

03-17-2021 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #1: Orange County Transit Plan and Proposed Commuter Rail Update

Council Question:

Are there specific definitions re. short/medium/ long-term?

Staff Response:

The Transit Plan Update is looking at the next 20 years. For staff planning purposes we assumed the following: short-term (1-4years); mid-term (5-9years) and long-term (10+years).

Council Question:

What is the extent of the Town's involvement with the Proposed Commuter Rail project? In other words, what role does the town serve on this project, given there are no stops in Chapel Hill?

Staff Response:

The presentation is provided as information pertaining to ongoing regional transportation planning and engagement efforts. Service to Orange County is not included in the current study for the initial rail project and there is no funding from Orange County revenue sources supporting the study. Should local leaders choose to move forward with the project at the conclusion of the current study, the rail project has an approximate opening year of 2029. However, extension of rail service westward to Mebane is presently included in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the long-range, locally-adopted regional transportation vision. The Town Council has indirect involvement in the rail project through its representation on the GoTriangle Board as well as the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, both of which are among the partners overseeing the current study. Additionally, GoTriangle is planning the relocation of the Regional Transit Center to a new location adjacent to a planned rail station in RTP. The new location would allow for convenient connections between regional bus services to Orange County and the rail project.

Council Question:

What are the timelines associated with the "short term", "mid term" and "long term" priorities identified under "Regional Connectivity" and "Local Connectivity"?

Staff Response:

The Transit Plan Update is looking at the next 20 years. For staff planning purposes we assumed the following: short-term (1-4years); mid-term (5-9years) and long-term (10+years).

03-17-2021 Town Council Meeting

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Council Question:

Among the unfunded priorities listed on pages 6 and 7 of the packet, what are the top five unfunded priorities?

Staff Response:

Chapel Hill Transit has many unfunded service and capital needs (including buses and bus stops). For service, we would recommend the following priorities (attached) improving frequency, strategically expanding weekend service and extending weekday hours of service - to improve access to jobs and community places and ensure transit is accessible, especially for those who depend on it the most:

- *CL – Weekend service.*
- *D – Extend route to Patterson Place for weekdays and weekends (Saturday service until 9pm).*
- *J – Improve peak hour service to 10 minutes and provide 15 minute service until noon. Extend Saturday service until 11pm and Sunday service until 9pm.*
- *CL – Improve peak hour weekday service to 10 minutes.*
- *D – Improve peak hour weekday service to 10 minutes.*
- *HS – Add weekend service.*
- *Weekend Service – improve frequency on eight routes to 30 minutes or better.*

Council Question:

Can any updates be provided regarding the pilot fare-free service that GoTriangle has created involving a route that passes through Chapel Hill?

Staff Response:

Chapel Hill Transit staff worked with GoTriangle to implement a pilot fare free project for GoTriangle's 405 route that serves Durham (Durham Station, Duke and VA Hospitals), Chapel Hill (Downtown Chapel Hill, and UNC Hospitals) and Carrboro (Downtown Carrboro and Collins Crossing) on weekdays. This pilot project allows customers to use the 405 route fare free to and from seven (7) stops in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. The interest is to use the public transportation service in this key corridor to help address capacity concerns on Chapel Hill Transit's CW and J routes during the afternoon/evening peak, demonstrate collaboration between GoTriangle and Chapel Hill Transit and utilize existing transit capacity. This will allow us to test demand in this area, identify potential issues/challenges and determine if the concept is sustainable and/or could be applied in other areas. The pilot started on January 19, 2021 and has gone well. It is

03-17-2021 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

expected that the service will be most effective when the University and local employers move out of virtual or mostly virtual environments post-COVID. We anticipate running the pilot through at least the upcoming fall semester, at which time we will be able to provide a better assessment.

