



CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT  
Town of Chapel Hill  
6900 Millhouse Road  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-2401

phone (919) 969-4900 fax (919) 968-2840  
[www.townofchapelhill.org/transit](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/transit)

**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE**

**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING AND AGENDA**

**FEBRUARY 27, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.**

**CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT – VIRTUAL**

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## CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

**JANUARY 23, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.**

### CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT

**Present:** Camille Berry, Chapel Hill Town Council  
Chassem Anderson, UNC Transportation and Parking  
Chris Dobek, UNC Transportation and Parking  
Gordon Merklein, Associate Vice Chancellor for Real Estate and Campus Enterprises at UNC  
Melissa McCullough, Chapel Hill Town Council  
Theodore Nollert, Chapel Hill Town Council

**Absent:** Jason Merrill, Carrboro Town Council  
Marie Parker, Town of Carrboro - Assistant Town Manager  
Randee Haven-O'Donnell, Carrboro Town Council

**Staff present:** Brian Litchfield, Transit Director  
Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Tim Schwarzauer, Business Services Manager  
Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager  
Emily Powell, Community Outreach Manager  
Loryn Clark, Town of Chapel Deputy Town Manager

**Guests:** Landon Coley, UNC Transportation and Parking  
Tina Moon, Town of Carrboro

1. Approval of November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Meeting Summary - Approved
2. Employee Recognition
  - A. No Individual Recognitions
  - B. Brian thanks everyone for the heavy lift for winter weather!
  - C. Transit is working on Succession Planning & Cross Training
3. Consent Items
  - A. December Financial Report – Provided to Partners
4. Discussion Items
  - A. FY 2025-26 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development Update – Provided to Partners

Committee Member asked about route changes to increase service. Transit Planning is working on an informational MEMO with potential options. Caroline anticipates MEMO will be ready by the end of January and distributed to the Partners for review.

**Budget Focus Items:**

Pay Plans for Operators & Maintenance, Fuel Costs, Radio System, Backup Power Systems, Facility Repairs & Upgrades (Roof & HVAC), NSBRT

Orange County Re-Evaluation is currently underway and will impact budget/plans. Potential impacts to our Federal Grant Funding are currently unknown.

Only have infrastructure capacity for 20 electric buses. If we expand beyond that infrastructure will also need to be expanded.

Town working on Compensation Study. 60% of Transit budget is tied to personnel. Need a competitive starting pay but also a competitive pay progression.

Committee member asked for estimate of fuel cost changes by adding electric buses to the fleet. Electric vehicles do not currently impact the fuel budget.

Committee member asked for clarification on available fund balance vs additional money from partners to cover our additional capital projects. Cannot rely on the fund balance it would be better to be more intentional about additional partners money set aside specifically for the larger capital projects.

B. FY 2023-24 Audit Report – Provided to Partners

5. Information Items

A. North South Bus Rapid Transit Project Update – Provided to Partners

Committee member asked about transitions between dedicated vs mixed use lanes. This is being incorporated in the planning. Committee member mentioned current issues with Culbreth area. This planning process is working on incorporating as many improvement changes as possible within its boundaries. Public education will be a focus. Committee member asked if Hurricane Helene had any impacts on our plans. So far it has not but we are aware that this could be a potential impact.

B. Electric Bus Update – Provided to Partners

Committee member asked about the replacement bus. It will have the newer battery system. Committee member asked about the other three buses that are of the same system. They are out of service until the investigation is complete and it is determined what needs to happen next (recalled, replaced, or ok to use). Committee member expressed appreciation of communication and how this event was handled. Committee member asked about presence of a “black box” on the electric buses. There are data loggers on the bus, and these are being looked into as part of the investigation process. Committee member asked about last training on electric buses. Typically, when new vehicles arrive all training is provided as well as on-going training. Committee member expressed gratitude that everything happened how it did and that no one was harmed. Brian stated that we will continue to purchase electric vehicles as we have funding to do so. Diesel buses also catch on fire, so we do not plan to stop investing in electric technology. Committee member asked about warranty of the bus. It was technically out of warranty (over 2 years old) but this was not an issue with the bus it was with the battery manufacturer and the bus company is making sure this is taken care of. Not sure

what will happen with the other three buses until we know more specifics about what happened.

Brian mentioned the “roll away” bus. It was a new bus, and all safety evaluations were done, and it has been confirmed that it was not a mechanical issue with the bus.

C. Project Updates – Provided to Partners

6. Departmental Monthly Reports

- A. Operations – Provided to Partners
- B. Community Outreach – Provided to Partners

Fire Side Chat is on Feb 10th 6:30-7:30pm

C. Planning – Provided to Partners

We only have 1 route left that is being handled by Carolina Livery. We hope that we will not need this moving forward into the next fiscal year.

We split the HS route into the HS and C route because it just couldn't be run efficiently. Committee member asked about difficulties with routes running on time. This route was delayed because it was so long and also running down the MLK & campus corridor. Small group from Transit will be going to DC to talk about federal funding.

