



on the move >>>>>

FALL 2007

> > > > > > *News from the Triangle Transit Authority to keep you going.*

TTA Ridership Continues to Rise

Triangle Transit ridership continues to rise at levels higher than the national average. TTA ridership grew by 3.3% for the first six months of the year to 433,195.

Ridership nationally rose 2.3% from January through June.

“We’re pleased that we’re helping boost ridership on public transportation in America to its highest level in 49 years,” said John Tallmadge, director of commuter resources. “Whether it’s because of higher fuel prices, increased congestion, or new and expanded transit services, more and more people are riding TTA.”

TTA’s ridership mirrors a newly-released profile of public transportation passengers. The majority of TTA riders use regional bus, shuttle and vanpool services to get to work or school.

In March, TTA began hosting the GoTriangle Regional Transit Information Center with calls hitting the 100,000 mark in its first six months. Calls to 485-RIDE receive transit information for several providers including Capital Area Transit (CAT) in Raleigh and Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA)



Triangle Transit's ridership continues to be higher than the national average.

in Durham. The Web site at GoTriangle.org saw 1.2 million Web page visits for the first half of the year.

More and more people use and depend on transit. The GoTriangle logo will be placed on all buses and represents a cooperative effort of the Triangle’s transit systems to make commuting through the region easier using public transportation. ▲▲▲



Benches, Shelters and Information Signs are amenities TTA wants to add to more transit stops.

More Amenities Coming to TTA

More rider-suggested amenities are coming to TTA. A record \$7.1 million in capital improvements will go for bus and vanpool services this year. A majority of the funding will go for 20-heavy duty replacement buses and eight vanpool vehicles that will be in service in Spring 2008.

Nearly \$200,000 will be spent on enhancements such as new shelters, bike lockers, additional “park and ride” spaces, transit information tubes, bus benches, talking bus technology and lighted schedule posts.

The amenities are part of TTA’s multi-year plan to improve transit options. Last fall, TTA held public outreach sessions to ask riders what they would like to see added to improve their trip. Riders and the public were asked the prioritize their suggestions through a “transit design game,” limiting the amount of money that could be spent. ▲▲▲

Transit Commission Sets Regional Goals

The 38-member Special Transit Advisory Commission (STAC) continues its work to identify future corridors for rapid transit investments. The STAC's membership was appointed by both planning organizations in the Triangle. At a recent meeting, the STAC decided on goals that will help drive the evaluation process and its final recommendations:

1. Create a regional transit system which is efficient, convenient, affordable, attractive, safe, secure and accessible for people and commerce.
2. Create a regional transit system which is multi-modal, seamless and interconnected with multiple transit choices for people and commerce.
3. Encourage sustainable land use, ranging from compact, mixed-use, walkable and bikeable development to allowing for and preserving open space, trails, farmland, and historic, culturally valuable and environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Reduce the need for and cost of new roads and other infrastructure by optimizing the capacity of existing roads.



Congressman David Price talks with TTA Board Chair Sig Hutchinson during a recent STAC meeting. The STAC hopes to complete its work later this year.

5. Minimize the impact on the natural environment, neighborhoods, and cultural resources when selecting, building and improving transportation corridors.
6. Create a regional transit system that improves our health by reducing air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and by promoting active living.
7. Create a regional transit system that reduces our dependence on foreign oil and reduces our consumption of fossil fuels.
8. Create a cost effective regional transit system with positive economic and social value for the region with adequate and proportional funding.
9. Encourage economic development and reduce travel time and make it more productive.
10. Improve access to existing and future employment, services, leisure, health, education, cultural, and natural resources for everyone, including the mobility impaired and economically disadvantaged.
11. Strengthen all residents' feelings of belonging, connection, and community throughout the region by creating shared public and private responsibility and investment for transit which demonstrates that the region can think and act inclusively with vision, creativity, and open communication.

Rail and bus options are being reviewed for each of 18 corridors identified for future study. Final recommendations are due later this year and will help both area planning organizations as they determine long range transportation plans for the Triangle. More information about the STAC's work and documents used in its evaluation are available at: www.transitblueprint.org. ▲▲▲

Seven-Passenger Vanpools Gain Interest

TTA is looking to add more seven-passenger vehicles to its vanpool fleet. This spring, TTA introduced four of the new vehicles paid for with federal, state and local funds. TTA has been operating a vanpool program since 1989 and most of its vans hold up to 15-passengers. The seven-passenger vans allow TTA to reach more prospective riders because the vehicles are closer to a size many are accustomed to driving.

