



CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT  
Town of Chapel Hill  
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**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE**  
**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING AND AGENDA**  
**JUNE 22, 2023 – 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. (VIRTUAL MEETING)**  
**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT**

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7. Adjourn	

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

May 25, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Present: Michael Parker, Chapel Hill Town Council  
Anne-Marie Vanaman, Town of Carrboro Management Specialist  
Cha'ssem Anderson, UNC Associate Director of  
Transportation Planning  
Ranee Haven-O'Donnell, Carrboro Town Council  
Cheryl Stout, UNC Transportation and Parking  
Karen Stegman, Chapel Hill Town Council

Absent: Gordon Merklein, UNC Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Campus Enterprises,  
Tai Huynh, Chapel Hill Town Council, Damon Seils, Carrboro Town Council, Loryn Clark,  
Town of Chapel Hill Deputy Town Manager

Staff present: Brian Litchfield, Transit Director, Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager,

Nick Pittman, Deputy Assistant Director, Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager II,

Bobbiette Glover, Administrative Analyst

Guests: Tina Moon, Fred Lampe, Joe Milazzo, RTA

1. **Meeting Summary of April 27, 2023.** The meeting summary was unanimously approved.
2. **Employee Recognition.** Bobbiette Glover was recognized on her recent promotion to Administrative Analyst.
3. **Consent Items**
  - A. April Financial Report – Provided for Partners information.
4. **Discussion Items**
  - A. Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) Study Funding Participation – Provided for Partners information. A committee member asked how much of a commitment would Chapel Hill need to provide? \$50,000 would be a reasonable contribution for this study.  
A committee member asked who would operate the system running BRT from the airport to the different municipalities? If we can get a dedicated a lane or shoulder for the buses running from the airport to Chapel Hill, that is a big win and we can figure out how to run it afterwards.  
A committee member asked where the funding comes from to do these studies? The goal of the study is to leverage the study information to get the plans into infrastructure plans for highway improvement which can then be paid for by DOT.

A committee member asked how long the study would take? They always take longer than you hope for but we push for preliminary results in the first 3 to 6 months.

- B. FY 2023-24 Budget Development – Provided for Partners information.

**5. Information Items**

- A. North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) Update – Provided for Partners information. A committee member asked if we know which stations we will be combining and eliminating? The station at Long View was added in due to potential development in that location that has since not proceeded also with payment from the developer of that project. We will need to look at potential ridership before making a final decision on the stations.

A committee member would like a timeline on when decisions for this project need to be made. We will probably need to decide within the next month or so on how to move forward with this project. Something will be put together to show how different decisions will have different outcomes when it comes to deciding.

- B. Project Updates – Provided for Partners information.
- C. May Performance Report – Provided for Partners information.

**6. Departmental Monthly Reports**

- A. Operations – Provided for Partners information.
- B. Community Outreach – Provided for Partners information.
- C. Planning – Provided for Partners information.
- D. Director – Provided for Partners information.

- 7. **Next Meeting** – June 22, 2023 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., virtual)

**8. Adjourn**

The Partners set a next meeting date for June 22, 2023
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**3A. EZ Rider Advisory Committee Appointments**

Action: 1. Receive information and approve committee appointments based on staff recommendations.

Staff Resource: Melissa Patrick, Assistant Operations Manager – Demand Response

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**Background**

The EZ Rider Advisory Committee (EZRAC) has been meeting with Chapel Hill Transit EZ Rider staff on a monthly basis for several years to discuss service concerns, policies and procedures and provide input on updates to EZ Rider documents and plans and fixed-route services when applicable. The committee currently consists of seven (7) members from throughout our service area. The current, long-serving members generally volunteered to serve based on their interest and use of the service. In April 2016, the Mayor’s Office received a request from representatives of the EZRAC to formalize the committee and a process for selecting and appointing members. During the May 24, 2016 Partners Meeting the Committee asked staff to develop formal policies and procedures for the EZRAC committee, consistent with the following objectives:

- EZRAC would serve as a subcommittee to the Partners.
- Developing changes to procedures or policies related to EZ Rider and Fixed Route Services (in order to ensure our system is serving the needs of persons with disabilities within our service area).
- Reviewing budgets and grant applications
- Providing input on updates to EZ Rider documents
- Outreach to people with disabilities who need to know about EZ Rider and/or accessible Fixed-Route Services
- Offer a forum for the community to bring their comments or concerns about EZ Rider and/or Fixed-Route service issues.

On May 23, 2017, the Partners Committee adopted the guidelines for the EZRAC. Since that time, staff has worked with the existing EZRAC members, Clerk’s Office and Communications and Public Affairs staff to formally recruit for Committee members, consistent with the adopted guidelines.

**Applicants**

Following a recruitment process similar to those followed by the Town of Chapel Hill for Advisory Boards, 16 applications were received from persons interested in serving on the EZRAC.

Staff received each application, consistent with the guidelines for the Committee:

- **Composition:**
  - The EZ Rider Advisory Committee shall be made up of seven (7) members. Each Chapel Hill Transit funding partner (Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro and

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) will have one (1) representative. Four (4) representatives will be EZ Rider customers, from organizations involved in issues that concern persons with disabilities or private citizens who advocate for the needs of persons with disabilities.

### **Recommendation**

- Partners approve the following appointments to the EZ Rider Advisory Committee:
  - Kim Tyler: Term Expires August 2026
  - Hugh “Skip” Proctor: Term Expires August 2026
  - Margaret “Peg” Rundell: Term Expires August 2026

Notes: Existing committee members indicated an interest in continuing to serve and those that applied were recommended for appointment. To assist with staggered term requirements, existing committee members are recommended for two-year terms.

4A. FY2023-24 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development and Fund Balance Recommendations  
Action: 1. Receive information and provide staff with feedback.

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Brian Litchfield, Director

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The Chapel Hill Town Council has adopted the FY2023-24 Budget (<https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6248212&GUID=284F547E-4FB4-437D-8E37-2121EA92CE4B>), which included the Transit budget as recommended by the Transit Partners Committee. Staff is finalizing contracts for the University and Carrboro and will be sending them for review.