7. Next Meeting – February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting)

Happy Birthday to Camille!

8. Adjourn

**3A. January Financial Report**

Staff Resource: Tim Schwarzauer, Business Services Manager

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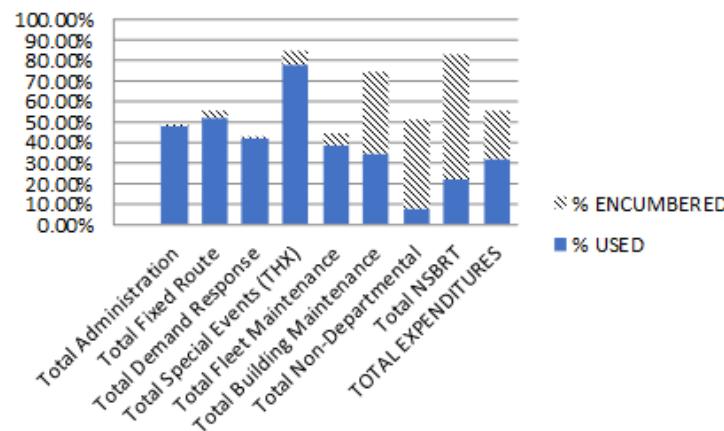
**January 2025**

- Expenses for the month of January were \$2,091,582.96. This aggregation of expenses and encumbrances is consistent with years past and is in line with what we would expect.
- The revised budget includes carryforward of projects not completed in FY24. This includes bus and LTV purchases (EZ Rider), NSBRT design consultants, and other various projects.
- The Non-Departmental category includes bus purchases encumbrances from the previous fiscal year that will be expended in FY25.
- 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 Jan 2025

	ORIGINAL BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD EXPENSES	ACTUAL MONTH EXPENSES	CURRENT ENCUMBRANCES	BALANCE AVAILABLE	% USED OR ENCUMBERED		% USED	% ENCUMBERED
							Jan	58.33%		
Total Administration	2,705,051	2,713,765	1,285,855.31	165,578.38	35,938.81	1,391,971		48.70	47.38%	1.32%
Total Fixed Route	17,915,950	19,416,088	10,140,474.23	1,073,774.12	603,901.94	8,671,712		55.30	52.23%	3.11%
Total Demand Response	2,906,671	3,408,495	1,428,631.82	212,347.68	11,499.47	1,968,364		42.30	41.91%	0.34%
Total Special Events (THX)	317,845	318,056	248,073.37	38,534.93	20,854.88	49,128		84.60	78.00%	6.56%
Total Fleet Maintenance	5,697,185	5,903,250	2,282,600.97	267,367.54	357,387.62	3,263,261		44.70	38.67%	6.05%
Total Building Maintenance	929,213	1,131,546	388,850.07	86,332.74	456,499.02	286,197		74.70	34.36%	40.34%
Total Non-Departmental	2,184,523	18,684,323	1,368,731.11	67,544.97	8,188,276.94	9,127,315		51.10	7.33%	43.82%
Total NSBRT	4,000,000	6,696,567	1,479,158.42	180,102.60	4,079,743.63	1,137,665		83.00	22.09%	60.92%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>36,656,438</b>	<b>58,272,090</b>	<b>18,622,375.30</b>	<b>2,091,582.96</b>	<b>13,754,102.31</b>	<b>25,895,612</b>		<b>55.60</b>	<b>31.96%</b>	<b>23.60%</b>

#### CHT Jan 2025 YTD Expenses as % of Budget



#### CHT Total YTD Expenses - Previous Years Comparison



**4A. FY 2025-26 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development Update****Action:** 1. Receive information and provide staff with feedback.**Staff Resource:** Timothy Schwarzauer, Business Services Manager

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 2025-26 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 next month, 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 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 increased costs in operating and capital expenses. We are no longer in a position to continue to absorb these costs, and while we are always looking for grant opportunities, the current landscape means we can no longer rely on new grants to cover 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 2025-26 is estimated at \$36,852,958. This budget also assumes that we will operate all routes and no longer utilize Carolina Livery as we have in past years. At this time, the budget assumes the following:

- 5% of market cost of living increase for all Team Members (~\$1.4M).
- 2% of market adjustment buffer for recommendations from the Town's pay study (~\$400K)
- 10% increase in healthcare costs (~\$400K)
- Capital contribution (\$500K)
- Holds federal and state funding static
- Safe Rides will transition to University (details to be discussed)
- Increases to parts, supplies and contracts for services
- Positions adds (notes below)

While key expense areas such as fuel, salaries and benefits and insurance have not been finalized we are currently showing a shortfall of around \$2M while using current fiscal year contributions for revenues:

