



CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT
Town of Chapel Hill
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CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING AND AGENDA

FEBRUARY 29, 2024 – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 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, 2023, at 10:00 AM

Present: Marie Parker, Interim Town Manager for
Town of Carrboro
Ranee Haven-O'Donnell, Carrboro Town Council
Cheryl Stout, UNC Transportation and Parking
Jason Merrill, Carrboro Town Council
Camille Berry, Chapel Hill Town Council
Melissa McMullough, Chapel Hill Town Council
Theodore Nollert, Chapel Hill Town Council

Absent: Chassem Anderson, UNC Transportation and Parking, Loryn Clark, Town of Chapel Hill Deputy Town Manager, Gordon Merklein, Associate Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Campus Enterprises at UNC

Staff present: Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager, Nick Pittman, Deputy Assistant

Director, Matt Cecil, Transit Development Manager II, Tim Schwarzauer, Senior Grants

and Strategic Project Manager

Guests: Tina Moon, Town of Carrboro

1. **Meeting Summary of November 16, 2023.** The meeting summary was unanimously approved.
2. **Employee Recognition** – None for this month.
3. **Consent Items**
 - A. December Financial Report – A committee member asked what the sourcing was for the numbers? These numbers are our operating costs along with debt financing.
4. **Discussion Items**
 - A. Committee Chair– Council member Camille Berry has expressed interest in becoming the chair. Committee members agree in favor of Camille Berry to become the chair effective for our February meeting.
 - B. FY 2022-23 Audit Report – A committee member asked what the timetable is on a decision for expanding the infrastructure. We need to decide as soon as possible due to running out of space for our current inventory of vehicles and vehicles that are coming in soon.
A committee member asked about the location for the new building, and would it be better to be it next to the current building? We would have to redo the entire

bus lot to put it next to our current building which is why the new building will be separate.

A committee member asked what the anticipated budget is for electric battery replacements over time and perhaps adding a line item in the budget to anticipate the need for this in the future? Currently we have a 12-year warranty in place but the predictability of how long the batteries will last is unknown at this point due to them being in the mass market for only a short amount of time. As time goes on, we will be able to get a better idea of how long these batteries last and roughly how many we will need to replace on a yearly basis.

- C. FY 2024-25 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development Update –A committee member asked if it would be helpful to create a spreadsheet to go along with the budget information sent to members to put a mark in that column if they have questions ahead of the meeting. We will pay extra attention to adding more detailed information for the Partners that we need feedback on before taking our budget proposal to Town Council.
- D. North South Bus Rapid Transit-Naming Rights – A committee member asked how intrusive this will look on our new bus stops. There are still rules and regulations that must be adhered to and to keep the integrity of the bus stations.

5. Information Items

- A. Project Updates - Provided for Partners information.
- B. Director’s Report - Provided for Partners information.
- C. Performance Report - Provided for Partners information.

6. **Next Meeting** – February 22, 2024 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Virtual)

7. Adjourn

The Partners set a next meeting date for February 22, 2024
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3A. January Financial Report

