are currently underway:
  - Replace existing shuttle cars with electric shuttle cars = \$750,000 (plus charging stations)
  - Refurbish and reseal the maintenance shop floor = \$400,000
  - Replace existing lights in maintenance shop with LEDs = \$60,000
  - Facility repairs and security gate upgrade = \$200,000
  - Replace shop lift and truck = \$100,000
    - Total = \$1,510,000

- If the capital needs above are addressed as recommended the potential surplus would be around \$2.25M. Some options to consider include:
  - Fund bus replacements and solar investments.
  - Place in Capital Reserve.
  - Use to offset contributions for next year using Partner Share.
  - Some combination of the above.

## 4C. Chapel Hill Transit Holiday Schedule for Calendar Years 2022-23

Action: Receive information provided by staff and adopt holiday schedule for publication.

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Transit Planning Manager

### **Background**

Each year Chapel Hill Transit staff works closely with our Partners to develop a holiday schedule that provides for adequate levels of service to our customers, is consistent with the Town's holiday policies, and allows our employees the opportunity to observe the holidays with their families. Chapel Hill Transit staff will coordinate the distribution of information on our holiday schedules with our Partners. Staff will advise the Partners if any adjustments are necessary following adoption. The following holidays and schedules will be observed by Chapel Hill Transit for 2022-23:

#### ***2022 Holiday Schedule:***

- Good Friday - Friday, April 15 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides); EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.; 420 Route will operate
- Memorial Day - Monday, May 30 – No service
- Juneteenth<sup>1</sup> – Monday, June 20 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides); EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.; 420 Route will operate
- Labor Day – Monday, September 5 – No service
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 24 – No Service
- Day after Thanksgiving – Friday, November 25 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides) and EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.

#### **Winter Break December 13, 2022 – January 4, 2023: Weekday NU will not operate, Safe Rides and the Saturday/Sunday NU routes will not operate.**

- Friday, December 23-- Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Christmas Eve – Saturday, December 24 – Saturday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Christmas Day – Sunday, December 25 – No Service
- Day after Christmas – Monday, December 26 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Tuesday, December 27– Local Service Only<sup>2</sup>, no Express service<sup>3</sup>
- Wednesday, December 28 – Local Service Only<sup>2</sup>, no Express service<sup>3</sup>
- Thursday, December 29 – Local Service Only<sup>2</sup>, no Express service<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Juneteenth service levels will require additional discussions

<sup>2</sup> Routes that will operate: A, B, CL, CM, CW, D, F, G, HS, J, N, NS, RU, S, T, and U

<sup>3</sup> Routes that will not operate: CCX, FCX, JFX, and NU

- Friday, December 30 – Local Service Only<sup>2</sup>, no Express service<sup>3</sup>
- Saturday, December 31— Saturday Routes (No U, NU, Safe Rides)

**2023 Holiday Schedule:**

- New Year’s Day – Sunday, January 1– No Service
- Monday, January 2, 2023— Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Monday, January 16 – Sunday Routes (No U and NU) and EZ Rider: 8:15 a.m. – 6:52 p.m.

Notes:

- Sunday Routes: A, CM, CW, D, J, N and NS.
- Tar Heel Express will be added as schedules are finalized.

The Town and several local municipalities recognize Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>) as an observed holiday. This year the holiday will be Monday, June 20, 2022. Transit staff recommends operating Sunday level service on this day consistent with Martin Luther King Jr. and Good Friday holidays. However, we understand that this may not be possible if the University and Hospital are not able to observe the holiday.

**Recommendation**

That the Partners Committee receive information presented and provide feedback to staff.

## 5A. NextBus Update

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Transit Planning Manager  
Brian M Litchfield, Director

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**Overview**

Major wireless providers were given approval to end their 3G networks and AT&T is working toward a February 22, 2022 shutdown (some providers have announced a December shutdown date). Chapel Hill Transit's Umo IQ (NextBus) services, which currently uses 3G AT&T modems, will not work if the shutdown moves forward on February 22, 2022. The modems inside of the Umo IQ equipment will no longer connect to the data network, they will no longer be able to transmit data which will interrupt the tracking and predictions for our buses and impact the feed to other service providers – creating a significant impact to customers and transit operations.

Chapel Hill Transit Partners agreed to use some of our Emergency Relief Funding to upgrade the modems to 4G and Council approved the sole source contract earlier this year. However, Umo IQ currently estimates that it will take 24 weeks to ship updated 4G modems for our vehicles. Due to the proprietary nature of these devices we must purchase upgraded modems through Umo IQ. Staff has explored additional options with Umo IQ related to installation new hardware to supply network connectivity, but we have discovered that this too is not an option with our current hardware configuration. We have also asked about switching to 3G Verizon modems; however, these are also not currently available through Umo IQ. We are reaching out to other systems that use Umo to see if they have any inventory of 4G AT&T modems or 3G Verizon mode.

Staff anticipates that the 3G network will be discontinued at the end of February 2022 barring any last-minute decisions by AT&T to keep the network operational. Staff will continue to explore all options to keep the Umo IQ real-time information available to our customers and will continue to keep the Partners updated.

Note – in August 2021 we shared with the Partners that we were starting the process of evaluating real time information and vehicle location systems in coordination with several other transit systems. A vendor/provider is scheduled to be selected by March 2022 and if funding is approved by the Transit Partners (see Item 4A), we could move forward with implementation of a new system or a full upgrade over the following 12-18 months.

## 5B. North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) Project Update

Staff Resource: Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager

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### **Overview**

The North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) project was initiated in January 2014 as one of the results of the Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Chapel Hill Transit is developing the project with guidance from a Policy Committee, Technical Committee, Transit Partners Committee and a substantial public involvement process. NSBRT will serve an 8.2-mile long corridor along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and 15/501 South between Eubanks Road in the north and Southern Village in the south. The project will include exclusive bus lane, traffic signal priority for buses, enhanced transit stations, a multi-use path along much of the corridor and electric buses.

NSBRT was accepted into the Federal Transit Administrations (FTA) Project Development process in November 2016 and in February 2020 received a project ranking from FTA (Medium) that allows the project to be eligible for federal funding through the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. The FTA awards CIG Program funding only when the project sponsor can assure FTA that the proposed project scope, cost estimate, and budget are firm and reliable, all non-CIG funding commitments are in place, and all critical third-party agreements are completed.

The following links will provide additional information on the project:

- NSBRT Website: <https://nsbrt.org/>
- June 17, 2020 Chapel Hill Town Council Presentation: <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4554970&GUID=294C718A-547A-4AE7-B633-1B5D1D57E5D9&Options=&Search=&FullText=1>

### **Recent Updates**

The NSBRT project has completed 30% design and continues to move forward through the Federal Environmental Review Process (NEPA). We anticipate the NEPA process being completed in late calendar year 2022. We issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for final design and construction documents (work will be completed in phases as funding is identified and federal requirements are met) in 2020 and are working on contracting with AECOM for this phase of the project.

Unfortunately, changes to the State's funding cycle has required us to adjust the project's schedule and budget. This fall the State (NCDOT) announced the discontinuation of SPOT 6.0, which meant that State funding for projects like NSBRT may not be available until 2026. Our previous schedule for NSBRT assumed State funding would be available in 2021-22 and BRT service starting in 2025-26. This announcement required a significant change (delay) to our



project schedule and cost impacts, due to inflation, cost of materials over time, etc. The earliest opportunity for SPOT 7.0 funding is now likely FY26. We are planning to apply for \$45M in the next round of State funding opportunities. It now appears that the construction could begin no earlier than 2026 (originally anticipated for 2023), with service beginning no earlier than 2028 (originally anticipated to be 2027 – both construction and service dates subject to change based on federal and state funding).