### **Fund Balance Recommendations**

During the January 26, 2023, and March 23, 2023, Partners Meetings staff provided an update on the current Fund Balance and existing needs. The updates included a series of recommendations for the Partners to consider for Fund Balance. It is important to note that fund balance includes savings due to ARPA funds we drew down for future uses in FY 2021-22 and will see similar actions in FY 2022-23.

### **Overview**

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. 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 made to purchase buses, make capital investments and/or provide match on large Federal/State grants, following Partner consideration and approval.

The Transit Fund currently has an unrestricted fund balance of \$31,030,404. This amount is unusually high and the result of a number of factors, including Federal ARPA funds and unanticipated State funds (SMAP), carryforward for projects and grant matches that were started in the previous fiscal year, and personnel savings. This amount includes:

- \$9,610,418 in carryforward projects from the previous year.
- \$7,863,590 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 \$10,556,396 (for FY21 the University received a refund of \$1,180,700 and \$744,299.99 for FY22, and the Towns agreed to leave their share of the surplus in fund balance for future needs).

## **Recommendations**

There are several immediate uses that staff recommends for a share of the available fund balance:

- North South Bus Rapid Transit Capital Contribution - \$2M is needed to finalize the non-Federal funding for our Small Starts application. The Partners should also strongly consider reserving additional funding for project contingency purposes as we move toward construction and implementation. This would be reasonable considering a number of factors, including the scope and scale of the project, inflationary costs of construction, and zero emission vehicles, and that once the Federal portion of the project is approved, Federal resources cannot be used to cover project cost increases. Staff recommends moving \$2M of existing fund balance to capital reserve for this project. Staff will work with Partners to identify a reasonable contingency amount as project costs are updated at the completion of 60% design.
- Grant Match for Electric Bus Awards – \$2.7M is needed to match our recent CMAQ/VW grant awards for five (5) electric buses, and \$600,000 is needed to match our recent Community Funding grant award for two (2) electric buses. Staff recommends moving \$3.3M to capital reserve for the necessary match for these bus grants. Staff is also pursuing State match for these buses, so this match need could be reduced in the future.
- Replacement Vehicles for Demand Response – five (5) demand response vehicles need to be replaced in the current fiscal year, and seven (7) need to be replaced in the upcoming fiscal year. Staff recommends using \$500,000 for the current fiscal year and moving \$700,00 to capital reserve to assist with purchases in the next fiscal year. This amount could be reduced by grants and State match.
- Replacement Buses – staff recommends using \$2M to purchase fixed route buses to help us towards staying on course with the adopted Capital Plan. With the number of buses needed to be replaced, staff recommends purchasing 40' clean diesel buses. The Partners could consider additional purchases, if grant matches above are reduced and with future budget savings.

## **Additional/Future Needs**

- Future budget needs - the Partners have also agreed from time to time to budget fund balance to help balance the budget and reduce annual Partner contributions. The Partners should consider reserving some portion of fund balance for future needs. This could include operating and/ or capital.

- Radio system – this system was identified for replacement almost 15 years ago. Current cost estimate is \$1.5M.
- Bus stop improvement projects – transit has been awarded grant funds and some funding through the Orange County Transit Plan for bus stop improvements. This funding has been utilized or obligated and additional funding is needed to continue these critical improvement projects. Staff will continue to pursue grant funding; however, funding will be needed to continue progress. Facility Expansion Needs for Zero Emission Vehicles – site work and pavement for parking is estimated at ~\$5M. While we will pursue Federal funding for this, it will be competing with our needs for BRT, buses and other capital needs. As shared in previous discussions, at 20 standard buses we will be at our space limit at our current facility and do not have the space for infrastructure for zero emission 60' buses or additional 60' buses needed for NSBRT.
- Solar infrastructure – there is no existing funding identified for solar infrastructure projects. Cost to be determined.
- Backup Power Source for Charging Stations – current facility generator needs to be replaced and is not capable of handling charging needs for cars or buses. Cost to be determined.
- Facility Repairs and Upgrades – maintain a portion of the unrestricted fund balance to assist with anticipated needs for an aging facility: roof, HVAC, fire and safety alarm system, and solar. Capital Plan recommends reserving \$535,000 per year (~\$2.1M since Capital Plan was adopted) and no funding has been allocated to these projects.

### **Recommendation**

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



**4B. North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) Update**

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Caroline Dwyer, AICP Transit Planning Manager  
Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager

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**A. Small Starts Grant Agreement (SSGA) Capital Investment Grant Request**

- Updated Project Rating Request (submission deadline August 2023)
  - Finalized capital cost adjustments (see Funding Update)
  - Continuing to collect and prepare additional information required

**B. 60% Design & Engineering**

- Coordinating meeting with UNC and UNC Health staff to discuss BRT station design and engineering requirements
- Upcoming public engagement (in 3 phases) to gather feedback informing BRT station design; more information will be provided over the coming weeks
- Continuing surveying and engineering through Fall 2023

**C. Funding Update**

- Continuing to coordinate with local and regional partners on SPOT 7.0 state funding requests for NSBRT projects
- Significant support from local and regional partners prioritizing NSBRT finding in SPOT 7.0 scoring process
- Presented recommendations for scope adjustments to accommodate inflation and cost increases to Partners in May 2023 and to Chapel Hill Town Council on June 14, 2023; there is support for staff recommendations including substituting diesel vehicles for all-electric fleet and revising scope of multiuse path to one side of NSBRT corridor
- Design and engineering consultant (AECOM) currently revising engineering plans and cost estimates for August 2023 updated FTA Project Rating

**D. Sponsorship Feasibility Study**

- Chapel Hill Transit executed a contract with the Superlative Group for an NSBRT Sponsorship Feasibility Study
- The study will evaluate the fair market value of Chapel Hill Transit assets for potential sponsorship, including naming rights for NSBRT, vehicle and station sponsorships.
- An NSBRT naming rights/sponsorship program could generate funding for capital improvements and/or annual operating and maintenance costs
- The Sponsorship Feasibility Study has two phases: 1) research and valuation of system assets, and 2) implementing NSBRT's sponsorship program (optional)
- Phase 1 was recently completed, and findings presented to CHT staff:
  - The NSBRT system's preliminary valuation over a 25-year period is estimated to be approximately \$11,000,000.
  - NSBRT stations were assigned preliminary valuations over a 10-year period ranging between \$700,000 - \$1,600,000, based on relative ridership projections

- Estimates are preliminary and will continue to adjust as the Superlative Groups finalizes Phase 1 tasks.
- Asset valuation is based on exposure and impressions including
  - Current ridership in the corridor
  - Projected NSBRT ridership
  - Service frequency
  - Transit demand
  - Population
  - Media impressions (i.e., website hits, social media trends)
- The Superlative Group will present refined asset valuation estimates and next steps to the Partners in late summer or early fall.

