



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

CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING AND AGENDA

APRIL 17, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT – VIRTUAL

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7. Adjourn	



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CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

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

Present: Camille Berry, Chapel Hill Town Council
Chassem Anderson, UNC Transportation and Parking
Chris Dobek, UNC Transportation and Parking
Marie Parker, Town of Carrboro - Assistant Town Manager
Melissa McCullough, Chapel Hill Town Council
Theodore Nollert, Chapel Hill Town Council
Cristobal Palmer, Carrboro Town Council

Absent: 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
Katie Fontaine, Transit Development Manager
Loryn Clark, Town of Chapel Deputy Town Manager

Guests: None

1. Approval of January 23rd, 2025, Meeting Summary
 - A. Emailed Corrections will be made.
 - B. Minutes Approved
2. Employee Recognition
 - A. New Committee Member: Cristobal Palmer!
 - B. Brian provided thanks to all who served during the winter weather event.
 - C. 7 Electric Buses will be coming back into service (different battery packs). 3 Buses with similar battery packs will remain out of service until further notice.
 - D. Committee Member thanked us for our winter weather service.
 - E. Happy Birthday to Camille Berry!
3. Consent Items
 - A. January Financial Report
 - i. Provided for Partners.
4. Discussion Items
 - A. FY 2025-26 Chapel Hill Transit Budget Development Update
 - i. Provided for Partners.

- ii. Committee Member asked about cost-of-living increases. The Town handles this within the Town's Budget process. 65% of our Transit budget is personnel.
- iii. Committee Member requested that percentage of partners contributions be added to the report. This way the Partners can see what their contributions are going towards.
- iv. Brian explained staffing situation for service needs. We need additional operators to continue to bring back and expand service areas.
- v. Still waiting to know about Federal Funding. We can utilize our Fund Balance in the short term if needed.
- vi. Committee Member asked for clarification about the \$2 million shortfall in budget. Brian explained this is still an estimated number and we are waiting on final Town numbers. If no federal money, then there is a potential \$4 million shortfall. Cutting routes would not be realistic to cover these shortfalls.
- vii. Committee Member mentioned that asking Partners for more funds is not sustainable. Partners have limited resources as well.

B. Chapel Hill Transit Holiday Schedule for Calendar Years 2025-26

- a. Provided for Partners.
- b. Committee Member mentioned the first football game is on Labor Day. We are planning for this with TEX service, no regular service will be running.

C. Short Range Transit Plan Update

- a. Provided for Partners.
- b. Committee Member asked for clarification that there are no monies being asked of the Partners. Caroline confirmed that this is correct, and funding is mostly coming from Orange County Transit Plan. Most funding is dedicated but some funding has been reallocated for priority needs.
- c. Committee Member asked what the process is with Orange County for reallocating these funds (must be within that FY). It is a very formal process with a form and a board review and approval as well as the Board of Commissioners and Go Triangle. Partners get to provide feedback on SRT plan priorities.
- d. Committee Members asked if there was a way to depict ridership per route to see impacts on route changes. Quarterly Ridership has been requested to discuss volume of ridership as well as cost per rider per route. Current and Projected data requested. Caroline can provide this data moving forward.
- e. Committee Member asked about Destination and Origin data and mentioned Transfers. Caroline can provide some of this data, but it is not the easiest to capture.
- f. Committee Member mentioned StreetLight Data which monitors rider movement.
- g. Committee Member asked about timeline for process. Transit projects this Spring.

- h. Motion to Approve by Melissa McCullough, 2nd by Marie Parker.
Unanimous Approval

5. Information Items

- A. Bus Stop Improvement Plan Update
 - a. Provided for Partners.
 - b. Committee Member requested a Public Link that can be shared.
- B. Major Project Overview and Update
 - a. Provided for Partners.
- C. North South Bus Rapid Transit Project Update
 - a. Provided for Partners.
 - b. Committee Member asked why we did not get SPOT 7.0 funding. Brian responded that it is not really set up for what we need. Transit is looking for funding in other areas/ways.

6. Departmental Monthly Reports

- A. Operations
 - a. Provided for Partners.
- B. Community Outreach
 - a. Provided for Partners.
 - b. Committee Member thanked Transit for the Fireside Chat!
- C. Planning
 - a. Provided for Partners.