	<b>Current Year Allocation</b>	<b>Potential FY26</b>	<b>Estimated Difference</b>	<b>FY26 Capital Plan Projection</b>
Town of Chapel Hill	\$6,557,225	\$7,572,975	\$1,015,750	\$7,912,000
Town of Carrboro	\$2,366,281	\$2,557,353	\$191,072	\$2,640,000
University	\$11,211,816	\$12,056,694	\$844,878	\$12,510,000

### **Position Adds Overview**

The draft budget includes twelve (12) new positions, ten (10) new Transit Operators, one (1) new Transit Supervisor and one (1) new Quality Assurance/ Quality Control Position (QA/QC). With the completion of our current Short Range Transit Plan the staffing analysis showed a need to have 135 full time Transit Operators and an additional Operations Supervisor to effectively operate our service level. This has not been an issue until recently due to staffing shortages and COVID era service reductions. At this time, we have 120 full time fixed route Operator positions and as we plan for all of our service to operate through Chapel Hill Transit in FY26, we need to start adding this positions in order to cover service and cover planned and unplanned leave of Operators and Supervisors. Additionally, prior to COVID we were able to cover most of this work using Program Support (part time, non-benefited positions) and that sector of the employment market has not returned as we have seen little to no interest from applicants in part time work.

The QA/QC position will be covered by funding from the Orange County Transit Plan and will not impact Partner's contributions. This position will reduce the demands on Dispatch and allow us to improve our focus on quality data going into and coming out of our real time information system (GMV), which will improve the customer experience and allow Dispatch to focus on operational needs.

### **Items for further consideration**

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

- 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). We recommend adding an additional \$500K in the next fiscal year (FY26) to be used toward future debt financing of buses – especially with the likelihood that federal grants for buses will be limited or non-existent.

Fixed Route Buses FY21-26	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Need to purchase (capital plan 2019)	6	6	7	7	7	7
Funded	0	3	8	16	2*	2*
+/-	9	12	11	2	7	12

\*FY25 Community Grant funding; FY26 Orange County Transit Plan funding

- 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.
- 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 requesting funding for a new Quality Assurance/ Quality Control (QA/QC) position in the FY26 OCTP Work Plan. Partner funding could be necessary in future budget years for this position.
- 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 26th and May 14th, the presentation of the Manager's Recommended Budget is scheduled for May 7th 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 2025-26**

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

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director

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**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 2025-26:

***2025 Holiday Schedule:***

**Spring Break March 10, 2025 – March 16, 2025: Weekday NU will end at 7:00pm, Safe Rides and the Saturday/Sunday NU routes will not operate. Sunday NU will operate on March 16.**

- Good Friday – Friday, April 18 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides); EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.; 420 Route will operate
- Memorial Day – Monday, May 26 – No service
- Juneteenth – Thursday, 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 – Friday, July 4 – No service
- Labor Day – Monday, September 1 – No service
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 27 – No Service
- Day after Thanksgiving – Friday, November 28 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides) and EZ Rider: 8:15a.m. – 6:52p.m.

**Winter Break December 16, 2025 – January 5, 2026: Weekday NU will end at 7:00pm, Safe Rides and the Saturday/Sunday NU routes will not operate.**

- Monday, December 22 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>
- Tuesday, December 23 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>
- Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)

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

<sup>2</sup> Routes that will not operate: CCX, FCX, JFX, and NU

- Christmas Day – Thursday, December 25 – No Service
- Day after Christmas – Friday, December 26 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU and Safe Rides)
- Saturday, December 27 – Saturday Routes (No U, NU, Safe Rides)
- Sunday, December 28 – Sunday Routes (No U, NU, Safe Rides)
- Monday, December 29 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>
- Tuesday, December 30 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>
- Wednesday, December 31 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>

***2026 Holiday Schedule:***

- New Year's Day – Thursday, January 1 – No Service
- Friday, January 2 – Local Service Only<sup>1</sup>, no Express service<sup>2</sup>
- 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.
- NU Route will end at 7:00pm during UNC's Summer Break (May 12, 2025 – August 17, 2025)
- Tar Heel Express will be added as schedules are finalized.

**Recommendation**

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Routes that will not operate: CCX, FCX, JFX, and NU

**4C. Short Range Transit Plan Update**

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

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager

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**Short Range Transit Plan Update**

With this Committee's approval, Transit staff are prepared to proceed with a planned update to Chapel Hill Transit's Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The information below provides an overview of the project goals, scope of work, timeline, and funding sources.

*Background*

Chapel Hill Transit's Short Range Transit Plan was last updated and adopted in March 2020 (<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=45520>), just before the outbreak of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2020, Transit implemented a series of the SRTP's recommended service changes including, most notably, the first-ever Sunday service in over 40 years, a focus on providing high-frequency service in transit corridors and service efficiencies. The plan also included a significant number of unfunded service priorities (attached) that staff has sought funding for over the last five years. In the five years following the plan's adoption, we've observed significant demographic, transportation, and land use shifts in Transit's service area and regionally. Some of these trends challenge the data and assumptions underlying the SRTP's service plan; others limit Transit's full implementation of the SRTP's recommendations. Staff recommend revisiting and confirming or revising the plan's fact base and service recommendations.

