

Memo

Date: Tuesday, December 09, 2014

Project: City of High Point Short Range Transit Plan

To:

From: HDR of the Carolinas, Inc.

Subject: Short Range Transit Plan Summary

Introduction

In May 2013, the City of High Point, North Carolina contracted with HDR Engineering of the Carolinas (HDR) and its partners to develop a short-range transit plan (SRTP) for public transportation in High Point and neighboring communities of Guilford County. The objective of the SRTP was to conduct a detailed review of the High Point Transit System services, identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing system, and develop a series of recommendations that build on system strengths and assets, and provide a path forward for future service. The SRTP is intentionally designed to provide flexibility in its application in order to respond to changing financial conditions and service needs.

Planning Process

The SRTP process was designed around a series of three main work tasks:

1. Evaluation of existing demographic conditions, transit services and market characteristics.
2. Development of alternative service scenarios for fixed-route bus service, with consideration of how service network changes also affect ADA-paratransit, non-ADA demand-responsive services, and transit facilities.
3. Creation of a five-year action plan specifying recommendations for modifications and enhancements to all High Point Transit System services and facilities.

The planning process was designed to be as inclusive as possible, so that members of the riding and non-riding community in High Point had ample opportunities to provide input and comment on the study process and findings.

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities of the SRTP

In consultation with High Point Transit System staff and members of the Steering Committee and Sounding Board (discussed below), specific goals for future transit service in High Point were identified. These included:

- Establish service in the Palladium/Deep River region of High Point.
- Improve coordination with other regional transit providers (PART in particular)
- Enhance service frequency, coverage, and the hours during which service is available.
- Identify opportunities to maximize efficiencies while reducing operational costs.
- Reinvest cost savings and new revenues into service operations and capital facilities as available.

- Encourage use of fixed-route service by persons eligible for non-ADA demand-responsive service.

Recommendations

A number of service efficiency, effectiveness, and quality issues have been identified through community and staff outreach, and through the evaluation of service performance. The SRTP developed a combination a high-level policy recommendations on how bus services should be designed and operated as well as more practical and applied service improvement recommendations about the design and operation of individual bus routes. The following are key recommendations that are addressed and/or considered in the SRTP. A map of the proposed future service network is attached to this memorandum.

1. Establish a transit service hierarchy to distinguish the appropriate level of service for each route in effort to satisfactorily serve markets without overinvesting in service, and to help identify those routes that warrant additional investment.
2. Specific recommendations for each route are provided in the SRTP, with a summary of the recommendations provided below in the table below. The project team continues to work with High Point Transit System staff on optimizing these recommendations.

Route	Service Modification	Recommendation(s)
10	Yes	Designate as trunk route; enhance service span
11	Yes	Designate as trunk route; enhance service span
12	Yes	Eliminate route
13	Yes	Replace Route 17 service south of Montlieu Avenue
14	Yes	Minor route adjustment at Juanita Hills terminus
15	Yes	Eliminate route
16	No	No recommended routing or service changes
17	Yes	Designate as crosstown route; realign service
18	Yes	New service on Russell Avenue, realign service on Kivett
19	Yes	Modify route to serve Prospect Street and south High Point
20	Yes	Modify route to serve Green Drive and south High Point
21	Yes	Eliminate route
25	Yes	Modify route to serve Washington Drive and Gordon Street
PDC	Yes	New circulator service in Palladium/Deep River district

In addition to fixed-route bus services, the SRTP also makes recommendations for demand-responsive transit services. Many of these recommendations revolve around operating policies and procedures. Modifications to the age eligibility requirements, a transit travel training program, consolidating weekday trips to common destinations, free fare policy on fixed-route buses, and bus stop improvements are among the recommendations for demand responsive services. Finally, the SRTP outlines recommendations for capital facilities and infrastructure needs. A priority need will be the replacement of bus fleet vehicles, as a majority of fleet vehicles are beyond 50% of their useful lives. Stop infrastructure is also a critical need.

Capital and Operating Costs

The SRTP has assumed a neutral funding scenario for the future High Point Transit System, with revenues and expenditures assumed to be consistent with current budget parameters. However, this does not preclude operating expenses from increasing due to natural market forces for commodities such as fuel, parts, insurance, and wages. The SRTP provides an illustration of how costs may increase over the five fiscal years of the plan’s timeframe; a general “rule of thumb” is a 3% annual increase in costs. Assuming



this increase, and assuming no increase in revenue, costs could escalate by approximately \$400,000 in FY2020 above today's current system operating cost.