Prepared by: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director

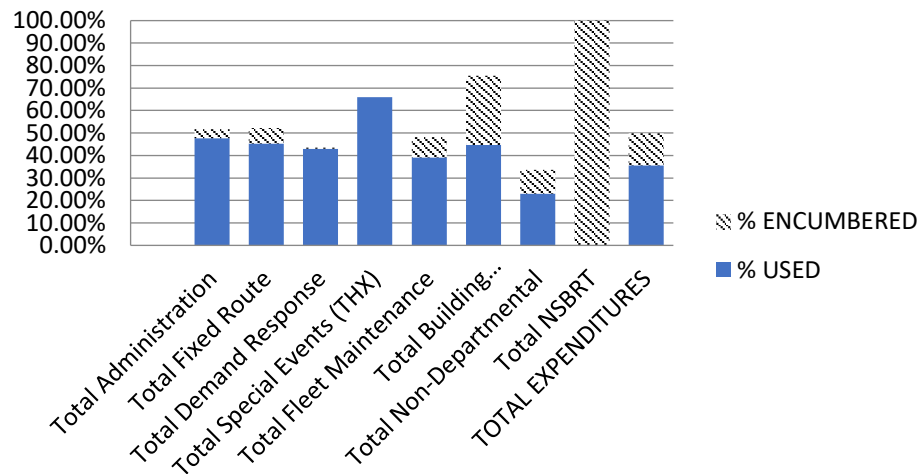
January 2024

- Expenses for the month of January were \$2,779,748. This aggregation of expenses and encumbrances for the first seven months of the fiscal year is consistent with years past and is perfectly in line with what we would expect at this point in the year.
- The attached data exhibits the financial information by divisions and should be a useful tool in monitoring our patterns as the year progresses, and is a high-level representation of the data used by our division heads.

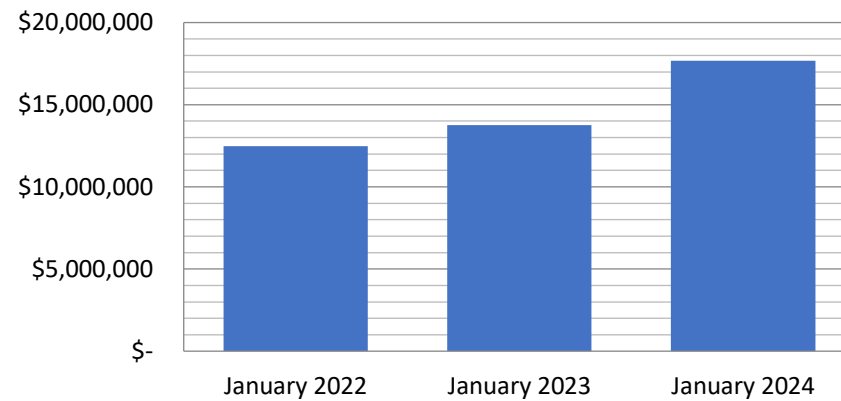
Transit 640 Fund Budget to Actual at end of January 2024

	ORIGINAL BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD EXPENSES	ACTUAL MONTH EXPENSES	CURRENT ENCUMBRANCES	BALANCE AVAILABLE	% USED OR ENCUMBERED Jan
							58.33%
Total Administration	\$2,450,306.00	\$2,644,696.00	\$1,258,823.47	\$161,798.28	\$107,770.00	\$1,278,103.00	51.70%
Total Fixed Route	\$16,508,744.00	\$18,715,171.00	\$8,473,890.05	\$1,225,315.81	\$1,297,834.25	\$8,943,447.00	52.20%
Total Demand Response	\$2,659,688.00	\$3,161,470.00	\$1,357,475.26	\$188,914.95	\$15,731.02	\$1,788,264.00	43.40%
Total Special Events (THX)	\$311,364.00	\$311,364.00	\$205,094.04	\$31,274.80	\$0.00	\$106,270.00	65.90%
Total Fleet Maintenance	\$5,342,805.00	\$5,453,998.00	\$2,131,175.10	\$297,768.86	\$497,468.48	\$2,825,354.00	48.20%
Total Building Maintenance	\$914,611.00	\$2,140,213.00	\$956,982.60	\$319,799.36	\$657,660.79	\$525,570.00	75.40%
Total Non-Departmental	\$3,962,372.00	\$14,287,262.00	\$3,304,086.80	\$554,876.41	\$1,499,702.17	\$9,483,473.00	33.60%
Total NSBRT	\$0.00	\$3,030,555.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,030,555.00	\$0.00	100.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$32,149,890.00	\$49,744,729.00	\$17,687,527.32	\$2,779,748.47	\$7,106,721.71	\$24,950,480.00	49.80%

CHT January 2024 YTD Expenses as % of Budget



CHT Total YTD Expenses - Previous Years Comparison



4A. FY 2024-25 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development Update
 Action: 1. Receive information and provide staff with feedback.

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

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 FY 2024-25 budget proposal. We are meeting over the next month to finalize expenditure numbers, and to home in on revenue expectations for next year.

