



# CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT BUSINESS PLAN

# 2023

**“We were  
troublemakers.**

We questioned  
authority and  
challenged it  
head on.”

- Harold Foster

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL



## Letter from the Director



Over the past two years, Chapel Hill Transit and the communities we serve have faced significant challenges due to the COVID pandemic. I am very proud of the Chapel Hill Transit Team and what they have been able to accomplish during this time despite the pandemic and the significant changes it has brought into our personal and professional lives. Despite these changes and challenges, our Team continues to be committed to supporting the communities we serve, guided by our commitment to safety, customer service, mobility and access. The safety of our Team Members and customers will continue to be our highest priority, as we plan for the future while solving the challenges of today – Zero Emission Buses, North South BRT, Franklin Street Redesign, new Real-Time Information System and the Solar Feasibility Study are all good examples of this approach.

While the past two years have presented significant challenges, last year was also a historic year for Chapel Hill Transit and our funding partners. We recognized the achievements and visionary thinking of Mayor Howard and Lillian Lee with the renaming of our facility to the Howard and Lillian Lee Transit Operation Center on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We also unveiled the first of our zero-emission buses on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Both of these efforts were the result of countless hours of work and forward thinking by our dedicated team.

For the upcoming year, we will continue to focus our efforts in supporting the Chapel Hill Town Council’s Strategic Goals of Environmental Stewardship, Economic and Financial Sustainability, Connected Community and Safe Community, with the following priorities, in collaboration with other Town Departments and our Transit Funding Partners:

**Operator and Mechanic Recruitment and Retention** (*Strategic Goals: Connected Community and Safe Community*): Our Team Members are the key to Chapel Hill Transit’s success. Attracting Transit Operators continues to be a significant challenge due to market conditions, increased demand for commercial operators and mechanics and increased labor demand across many industries. We greatly appreciate the efforts the Town has made to implement a new compensation plan and increasing the starting rate for CDL Operators to \$19/hour, however, compression and competitive wages continues to be a challenge for many front-line positions. This, coupled with the high cost of living in the communities we serve make it difficult to recruit and retain critical front-line Team Members. We have found some success in providing recruitment incentives and plan to continue those through the current fiscal year. In a quickly evolving and competitive market, compensation and retention efforts needs to be the highest priority for the Town and we will continue to do all that we can support these essential efforts.

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Our department provides:

- Fixed-Route Bus Service
  - Demand-Response (EZ Rider) Service
  - Maintenance
  - Community Outreach, Planning and Finance
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**North South Bus Rapid Transit** (*Strategic Goals: Connected Community, Safe Community and Environmental Stewardship*): We are moving into 60% design and the environmental work is on schedule to be completed in early 2023. Changes to the State funding cycle have required us to adjust the projects' schedule and budget. Changes on the federal funding side have allowed us to increase the federal request portion to \$124M and reduce our non-federal shared to \$35M. We plan to submit a federal grant request for \$124M in August of 2023 – this will require securing \$17M in non-federal funding sources prior to that time. We have also moved forward with our Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning efforts, in coordination with the Town's Complete Communities planning effort. This effort is critical to community and the NSBRT project, as Land Use, Economic Development and TOD are the areas in the federal scoring process where we have the best opportunities to improve our scoring for the project. An effective land-use plan, that support transit around the NSBRT corridor and high-frequency service corridors is necessary to support the Town's transportation, sustainability, housing, safety and equity goals.

**Electric Bus and Sustainability Efforts** (*Strategic Goals: Connected Community, Safe Community and Environmental Stewardship*): We will be taking delivery of our next eight (8) electric vehicles in FY23 (pending supply chain availability). We have also secured an additional \$2.5M in new funding through State grant programs for additional electric buses. We continue to pursue funding opportunities for additional electric buses. Additionally, we continue to review our transit facility's needs to support these efforts. This includes completing a solar feasibility study, installing infrastructure to support the electrification of our fleet, and developing plans for expansion of the existing facility.

**Bus Stop Improvements and Art in Transit** (*Strategic Goals: Connected Community and Safe Community*): We will continue efforts to improve bus stops and provide safe access to stops. We are finalizing a contract for a new real-time information system, replacing our legacy NextBus system, with a system that will provide improved benefits to our customers and operationally. We will also continue our collaborations with Community Arts & Culture on art in bus shelters and on buses.

