

Short Range Transit Plan – Summary

Chapel Hill Transit initiated its Short Range Transit Plan (S RTP) development in September 2017.

At the outset of the planning process, a Technical Committee and Policy Committee were established to allow for in-depth discussion and informed decision-making on the part of Chapel Hill Transit's Partners Committee. Both committees included representatives from the Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro, and UNC-Chapel Hill. The goal of the Technical Committee was to review recommendations and ask clarifying questions before presentations were made to the Partners Committee as a whole; the goal of the Policy Committee was to provide strategic direction, review work products and recommendations, and make recommendations to the Partners Committee.

CHT's S RTP Technical Committee and Policy Committee developed six guiding principles designed to inform the future of transit service in Chapel Hill. The six goals are as follows:

- Improve transit mode shift. Improving weekend service throughout the system, how often buses arrive, making service simpler and easier to understand, and providing more all-day service were strategies identified to improve transit mode shift in the community.
- Increase ridership. Recommendations developed as part of the S RTP process improve weekend service, increase service frequency, and make service more direct to increase ridership in the system.
- Create high frequency transit corridors. The S RTP Preferred Alternative improves service frequencies in the highest demand areas of the service area, including East Franklin Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, to provide a series of high frequency transit corridors.
- Emphasize equity. Recommendations considered transit need as part of the service planning effort, and recommendations result in minimal change to existing service coverage to ensure transit service continues to be provided where it is needed most.
- Improve weekend service. Better weekend service was an important priority identified by the community, and short-term service recommendations will greatly expand the level of service offered on weekends.
- Enhance the convenience of living without a private vehicle. By improving existing service frequency, directness of service, Saturday service, and the availability of Sunday service, recommendations developed as part of the S RTP will enhance the convenience of living without a private vehicle in Carrboro and Chapel Hill.

Following a detailed analysis and several community/customer engagement efforts, the Preferred Alternative of the S RTP makes modest changes to bus routing, reallocating existing resources to improve service frequency on key routes, maintain service area coverage, simplify service, and improve weekend service. It modifies 15 routes, eliminates four, and leaves five unchanged.

Weekday Peak Period Service

During peak period service from approximately 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., high frequency service (every 15 minutes or better) would be offered on Routes CCX, CM, CPX, J, NS, NU, S, RU, and U. Routes D and CL would provide a combined 10-minute frequency on East Franklin Street. The remaining routes maintain coverage throughout the service area with frequencies between 20-60 minutes.

Weekday Midday Service

During the midday time period from approximately 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., high frequency service (every 15 minutes or better) would be offered on routes NS, RU, and U. Routes D and CL would provide a combined 15-minute or better frequency on East Franklin Street. The remaining routes would operate with frequencies between 20-60 minutes.

Saturday and Sunday Service

In the Preferred Alternative, weekend service is dramatically improved over what is currently offered. Saturday and Sunday service would be provided on Routes A, CM, CW, D, J, N, and NS; existing Saturday and Sunday service would be maintained for Route NU and U.

Since the Preferred Alternative adds new Saturday and Sunday service along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on Route NS, weekend service currently offered on Route T would be eliminated. Weekend-only Routes FG and JN would be removed and replaced by new weekend services.

Throughout the SRTP project, public involvement remained a large component of the planning process. Three (3) rounds of public involvement were held during the initial start of the project, during the scenarios phase and finally, during the Preferred Alternative phase. These rounds of public involvement netted over 2,000 comments through face to face, email and online surveys.

As the project nears adoption, our next round of public involvement will focus on our implementation of the SRTP in August 2020.