## 5A. Project Updates

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Caroline Dwyer, AICP Transit Planning Manager  
Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager  
Katy Fontaine, Project Manager

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**A. Bus Stop Improvement Updates**

- Chapel Hill Town Council awarded a Bus Stop Improvement Bid for 17 bus stops on March 22, 2023, to White Oak Consulting. Work is scheduled to begin in mid-to-late July 2023 at the South Columbia Street at Frat Court stop.
- Chapel Hill Transit is coordinating with GoTriangle on improvements for three (3) shared bus stops along East Franklin Street. Due to project delays, work is tentatively scheduled begin in mid-to-late June 2023.
- Chapel Hill Transit has hired an intern to assist with a comprehensive bus stop inventory over Summer 2023. The audit will assess and catalog existing conditions at all CHT stops and will help staff prioritize future improvements. The inventory is scheduled to begin in June 2023.

**B. Professional Soccer Game at Kenan Stadium**

- European professional soccer teams Chelsea and Wrexham will play a friendly match at Kenan Stadium on July 19, 2023.
- Chapel Hill Transit has been asked to provide Tar Heel Express bus service for this game
- Shuttles will begin leaving the Friday Center, Southern Village and Downtown THX stops at 5:30 PM on the day of the game.
- Staff are evaluating the need to adjust regular service based on anticipated roadway conditions.

**C. Fourth of July Shuttle**

- The Town of Chapel Hill is hosting their annual fireworks display at Southern Village on Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Chapel Hill Transit is providing service to/from Southern Village and the Jackson Parking Deck.
- The cost of shuttle service is provided by the Town of Chapel Hill.

**D. GMV (real-time transit technology)**

- GMV system components are installed on all vehicles.
- Final testing and data cleanup are underway.
- Preliminary system and mobile app testing have not identified any critical issues.
- The new system is slated to go live July 15, 2023.
- Marketing and outreach plan development and deployment are in progress.
- CHT's new AVL system does not integrate with the regional transit mobile app used by GoTriangle, GoDurham, and several other Triangle systems

- Customers will use our new “My CH Transit” mobile app for real-time information and transit alerts
- GoTriangle is replacing Transloc as the regional real-time information provider; once that is complete, CHT’s real-time information will be integrated with the other systems’ real-time information

#### **E. Solar Powered Real Time Information Displays**

- Transit staff continue to work with Connexionz to update our solar powered real time displays
- Connexionz conducted solar surveys in May 2023, confirming the suitability of locations for solar units
- The new displays are more accessible for people with vision impairment
- Connexionz units will be installed temporarily at stops that currently have Nextbus signs; once new larger signs arrive, the Connexionz units will be moved to other stops
- Updated real time units will replace all existing units and an additional 55 new units will be installed (specific locations detailed in May 2023 Partner’s Update)