7. Next Meeting – March 27th, 2025 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting)

8. Adjourn

3A. March Financial Report

Staff Resource: Tim Schwarzauer, Business Services Manager

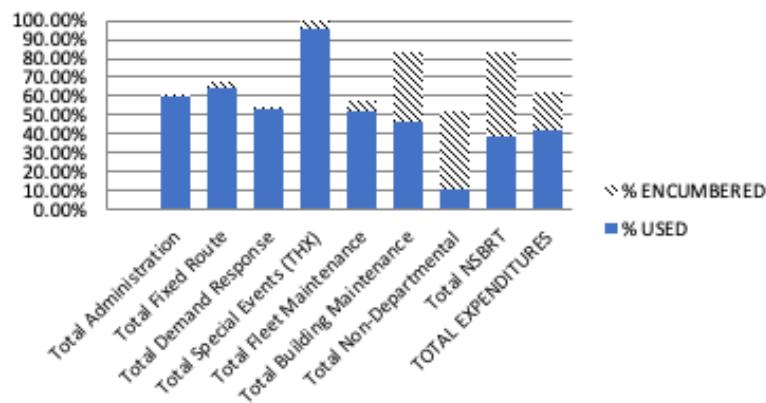
March 2025

- Expenses for the month of January were \$3,578,276. 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.

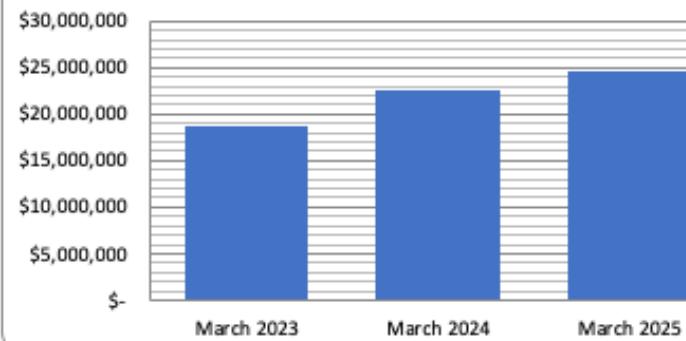
Transit 640 Fund Budget to Actual at end of March 2025

	ORIGINAL BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD EXPENSES	ACTUAL MONTH EXPENSES	CURRENT ENCUMBRANCES	BALANCE AVAILABLE	% USED OR ENCUMBERED March	% USED
Total Administration	2,705,051	2,713,765	1,640,276.25	177,439.39	32,024.12	1,041,465	61.60	60.44%
Total Fixed Route	17,915,950	19,358,388	12,576,130.73	1,309,746.02	445,419.47	6,336,838	67.30	64.96%
Total Demand Response	2,906,671	3,431,495	1,838,135.46	206,104.99	10,497.73	1,582,862	53.90	53.57%
Total Special Events (THX)	317,845	329,056	315,691.97	41,076.46	16,511.69	-3,148	101.00	95.94%
Total Fleet Maintenance	5,697,185	5,911,950	3,064,229.55	359,257.20	335,822.91	2,511,898	57.50	51.83%
Total Building Maintenance	929,213	1,146,546	533,272.42	89,511.37	420,371.45	192,902	83.20	46.51%
Total Non-Departmental	2,184,523	18,684,323	2,064,636.80	654,908.19	7,637,218.25	8,982,468	51.90	11.05%
Total NSBRT	4,000,000	6,696,567	2,606,756.97	740,232.66	2,952,145.08	1,137,665	83.00	38.93%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	36,656,438	58,272,090	24,639,130.15	3,578,276.28	11,850,010.70	21,782,949	62.60	42.28%

CHT March 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:** Nick Pittman, Assistant Director

Tim Schwarzauer, Business Services Manager

Brian Litchfield, Director

- Please see attached draft presentation. The final presentation will be shared at the April 17, 2025, Partners' Meeting.