**SRTP Update Goals:**

- Remain well-positioned for success over the next 5-10 years.
- Respond to continuing shifts in underlying conditions.
- Successfully integrate and leverage bus rapid transit service.
- Identify opportunities to enhance system and service.
- Explore alternative and/or emerging transit delivery models (ex. microtransit).
- Refine, clarify, and strengthen the plan's implementation elements.
- Meet current and future public transportation needs while limiting impacts to the Department's budget.

**Project Timeline:** 24 months from issuing a notice to proceed.

**Project Budget:** \$600,000

**Funding Sources:**

- Orange County Transit Plan: \$250,000

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Areas of Persistent Poverty Program (AoPP) grant (funds only microtransit component): \$350,000. This portion could be put on hold pending potential changes with federal funding.

### **Recommendation**

That the Partners Committee receive information presented and approve issuing an RFP to initiate work on the Short Range Transit Plan Update.

**Unfunded Improvements (Updated 02/2025)**

Route	Service Summary	Additional Revenue Hours (Annual)	Additional Peak Vehicles	Annual Operating Cost (2020)	Annual Operating Cost (2024)	Frequency: Peak	Frequency: Midday	Frequency: Night	Frequency: Weekend	Service Span	Year Funded in OCTP	
<b>PRIORITY UNFUNDDED PROJECTS SRTP 2020</b>												
CL	Add weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	\$197,600	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. (Note: Funded by OCTP, not yet implemented)	1,500	0	\$150,000	\$228,00	20/30	30	60	60	7:00 AM - 9:00 PM (M-F) 8:30 AM - 6:30 PM (Sat-Sun)	2023	
NS	Improve morning peak service to every 6 minutes. Provide Saturday service until 11 PM and Sunday service until 9 PM. (Note: Funded by OCTP, not yet implemented)	2,300	3	\$230,000	\$349,600	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)	2026	
D	Extend service to Patterson Place and provide Saturday service until 9 PM. (Note: Programmed for FY28 funding in OCTP)	5,300	1	\$530,000	\$805,600	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)	2026	
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. (Note: Programmed for FY28 funding in OCTP)	3,200	2	\$320,000	\$486,400	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)	2028	
New Service: West NC 54	New weekday peak-only service from White Cross to UNC-Chapel Hill.	1,500	1	\$150,000	\$228,000	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	\$1,960,800	30	30	30	45	6:30 AM - 8:30 PM (M-F) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sat-Sun)		
<b>UNFUNDED PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN 2020 SRTP</b>				<b>\$ 2,800,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,028,000</b>							
EZ Rider	Same Day Customer Trips	6,240	3	\$624,000	\$948,480	-	-	-	-	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	\$1,292,000	-	-	-	-	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	\$335,160	60	60	60	-	8:00 AM - 7:00 PM		
A	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	3,400	1	\$340,000	\$516,800	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	Add weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	\$197,600	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)		
CL	Improve weekday peak service to 10 minutes frequency	9,000	3	\$900,000	\$1,368,000	10	30	60	-	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM		
D	Improve weekday peak service to 10 minutes frequency	9,000	3	\$900,000	\$1,368,000	10	30	60	60	6:00 AM - 11:00 PM		
F	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	7,400	1	\$740,000	\$1,124,800	30	30	30	-	6:30 AM - 10:00 PM (M-F)		
F	Add Weekend service.	1,300	0	\$130,000	\$197,600	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	\$114,000	60	60	60	-	7:00 AM - 9:00 PM (M-F)		
HS	Add weekend service. (Note: Funded by OCTP, not yet implemented)	1,300	0	\$130,000	\$197,600	30	30	30	60	8:00 AM - 9:00 PM (Sat) 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Sun)	2023	
N	Improve weekday service to 30 minutes frequency	3,300	1	\$330,000	\$501,600	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	\$570,000	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)		
NS BRT	Operation of NSBRT (at launch of service, marginal increase from NS Route operation)	14,000	14	N/A	\$1,400,000	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	\$608,000	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	\$950,000	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	\$1,824,000	-	-	-	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	\$851,200	-	-	-	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	\$760,000	-	-	30	-	7:00 PM - 11:30 PM (M-F)		
Seamless Regional Paratransit	Partnership with GoTriangle to provide seamless paratransit service.			\$500,000	\$750,000	-	-	-	-			
<b>Improvements Funded/Programmed by OCTP (FY23-FY28)</b>					<b>\$1,839,200</b>							
<b>Unfunded Improvements</b>				<b>\$12,329,500</b>	<b>\$18,063,640</b>							

\* Yellow Highlights identifies top priorities

**5A. Bus Stop Improvement Plan**

Staff Resource: Katy Fontaine, Transit Development Manager  
Henry Shriver, Transit Planner

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Chapel Hill Transit is committed to providing our customers with a safe and comfortable transit experience. The start of that experience is at one of our over 500 bus stops. As many of our bus stops have been around for several years, there are various levels of improvement needed – from ADA accessibility to improving amenities.