# transit snapshot

MAY 2023



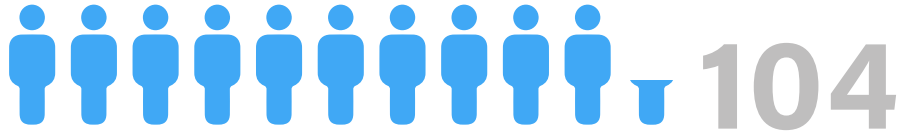
## STAFF

FIXED ROUTE

**OPERATORS**  
(Budgeted)



**OPERATORS**  
(Active)



**OPERATORS**  
IN TRAINING



**CANDIDATES**  
IN HIRING  
QUEUE



DEMAND RESPONSE

**OPERATORS**  
(Budgeted)



**OPERATORS**  
(Active)



**OPERATORS**  
IN TRAINING

**CANDIDATES**  
IN HIRING  
QUEUE



# Operations

MAY SERVICE DAYS

**30 TOTAL**

22 weekday service days  
8 weekend service days

MAY ROUTES

**23 TOTAL**

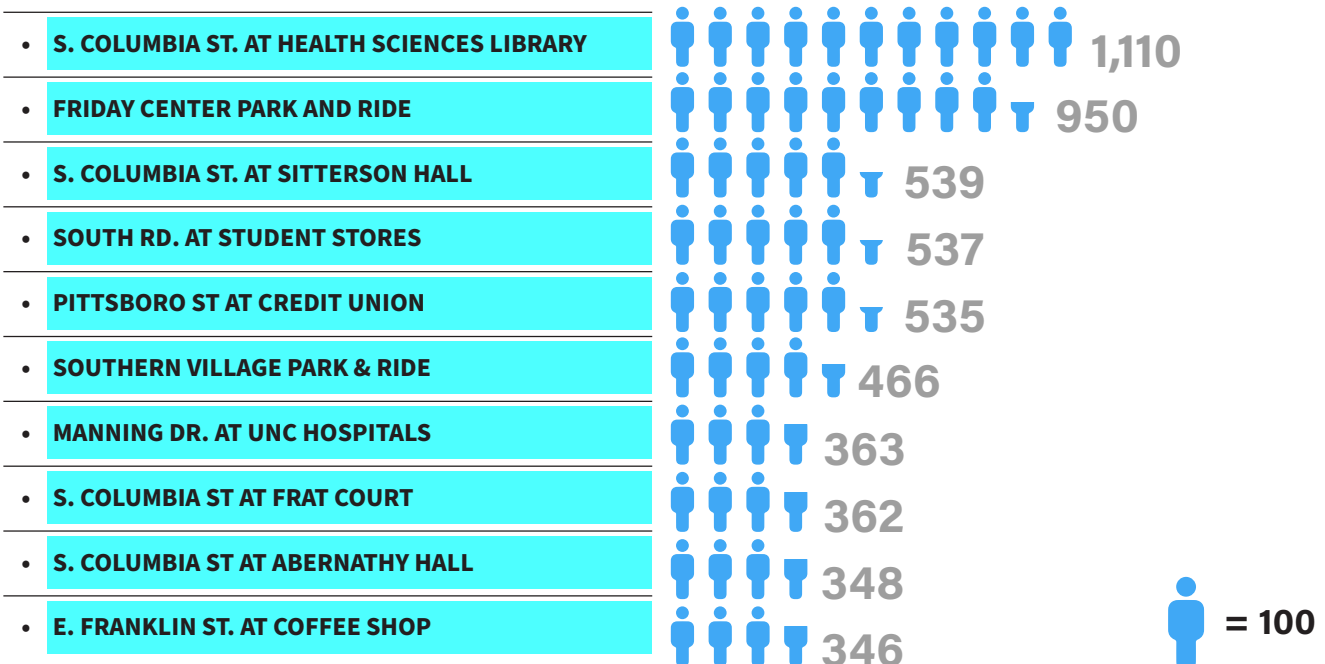
13 full service  
10 reduced service

B, CCX, CM, FCX, HS,  
JFX, RU, S, Safe G, Safe  
J, Safe T, T, U

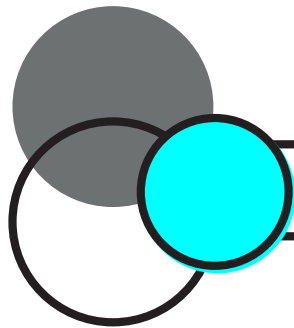
A, CL, CW, D, F, G, J,  
N, NS, NU

## transit stops

### AVG DAILY PASSENGERS | TOP 10 WEEKDAY STOPS



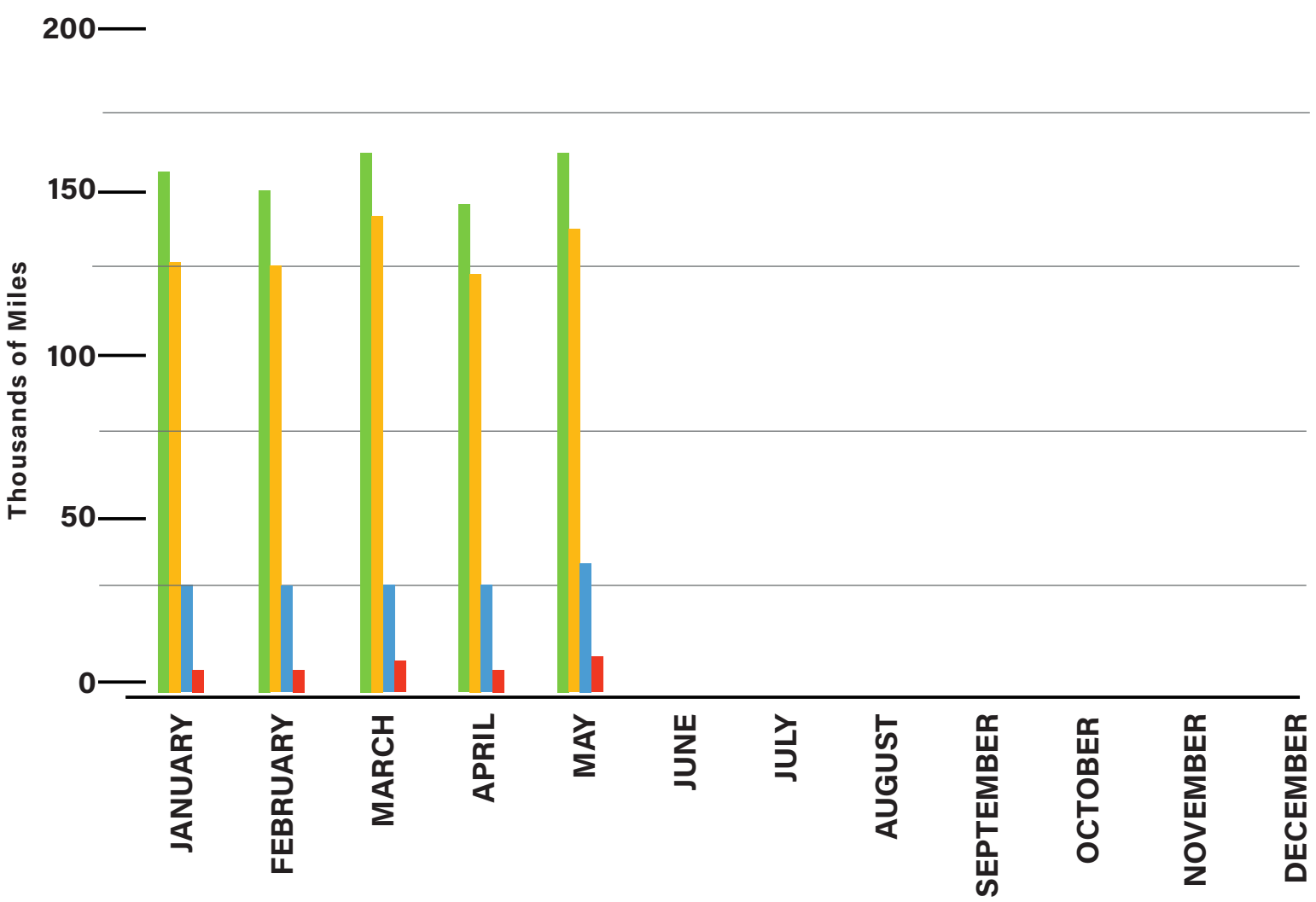
# operations



## MAY PASSENGER MILES

- TOTAL PASSENGER MILES: 162,788**
- Fixed Route: 135,318**
- Demand Response: 27,470**
- Battery Electric Buses: 4,125\***

*\*Included in Fixed Route miles*



# Operations



**TOTAL: 13,718**  
**M-F: 12,916**  
**SAT: 401**  
**SUN: 401**



**TOTAL: 17,086**  
**M-F: 16,038**  
**SAT/SUN: 1,048**

## daily trips (MAY)

\* A trip is the completion of one loop or one direction (ex. outbound) of a route