Some of our departmental accomplishments from FY2021-22 include:

- Celebrated the renaming of the transit facility to the Howard and Lillian Lee Transit Operations Center.
- Unveiled our first three (3) battery electric bus vehicles and replaced our Operator shuttle cars with electric vehicles.
- Demand Response division moved forward with technology investments that will improve the customer experience (e.g. real-time information of calls/texts/emails to customers about van location).
- Leadership Team completed Phase II of the Racial Equity Institute (REI) training.
- Continued partnership with Community Arts and Culture to expand public art in shelters and added a new wrapped bus in coordination with LGBTQIA+ Pride and NAACP Youth Council.

– Brian M. Litchfield, Director of Chapel Hill Transit

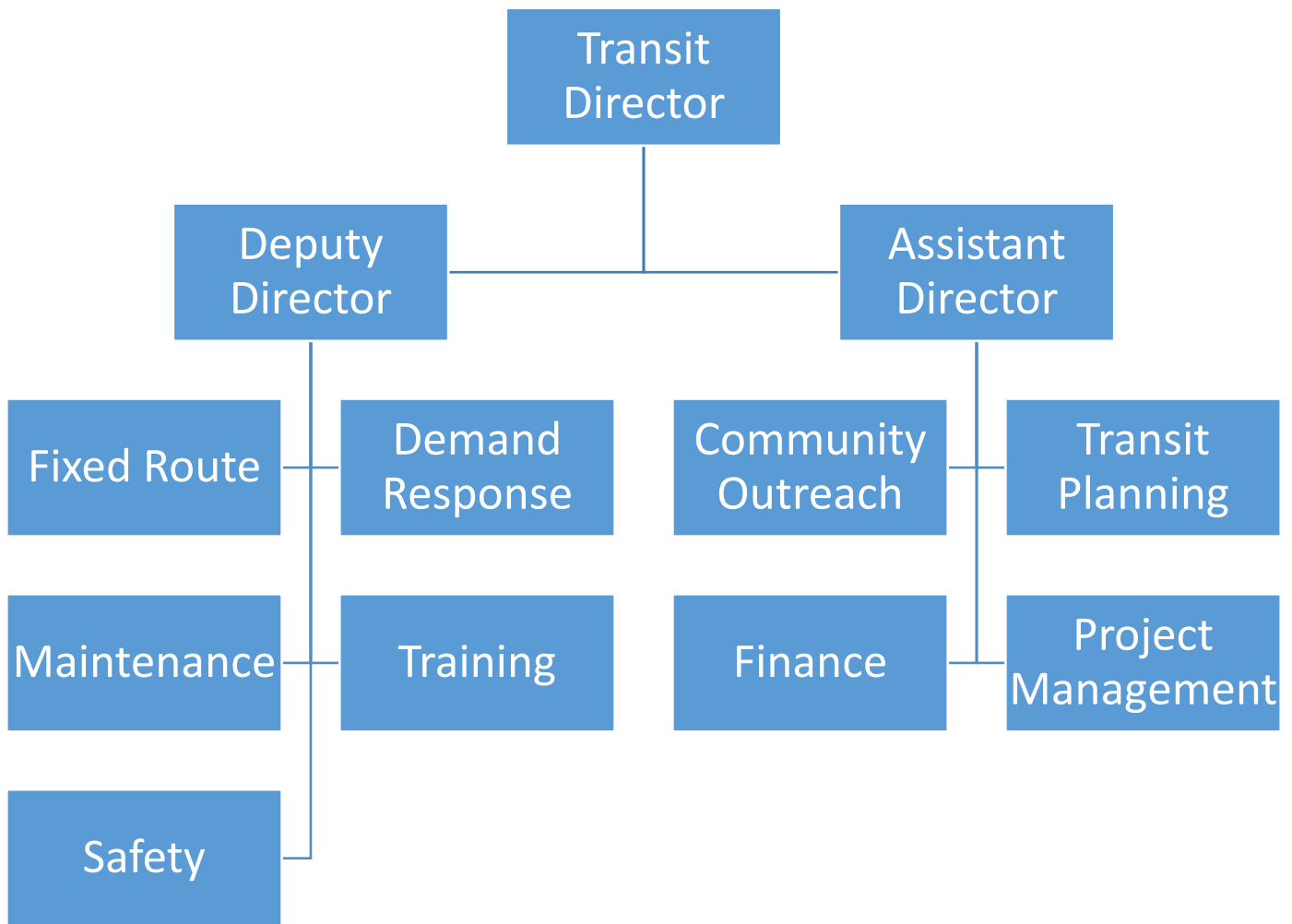
## Our Mission

Chapel Hill Transit’s mission is to build and operate a public transit system that provides personal mobility, while supporting local development and the environmental goals of the communities we serve.