**Bus Stop Audit**

In 2023-2024, Chapel Hill Transit undertook a bus stop audit to take inventory of our stops and the state of the amenities. Using the data collected, we were able to complete a comprehensive improvement list, based on four weighted focus areas – Safety, Equity, Ridership, and Community Connections.

**Recent Stop Improvements**

In January 2025, our construction contractor finished work on a new shelter at Homestead Road at Seymour Center. These additional amenities at the stop allow the stop to be fully ADA accessible and provide a greater customer experience for those riding from the Seymour Center or Southern Human Services. This brings our total number of stops that have been upgraded to 37. We have 19 additional sites that are ready for construction (includes 6 along NC-54) and 23 sites that are in design.

Our construction contractor also installed 33 posts (the remainder will be attached to shelters) to support our new Papercast Real Time Signs (small real time information signs) from Connexionz. While we are still waiting on the signs to be shipped, having the posts installed will allow for a quicker implementation once they are delivered.

**Next Steps**

Staff is currently working with our design firm to compile the next set of construction plans. Sites include the West Franklin Street bus islands, Ephesus Church Road improvements, and East Franklin Street at the Coffee Shop. We anticipate a request for bids in Spring 2025.

To help create the following construction set, we will be taking the improvement list and determine the level of improvements needed at the stop and the cost to improve. This will allow us to allocate federal funding for bus stop improvements of around \$3M.

### **Staff Presentation**

Staff will update the Partners' on our Draft Bus Stop Strategic Plan at the February 27, 2025 Partners Meeting. Draft presentation is attached.

# Chapel Hill Transit Bus Stop Strategic Plan

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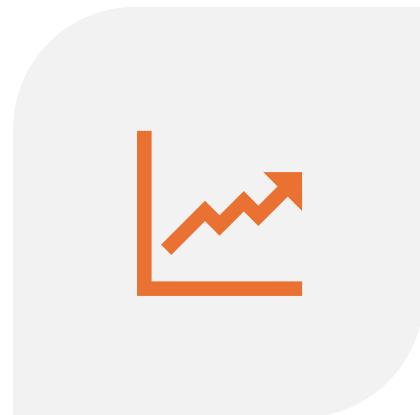
Katy Fontaine, Transit Development Manager

Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager

Henry Shriver, Transit Planner



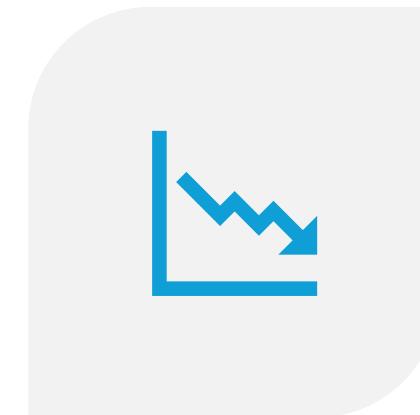
# Purpose



GUIDE FUTURE  
INVESTMENTS



ASSIST PLANNING  
AND PURCHASING



REDUCE  
INEFFICIENCIES

# How are improvements selected?

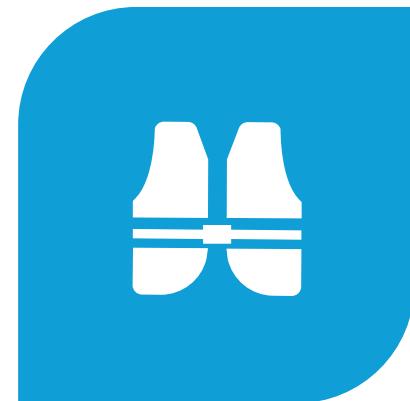
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BUS STOP IMPROVEMENT INDEX



COORDINATION WITH LOCAL  
PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS



LIFE, HEALTH AND SAFETY  
NEEDS

# 2024 Bus Stop Audit

Over 500 stops visited with over 1000 data fields logged



Audit results used to create the following:

Shelter Maintenance  
Schedule

Stop Repairs List

Bus Stop Improvement  
Index

# Index Methodology

Safety - ADA

Equity

Stop Context

Ridership

# Top Identified Stops

- Old Sterling Drive at Eastowne Road
- Homestead Road at Seymour Center Northbound
- East Franklin Street at 1512
- Elliot Road at Fordham Boulevard Westbound
- Old Fayetteville Road at Carrboro Plaza
- MLK at Adelaide Walters Apartments
- MLK at Stateside Drive
- Longview Street at North Columbia Street
- Southern Human Services Northbound
- Homestead Road at Seymour Center Southbound