Due to the schedule change required by the delay in State funding and to encompass the addition of the Homestead Road and Longview Street stations, fully electric 60' buses, along with other material project design adjustments the project is now estimated at \$150M (previous estimate was \$140M), with around \$100M coming from Federal sources and around \$50M coming from Local and/or State sources.

Staff recently secured a federal grant to assist with the planning for Transit Oriented Development around NSBRT stations, and that is moving forward with the Town of Chapel Hill's land use planning effort.

The Local Reporter published an article on NSBRT that you may find of interest: [Local Leaders Laud Bus Rapid Transit As Towns Grapple with Traffic - The Local Reporter](#)

### Transit Oriented Development Planning

Staff secured a federal grant (\$592k) to assist the with planning for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around NSBRT stations. The TOD work was merged with the Town of Chapel Hill's land use planning effort, in a joint RFP issued in fall 2021. Through a selections process Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) was selected, with subconsultants including: Orion Planning + Design, Neighboring Concepts, SRF, and SB Friedman. The major milestones and are:

- January 2022 – Public Engagement Plan
- March 2022 – Technical Studies
- November 2022 – Station Area Concept Metrics
- January 2023 – Implementation Plan
- February 2023 – Final Report
- June 2023 – UDO Visioning Reports

The Public Engagement Plan includes several work sessions and opportunities for input from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and University representatives and residents. The initial phase of data collection was kicked off on February 15<sup>th</sup> with on-site SOM representatives meeting with various groups and representatives. Staff will continue to provide updates as the project moves forward

and we plan to have the Consultant Team provide the Partners with a presentation during the April 26, 2022 meeting.

**5C. Orange County Transit Plan Update**

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Transit Planning Manager  
Brian M Litchfield, Director

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**Overview**

Orange County Transit Plan funding is critical to the annual operating budget of Chapel Hill Transit, providing around 10% of our annual operating budget (including covering the cost of our Sunday Service and other service expansions). It has also helped meet vehicle replacement needs, fund bus stop improvements and provide a share of the non-federal match (\$14.1M) for the North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) Project.

The Board of Orange County Commissioners approved a planning framework for updating the Transit Plan in 2019. They also developed a Policy Steering Committee to provide guidance on the vision and goals of the Transit Plan Update and help prioritize the types and quantities of service improvements and infrastructure investments that will best serve the communities they represent. The Committee includes:

- Barbara Foushee, Town of Carrboro Council Member
- Michael Parker, Town of Chapel Hill Council Member
- Mark Bell, Town of Hillsborough Commissioner
- Patty Philipps, City of Mebane Commissioner
- Amy Fowler, Orange County Commissioner
- Sally Greene, Orange County Commissioner (Chair)

The Policy Committee has met several times over the past two years. The agenda and some of the minutes are available at the following link: <https://octransit2020.com/learn-more/policy-steering-committee/>. The Committee is supported by Orange County staff and a Consultant Team.

Chapel Hill Transit staff provided the Chapel Hill Town Council and Transit Partners with an update on the Transit Plan in March 2021. The update is included as an attachment to this item and includes some background information and data that may be helpful when thinking about the Draft Plan.

During the January 14, 2022, meeting, the consultant team presented a Draft Transit Network Projects and a Conceptual Transit Vision Map, following discussion and feedback from transit providers and stakeholders. Chapel Hill Transit staff has discussed the Transit Network Projects with University Transportation and Parking staff and we believe they are consistent with the priorities of our Short Range Transit Plan and are reasonable, considering the fiscal constraints of the Plan and the significant needs in the County and Region. Note that based on current

obligations, the Draft Transit Plan will have around \$330,000 per year available to allocate to new projects between 2021-2025. The projects in the current draft include:

#### Chapel Hill Transit

- CW Route: Improve weekday midday service to 30 minutes – FY22
- HS Route: Add weekend service 8am-6:30pm – FY25
- NS Route: Improve AM/PM frequencies to every 6 minutes, extend Saturday service to 11pm and Sunday Service to 9pm (in support of NSBRT project) – FY27
- D Route: Extend service to Patterson Place and provide Saturday service until 9pm (cost shared at 40/60 between Durham and Orange Counties) – FY26
- J Route: Improve AM peak service to 10 minutes and provide 15 minute service until Noon; provide Saturday service until 11pm and Sunday service until 9pm – FY26

#### Orange County

- Mobility on Demand: Expand to two (2) days per week by different zones in Orange County – FY23

#### GoTriangle

- 400/405: Increase mid-day service to 15 minute frequency and improved weekend service (assumes 50/50 cost share with Durham County) – FY26

#### Capital Projects

- Bus stop and transfer improvements at 15-501 and Ephesus Church Road – includes bus shelters and pedestrian crossing improvements to support transfers between D, F and 400 routes (assumes cost share with federal/state grant) – FY26
- Queue jump lane and shoulder running bus lane improvements on 15-501 and Manning Drive to support local and regional routes (assumes cost share with federal/state grant) – FY28-29

Additional information on these projects and the Conceptual Transit Vision Map are available at the following link:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=50694&t=637786321994743861>

The Consultant Team and County are planning for community engagement efforts in February and March with a goal to have a final plan by the end of April. A community survey is currently available: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7K2X8F5>

#### **Chapel Hill Transit Staff Feedback on Draft Plan**

Staff has reviewed the plan and coordinated feedback with University Transportation and Parking staff, GoTriangle and Town of Carrboro staff. A summary of our feedback was shared via email earlier this month, however, we have included it in this item for your reference.

Email to Policy Steering Committee and Consultant Team on February 4, 2022:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the projects proposed for the current draft of the Orange County Transit Plan Update. We appreciate that some of the priorities we have shared are included in the current draft and understand that not all priorities can be met due to funding constraints. We are supportive of service and capital investment priorities identified in the current draft Plan. We also appreciate your continued efforts to have ongoing conversations with the transit service providers in the County. Please find below some questions/comments that we hope will be helpful as the Plan moves forward:

- Can you confirm that buses previously funded with transit plan \$ are planned to be replaced every 12-14 years with transit plan \$ in the future and identify the years in which funding would be available? It may not be possible with this update, however, for the aspirational/vision section, it may be good to note that future updates should look to identify what funds for zero-emission vehicles and/or only allow for the purchase of zero-emission vehicles with Transit Plan \$.
- Does the draft update assume all hours currently funded by the plan and allocated to service providers will be funded through 2040? Including funding for Cost of Existing Services?
- Understanding that all needs/priorities cannot be met with current funding levels as part of the vision section, could you identify a priority list of unfunded projects (this would help guide, but not limit, future investments and could help guide decision makers if a service/project in the current draft does not move forward for one reason or another – it would also help decision makers and others understand the unfunded needs and perhaps assist with setting the ground work for future funding conversations).
- It would also be helpful to provide high-level costs for the vision projects, even if a broad range (with the appropriate caveats about the need to refine costs with future studies, etc).
- The Chapel Hill Transit Short Range Transit Plan identified the east-west BRT corridor (15-501 to Campus BRT), shown in the vision section, as a priority and the draft Town of Chapel Hill Five Year Budget Plan calls for funding the feasibility study in FY25. We support funding being identified for this effort, even if that needs to be outside the current planning/implementation horizon. We believe it is important to show steps are being taken toward implementing the vision.
- In the vision section, express services are noted to Hillsborough and Chatham, both generally existing today. The 2050 MTP shows BRT to Hillsborough and Chatham – while unfunded, it seems the vision plan should be consistent with the MTP.
- Are the buses/vehicles identified for the operating improvements funded by the plan? For the D route – is capital costs shared with Durham or just operating costs?
- Bus stop improvements are critical to mobility and improving access/safety. Outside of the larger capital projects in 15/501, are there funds identified to make bus stop improvements? We would support funding (Identify a specific amount of \$ each year or for a given time

period) to allow for bus stop improvements, with a focus on stops that support LMI areas, community facilities, downtowns, job centers, etc.