While we will have a more detailed set of projections in the coming months, we wish to share some high-level items over which we will be seeking Partner guidance. Chapel Hill Transit has benefitted substantially over the past several years due to emergency relief/CMAQ grants and using lapsed salaries to assist with salary/benefit increases. The previously unanticipated grant funds and lapsed salaries were critical towards helping us bridge the gap caused by losses in State grant funds (SMAP) and cover operating and capital expenses. We have continued to absorb increases in Maintenance and other contracts necessary to operate the system and facility and utilized grant funds to cover the cost of major repairs. We are no longer in a position to continue to absorb these costs and while we are always looking for grant opportunities, we have no new grants that can help with these expenses. These external funds allowed us to progress while keeping Partner contributions below the previously agreed – upon projections from the Capital Plan.

At current service levels our current draft budget for FY 2024-25 is estimated at \$34,734,219. While key expense areas such as fuel, salaries and benefits and insurance have not been finalized we are currently showing a shortfall of around \$1.4M while using current contributions for revenues:

	Current Year Allocation	Potential FY25	Difference	FY25 Capital Plan Projection
Town of Chapel Hill	\$6,478,034	\$6,967,837	\$489,803	\$7,912,000
Town of Carrboro	\$2,233,512	\$2,391,978	\$158,466	\$2,640,000
University	\$10,676,519	\$11,468,847	\$792,328	\$12,510,000

Note – the budget includes two new positions, however, as noted below these will be covered by funding from the Orange County Transit Plan and will not impact Partner’s contributions.

Items for further consideration

Some of the potential areas for consideration for the upcoming budget year include:

- Recruitment and retention remain significant marketplace drivers, and we will likely face increased expenses in the areas of compensation and health insurance. Note that GoDurham, GoRaleigh, and GoTriangle are starting Operators around \$20.50 per hour and moving them to around \$27.05-29.93 per hour within four (4) years. Our current approved starting rate is \$19.50. While above the current recommended Orange County Living Wage, we know that \$25-27/hr. is likely a more realistic living wage for our area considering rent and cost of living. We need to continue to advance our starting pay and pay for existing Team Members to be reasonably competitive in the market and provide opportunities for Team Members to live in the region. At this time, we are anticipating a 5% of market adjustment for existing Team Members, in addition to additional adjustments for Maintenance Team Members as noted below, and this amount could be around \$1.3M, including salary and benefits.

We are also seeing similar challenges in Maintenance where our starting rate is around \$19.50 per hour for entry level Mechanics and our peers are starting at \$25 per hour or higher and moving to \$27.95-\$31.11 within four (4) years. Another example is Maintenance Supervisors, the starting rate regionally for transit systems and public works departments is \$70,000 and our current highest paid supervisor is at \$67,000 (with almost 10 years of service with Transit). We recently completed a Maintenance Pay Market Study in partnership with the Town’s Public Works and Human Resources Department. The Consultant reviewed pay ranges, job postings, etc. from various regional (all NC) agencies both public and private sector for their comparisons. They recommended pay grade adjustments for all Maintenance staff to better align our current positions and starting rates to other regional employers.

It is also worth noting that GoRaleigh is currently recruiting for an Assistant General Manager, which the duties are closely in line with our Operations Manager, with a hiring range of \$130,000 - \$150,000 (well above our pay rates for Operations Manager, Assistant Director and Deputy Director). We are also seeing GoCary recruiting for Mid-Level Transit

Planners with a salary range of \$90,000 - \$110,000. All of these are well above our senior staff.

- In FY25, we expect to continue using Carolina Livery for the operation of the B, CCX, and JFX routes. We estimate the cost to provide this will be around \$1.9M and we will continue to use federal relief funding to cover this cost.
- Fuel may provide an opportunity for some budget savings going into next year if current trends continue. It is too early to make projections at this point; however, prices are currently trending favorably.
- Capital investments are required to maintain the transit fleet consistent with the adopted 2019 Capital Plan. Below is a chart of the fixed route bus purchase needs along with the number of buses that currently are funding for purchase (grants, fund balance, debt financing).