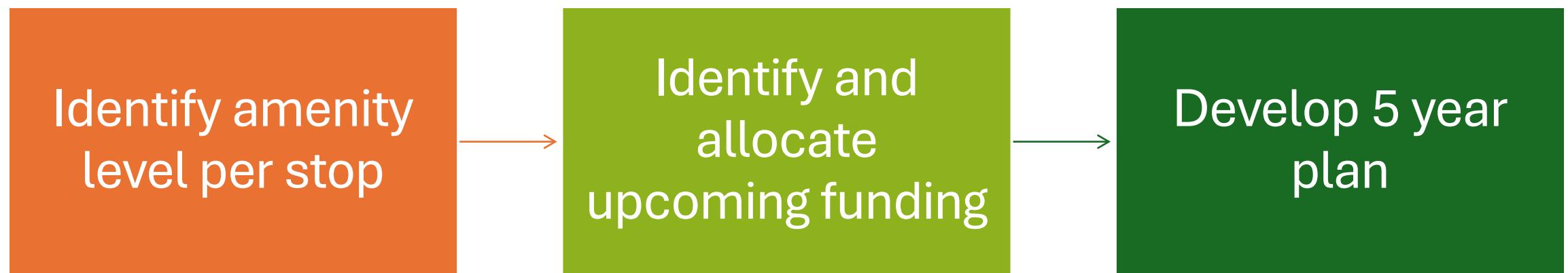


# 2024 Improvement Costs

<b>Estimated Costs</b>	
Survey & Site Design	\$10,850
8' Tolar Bench	\$1,560
36"x36" Map Case	\$895
8' Tolar Shelter	\$10,950
12' Tolar Shelter	\$15,400
16' Tolar Shelter	\$20,805
Shelter Site Construction	\$45,000
Landing Pad Construction	\$18,000

*\*Note – These estimates are based on standard site costs and may increase based on additional amenities and site conditions.*

# Next Steps



## 5B. Major Project Overview and Update

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director  
Brian Litchfield, Director  
Katy Fontaine, Transit Development Manager II

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Transit staff is working on several critical projects and there are additional projects pending. The current projects, along with daily service and administration needs have exceeded the capacity of our administration team. To help prioritize staff time and meet necessary deadlines and Transit Partner priorities, staff has carefully reviewed these projects and is recommending the following priorities and associated timelines (note that some have deadlines established by funding agencies or grant obligations that are not negotiable and extending timelines for vehicle purchases lead to cost increases):

- **NSBRT Funding Application and Ratings Review: October 2025– January 2026 NSBRT 60% Design (on going)**
- **NSBRT 90% Design: January/February**
- **Facility Fire and Safety System: Ongoing**
- **Electric Bus Infrastructure (needed for 7 buses that are being built) - Ongoing**
- **Finalize Purchases of Fixed Route and Demand Response Vehicles – Completed**
- **Implementation of Bus Stop/Shelter Grant: Spring/Summer 2025 (see item 5A)**
- **Customer Survey: Spring 2025 (Short Range Transit Plan)**
- **Zero Emission Fleet Plan: Develop Scope of Work and Issue RFQ by January 2026 (consultant) – assuming availability of federal funds**
- **Capital Plan Update: FY26**
- **Transit Facility Expansion Plan: Develop Scope of Work and Issue RFQ by Fall**
- **Short Range Planning Efforts: Issue RFQ by early Spring with work underway in FY25 (see item 4C)**

### Updates on Ongoing Projects

#### A. Solar Powered Real Time Information Displays

- Updated Connexionz Papercast signs will display real-time information, with audible data available for increased ADA accessibility.
- An additional 53 Papercast Signs will be installed throughout Chapel Hill and Carrboro in late fall/early winter.

#### B. Transit Facility Expansion & Improvements

- In Fall of 2022, our Facility Expansion Concept Plan was approved by Council. After receiving the grant to assist with design work, we are moving forward with developing a scope of work for the project.
- The scope of work will include expanding our bus parking lot, new operations and maintenance facility, and an update to our Zero Emission Vehicle Plan.

- In Summer 2023, Chapel Hill Transit moved forward with repairs to our bus parking lot. This included replacing the concrete at our entrance gate, repairing drain work, and installing larger pads near our fuel island. We have additional work to go on our security gate/fence. **Zero Emission Fleet Plan**
- While we have a current plan that has been developed, the new grant guidelines require us to have a more developed plan, that includes resiliency, redundancy, and training.
- Chapel Hill Transit will be utilizing federal funding to hire a firm to make us a plan.