- Along with the efforts to engage with customers and residents, have there been, or will there be, direct engagement efforts with community organizations and employers (perhaps through Chamber, Downtown Partnership, etc.)?

We are happy to assist with sharing information with communities and customers when appropriate. Please let us know if there is anything we can clarify.



# Orange County Transit Plan Update

Chapel Hill Town Council  
Work Session  
March 17, 2021

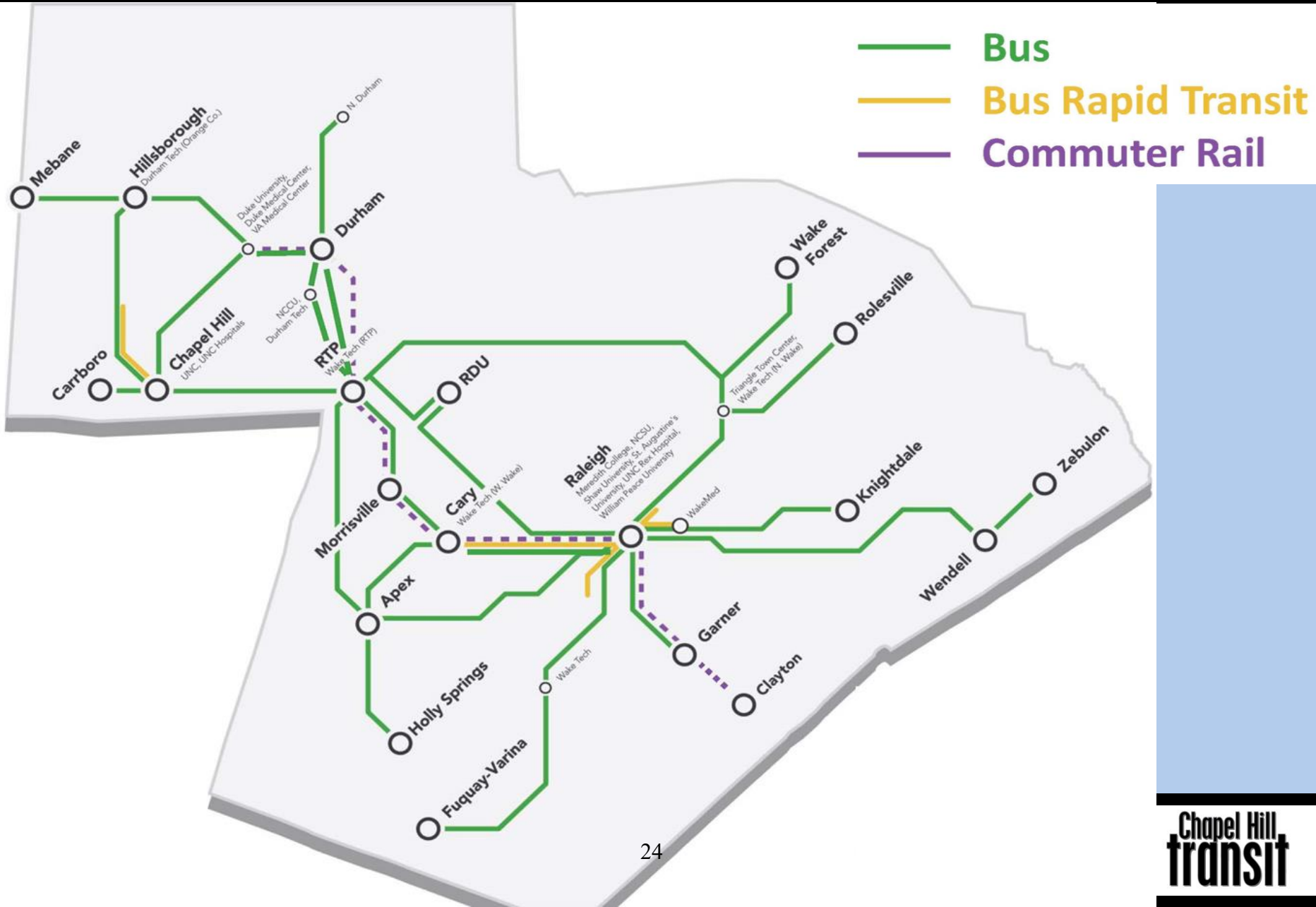
# Tonight's Agenda

- Transit Plan Overview
  - Funding
  - Initiatives
  - Update Overview and Next Steps
  - Chapel Hill Transit Priorities
- Proposed Commuter Rail Overview
  - Current Study and Next Steps
- Questions and Feedback