### Weekday Service

- **A\*** 14
- **B** 22
- **CCX** 38
- **CL\*** 32
- **CM** 30
- **CW\*** 21
- **D\*** 33
- **F\*** 15
- **FCX** 90
- **G\*** 11
- **HS** 34

- **J\*** 57
- **JFX** 42
- **N\*** 14
- **NS\*** 72
- **NU\*** 42
- **RU** 60
- **S** 40
- **SAFE G** No
- **SAFE J** summer
- **SAFE T** service
- **T** 11
- **U** 51

### Weekend Service

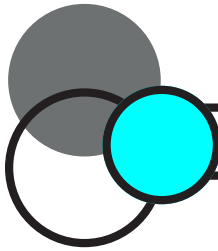
- **A** 11
- **CM** 18
- **CW** 10
- **D** 11
- **J\*** 9
- **N** 11
- **NS\*** 19
- **NU** 18
- **SAFE G** No
- **SAFE J** summer
- **SAFE T** service
- **U** 21

= 10

\*Route operating with suspended trips



# Ridership

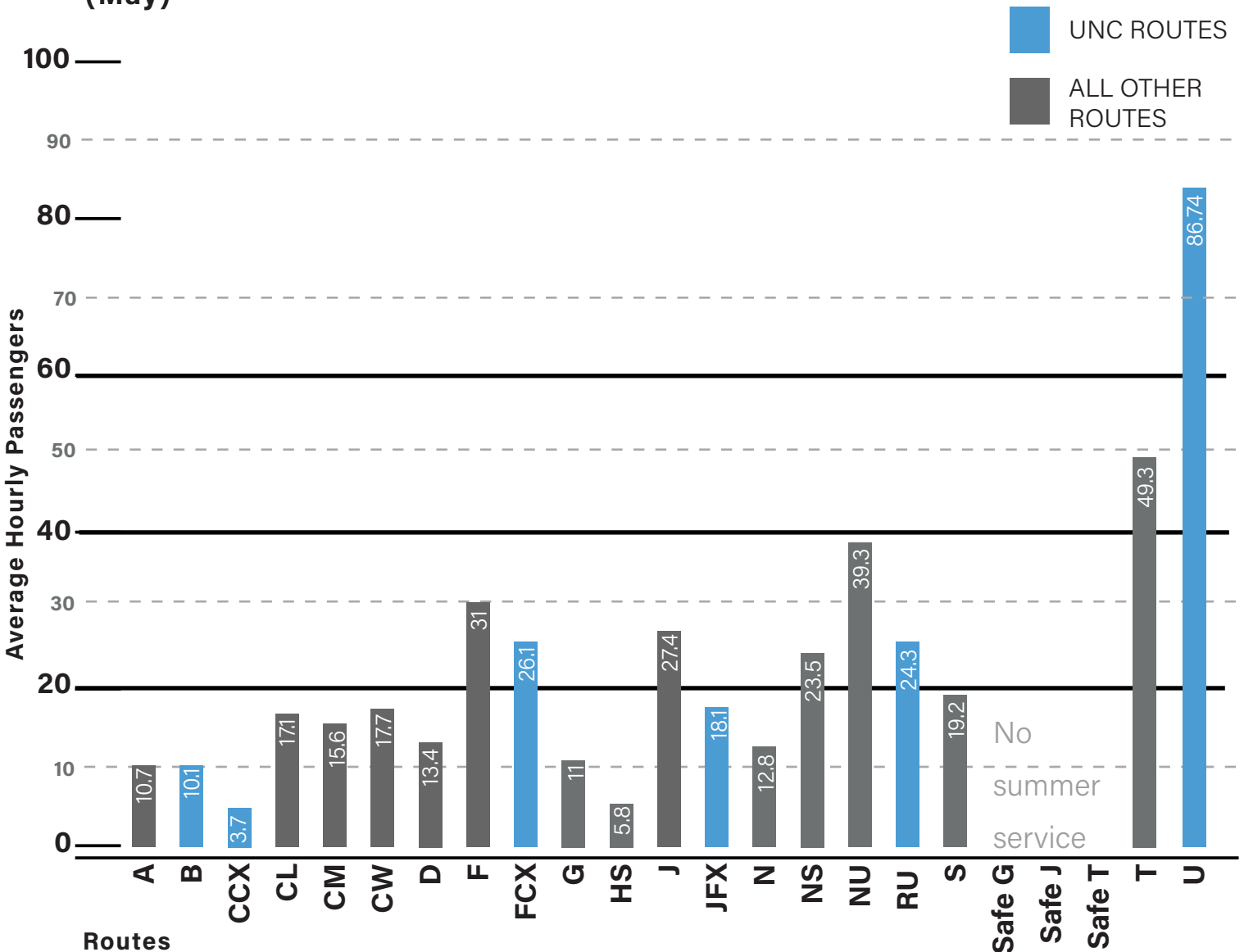


MAY PASSENGERS

**TOTAL: 234,901**  
Avg Pass/Hour: 17

## average passengers per hour

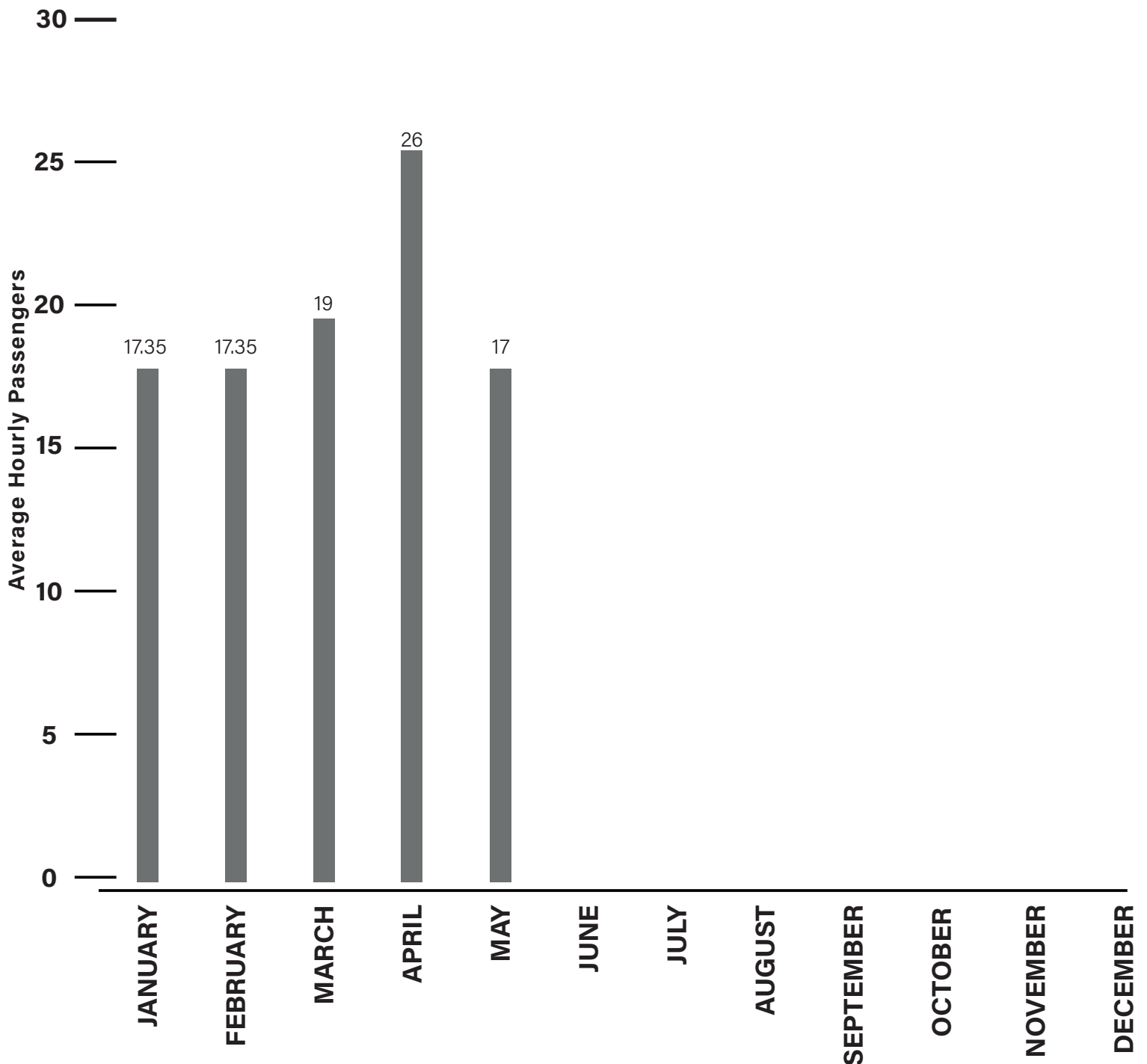
(May)



# Ridership

average passengers per hour

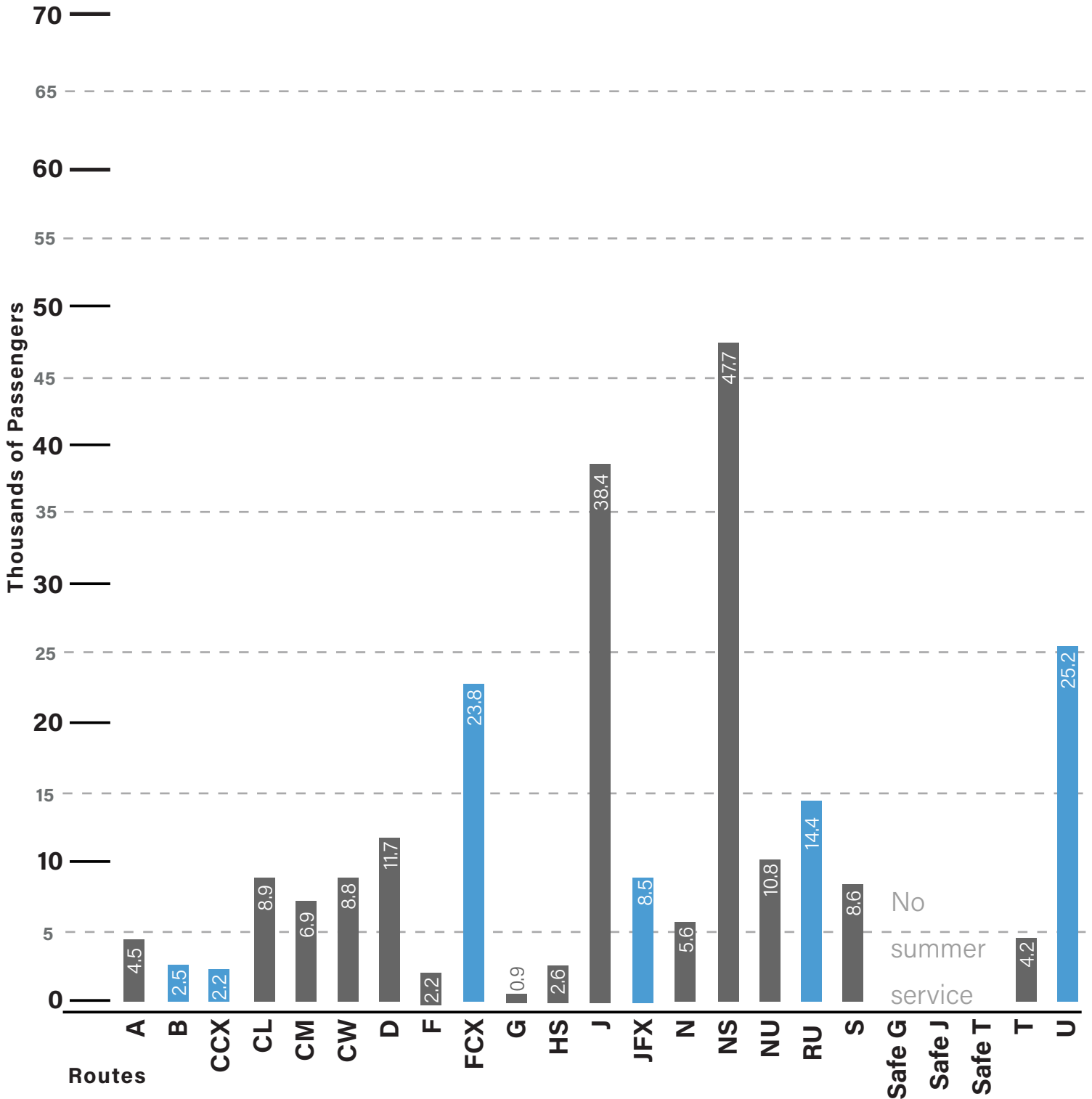
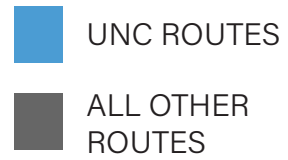
(Year to Date)