**5C. North South Bus Rapid Transit Project Update**

Staff Resource: Katy Fontaine, Transit Development Manager  
Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager

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**Update and Progress Report**

NSBRT's 60% Design phase is successfully advancing, with significant progress being made in several key focus areas. Recently, Transit staff and our consultant team have:

- Completed inter-departmental and inter-agency review of draft 60% designs for corridor segment 1 (Southern Village Park & Ride to NC-54 Bypass); beginning revisions to segment 1 design and engineering based on reviews.
- Initiated inter-departmental and inter-agency review of draft 60% designs for corridor segment 2 (NC 54 Bypass to North Street), including submitting designs for stations on UNC's campus to UNC for formal review and approval.
- Continued design and engineering of corridor segment 3 (North Street to Eubanks Road Park & Ride)
- Initiated Level A subsurface utility engineering (SUE) in select locations (including hand digging of potholes in locations on campus with aging/fragile subsurface utility infrastructure).
- Facilitated ongoing coordination with NCDOT including negotiating and executing agreements for shared improvements on NC-86 (corridor segment 3), a planned resurfacing project (corridor segment 2), and opportunities for joint project management and construction management support.
- Continued coordinating the project's required permits and third party agreements, including a required access agreement for stations on UNC's campus.
- Worked with the Town's Strategic Communications team to hire an NSBRT marketing and communications support staffer and to launch an updated project website.
- Prepared for procurement of real estate acquisition services to manage NSBRT's required right of way and easement acquisitions.

**Technical and Policy Committee Meetings**

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, our project team met with our Technical and Policy Committees at the Chapel Hill Public Library to provide important updates on the project. Topics covered included:

- Review of Segment 1 60% Design updates, based on the comments provided in November 2024
- Review of stations included in Segment 2 60% Design
- Coordination with other projects throughout the corridor

- BRT Features, including station technology, queue jumps, and bus-only lanes
- Schedule overview and update

### **NSBRT Funding**

SPOT 7.0 Divisional Needs funding announcements were released shortly after the Partners met in January. Unfortunately, no funding was awarded to any projects submitted by Triangle West TPO (formerly DCHC MPO) in the Divisional Needs category, including NSBRT. Transit staff are awaiting additional information from NCDOT and will continue to seek funding in SPOT 8.0 which recently launched. Transit staff are also working directly with NCDOT staff (at the Division and State level) to investigate ways NCDOT can help advance NSBRT in lieu of direct funding through SPOT. These conversations have been fruitful, and we look forward to providing additional updates to the Partners.

Like all agencies and organizations that were promised, or that anticipated, federal funding for important projects, we are also closely monitoring recent activity at USDOT. To date, we have not been provided any official guidance indicating any changes to NSBRT's funding source. If/when we do, Transit staff will brief the Partners on impacts and next steps. Until then, work on NSBRT continues as planned and we anticipate submitting our formal Capital Improvement Grant request in summer 2025.

### **NSBRT Next Steps**

Staff expect to reach several important project milestones in the next few months:

- **February 28th, 2025:** Segment 2 draft 60% design review comments due.
- **May/June 2025:**
  - Segment 3 draft 60% design's released to agencies and departments for review.
  - NSBRT 60% design presented for consideration to Chapel Hill Town Council.

**6A. Operations Report**

Staff Resource: Joe McMiller – Deputy Operations Manager  
Melissa Patrick – Assistant Operations Manager  
Peter Aube – Maintenance Manager  
Michelle Sykes-Parker – Training Coordinator  
Mark Lowry – Safety Officer

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**Fixed Route Division – Joe McMiller, Deputy Operations Manager**

- Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> – 3 new full-time operators started
- Feb 8<sup>th</sup> – UNC Basketball vs Pittsburgh
- Feb 11<sup>th</sup> – Thrive Tour (Operator Jerry Leathers)
- Feb 19<sup>th</sup> – Services suspended 3pm due to Winter Storm Kingston
- Feb 20<sup>th</sup> – Services delayed until 1pm due to Winter Storm Kingston
- Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> – UNC Basketball vs Virginia

**Demand Response Division – Melissa Patrick, Assistant Operations Manager**

- On Time Performance: 88.44 %
- Inclement weather on February 19 and February 20
- EZRAC meeting was held on February 12

**Maintenance Division – Peter Aube, Maintenance Manager**

- Demand response ran 34,102 miles in January.
- Non-revenue Gas and Diesel vehicles ran 11,482 miles in January.
- Non-revenue Electric cars ran 20,148 miles in January.
- Fixed route buses ran 169,725 miles in January.
- Maintenance performed (159) Preventive Maintenance Inspections in January (99% on-time). One (1) annual inspection was two (2) days late because the vehicle was at the body shop for repairs.
- Maintenance performed (13) road calls in January, (13,055) miles between road calls for fixed route.
- Maintenance performed (0) road calls in January, (34,102) miles between road call for demand response.