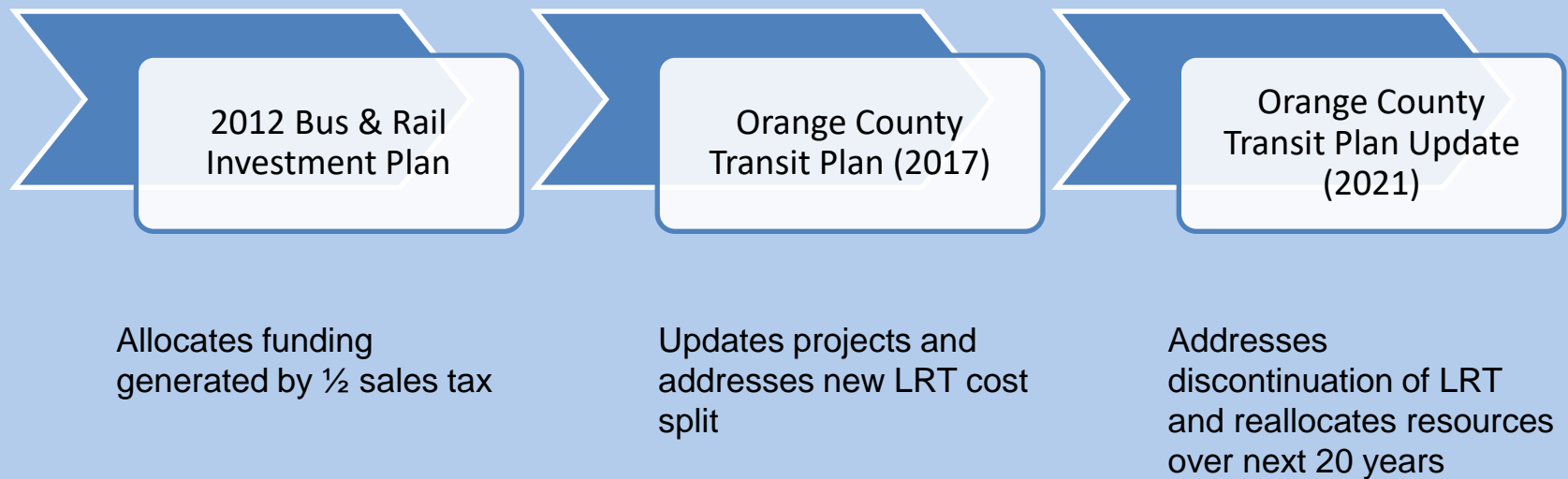




# Regional Context



# Transit Plan History



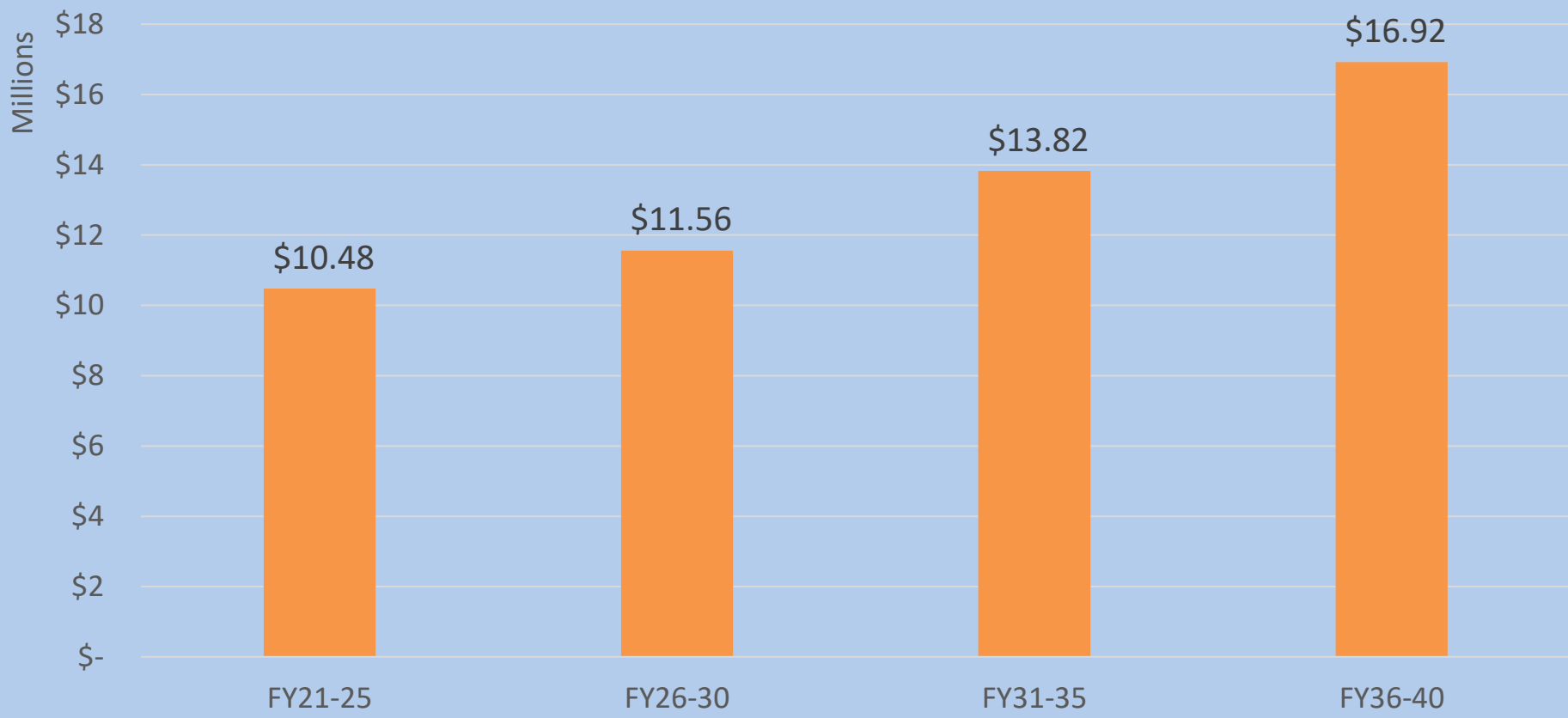
Core Investments: Transit service, buses and stop improvements, Hillsborough Train Station and North South BRT.

# OCTP Funding and Investments

- Funding Sources:
  - Article 43: Half-Cent Sales and Use Tax
  - Article 50: Five-Percent Vehicle Rental Tax for Regional Transit Authority
  - Article 51: Three-Dollar Increase to GoTriangle Regional Vehicle Registration Fee
  - Article 52: Seven-Dollar County Vehicle Registration Fee
- Revenue FY14 – FY20 = ~\$63M
- Investments FY14 – FY20 = ~\$55M
  - DOLRT = \$27M
  - Transit Service = \$15M (Chapel Hill Transit, OPT and GoT)
  - Buses and Capital = \$6.7M (Chapel Hill Transit, OPT and GoT)
  - North South BRT = \$1.4M



