

# **Municipality of Princeton**

400 Witherspoon Street □ 1 Monument Drive  
Princeton, NJ 08540

## **Task Force on Free-B Transit Service**

To: Princeton Council

Date: February 21, 2013

At its meeting on February 11, 2013, the Council established a Special Task Force on Free-B Transit. It has been meeting to review current operations and to determine plans for renewal of budgets and operating contracts for the year ahead.

### **Participants:**

Participating in the meetings have been Anton Lahnston of the Traffic and Transportation Committee, Nat Bottigheimer of the MOU Transit Study Group, Hilly Geertz of the CWW Transportation Committee, Susan Hoskins of the Senior Resource Center, Fay Reiter, and Edward Edward Truscelli of Princeton Community Housing, Councilwoman Jo Butler, Don Mayer-Brown of the staff, Joan Lockwood-Reck and Cheryl Kastrenakes, of the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association, and Kim Jackson, Director of Parking & Transportation at Princeton University.

### **Origins of FreeB Service**

The FreeB jitney was begun by the Borough as a transit service for morning and late afternoon commuters to connect to the "Dinky" and the Northeast Corridor rail service of New Jersey Transit. Under a special grant of state and federal funds NJ Transit had originally provided a vehicle and operating subsidies to the Borough, which managed the program.

### **Expansion to Mid-Day Service**

In recent years the service has expanded into the Township to include a mid-day service connecting beyond the downtown to senior and affordable housing complexes at Elm Court, Harriet Bryant House, Spruce Circle, Clay Street, Princeton Community Village, and Redding Terrace. This currently runs three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday 9:30-3:30 p.m.

While original costs were assisted by funding from Princeton University, a few downtown businesses, and NJ Transit, all current costs are covered by the Municipal Parking Utility Budget, a fund separate from the regular Operating Fund covering income and expenses from traffic meters and the downtown municipal parking garage.

The Borough had subcontracted with Stouts Transportation for a monthly charge for the Commuter Service of \$5,350 and for the Mid-Day Service of \$3,360.

In reviewing ridership and budget experience the Task Force sees increasing popularity of the Mid-Day system, noting that it was now averaging above 47 passengers a day. Morning and afternoon commuter service averages no more than 32 riders a day.

**Recommendations:**

The Task Force will be reviewing with Council its findings and will be recommending expansion of the mid-day service to six days a week, but the discontinuation of the early morning and late afternoon service with transfer of those commuters to the new #655 bus, the University's Tiger Transit network, or other existing services..

If accepted by the Council, the Task Force will recommend that the staff take bids from responsible transit providers with alternatives for final action by the end of March when current contracts expire.

Respectfully submitted,

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