- Maintenance continued interior major cleaning /Stripping waxing floors previously completed by vendor.
- Maintenance continues working with procurement on bid documents for phase three depot charging station Installation and destination sign retrofit kits.
- Build completed on 1- 40 ft Gillig bus delivery scheduled in February
- Five 60 Ft new flyer buses scheduled pushed back first bus scheduled to go online Feb. 4 last delivery scheduled in May (subject to change)
- Eight Gillig 40-foot BEB's scheduled to go online for build May 21st
- Five 20 ft LTV's tentative delivery scheduled for late June

#### **Training - Michelle Sykes-Parker, Training Coordinator**

- Four (4) Fixed Route candidates in the hiring process.
- One (1) Demand Response candidate in the hiring process.
- Four (4) new hires since January 2025 in the Training Program.
- Next Training Classes – March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025
- Recent Training Areas of Focus
  - Electric Bus retraining
  - Smith System Refresher
  - Smith System Refresher Class ongoing through July 2025
    - Roughly 80 operators to be retrained through July 2025
  - Operator Trainer Recruitment – ongoing
  - Two (2) Additional NCDOT 3rd Party Testers to be added by Fall 2025
  - Operator Trainer Refresher – February/March

**Safety - Mark Lowry, Safety Officer**

<b><u>Division</u></b>	<b>Jan-24</b>	<b>Jan-25</b>
<b><u>Fixed Route</u></b>		
Preventable	1	2
Non-Preventable	2	0
<b><u>Demand Response</u></b>		
Preventable	0	0
Non-Preventable	0	0
<b><u>Maintenance</u></b>		
Preventable	0	0
Non-Preventable	0	0

## 6B. Community Outreach

Staff Resource: Emily Powell, Community Outreach Manager

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**February's Highlight**

The Fire Side Chat was the highlight of the past month. The event was held at the Chapel Hill Library on February 10<sup>th</sup> as part of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and in part to recognize Black History Month. The room was filled with an attentive audience spanning UNC students and lifelong riders. We thank our panelists for sharing their stories, and of course, their impact on Chapel Hill Transit for the past 50 years: Mayor Howard Lee, Councilman Braxton Foushee, Alderman Gerry Cohen, and Transit Director Brian Litchfield.

The event was recorded and video should be available soon. There's a companion exhibit of our historical photos and news clippings set up in the Library's main room.

**Operators' Experience**

We celebrated our Operators who reached significant milestones in their Years of Service with Chapel Hill Transit. As one Operator shared, "it may only be one year for me, but it feels like longer –because of the way we turn into family".

Other internal events included a Super Bowl snack station and fanwear week, punny Valentine's treats for everyone, Town focus groups for Wellness at Work, and the Town's Vision Zero group who are gathering Operators' perspective on safety on our roadways.



### **Ambassadors**

A new cohort of Transit Operator-Ambassadors have entered the rotation! This is exciting because it shows our team members commitment to being more involved and it helps us cover more community events without straining a few Operators' schedules. We're looking forward to seeing them out soon at events like the Peoples Academy, UNC Wellbeing Expo, Carrboro-In-Motion, and Park and Recreation's Resource Fair for People with Disabilities.

### **Projects on the Horizon**

In addition to our ongoing work, two important projects are being worked on from the Community Outreach Team.

We'll dive into maximizing our partnership with the Transit app by receiving more and analyzing crowd-sourced data. Customers who use the app get to report back on a few easy, but important, aspects of our service like bus cleanliness, shelter conditions, or compliment our Operators. Using the data is an efficient way to be responsive to our customers' experience.

The second project will address our customer-facing information –auditing for accuracy and consistency across printed and web versions. The Community Outreach, Planning, and Operations teams will work together to systematically review our assets and ensure their accuracy and usability. The goals are to have schedules reprinted this Summer, updated timetables in bus shelters that do not have real-time boards, website information prepared for the Town-wide overhaul, and cross-check Operators' information with Customers' expectations.

### **Recruitment Processes**

We are past the half-way point for two recruitment processes. We will have a Commute Solutions Specialist and NSBRT Marketing and Communications Coordinator onboarding in early Spring.

**6C. Planning**

Staff Resource: Caroline Dwyer, Transit Planning Manager

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**SERVICE UPDATES**

Transit staff continue monitoring performance and staffing levels related to the January 6, 2025, service updates (described in January 2025 agenda packet). Available data and information suggest we are meeting most of the adjustments' goals including reinstating service reduced during the COVID pandemic and improving on-time performance on the former HS Route (now the HS Route and C Route).

Staff will continue monitoring feedback and data related to Senior Shuttle route and schedule changes and consider adjustments, as needed.

**S Route Follow Up**

At the request of the University, Transit staff drafted and submitted a detailed memo presenting alternatives for potential changes to S Route service. This information is under review and staff met to discuss the next steps for University's preferred alternative on February 25, 2025, following publication of this agenda packet. Transit staff will provide an update at the next Partners meeting.

**PLANNING PROJECT UPDATES****North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT)**

Staff continue to advance design and engineering activities for NSBRT's 60% design. Additional information can be found in Agenda item 5C.

**Chapel Hill Transit High-Capacity Transit Corridor Study**

Contract negotiations are currently on hold while NCDOT and Triangle West TPO await further guidance on the availability of the federal funds supporting this project. Transit staff will provide an update at the next Partners meeting.

### **Short Range Transit Plan Update**

The RFP for this project will be posted following the Partners' consideration of our recommendation. Please see Agenda item 5D for additional information and staff's recommendation.