# Ridership

## total passengers by route

(May)

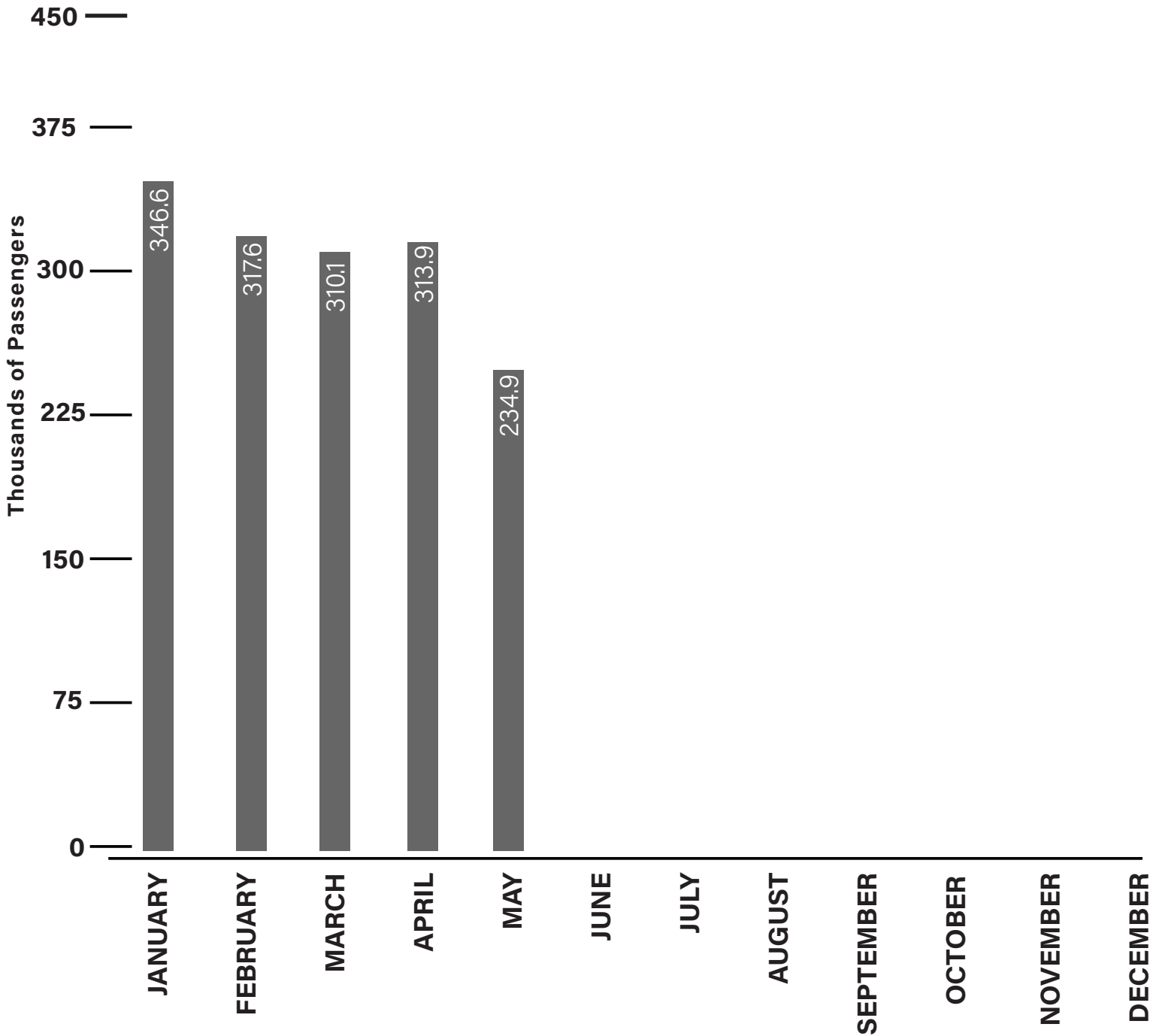


# Ridership

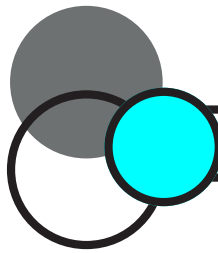
## total passengers

(Year to Date)