## Strategic Alignment

The Transit department addresses the **Connected Community** Strategic Goal(s) of the Town of Chapel Hill and supports the goals of Environmental Stewardship, Economic and Financial Sustainability and Safe Community.

## Our Department



**Departmental Performance Measures Overview** (mark 'X' if performance from the most recent data collection period is at or above target). All of our measures have been impacted in some way by COVID, including service adjustments and ridership due to customers working virtually. We expect to continue to see impacts through FY23 as we continue to return service to its pre-COVID levels.

Mission-level Measures		At or above target
1.	On-time performance percentage for Demand Response	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	On-time performance percentage for Fixed Route	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Preventable collisions per 100,000 miles for Demand Response	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Preventable collisions per 100,000 miles for Fixed Route	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Customers per service hour for Demand Response	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Customers per service hour for Fixed Route	<input type="checkbox"/>

Program-level Measures		
Program	Performance Measure	At or above target
Demand - Response Service	Number of passengers per mile in demand response paratransit service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demand - Response Service	Cost per hour for demand response paratransit services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demand - Response Service	On-time performance percentage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demand - Response Service	Scheduled weekday/weekend DR service placed into service on time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demand - Response Service	Demand Response accidents per 100,000 miles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demand - Response Service	Preventable demand response accident per 100,000 miles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Number of passengers per mile in fixed route transit service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Cost per hour for fixed route services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Percentage of on-time performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Scheduled weekday/weekend FR service placed into service on time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Complaints per 100,000 fixed route trips	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Fixed Route accidents per 100,000 miles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fixed - Route Bus Service	Preventable Fixed Route accident per 100,000 miles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	Number of service miles between road calls that may interrupt (DR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	Number of service miles between road calls that may interrupt (FR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	Compliance with preventative maintenance percentage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Passengers per Revenue Hour (DR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Passengers per Revenue Hour (FR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Passengers per Revenue Mile (DR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Passengers per Revenue Mile (FR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Average age of fleet vehicle (DR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Administration and Finance	Average age of fleet vehicle (FR)	<input type="checkbox"/>

DEPARTMENTAL  
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



# Initiative #1: Design & Fund North-South Bus Rapid Transit

Project Manager(s): Matt Cecil

## Business Alignment

**Deliverables** provide a summary of deliverables and outcomes that are expected to be achieved during the fiscal year.

Deliverable	Environmental	Estimated July 2022
Deliverable	TOD Grant -Station Area Planning	Estimated September 2022
Deliverable	60-90% Design Plans	September 2023

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lens

**How has your department considered a DEI Lens in this initiative?**

The North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) will provide improved fare-free bus service in the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard/15-501 south corridor, including nights and weekend – providing access to education, healthcare, employment, community facilities, retail and other opportunities. The route will serve Town Public Housing sites and other affordable housing areas along the corridor. The project will also support planned affordable housing projects and include improvements to bike and pedestrian facilities that will make them accessible to a wide range of users.

We also completed a customer survey in 2018

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=42340&t=636888566770570000>

## Initiative #2: ADA Bus Stop Improvements

Project Manager(s): Katy Fontaine

### Business Alignment

**Deliverables** provide a summary of deliverables and outcomes that are expected to be achieved during the fiscal year.

Deliverable	Bus Stop & Shelter Assessment	Completed
Deliverable	Construction Bid Package	Estimated Fall 2022

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lens

#### How has your department considered a DEI Lens in this initiative?

The public's first impression of Chapel Hill Transit and its services is the bus stop. It is important that our bus stops are easily identifiable, safe, accessible, and a comfortable place to wait for the bus. Although, there will likely always be underdeveloped bus stops, we feel that it is important to begin taking steps to improve our bus stops and our customers experience while waiting for the bus.

A little over three years ago, Chapel Hill Transit undertook a bus stop/shelter assessment project to identify necessary improvements for the over 500 bus stops in our system – which includes Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus. The assessment demonstrated that many of our stops/shelters, most of which were placed prior to 1990, would benefit from improvements to make them accessible to customers of all mobility levels. The Transit Partners Committee identified several priorities, including upgrading existing shelters, addressing safety and customer concerns, and targeting improvements along routes that serve neighborhoods and areas where public housing and community services are located.

We also feel that our bus stops and shelters in particular, in addition to providing a safe and attractive waiting place for our customers, should also make a positive contribution to the streetscapes in the communities we serve. Recently, we have expanded this program to include a collaboration with the Town's Community Art & Culture Division to bring more artistic vibrancy to the daily commute, provide more access to public art and showcase local and regional artists.