Unfunded Improvements

Route	Service Summary	Additional Revenue Hours (Annual)	Additional Peak Vehicles	Annual Operating Cost	Frequency: Peak	Frequency: Midday	Frequency: Night	Frequency: Weekend	Service Span
CL	Add weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	20	30	60	60	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
CW	Improve midday service to 30 minutes.	1,500	0	\$150,000	20/30	30	60	60	7:00 AM - 9:00 PM (M-F) 8:30 AM - 6:30 PM (Sat-Sun)
D	Extend service to Patterson Place and provide Saturday service until 9 PM.	5,300	1	\$530,000	20	30	60	60	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
J	Improve morning peak service to every 10 minutes and offer 15-minute service until noon. Provide Saturday service until 11 PM and Sunday service until 9 PM.	3,200	2	\$320,000	10/15	15/20	40	40	6:30 AM - 12:00 AM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 11:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sun)
NS	Improve morning peak service to every 6 minutes. Provide Saturday service until 11 PM and Sunday service until 9 PM.	2,300	3	\$230,000	6/10	15	30/40	40	5:30 AM - 11:30 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 11:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sun)
New Service: West NC 54	New weekday peak-only service from White Cross to UNC-Chapel Hill.	1,500	1	\$150,000	70	-	-	-	6:30 AM - 9:30 AM; 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM (M-F)
New Service: Estes Drive Crosstown	New service connecting UNC-Chapel Hill, University Place, and Glen Lennox via Estes Drive.	12,900	3	\$1,290,000	30	30	30	45	6:30 AM - 8:30 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sat-Sun)
				\$2,800,000					
EZ Rider	Same Day Customer Trips	6,240	3	\$624,000	-	-	-	-	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
On-Demand Service	Midday/Evening trips to/from service area with no bus routes	8,500	0	\$850,000	-	-	-	-	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM; 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM (M-F)
Senior Shuttle	Bi-Directional Service utilizing 2nd vehicle	2,205	1	\$220,500	60	60	60	-	8:00 AM - 7:00 PM
A	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	3,400	1	\$340,000	30	30	30	60	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
CL	Improve weekday peak service to 10 minutes frequency	9,000	3	\$900,000	10	30	60	-	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM
D	Improve weekday peak service to 10 minutes frequency	9,000	3	\$900,000	10	30	60	60	6:00 AM - 11:00 PM
F	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	7,400	1	\$740,000	30	30	30	-	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F)
F	Add Weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	60	60	60	60	8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
G	Extend evening service to 9:00 PM	750	0	\$75,000	60	60	60	-	7:00 AM - 9:00 PM (M-F)
HS	Add weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	30	30	30	60	8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
N	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	3,300	1	\$330,000	30	30	30	60	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
NS	Improve mid-day to 10 minutes frequency	3,750	3	\$375,000	7.5	10	40	40	5:30 AM - 11:30 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 11:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sun)
T	Extend service to Fordham Boulevard. Improve peak service to 30 minutes.	4,000	1	\$400,000	30	60	30	-	7:00 AM - 6:00 PM (M-F)
New Service: Chatham Park	Express Service to/from Chatham Park and Campus (weekday only)	6,250	3	\$625,000	20	60	-	-	6:00 AM - 9:00 AM (M-F) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (M-F)
Improve Weekend Service	Improve weekend service on A, CM, CW, D, J, N, NS and NU (Saturday and Sunday) - increased frequency on existing routes	12,000	0	\$1,200,000	-	-	-	30	8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)
Improve Weekend Service	Improve weekend service on A, CM, CW, D, J, N, NS and NU 6:30pm - 11:30pm	5,600	0	\$560,000	-	-	-	60	6:30 PM - 11:30 PM (Sat) 6:30 PM - 11:30 PM (Sun)
Improve Weekday Service	Improve weekday service 7pm-11:30pm	5,000	0	\$500,000	-	-	30	-	7:00 PM - 11:30 PM (M-F)
Total				\$14,499,500	Note: Cost figures are in 2020 dollars				