Fixed Route Buses FY21-25	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Need to purchase (capital plan 2019)	6	6	7	7	7
Funded	0	3	8	15	0
+/-	9	12	11	3	7

The Partners also agreed to utilize grant funds and fund balance for the purchase of some Demand Response vehicles in FY23 and we have also identified additional funds for Demand Response vehicles for next year.

- Other Major Capital Expenses:
 - Radio system – this system was identified for replacement almost 15 years ago. Current cost estimate is \$1.5M.
 - 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. Parts and materials are being affected by inflationary increases

and cost of labor increases. We have continued to utilize existing fuel contracts and will require a new contract in FY25.

- No additional capital funding is available in the Orange County Transit Plan (OCTP) and we do not have the ability to increase the cost of existing services funding. We are exploring using FY24 operating fund (route expansions that we are unable to fulfill due to Operator shortages) to fill necessary staff vacancies. We have been approved in the OCTP for the addition of a Transit Planner and Amenities and Facilities Specialist. Partner funding will be necessary in future years budgets for these positions.
- As the North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) project continues to progress we have funding to cover for our current phase of design and we will need to start planning for the addition of new positions consistent with the NSBRT staffing plan as early as next year to help move this project forward.

Next Steps

- Staff will develop a timeline for additional discussions with the Partners Committee in coordination with the Town's budget calendar. Budget work sessions will occur on March 13th and May 8th, 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. Chapel Hill Transit Holiday Schedule for Calendar Years 2024-25

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

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director

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 2024-25:

2024 Holiday Schedule:

Spring Break March 9, 2024 – March 16, 2024: Weekday NU will end at 7:00pm, Safe Rides and the Saturday/Sunday NU routes will not operate. Sunday NU will operate on March 17.

- Good Friday – Friday, March 29 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides); EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.; 420 Route will operate
- Memorial Day – Monday, May 27 – No service
- Juneteenth – Wednesday, June 19 – Sunday Routes with exceptions for 420, FCX, and NS that will run their weekday schedule. No U or NU. EZ Rider hours 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.
- Independence Day – Thursday, July 4 – No service
- Labor Day – Monday, September 2 – No service
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 28 – No Service
- Day after Thanksgiving – Friday, November 29 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides) and EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.

Winter Break December 16, 2024 – January 6, 2025: Weekday NU will not operate, Safe Rides and the Saturday/Sunday NU routes will not operate.

- Monday, December 23 – Local Service Only¹, no Express service²
- Christmas Eve – Tuesday, December 24 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Christmas Day – Wednesday, December 25 – No Service

¹ Routes that will operate: A, B, CL, CM, CW, D, F, G, HS, J, N, NS, RU, S, T, and U

² Routes that will not operate: CCX, FCX, JFX, and NU

- Day after Christmas – Thursday, December 26 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Friday, December 27 – Local Service Only¹, no Express service²
- Saturday, December 28 – Saturday Routes (No U, NU, Safe Rides)
- Sunday, December 29– Sunday Routes (No U, NU, Safe Rides)
- Monday, December 30– Local Service Only¹, no Express service²
- Tuesday, December 31– Local Service Only¹, no Express service²

2025 Holiday Schedule:

- New Year’s Day – Wednesday, January 1– No Service
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Monday, January 20 – 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.

Recommendation

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

5A. Triennial Review Update

Staff Resource: Tim Schwarzauer, Senior Grants and Strategic Projects Manager

Background

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Triennial Review of Chapel Hill Transit for Fiscal Years '21, '22, and '23. The auditors are tentatively scheduled to be on-site June 17th and 18th. The review determines whether an FTA grantee is administering its FTA funded programs in accordance with federal transit law provisions (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53), regulations (49 CFR 601 to 665) and relevant guidance Circulars.
- The review is being conducted by the Calyptus Consulting Group, in coordination with the FTA, and will focus on 23 areas, including: technical capacity, procurement, Title VI, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, Drug-Free Workplace, Drug and Alcohol Program, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Americans with Disabilities Act, etc.
- Staff has provided the FTA Review Team with all the required advance materials, along with responding to a small number of follow up questions.
- Timothy Schwarzauer is the lead staff on the Triennial Review and is being supported by Transit and Town staff. Preparation for the review requires countless hours and a significant amount of coordination.