More seven passenger vanpools will be added soon. A vanpool is made up of no fewer than seven commuters who live and work near each other and who share approximately the same work hours. One leg of each vanpool's trip must begin or end in Durham, Orange or Wake counties. TTA provides the van, pays for gas and insurance; and arranges, oversees, and pays for all maintenance. Van drivers must pass a credit check and DMV check. Riders pay a low monthly fare based on the average daily round-trip mileage. Fares for the vans are set to recover full costs.

The cost of a vanpool is often offset by employer contributions. In 2007, the IRS increased the amount of transit benefits which companies can offer up to \$110 a month. Vanpoolers are also immediately eligible to register online at www.GoTriangle.org



These riders in the Henderson to RTI International vanpool were among the first to start using TTA's new seven-passenger vehicles.

for the free Emergency Ride Home program which provides registered participants with a reliable, emergency ride home on the day the person has used an alternative mode of transportation to get to work.

One of the agencies that has supported employee vanpooling is the US EPA in Research Triangle Park. EPA employees signed up for three of the new seven-passenger vans, bringing to fifteen, the number of TTA vanpools serving the EPA campus in the Research Triangle Park. "Since we're in the clean air business, we're thrilled to have this level of participation in TTA's program," said Chris Long, EPA's Director of Sustainable Development at RTP. ▲▲▲

Bike Winner Encourages More to Give It A Try

When Nick Soucy signed up for “Bike to Work Week” this spring, he had no idea he’d win a new bike. Soucy won the bike for his participation and told us it was just what he needed to continue his new hobby.

“I only decided to start riding a bike more this past spring,” Soucy said. “Since then, my wife and I have been riding to work a couple of times a week. We’ve also started to go other places on a bike, like the grocery store, or to a favorite restaurant.”

Soucy says while amenities are improving for bike riders and there are good bike lanes and trails to get to many places, he says it’s tough to deal with rush hour traffic on a road without bike lanes. “We actually have put together routes that will take us through various office parks and apartment complexes to help avoid some of the traffic, but in the long run, we’re forced onto a road that can barely handle cars.”

For those looking to take the first steps into serious bike commuting, Soucy says “get a serious bike, get a rack, get some bags to keep your stuff in... and get invested in it if you are going to make

Glenn van den Heerik
of The Bicycle Chain
on Glenwood Avenue
in Raleigh adjusts Nick
Soucy's new bike helmet.



a serious attempt. If you buy a good bike, you’re much more likely to enjoy yourself.”

Like many employers in the Triangle, Nick’s employer provides space for him to store his bike and showers.

This year’s “Bike to Work Week” winner says, “the real benefits of biking are the exercise and the fun of getting there. While it might take a few minutes here and there to get to a place, it’s much more fun than driving. It’s slower, so you see more of what’s around you. By the time to get where you’re going, you feel like you’ve really worked for your dinner.

TTA’s participation in *Bike to Work Week* in the Triangle has been recognized for excellence by the Association for Commuter Transport. More information on biking to work and taking your bike on the bus can be found at www.GoTriangle.org.



Clean Fuels Grant Helps TTA Reduce Bus Emissions

TTA is helping clear the air—thanks to a grant from the North Carolina Solar Center at N.C. State University.

The grant one of several awarded through the Clean Fuel & Advanced Technology Project. “CFAT” is an initiative funded by the N.C. Department of Transportation, State Energy Office and Division of Air Quality.

“The improvements possible through this grant, along with an upgrade of our aging fleet

with newer vehicles, will allow us to contribute to the Triangle’s overall environmental health,” said TTA General Manager David King.

The grant, totaling \$37,400 will help TTA use retrofit technology to reduce harmful emissions from existing diesel engines. TTA will outfit 22 buses with diesel oxidation catalysts and crankcase filtration systems. The chemical filters will reduce particulate matter by 20% and require little or no maintenance.

Help Us Do Some Housecleaning

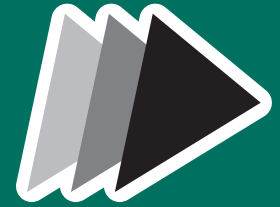
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Thanks for helping us better serve you.



Watch Us Grow

Thanks to you, TTA is moving forward.

Our ridership in 2006 grew four times the national average and continues to outpace the nation in 2007.

In the next year, we’ll improve and add innovative transit services and focus on the needs and challenges which growth will place on the region.

Keep riding and supporting Triangle Transit!