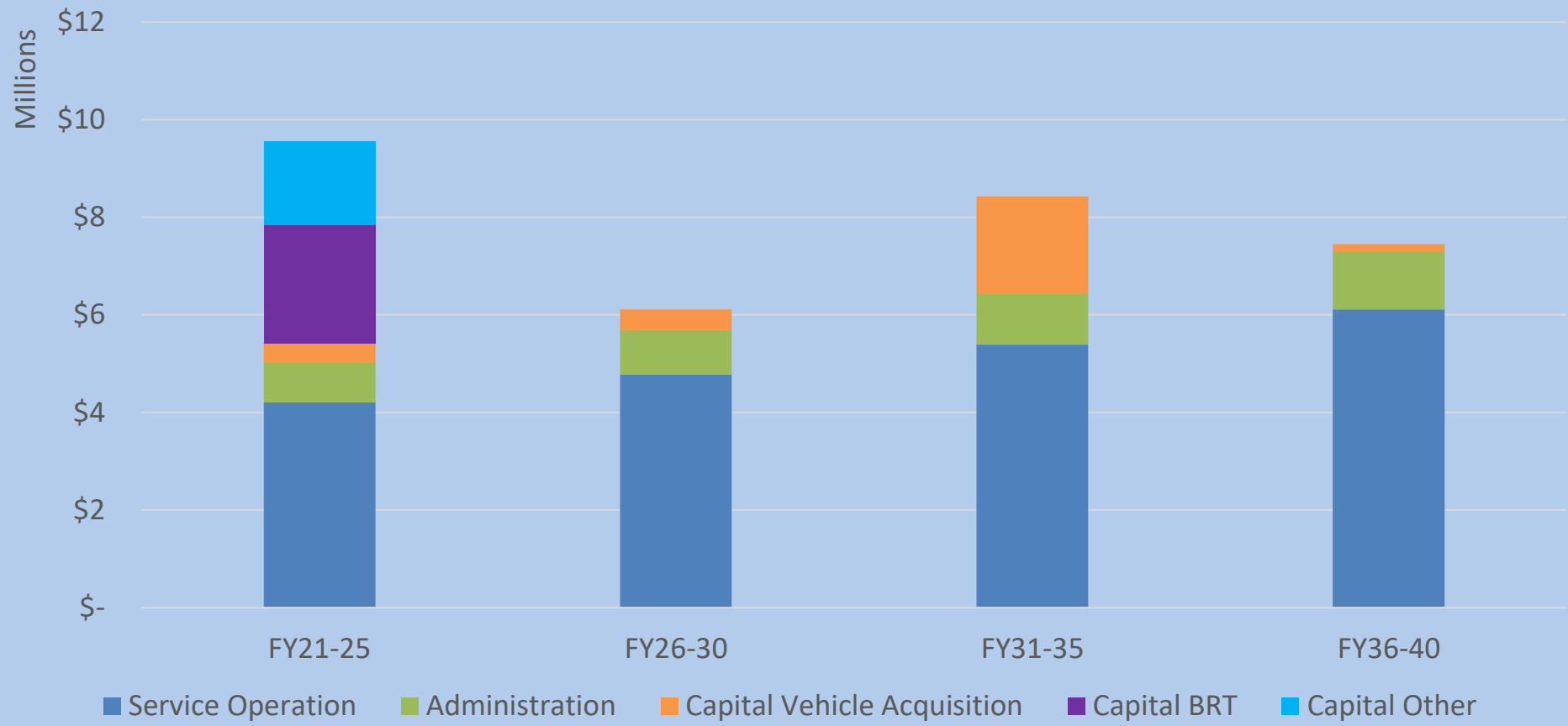
# OCTP Avg. Annual Revenue



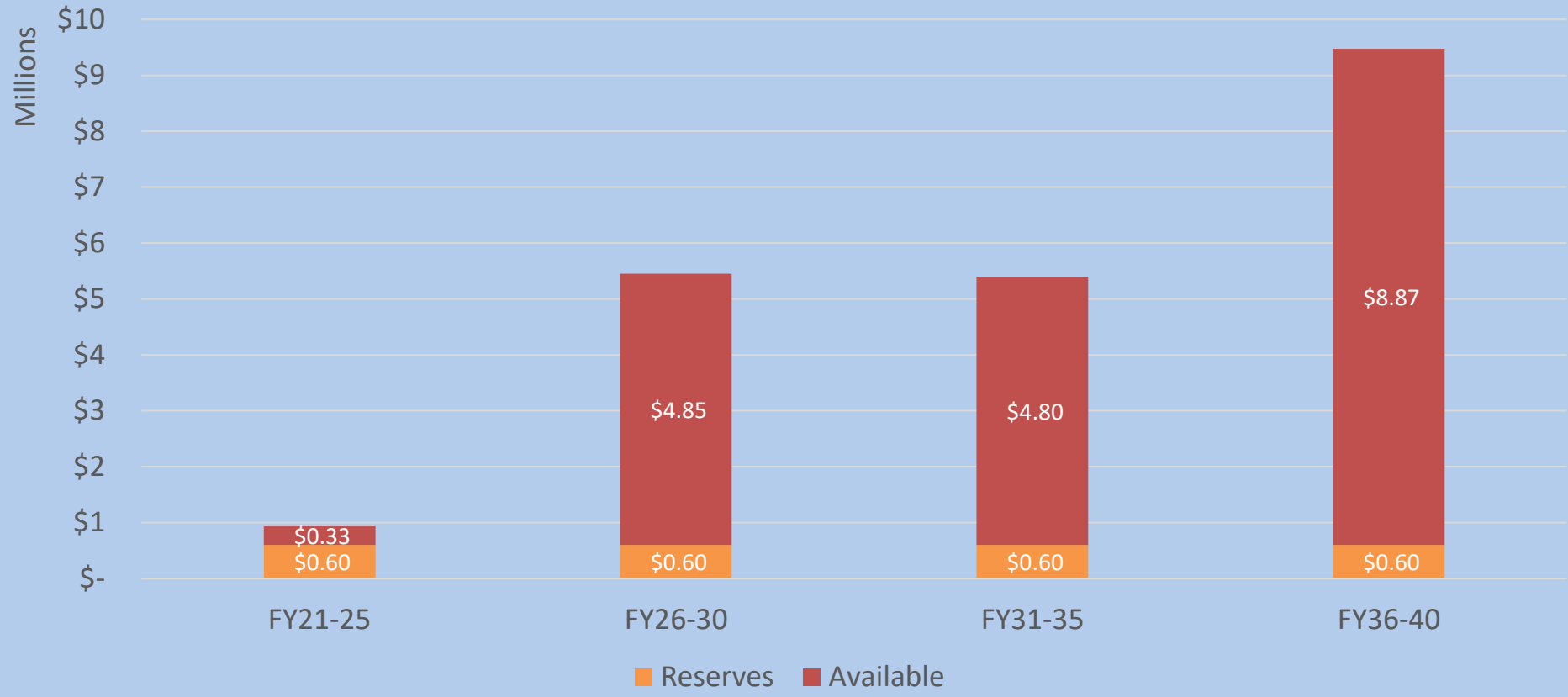
- Note: Not adjusted for inflation.



# OCTP Avg. Annual Expenses



# OCTP Unobligated Avg. Annual Funds



# Chapel Hill Transit OCTP Investments

- Investments
  - Service Hours = 13,696
  - Buses = 5 fixed route buses (\$3.7M)
  - Bus Stops = 20-25 bus stops (\$400K)
  - NSBRT = \$14.1M allocated
- Priorities for Investments
  - Implement service improvements such as evening/nighttime and weekend service, that provide improved access to jobs with nontraditional work hours.
  - Expand access to retail, medical, recreational and educational destinations in Chapel Hill and Carrboro for lower-income and transit dependent residents.
  - Identified areas of interest including better serving Rogers Road community and other lower-income populations.
  - Meet peak-hour service demands (e.g. overcrowding, lack of service, etc.).
  - Cover cost of existing services.



# OCTP Policy Committee

A Policy Steering Committee was developed by the County to provide guidance on the vision and goals of the Transit Plan Update. The Committee includes:

- Barbara Foushee, Town of Carrboro Council Member
- Michael Parker, Town of Chapel Hill Mayor Pro Tem
- Mark Bell, Town of Hillsborough Commissioner
- Patty Philipps, City of Mebane Commissioner
- Mark Dorosin, Orange County Commissioner
- Sally Greene, Orange County Commissioner





# OCTP Update Scope Of Work

Tasks by Phase

Tasks by Phase		
Phase 1	T1	PSC Coordination
	T2	Transit Choices Brochure
	T2	Regional Connections Opportunities Report
	T3	Engagement Preparations
	T3	Engagement Wave 1
	T4	Conceptual Scenario Development
Phase 2	T5	Identify projects
	T5	Prioritization process development
	T5	Preferred Scenario
	T6	Engagement wave 2 prep
	T6	Engagement Wave 2
	T7	Revenue forecasting
	T7	Implementation Plan
	T8	Final Report

**PHASE 1** Introduces key transit planning concepts and frames choices in terms of easy-to-understand values to generate alternative conceptual transit scenarios

**PHASE 2** Identifies proposed projects, prioritization criteria, and available revenues to produce implementation recommendations through 2040.

# OCTP Potential Priorities

## Regional Connectivity – Short Term:

- Maintain existing capital funding for NSBRT and identify operating funding.
- Identify and prioritize investments in local and regional transit that increase connections and frequency between Orange County and Durham County along 15-501 (East-West BRT) and NC-54.
- Identify and develop high-capacity transit service that connects Orange County and Durham County along 15-501
- Identify high-capacity transit service options that connect Orange, Durham, Wake and RTP.
- Evaluate options for improved coordination of regional demand response trips to improve service for customers and reduce the number of required transfers.



# OCTP Potential Priorities

## Regional Connectivity – Mid Term:

- Identify options for the development of transit/transfer hubs in key regional corridors and areas, including near UNC Health, Eastowne area, South Road near Student Union and NC 86.
- Identify high-capacity transit options for extending NSBRT to Chatham County, including connections to Chatham Park.
- Identify high-capacity transit options for connections to RTP and Wake County rapid transit investments, in coordination with City of Durham and Durham County.

## Regional Connectivity – Long Term:

- Identify corridors and key areas for the planning of new transit investments over the next 25 years and develop a long-range vision for transit connections in the Triangle and Triad.
- Identify opportunities for regional maintenance and training facilities.



# OCTP Potential Priorities

## Local Connectivity - Short Term:

- Identify Transit Plan funding for unfunded priorities in the adopted Chapel Hill Transit Short Range Transit Plan.
- Continue to identify Transit Plan funding for bus shelter and bus improvements that prioritize transit customers, including curb-extensions at bus stops, bus shelters, walking routes and crossings, transit signal priority, dedicated bus lanes and queue jumps .
- Continue to identify Transit Plan funding for investments in replacement and expansion transit vehicles, with a priority on electric (non-diesel/gasoline) vehicles.
- Identify funding to assist with same-day demand response trips for EZ rider customers – improving access and mobility for those who depend on it the most.



# OCTP Potential Priorities

## Local Connectivity - Mid Term:

- Identify funding for solar power generation options currently under review by Chapel Hill Transit.
- Evaluate options for new park and ride facilities in the White Cross and Chatham County areas, consistent with the adopted Chapel Hill Transit Short Range Transit Plan.

## Local Connectivity – Long Term:

- Identify key areas for the planning of new transit investments beyond 2030 and develop a long-range vision for local transit services in Orange County.