Chapel Hill Transit Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Presentation

April 17, 2025



Department Goals & Priorities

- ❖ Align staffing to meet needs identified in Short Range Transit Plan and consistent with existing service levels
- ❖ Operator/Maintenance pay, recruitment and retention
 - Step-based plan for skill-based positions
- ❖ Supervisor training and development training for managers
 - Succession planning and development
- ❖ Bus stop improvement projects and support Vision Zero
 - Construction Bid/NC54 Improvements with NCDOT and Carrboro
- ❖ North South Bus Rapid Transit
 - NSBRT - Complete 60% design and begin 90% design
- ❖ Continue Art in Transit collaboration
- ❖ Continue operator and supervisor safety initiatives
- ❖ Radio system and roof replacement
- ❖ Short Range Transit Plan update



Key Budget Issues for FY 2025

- ✓ Adequate staffing.
- ✓ Costs up, things break and are getting old.
- ✓ Need to replace critical infrastructure.
- ✓ Labor market challenges continue.
- ✓ Staff stress high and capacity low.
- ✓ State and federal contributions flat and future uncertain.
- ✓ Out of space – zero emission infrastructure.
- ✓ No new service.
- ✓ Short Range Transit Plan update – funded.
- ✓ The list goes on, but we'll stop here.



Examples of Cost Increases

Part Description	2019 Price	Current Purchase Price	% Change
Front Air Bag	\$62.50	\$81.20	29.92%
Oil Filter	\$16.00	\$24.15	50.93%
Alternator Support Bracket	\$225.00	\$318.99	41.77%
Front Wheel Seal	\$8.70	\$15.75	81.03%
Door Actuator	\$275.82	\$1,448.52	425.17%
Injector	\$600.77	\$764.00	27.17%
Power Steering Hose	\$67.86	\$143.55	111.54%
Rear Brake Drums	\$187.63	\$253.68	35.20%
Water Pump Belt	\$12.37	\$20.31	64.18%
Air Conditioner Belt	\$29.85	\$39.30	31.67%
Mirror Assembly	\$751.27	\$994.05	32.32%
Demand Response Vehicle Tire	\$139.68	\$247.19	76.88%
Diesel Bus	\$458,944	\$603,443	31.49%
Demand Response Vehicle	\$64,720	\$130,000	100.87%
Engine Replacement	\$25,000	\$70,000	180%

Prioritized Adds for FY 2026

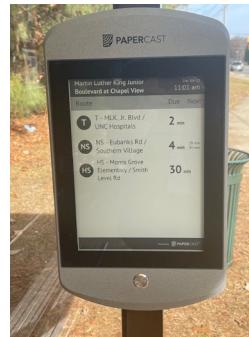
Capital –

- \$500,000 for future capital purchases.