ALL OTHER ROUTES

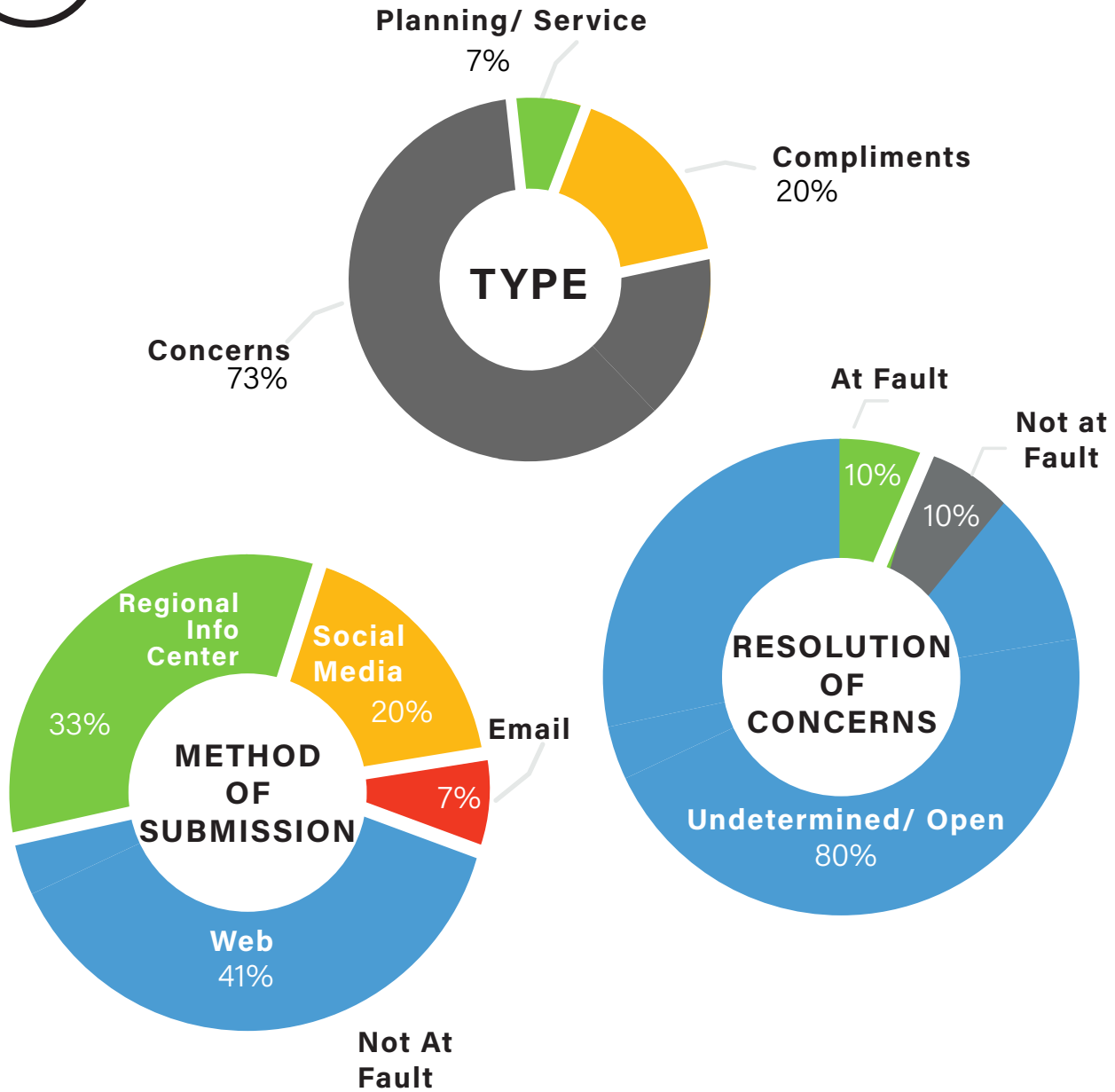


# Customer Service



MAY COMMENTS RECEIVED

15



Staff Resource: Brian Litchfield, Transit Director

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#### **4<sup>th</sup> of July Holiday**

- Tuesday, July 4, 2023, is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and regular Chapel Hill Transit services will not operate. Shuttle service will operate for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration at Southern Community Park.

#### **Assault of Transit Worker Legislation**

- We continue to work with the North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) to try and adjust the penalties for assaulting transit workers. This is a national issue and several states have recently taken steps to adjust or increase penalties for assaults on transit workers (<https://www.governing.com/work/rise-in-bus-driver-assaults-triggers-new-protection-laws>). While North Carolina systems can and have implemented safety measures, additional protections are needed for our front-line workers. There are currently two bills (H707 and H125) in the Senate that cover penalties for different classifications of employees and we are working to get language added to protect transit employees statewide.

#### **Service Update and Staffing**

- On Monday, May 15, 2023, Chapel Hill Transit restored all scheduled trips on the HS Route. We are operating over 90% of our scheduled service, which includes the three (3) routes operated by Carolina Livery. We will continue to restore service using the priorities approved by the Transit Partners as we are able to hire and train Bus Operators. The following services are yet to be restored:
  - A Weekday - service after 7:30p
  - CL Weekday - peak hour and midday service
  - CW Weekday- service after 8:20p
  - D Weekday - PM peak and evening service
  - F Weekday - midday service
  - G Weekday - peak hours and midday service
  - J Weekday - service after 7:30p
  - NS Weekday - service after 8:05p
  - NU Weekday - peak hour, midday and evening service
  - RU Weekday - AM peak service
  - J Weekend - 2nd bus and evening service
  - NS Weekend - 2nd bus and evening service
  - 420 Route (contracted) peak hour service.

- Recruiting for Operators and Maintenance (see pay schedule below) continues to be a significant challenge and we see strong competition from transit providers in the region (Triangle and Triad), school districts, public utilities and delivery services (Amazon, Uber, etc). We continue to start training classes every two weeks. However, sometimes those classes are only covering retirements or other operator transitions. We started a new comprehensive recruitment campaign for the late spring/early summer.

<b>GoDurham</b>	Start	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year and Thereafter
Garage(Service ) Attendant		\$20.95	\$22.45	\$23.94	\$25.44
Mechanic C		\$26.94	\$27.84	\$28.73	\$29.63
Mechanic B		\$31.43	\$32.33	\$33.22	\$34.12
Mechanic A		\$35.92	\$36.82	\$37.72	\$38.61
<b>GoTriangle</b>					
Service Attendant	\$18.50	\$19.88	\$21.43	\$24.11	Merit
Mechanic 1	\$29.53	Merit	Merit	Merit	Merit
Mechanic 2	\$32.48	Merit	Merit	Merit	Merit
Mechanic 3	\$35.73	Merit	Merit	Merit	Merit
<b>Chapel Hill Transit</b>					
Service Attendant	\$16	-	-	-	-
Mechanic 1	\$23.56	-	-	-	-
Mechanic 2	\$27.28	-	-	-	-
Mechanic 3	\$28.64	-	-	-	-

- Note – Chapel Hill Transit/Town of Chapel Hill does not have a step/guaranteed pay plan for Operators or Mechanics. Durham and GoTriangle also provide shift differential pay for shifts starting between 1pm-6pm (ranges from \$.50/hr to \$1.50/hr).