## Questions and Feedback



5D. February Performance Report - Ridership

Staff Resource: Matt Cecil

**Weekday**

Route	21-Jun	21-Jul	21-Aug	21-Sep	21-Oct	21-Nov	21-Dec	22-Jan	Average
A	2826	2990	5660	8020	5033	5738	2971	2647	4,486
B			2066	3116	2282	2719	1493	1775	2,242
CCX			1622	1593	1772	1594	1731	1244	1,593
CL	7113	7241	12309	14675	11117	10881	7207	9665	10,026
CM	7855	8670	14867	15757	9949	10910	5292	9134	10,304
CW	7242	6918	9988	11255	8048	8946	7355	6699	8,306
D	8226	5142	15608	18675	10212	13835	8686	11434	11,477
F			5652	7842	1584	1522	973	1358	3,155
FCX	23260	21595	52523	52432	43982	41656	26807	29755	36,501
G			2848	4454	1219	1362	887	784	1,926
HS	5538	4775	8521	16181	2441	2434	1790	2107	5,473
J	24755	24877	52182	60529	41813	39397	23278	31954	37,348
JFX			4150	4917	5758	5902	3685	5624	4,882
N	2552	3861	4660	4734	3568	3020	2992	3248	3,173
NS	38950	39664	69650	85962	56459	58253	34067	47084	53,761
NU			16753	22647	13563	14382	5773	11628	14,124
RU	6403	6426	30386	45992	30514	35520	7133	27903	23,785
S	5421	5949	11783	13139	4051	3969	2229	2162	6,088
T			4934	9313	2516	2156	987	887	3,466
U	5431	5776	45830	49481	31288	35573	13625	27159	26,770
Safe G			152	176	11	1	N/A	4	69
Safe J			1125	240	18	8	N/A	24	283
Safe T			0	660	37	22	N/A	27	149
Trippers								204	204
<b>Total</b>	<b>145,572</b>	<b>143,884</b>	<b>373,269</b>	<b>451,790</b>	<b>287,235</b>	<b>299,800</b>	<b>158,961</b>	<b>225,638</b>	<b>260,769</b>



**Saturday**

A	328	540	273	570	107	318	262	468	358
CM	453	530	532	600	77	476	290	233	399
CW	720	652	516	702	1124	614	533	617	603
D	612	655	964	1022	248	683	789	936	739
J	1,305	2278	2374	2736	1648	1578	1029	928	1735
N	278	115	338	524	1162	2048	150	295	469
NS	1,394	1590	1970	2452	1935	554	1020	1121	1505
NU			1800	1935	724	4661	665	760	1758
U	301	309	6122	2136	2899	2501	1767	2792	2353
Total	5,391	5,391	6,017	14,889	12,677	8,762	13,433	6,505	9133

**Sunday**

A	236	319	544	414	404	869	476	468	466
CM	194	335	440	338	339	368	366	344	341
CW	447	523	787	571	409	916	867	676	650
D	531	552	1170	432	612	1889	994	830	773
J	1,029	1088	1784	1648	1078	2012	1430	1308	1422
N	285	325	320	372	362	649	401	408	390
NS	873	672	1829	1195	931	3704	1574	1128	1488
NU			2995	2812	3142	2756	1843	1562	2518
U	276	302	3010	3440	2085	2208	2933	3936	2274
Total	3,871	3,871	4,116	12,879	11,222	9,362	15,371	10,884	8947

**6A. Operations**

Staff Resource: Travis Parker, Operations Manager  
Mark Rodgers, Assistant Operations Manager - Demand Response  
Peter Aube, Maintenance Manager  
Tim Thorpe, Training Coordinator

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**Travis Parker - Fixed Route Division**

- Operations responded to several winter weather events, which impacted service levels.
- February 11th -13th – Fixed Route Division allowed team members to wear their favorite professional sports teams as a morale booster for Super Bowl Weekend
- February 14<sup>th</sup> - Fixed Routed Division had 2 new employees start training
- Shanika Nickerson and Tammy Price completed the Mental Health First Aid class

**Mark Rodgers - Demand Response**

During the February EZRAC meeting the following items were discussed/present:

- Sarah Vinas – Director of Affordable Housing and Community Connections was our guest. She brought to the committee a better understanding of what the Town and Transit is doing for Language Assistance for the communities and answered any questions they had.
- Jeffrey Sullivan – was our guest again to follow up on our previous conversations about the EZ Rider Reservations line. We are also in the process of updating the EZ Rider handbook.
  - The committee also set our priorities for the coming year. The Trapeze capabilities will be rolled out so riders can get timely emails/texts/phone calls about the van status.
  - EZ Rider incorporates the language translation process we will be hearing about to help riders for whom English is not an option.
  - Some sort of option to provide same day trips is at least piloted
  - More discussion of the possible use of third parties to provide Lyft/Uber type service as an addition to (not replacement of) the EZ Rider service.
  - New versions of the EZ Rider Handbook (and other) material are made available

### **Tim Thorpe – Training Coordinator**

- Training Program redesign to meet the new FMCSA Entry Level Drivers Training standards are in its final stages
  - Implementation begins Feb. 28
- Electric Bus Training has been completed for over 60% of Operators
  - Training is still ongoing
- Hiring
  - Six (6) Operator new hires in 2022
    - 4 started 2/14/22 (2FR, 2 DR)
- Two (2) Fixed Route trainees graduated training 2/16/22

### **Peter Aube – Maintenance Manager**

- Demand response ran 27,886 miles in January - \$.12 per mile for fuel (Unleaded Fuel Purchased at locked in price of \$.78 a gallon)
- Non-revenue Gas and Diesel vehicles ran 9,101 miles January \$.06 per mile for fuel. (Unleaded Fuel Purchased at locked in price of \$.78 a gallon)
- Non-revenue Electric Cars ran 9,317 miles in January Fuel Cost of \$.012 per mile for Electricity
- Fixed route ran 121,772 miles January
- Maintenance performed (76) Preventive Maintenance Inspections in January (100% on-time).
- Maintenance performed (4) road calls in January, (30,443) miles between road calls for fixed route.
- Maintenance performed (0) road calls in January, (120,124) miles since last road call for demand response.
- Maintenance continued twice daily deep cleaning (disinfecting) on all buses and LTV's in use and twice daily common area deep cleaning with CDC approved disinfectant.
- Maintenance continues charging Electric driver relief cars for service each day.
- Maintenance continues to work with Gillig, Chargepoint and Triangle Electric on delivery and installation of third bus charger.
- Maintenance and Procurement are working with engineers to complete scope of work and engineering plans for 18 Electric car charging stations.

**6B. Community Outreach**

Staff Resource: Jeffrey Sullivan, Community Outreach Manager

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- Assisting Vision Zero team with the launch of the Vision Zero Executive committee and other Vision Zero Planning activities.
- Contributing to Town Equity Lab with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Updating website, communications with updates
  - Service restoration
  - Winter weather
  - Tar Heel Express
- Planning for Town of Chapel Hill Peoples Academy
- Updating advertisements for hiring initiatives
- Planning Operator and Maintenance appreciation day
- Collaborating with Community Arts and Culture, Library, and Affordable housing and community connections on their initiatives
- Outreach events at UNC

Staff Resource: Brian Litchfield, Transit Director

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### **Electric Bus Unveiling**

Our electric bus unveiling is now scheduled for Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. This will be an outdoor event and all local COVID safety protocols will be followed. We are also coordinating with the Town of Chapel Hill's Emergency Manager, to make sure the event is as safe as possible.

Our tentative list of speakers includes:

- Mayor Hemminger
- Mayor Seils
- University Representative
- Benjamin Brown and Ideliya Khismatova – CoChair of RESPC
- Council Member Parker – Chair of Transit Partners Committee
- Congressman Price

More details will be shared as we get closer to the date. We are looking forward to a great event.

