

# Princeton

400 Witherspoon Street □ 1 Monument Drive  
Princeton, NJ 08540

## Public Transit Advisory Committee

MINUTES –

May 14, 2015

The Public Transit Advisory Committee met in the East Conference Room of the Monument Municipal Building of Princeton, NJ at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2015.

### Attendance

Present were: Marvin Reed, chair; Fay Reiter, director of social services, Princeton Community Housing;; Joan Lockwood-Reck of the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association; and Don-Mayer Brown of the Engineering staff.

Kip Cherry, a member of the public, was also present.

### Rules of Behavior

The meeting began with a discussion of unruly passengers, especially when they express rudeness and hostility toward the “FreeB” driver.

It was noted that, in a worse case situation, the driver can stop the bus, dial :911” for police intervention, and refuse to proceed.

Joan and Fay agreed to review general rules of behavior that might be posted in each of the “FreeB” vehicles.

### Ridership

Joan reported on April “FreeB” ridership and on-time service:

- -- Ridership on the Commuter Route in April increased to 1,135 passengers, an average of 51.6 riders per day, compared to 964 the previous month, a daily average of 44.84, The 2014 April daily average was 40.8 riders.
- -- A driver emergency on April 8 caused the last four loops to be missed that day.
- -- Ridership for the Mid-Day Neighborhood Route in April stayed level at 1,801 passengers, an average of 69.3 daily riders, compared to 1,810 the previous month, a daily average of 68.6 riders. The 2014 April daily average was 62.1.

- -- The highest number of passenger trips – 93 -- occurred on the Mid-Day Neighborhood Route on April 24. The lowest number – 50 – occurred on April 20..
- -- The highest average number of residents in April – 14.9 passengers – came from Redding Circle. The lowest average number – 0.3 – came from Copperwood

### **Copperwood “Front Door” Service**

The committee discussed emails from the Mayor and the Municipal Attorney regarding an offer from the Hillier Studio, owners of Copperwood, offering a contribution of \$500 per month as long as the FreeB maintains its stop at that location. A small donor’s logo decal would appear by the vehicle’s front door. Legal advice seemed to recommend against linking any donation from any guarantee of special stops.

Marvin shared with a committee a memorandum which the Mayor had obtained from the Municipal Attorney advising that any donation toward “FreeB” operations be clearly unrelated to provisions for transit stops.

### **Bids for New Vehicle**

Don reported that specifications and instructions to bidders for a 19-passenger lift-equipped shuttle bus had been posted. Alternates would call for an outright purchase or an operator-provided vehicle.

So far seven vendors have picked up bid documents. They are returnable by May 29.

Committee members were asked to stand-by for a special meeting to review the returns and make a recommendation for the Council.

### **New Commuter Route Schedule**

Joan reported on new NJ Transit Northeast Corridor schedules, which change the time of several Princeton Junction, connecting “Dinky,” and Commuter Route “FreeB” stops. The revisions take effect May 17.

### **Eliminating the “655” NJ Transit Bus Route**

The Committee reviewed the recommendation from NJ Transit that it not continue bus service between Princeton and Plainsboro designed to service the relocated Princeton Medical Center unless more substantial subsidies are forthcoming from private sponsorships.

It was noted that there could still be bus service from Princeton to the Hospital via the University’s Route to its Plasma Physics Lab, which stops at the Hospital. The University has indicated that it would move the origin of this route from the “Dinky” train station to Nassau Street to accommodate more general public passengers.

This broadened the discussion to a more general focus on combining and/or extending public services on the University’s Tiger Transit buses. Limitations in this regard, it was noted, stem from the academic schedule on which the University operates. Routes do not run consistently throughout the year, leaving the public confused by a multiplicity of routes, transfers, and time schedules.

The Committee noted that if there were more vehicles available to the municipality, it would be preferable to build better public service by dividing the “FreeB” routes and providing more frequent service to the core where “FreeB” routes overlap.

### **Nest Meeting**

The Committee was reminded to stand -by for a special meeting reviewing bid submissions. The next regular meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the East Conference Room of the Monument Municipal Building on Thursday, May 14.