Next Steps

- Staff will provide the Partners with an update on the Triennial Review at the August 2024 Partners Meeting.

5B. Grant Update

Staff Resource: Tim Schwarzauer, Senior Grants and Strategic Projects Manager

5339 Low or No Emission and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Combined Application:

Transit Staff will be applying to the Federal Transit Administration's 5339B and 5339C programs (Bus and Bus Facility, and Low or No Emission, respectively.) On February 8, 2024, FTA announced the availability of \$1.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2024 funding to support state and local efforts to buy or modernize buses, improve bus facilities, and support workforce development.

- Of this, \$390 million in funding is authorized under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program.
- The funding opportunity will advance FTA's priorities of strengthening U.S. bus manufacturing, containing vehicle costs, and accelerating the delivery of new vehicles.

Staff will request funding for up to seven 40' Battery Electric Buses and associated charging infrastructure, including an overhead, on-route charger for the Eubanks Park and Ride Lot.

6A. Operations

Staff Resource: Peter Aube, Maintenance Manager
Joe McMiller, Deputy Operations Manager – Fixed Route
Melissa Patrick, Assistant Operations Manager – Demand Response
Tim Thorpe, Training Coordinator

Joe McMiller - Fixed Route Division

- On time Performance (OTP) – February – 67%
- Feb 3rd – Tarheel Express for UNC vs Duke (UNC victorious) Franklin Street closed at 8:45pm.
- Feb 6th – Tarheel Express for UNC vs Clemson.
- Feb 17th – Tarheel Express for UNC vs Virginia Tech.
- Feb 19th – 2 new Full Time Operators started Training Class.
- Feb 26th – Tarheel Express for UNC vs Miami.
- Feb 29th – In person site visit from Tulsa Transit, to learn about Optibus form Planning and Operations, as they are new to the software.

Melissa Patrick – Demand Response

- 2 Program Support Operators have gone Full-Time: William Verkerk and Peggy Lawrence.
- 1 - Resignation
- 1 new employee in the February 19th class, Natisha Gales
- On Time Performance for January 2024 - 87.38%
- Recommendation to appoint Ye Qian as a board member, reassignment of Hugh “Skip” Proctor to Chair and Robert “Bob” Warren to Vice Chair due to resignations of Kim Tyler and Helen Clark
- Still actively recruiting.
- Notifications are going well, feedback received from some customers like the feature; others don’t. Customers can customize their preference on the type of notifications they would like to receive.

Peter Aube - Maintenance

- Demand response ran 33,778 miles in January.
- Non-revenue Gas and Diesel vehicles ran 5,881 miles in January.
- Non-revenue Electric Cars ran 16,313 miles in January.

- Fixed route buses ran 147,168 miles in January.
- Battery Electric buses ran 6,111 miles in January.
- Maintenance performed (108) Preventative Maintenance Inspections in January (100% on-time).
- Maintenance performed (14) road calls in January, (10,512) miles between road calls for fixed route.
- Maintenance performed (2) road call in January, (16,889) miles between calls for demand response.
- Maintenance continued interior major cleaning/Stripping waxing floors previously completed by Vendor.
- Preparing Seven (7) New Gillig BEB's for service.
- All Technicians completed BEB 3.0 Familiarization, I/O Tablet, and Vanner diagnostic training for Battery Electric Buses.
- Several Newer Technicians completed basic Electric and Multiplex training.
- Four Technicians completed Voith Transmission and Warranty Certification.

6B. Community Outreach

Staff Resource: Emily Powell, Community Outreach Manager

Events

- Provided transportation for Town of Chapel Hill staff from Town Hall to a field location for LUMO work
- Operations team members enjoyed casual uniform weeks, education, and appreciation events for the Black History Month, Super Bowl, Heart Health Month, and Valentine's Day holiday
- COM attended the APTA "Marketing, Communications, and Customer Experience" Workshop in New Orleans with 400 other professionals in the industry.