### **Solar Study Update**

The study kicked off in January with a meeting of Town staff (Transit and Sustainability) and the consultant team from Optony. The consultant team has used this first month to gather information related to transit service information as well as our current energy usage. The team has started developing solar footprint maps, and we expect to see drafts of these documents in mid-March.

### **Changes to CDL Training**

Due to new federal requirements, beginning February 7, 2022, all entry-level drivers wishing to acquire their Class A or B commercial driver's license (CDL) are required to complete federally mandated Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT). This ELDT is required prior to a driver being allowed to test for their CDL. Chapel Hill Transit has worked with NCDMV and FMCSA/FTA to update all necessary training to meet these requirements. While our current program met many of the new ELDT requirements already we will be required to add two (2) additional days to our new hire training for the additional theory instruction that is now required - covering topics like fueling, baggage or cargo management, weigh stations, roadside inspections, penalties, and fines which are items that we do not deal with as a Transit System. We are working with NCPTA and NCDOT to see if a waiver from the theory training requirements could be granted.

## **2022 NCPTA Conference and Roadeo Update**

Each year we look forward to the North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) State Roadeo and celebrating the best Transit Operators in the State. Sadly, we have missed this opportunity over the past two years due to the pandemic. We were very hopeful the NCPTA Roadeo would return this year, unfortunately, due to staffing shortages being experienced by many transit systems and other COVID related challenges, the NCPTA Board of Directors took action during their February meeting to cancel the 2022 NCPTA Roadeo. While this is disappointing news, it is certainly understandable. Following this news, I asked our Roadeo Team, led by Nick Pittman, to start planning for an early summer roadeo for Chapel Hill Transit (in accordance with all COVID and local health guidance/protocols) – with the 1<sup>st</sup> place winners being eligible to attend the 2023 APTA or CTAA National Roadeos. We will share more information on this in the near future.

During the same meeting, the NCPTA Board also agreed to move forward with an in-person State Conference in April. While I understand their interests, I do not think it is fair or reasonable to send Team Members to the State Conference, when there will be no State Roadeo or other events for front-line Team Members, so while we will be represented at the Conference awards ceremony, we will not have Team Members attending the rest of the Conference. I have also informed the Board and Conference Planning Committee that I will not be attending as a speaker or panelist. I will attend the awards ceremony to help issue awards to Congressman Price and State Representative Verla Insko. We have also submitted Chapel Hill Transit for consideration of System of the Year – Urban and recently retired Operator Amy Edwards (following 34 years of service and no accidents) for consideration of Driver of the Year – Urban. The award nominations are attached to this item.

I truly hope this is the last year that we face these challenges and look forward to seeing our Roadeo Team put together a fun Roadeo and seeing our Team Members demonstrate the skills that make them the best of the best.

## **Operator Recruitment**

The Chapel Hill Town Council approved a new Pay Plan, on January 26, 2022, that included increasing Operator pay to \$18.68 per hour and providing a 2% increase for employees who are above the minimum for their classification and have been with the Town less than five years and 3% increase for employees who are above the minimum for their classification and have been with the Town five or more years. The new Pay Plan was effective February 1, 2022. The following are some of the steps we are taking to promote our full-time Operator positions:

- Updating hiring ads on buses (changing \$16+ to \$18+)
- Social media job ads (Facebook, Twitter) through Transit and Town of Chapel Hill
- Online job ads through Indeed, Government Jobs, Monster, Career Builder
- Newspaper/online ads through News and Observer and Durham Herald Sun
- Restarted Spotify ads

- Added AudioGo (Pandora, iheart radio, Podcast One) music services
- Starting new hire Fixed Route Operators as full time
- Scheduling WCHL Interviews for staff to discuss hiring opportunities
- Billboards on I40/I85 - subject to availability. (many are booked through the end of 2022)
- Attending Job Fairs throughout the Triangle
- Placing job flyers in weekly Food Bank boxes and providing flyers to local stakeholders

We also have a few items that we are beginning to explore and will need more work to implement

- Connecting further with local High Schools and Community Colleges for job board, training opportunities
- Hiring a recruiter to assist with recruitment efforts throughout the Triangle and Triad
- Adding hiring signage to relief cars and Demand Response vehicles

Staff has also recommended the use of retention bonuses, sign-on bonuses and referral bonuses to assist with retention and recruitment. We continue to work with the Town Managers Office on these efforts.

### **Out of Town**

I plan to be out of Town March 6, 2022 – March 28, 2022 for an extended visit with family in Arizona and Nevada that we have not seen in person for more than two years. Some of this time will be vacation and some of the time I will be working remotely. Once my schedule is developed around Council Work Sessions/Meetings, Budget Discussions and Partners Meeting, I will share it with the Partners. Henry DePietro, Assistant Director – Operations, will be acting director during my time away.

# NCPTA Driver of the Year Award

This award honors a public transit driver in 2021 who has championed the goals, services and causes of public transportation in North Carolina.

This individual has shown a commitment to promote public transportation and its advancement in their communities. This person serves either an urban (large market) transit system or a rural (small market) transit system. Two drivers will be selected in each category. **Transit systems who serve both urban and rural communities must choose to nominate in one category or the other.**

The nominating public transit system must be an active member of the North Carolina Public Transportation Association. Four total winners will be selected. Two winners in the urban category and two winners in the rural category.

The award winners are selected by the NCPTA Executive Director.

- 1. Please complete the attached form and return to [director@ncntransit.org](mailto:director@ncntransit.org) by Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Please include driver photo (headshot) with nomination form.**

Chapel Hill Transit is pleased to nominate Transit Operator, Amy Edwards for the NCPTA Driver of the Year Award – Urban. Ms. Amy, our longest serving Transit Operator and Queen of Chapel Hill Transit, rolled into service on July 28, 1986 and over her 34 year career has maintained a perfect safety record (we estimate she has traveled well over 1,500,000 miles in her career).

In addition to her safety record, Ms. Amy has long set the standard for Chapel Hill Transit Operators – she is incredibly dependable, loved by her customers (we stopped counting her customer service commendations years ago and it is fairly common for customers to throw parties for her when she switches routes/runs), respected by her fellow team members, a strong advocate for fellow Operators, and always the first to offer help – both at work and in her personal life. Not only does she operate her runs, but you will also see her driving for almost every Tar Heel Express event, helping with special shuttles and if needed, filling-in on a Safe Ride Route (Midnight-3am) or covering a run for another Operator so they are able to take care of something in their personal life.

Ms. Amy is the first to volunteer to assist with driving for emergency response efforts as well as during many snow/winter weather or hurricane events, she will spend the night at our transit facility as an On-Call Operator to ensure that she could be available to help. Ms. Amy is also our longest serving Operator Trainer and it is hard to calculate how many trainees she has trained and mentored. Along with driving, she assists with customer service events and over her career, she has assisted in a number of other areas when needed, including dispatching for Fixed Route and Demand Response and payroll clerk (while continuing to drive). Ms. Amy is the first to show up to assist with social events at Chapel Hill Transit (e.g., Thanksgiving dinner, retirement celebrations, graduations, etc.) and while her tenure would easily allow her to sit back and relax, she often takes on the roles that others try to avoid, including washing dishes, cleaning tables, setting up/taking down equipment, etc.

She also serves as a strong advocate and voice for her fellow Operators and is always willing to work with her Division Managers and the Transit Leadership Staff to identify and resolve issues and



concerns (as Transit Director – I appreciate her quiet feedback and wise counsel and respect her ability to approach issues from the perspective of what is best for Team Members and customers). She was able to do all of this, while also taking care of or assisting with the care of extended family through most of her career. Ms. Amy retired from being a full-time Operator in 2021, following a long and distinguished career, however, she continues to serve as a part-time Operator.