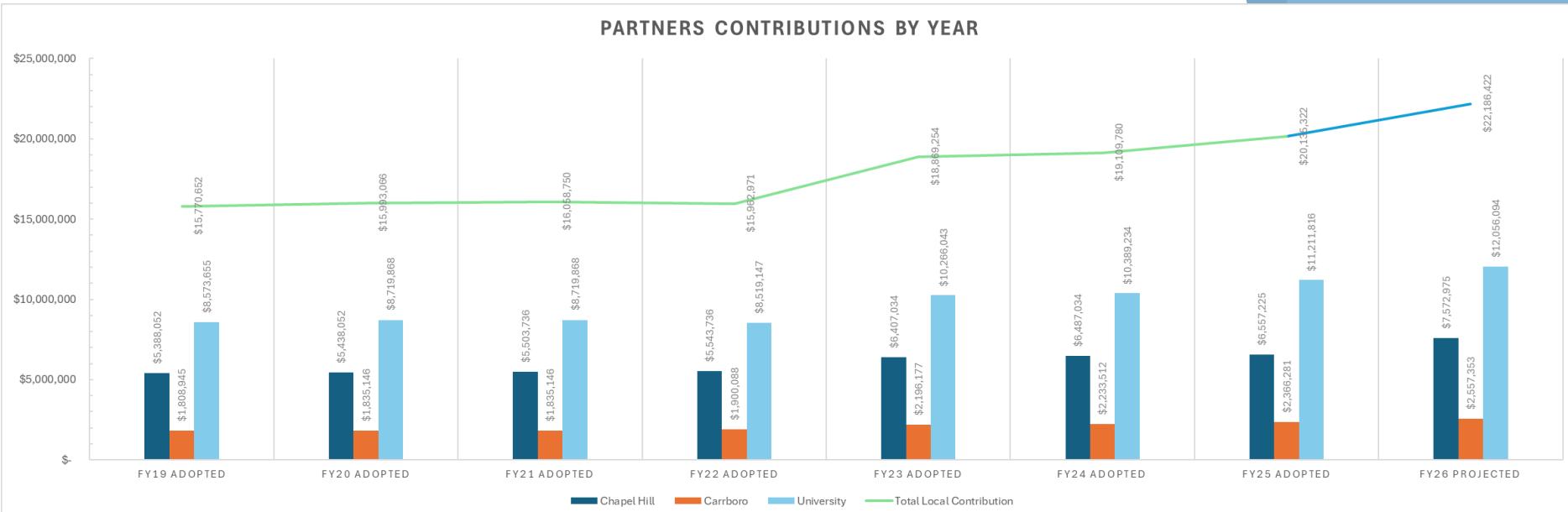
Positions –

- QA/QC Position* to assist with data reporting and service implementation.
- Operators – nine additional bus operators to align with Short Range Transit Plan.
- Supervisor – one additional supervisor.
- Facility and Maintenance Supervisor – new position.

*Position funded through the Orange County Transit Plan.



Partner Contributions



FY25 Budget Estimate

	Current Year Allocation	Projected FY26	Difference Between Current Year and Projected FY26	FY26 Capital Plan Projection	Difference Between Projected and Capital Plan
Town of Chapel Hill	\$7,007,255	\$7,840,644	\$833,389	\$8,229,000	\$388,356
Town of Carrboro	\$2,366,281	\$2,647,743	\$281,462	\$2,745,000	\$97,257
University	\$11,390,444	\$12,282,480	\$892,036	\$13,531,000	\$1,248,520
		Total Difference	\$2,006,887		

Notes:

- University contribution includes additional service on the S Route
- Partner allocations include \$500,000 in capital contribution

FY16-26 Capital Plan

Fixed Route Buses FY21-25	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	Totals Capital Plan
Need to purchases (capital plan 2019)	16	6	6	7	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	88
Funded	0	16	6	11	5	0	3	8	16	2*	3	1*	71
+/-	16	6	6	2	3	9	12	11	2	7	11	17	

Key Budget Issues Beyond FY 2026

- ✓ Discuss strategic funding alternatives related to ongoing operating and capital needs – fiscal sustainability.
- ✓ Labor market challenges will continue to impact transit – labor rates may continue to escalate, along with inflation/cost of living.
- ✓ NSBRT, buses, radio system, bus stops, facility expansion for zero emission, backup power for charging, roof, generator, HVAC, fire and safety alarm system, etc.
- ✓ Short Range Transit Plan includes \$15M in unfunded service priorities; beginning update to transit plan.
- ✓ Orange County Transit Plan: no funding for new services over next 5 years. Vehicle Capital funding in FY26 (\$1,855,583) and FY27(\$672,574).
- ✓ Potential impacts to State/Federal Funding due to zero fare/service expansions in State/Region.
- ✓ Zero emission infrastructure costs – facility, solar and looking beyond electric.
- ✓ GoTriangle could stop contracting for 420 service.



5A. Wireless Communication Study Update

Staff Resource: Nick Pittman, Assistant Director

Radio Study

We have contracted with Mission Critical Partners ([About MCP - Mission Critical Partners](#)) to conduct our wireless communication study and the project is underway. Alexius Farris, Senior Grants and Strategic Project Manager, is leading the project team that consists of Travis Parker – Operations Manager, Peter Aube – Maintenance Manager, Josh Martin – Technology Solutions, Henry DePietro – Deputy Director and Nick Pittman – Assistant Director. The first phase of the study is nearing completion and it will meet the following objectives.

- Conduct a full evaluation of the existing communication system.
- Identify alternative communication upgrades, additions, or replacements.
- Identify infrastructure upgrades that are needed.
- And provide a transition protocol that includes training and training materials needed to ensure a transition that will not interrupt transit services.

In initial drafts from the first phase of this study MCP has recommended three options for our review and consideration. The estimated cost for these options ranges from \$250,000 – \$1,300,000 (purchase and install equipment – operating costs will also be identified). The cost of these options ranges from only replacing existing radios with a newer model to a complete system replacement that would include implementation of a new system technology.

Staff will continue to work with MCP on the completion of the first phase of this study and we will continue to keep you updated on their findings.