

# Princeton

400 Witherspoon Street □ 1 Monument Drive  
Princeton, NJ 08540

## Public Transit Advisory Committee

MINUTES – April 10, 2014

The Public Transit Advisory Committee met at the East Conference Room of the Monument Municipal Building of Princeton, NJ at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 10, 2014.

### Attendance

Present were: Marvin Reed, chair, Nat Bottigheimer, David Keddie, Anton Lahnston and Tamera Matteo; Sam Bunting of the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee, Cheryl Kasternakes and Joan Lockwood-Reck of the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association; and Don Mayer-Brown of the Engineering staff.

### February Ridership

Joan presented a report on March FreeB ridership and on-time service:

- \* It showed better on-time service (96%) and no weather-cancellation days.
- \* Ridership on the Commuter Route in March rose to 978 passengers, an average of 46.6 riders, compared in February to 784 passengers, a daily average of 42.4 riders. The 2013 average was 38.3.)
- The mid-day Neighborhood Route carried 1,714 passengers in March, an average of 65.9 daily riders, up from 1,521 in February, an average of 69.1 daily riders.
- The Mid-Day Neighborhood Route hit its highest number of March passengers (88) on Saturday, March 1 and its lowest number (43) on Wednesday, March 12.

### Applications for Mass Transit Trust Fund Grants

Marvin indicated that he would be meeting with the Trustees of the Mass Transit Trust Fund on Friday, April 11 reviewing responses received to three application letters for grants from the Mass Transit Trust Fund, a joint effort between the municipality and Princeton University. (See as reported in Minutes of March 20, 2014,)

### Students to Community House Program

Marvin indicated that he had met with students in the Community House Program who asked whether the afternoon FreeB schedule might be altered when leaving the Shopping Center at 3:01 pm so that the students could get on it at Valley Road and Walnut to reach their study/mentoring program at the University's Fields Center at the corner of Olden and Prospect

Sts. He reported that their school dismissal time (2:55 pm) did not give them time to get to their lockers, retrieve their books, and walk to the FreeB stop.

The Committee expressed concern about the reliability of allowing drivers to deviate from the posted times. Marvin indicated that he had so informed the managers of the program.

### **Remote Parking and Transportation for Communiversity, April 27.**

Marvin presented a proposal to use FreeB vehicles on Sunday, April 27 to provide transit service on two routes: one from Town Hall to the Arts Council and one from the Shopping Center to the Library.

Members of the Committee reacted unfavorably to the plan, indicating that the 18-passenger FreeB jitneys used in 2013 proved too small to handle the crowds that formed. Two full-size buses should be used on a continuous basis from the Shopping Center. Tamera offered to work with Arts Council representatives on finding buses to charter for the day.

### **Biking to the New Dinky Station**

Sam commented on current efforts of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee on bike connections between the town and the New Dinky Station opening in the fall.

He noted the multiplicity of mixed-use paths and trails for pedestrians and bicyclists on the University Campus, including those reaching the new Station. He noted, however, the difficulty with how on-campus trails connect to bike paths and safe-riding streets in the surrounding municipality. Special concern was expressed about University Place and Alexander St. for safe biking, with preference being shown for cross-campus travel.

Anton commented on funding a proposed consultant study to identify and improve safe biking on selected streets that would, with wayfinding, encourage more safe biking across town -- north-south and east-west.

Committee members expressed hope for getting such a grant and undertake a consultant study. f

Questions were raised about a possible inter-municipal bike path alongside the Dinky tracks from the Princeton to the Princeton Junction Station.

### **Promotion**

Don indicated that two sandwich boards advertising pick-up times for the FreeB were ready for placement at the Dinky Station.

Correcting the web address on FreeB vehicles awaits the response of the Public Works Department.

### **Route #655**

Carol reported on a March 31 meeting by NJ Transit with stakeholders for reviewing the #655 bus from the Princeton Shopping Center to the Hospital and Plainsboro.

Agreement was reached on a revision of the route in Princeton to use Witherspoon St. for traveling in both directions to the Princeton Shopping Center rather than a loop via Harrison Street. Other route changes should improve connections through the Plainsboro Town Center.

It was reported that no changes in the current route will detour to the Junction Rail Station.

### **Next Meeting – May 15**

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2014, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month.

An invitation has been sent to NJ Transit to begin discussions on:

1. Ridership. (Note: Recent inaccurate Trenton Times story) Does NJ Transit periodically collect Dinky ridership figures? Could we get on someone's distribution list to see them (i.e., measure our improvement and progress).
2. Connections in the Trenton-Philadelphia direction. Could we attract more southbound NE Corridor riders?
3. Connections. Could we improve connectivity to our FreeB jitney circulator, the 605, the 606, and the University's Tiger Transit system?