While Ms. Amy’s tenure and safety record will ensure her place in the Chapel Hill Transit Hall of Fame, her character, caring heart, willing spirit, and kindness will ensure that she is remembered far longer than her career as a Transit Operator. Ms. Amy’s positive impact on Chapel Hill Transit, her fellow Team Members, and our customers cannot be measured. She has set a high standard for Chapel Hill Transit Operators and therefore, would be well deserving of the inaugural NCPTA Driver of the Year Award - Urban, for her example of exceptional public service, professionalism, outstanding customer service, teamwork, and commitment to safety.

A picture of Ms. Amy follows – we can provide a formal headshot, without a mask, if the committee would like, but we thought you would enjoy seeing her in her element, behind the wheel of a bus.



## Transit System of the Year

This award honors an NCPTA Transit System member that demonstrates exceptional achievement and leadership in the communities it serves for the past year. This system best represents the public transportation industry by promoting mobility, removing barriers that cause isolation, promoting economic growth while providing safe, efficient and reliable services.

Eligibility for the award is limited to active NCPTA members. NCPTA will make awards to one small market (rural) and one large market (urban) system.

The awardee is to be selected by an independent evaluation committee chaired by the NCPTA Executive Director and comprised of media and trade association professionals.

**Please send completed forms to [director@nctransit.org](mailto:director@nctransit.org) by Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>.**

1. Complete the attached nomination form
2. One entry per transit system per year
3. You are encouraged to nominate your own system (i.e., you know your system and its achievements best)
4. Calendar year 2019 (you may choose to present either calendar year or immediate past fiscal year statistics in support of your nominations)

## **Transit System of the Year Nomination Form**

**Transit System Name: Chapel Hill Transit**

**Submitted by Brian M Litchfield, Director**

**Telephone: 919.260.0932 email: blitchfield@townofchapelhill.org**

**Category: Rural (Small Market)\_\_\_\_\_ Urban (Large Market): X**

**System Achievement: (examples: Increase in ridership or service hours provided; new or expanded services or mobility; innovative service approaches)**

I am pleased to submit Chapel Hill Transit for consideration of Transit System of the Year – Urban, on behalf of all the Team Members of Chapel Hill Transit and our funding partners. This nomination will cover August 2020 and August 2021, as there was no award process in 2020 due to the pandemic, so it seems reasonable that the accomplishments from that time period should be celebrated.

I will focus on a few achievements for that time period:

- In August 2020, in the face of the pandemic and its many challenges, Chapel Hill Transit started to implement elements of its Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), which was developed over the previous three years and included significant community engagement efforts.
  - The first key element of the SRTP was the introduction of Sunday service – providing community wide Sunday service (Fixed Route and Demand Response) for the first time in almost 40 years to the communities of Chapel Hill and Carrboro. This new service was not only a reflection of customer interests, but also Chapel Hill Transit funding partner interests in investing in improving access, mobility and environmental sustainability and improving access to jobs locally and regionally – meeting transportation, safety, environmental and equity goals.
  - The second key element of the SRTP was aligning routes to increase the number of high-frequency (15 minute or better peak hour service) transit corridors in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. This effort assists Chapel Hill Transit in meeting current development needs in transit corridors, supports improved access to major employers including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UNC Hospitals, provides a framework for future transit expansions, creates improved connections to regional services, makes transit a more attractive option for residents and visitors, and supports the development of the North South Bus Rapid Transit project and future BRT projects in our service area.

## Transit System of the Year Nomination Form

- The third key element of the SRTP was ensuring that Chapel Hill Transit bus stops are easily identifiable, safe, accessible, and a comfortable place to wait for the bus. In 2020-21 we started design improvements for 60 bus stops in our system, along with replacing dated shelters with new modern shelters. The following link provides more details on this effort and includes a project tracker so that customers can see bus stops under design and/or construction: <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/transit/bus-stop-upgrades>. The following is a before and after example of one stop:



This effort also includes the installation of new solar powered real-time bus stop signs at more than 30 stops in our system. We partnered with several community agencies/organizations including Refugee Services, Building Integrated Communities, Public Housing, etc., to identify the best locations for these signs. The signs provide real time bus information, as well as some basic information about Chapel Hill Transit in English and Spanish.

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During this same time, we worked with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO, the Town of Chapel Hill, and the Town of Carrboro to secure around \$1M in funding to improve six (6) major bus stops along NC-54 with pedestrian safety improvements that will make it safer for transit customers, bicyclists, and pedestrians to cross the highway. All of these stops are near multifamily housing developments and LMI neighborhoods.

- Supporting the communities we serve through COVID.
  - Like other NCPTA members, Chapel Hill Transit continued to provide service to the community during the pandemic – while taking steps to make sure customers and Team Members were as safe as possible. As part of this effort, Chapel Hill Transit was one of the first systems in the state to offer on-demand transit trips to/from testing and vaccine sites. Chapel Hill Transit also worked closely with our funding partners and Health Department to share messages with the community about safety, including the *Spread Kindness, Not Illness* campaign. Although the campaign focused initially on slowing the spread of the coronavirus, it also highlighted the importance of addressing our physical and mental well-being. The campaign has included bus stop ads and interior/exterior bus ads in five (5) different languages, including the following examples:



## Transit System of the Year Nomination Form



We also partnered with the [RedApple](#) Learning Campus, where students ages 5-9, guided by their art teacher designed a bus shelter to promote social distancing and mask wearing. Because social distancing must be kept, none of the lines in the pictures touch, besides the doctors and nurses working together to save lives. And because masks have to be on faces to protect our mouths and noses, everyone (person or animal) in the picture has a mask.



- Supporting and promoting the communities we serve and improving the image of public transit.
  - Over the last year, Chapel Hill Transit has undertaken a number of efforts to support the communities we serve and promote public transit as part of the community. A couple of examples that we are very proud of include the following:

## Transit System of the Year Nomination Form

Heroes Bus Wrap – one side featured Town of Chapel Hill employees, including police officers, fire fighters, sanitation workers, and librarians that all worked on the front lines during the pandemic. The other side featured Chapel Hill Transit Team Members. The employees recognized at the bus unveiling, were able to autograph their photo and given a picture of the bus. The bus has been featured in several Town related campaigns to thank and appreciate front line Team Members.



Art in Shelters – Chapel Hill Transit has promoted public art through installations at shelters for several years. During the last year, as part of our pandemic response, we increased the number of shelters we sponsored and focused on supporting local artists

## Transit System of the Year Nomination Form

and artists of color. This link - <https://www.chapelhillarts.org/arts-experiences/public-art/art-transit/> - includes some examples of the shelters that we did in the summer of 2021 as a way to promote public art, transit and support the communities we serve.

### Racial Justice and LatinX Bus Wraps –

Racial Justice: We partnered with the local NAACP Youth Council, and they designed a bus wrap that focused on racial justice. The design that fills the background of the bus is symbolic of an African mud cloth design in bold colors on the inside and outside of the bus. The design also includes images of the artists themselves as a way to help spotlight their contribution against racial injustice.





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LatinX Bus Wrap: we partnered with LatinX artist George Le Chevallier to produce a bus wrap that supported and honored the LatinX community. The following is the statement from the artist about his work: *In "Orgullo Latino / Latinx Pride" Bus, I juxtapose visual patterns of colors with Spanish words that characterize Latinx people living at the beginning of this new millennium. Nothing divides people more than language, so my aim is to bring people together by showing them Spanish and English words coexisting together. The "Orgullo Latino / Latinx Pride" Bus also pays tribute to the many colorful buses in Latin America, from Chiva Buses in the Andean region of South America to the famous "Chicken Buses" in Central American countries like Guatemala.*

**Transit System of the Year  
Nomination Form**



I am sure that there will be many exceptional candidates for this award. However, I hope the examples we have shared give you a good sense of the efforts we have taken, above and beyond providing critical services, to support the communities we serve, and to improve the image of public transit.