Communications

- Parts of the website received updating for user friendliness and a fresh look. This project continues and will culminate at the end of 2024 when the entire Town website is reworked.
- Initial kickoff meeting with the Rivers Agency, who will help us craft our brand and market ourselves for the future.
- Customers received information through social media channels, website, rider app alerts, on the bus, and in shelters regarding holiday service changes, emergency weather, route detours, Tar Heel Express, updating their mobile apps, and a new stop.

Pending

- Transit will participate in the Town's Peoples Academy -including providing shuttles for participants to different town facilities and hosting the academy on March 2.
- Several events in March by student groups or departments from UNC will have our presence at informational tables or assisting with shuttles for participants.



Mutual Learning



Transit team members at the Town's MLK Celebration

6C. Planning

Staff Resource: Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager

1. UPDATE: ACTIVE PLANNING INITIATIVES*North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT)*

Staff are continuing to advance planning activities for the NSBRT's 60% design. Planning staff are also completing contract negotiations for Phase 2 of the NSBRT naming rights study.

Orange County Short Range Transit Plan

Chapel Hill Transit staff are members of the core technical team, providing guidance and feedback as Orange County develops their SRTP. The County's planning consultants are currently investigating existing conditions and trends. The project's first phase of outreach and engagement is planned for March 4 –March 31, 2024. The consulting team will be collecting feedback on existing service needs and concerns and potential transit service improvements. CHT staff will provide additional updates as this project advances.

GoTriangle Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)

Chapel Hill Transit staff participated as a member of the GoTriangle SRTP core technical team. The final plan was adopted by the GoTriangle Board of Trustees on January 24, 2024.

2. UPCOMING PLANNING PROJECTS*Chapel Hill Transit Short Range Transit Plan Update (including Microtransit Feasibility Study)*

Midyear, CHT will begin updating our Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), the roadmap positioning us for continued financial and operational success. CHT's last SRTP was completed in early 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impacts of COVID, including an ongoing, nationwide shortage of transit operators has significantly impacted our ability to implement planned improvements. Patterns of development, ridership, and employment have also changed post-COVID, challenging the usefulness of assumptions in CHT's 2020 SRTP. The SRTP update, including robust public outreach and engagement, will assess CHT's operating conditions, evaluate existing and planned service characteristics and system performance, and recommend changes to better serve the public. We will consider and address emerging challenges and opportunities in the SRTP update, including microtransit, BRT, and changing development patterns in our service area.

Chapel Hill Transit High-Capacity Transit Corridor Study

In FY25, CHT anticipates initiating a study assessing options and developing an implementation action plan for enhanced, high-capacity transit connections (including but not limited to express bus service, bus rapid transit, bus on shoulder access, transit queue jumps, etc.) between Chapel Hill, Durham, and potentially Alamance County. The discontinuation of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT) project leaves the critical need for improved, multimodal connections between Chapel Hill, Durham, and beyond unfulfilled. CHT is interested in collaborating with regional transit partners to assess high-capacity transit options on US 15-501, the primary artery between Durham and Chapel Hill, and to explore the feasibility of alternate or additional high-capacity transit corridors in the Chapel Hill Transit service area. The

feasibility assessment is a critical first step to advancing viable projects and seeking implementation support and resources from federal partners.

Zero Emissions Fleet & Facilities Transition and Resilience Plan

CHT's request for funding is included in the package of projects submitted by the State of North Carolina for consideration through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Building Resilience Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) program. If awarded, the BRIC Capability & Capacity Building (C&CB) funding will support the development of a comprehensive Zero-Emissions Fleet & Facilities Transition and Resilience Plan for CHT. This plan will help CHT successfully transition to more sustainable, environmentally friendly transportation technologies and protect our ability to provide uninterrupted transit service before, during, and after disruptive events. This includes enhancing our department's ability to anticipate, manage, and navigate power outages (on-route and at facilities) so CHT's battery electric buses can continue providing critical services during normal and emergency conditions. Staff will provide an update when a funding decision has been made.

6D. Director

Staff Resource: Brian Litchfield, Transit Director

- The Director's report will be provided during the February 26, 2024, Partners' Meeting.