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### TRIANGLE TRANSIT ANNUAL RIDERSHIP REACHES NEW HIGH

Research Triangle Park, N.C. - (August 26, 2009) Ridership on Triangle Transit reached an all-time high for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

The announcement was made at today's meeting of the Board of Trustees and was released in an annual performance report on Triangle Transit services for FY 2009. The report found:

- **Record ridership** - For the first time in the agency's history, more than one million unlinked passenger trips took place on Triangle Transit regional bus routes in FY 2009. Ridership in FY 2009 surpassed that in FY 2008 by 19.4 percent. (Triangle Transit recorded 1,143,375 boardings - 183,000 more than in FY08).
- **Increased efficiency** - Triangle Transit reduced operating costs by five percent, while providing eight percent *more* service (in revenue service hours) in FY 2009 than in FY 2008.
- **Improved farebox recovery** - Triangle Transit improved the percent of operating costs recovered through collection of fares (from 11 percent to 13 percent) despite the fact that the use of discounted passes (e.g., 30-day pass, State Government GoPass) now accounts for more than 60% of boardings.
- **Increased productivity** - Productivity of Triangle Transit routes continues to increase, with buses carrying more passengers per hour than ever before.
- **Express services thrive** - The Chapel Hill-Raleigh and Durham-Raleigh express routes continue to be among the most productive in Triangle transit's system. Their average productivity increased from 12.7 to 15.6 passengers per hour from FY 2008 to FY 2009; this takes into account the service added to each route in October 2008.

"We're pleased that our ridership continues to grow," said General Manager David King. "With fuel prices lower than last summer, the number of people choosing to ride Triangle Transit has remained strong. The data released today indicate that efficiency and productivity are increasing and improving across the board.

Triangle Transit improves the region's quality of life by connecting people and places with reliable, safe, and easy-to-use travel choices that reduce congestion and energy use, save money, and promote sustainability, healthier lifestyles, and a more environmentally responsible community.

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## FY2009 Annual Bus Performance Report

August 24, 2009

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## Introduction

In September 2003, Triangle Transit's Board of Trustees adopted the Regional Bus Service Standards to establish performance expectations for the agency's fixed-route services. The intent was to drive improvements in productivity by routinely and systematically evaluating bus service performance against quantifiable indicators. The Board of Trustees amended the Regional Bus Service Standards in 2004 and 2007.

The five performance indicators that Triangle Transit measures are:

- Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour
- Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Mile
- Cost Recovery Ratio
- Total Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip
- Net Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip (incorporates fares paid)

This report provides a summary of Triangle Transit's regional bus service performance during Fiscal Year 2009, with comparisons to Fiscal Year 2008 and prior years in order to illustrate changes and trends in performance.

## Factors Influencing Regional Bus Service Performance

Many internal and external factors can influence individuals' travel behavior (and hence consumption of services offered by Triangle Transit) and Triangle Transit's operating costs and revenues. Table 1 provides a list of some of the external and internal factors that were likely to have affected ridership, costs, and revenues during fiscal years 2008 and 2009. The most important external factor during both years was likely the price of fuel, which began rising sharply in the spring of 2008 and continued rising through the fall of 2008. This affected not only the decisions of individuals to use transit and other modes of travel, but also Triangle Transit's bottom line, fuel being one of the agency's most costly necessities for operation.

Several internal factors also likely influenced ridership, operating costs, and revenues. Triangle Transit replaced forty vehicles in its bus fleet, the majority of which arrived at the end of FY08. Triangle Transit partnered with the City of Raleigh and the Town of Wake Forest to introduce the Wake Forest Express route, serving one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the Triangle region. The agency also expanded its use of contracting for the provision of regional services. Finally, the relocation of the Regional Transit Center in December of 2008 gave rise to service changes for the majority of Triangle Transit routes.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Regional Bus Service Performance

	FY08	FY09
<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fuel prices began to rise</li> <li>Rapid population growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spike and subsequent decline in fuel prices</li> <li>Continued population growth</li> <li>Economic recession; job loss</li> <li>Opening of Durham Station</li> <li>Duke began subsidized pass program</li> </ul>
<b>Internal – Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New brand/logo/name – Triangle Transit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized Marketing campaign</li> </ul>
<b>Internal – Capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New buses (23 - 35’ coaches, 5 - 22’ cutaways)</li> <li>Completion of Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New buses (12 - 40’ coaches)</li> <li>Completion of new Regional Transit Center</li> </ul>
<b>Internal – Service Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased frequency on Chapel Hill to Raleigh Express routes</li> <li>Nighttime service overhaul</li> <li>Combined RTP-Raleigh routes (105/107)</li> <li>Began shuttle service to south RTP employers</li> <li>Began Cary-Raleigh midday service</li> <li>Cut service in Apex/Cary, RTP, and Brier Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced Wake Forest Express service; began contracting with Capital Area Transit</li> <li>Increased frequency on Durham and Chapel Hill to Raleigh Express routes</li> <li>Higher capacity buses on Hillsborough-Chapel Hill route; began contracting with Chapel Hill Transit; added service to Durham Tech Orange County Campus</li> <li>Service changes related to Regional Transit Center move</li> <li>Cut service to Brier Creek</li> <li>Reduced service in RTP and Garner</li> <li>On-time performance improvements throughout most of system</li> </ul>

## Summary of Key Findings

Subsequent sections include information on system and route-level performance according to each of Triangle Transit’s five performance indicators, but a few key findings deserve mention:

- **Record ridership** – For the first time in the agency’s history, more than one million unlinked passenger trips took place on Triangle Transit regional bus routes in FY09. Ridership in FY09 surpassed that in FY08 by 19.4 percent.
- **Increased efficiency** – Triangle Transit reduced operating costs by five percent, while providing eight percent *more* service (revenue service hours) in FY09 than in FY08.
- **Improved farebox recovery** – Triangle Transit improved the percent of operating costs recovered through collection of fares despite the fact that the use of discounted passes (e.g., 30-day pass, State Government GoPass) now accounts for more than 60% of boardings.
- **Increased productivity** – Productivity of Triangle Transit routes continues to increase, with buses carrying more passengers per hour and mile of service provided than ever before.
- **Express services thrive** – The Chapel Hill-Raleigh and Durham-Raleigh express routes continue to be among the most productive in Triangle transit’s system. Their average productivity increased from 12.7 to 15.6 passengers per hour from FY08 to FY09; this takes into account the service added to each route in October 2008.

## System Performance

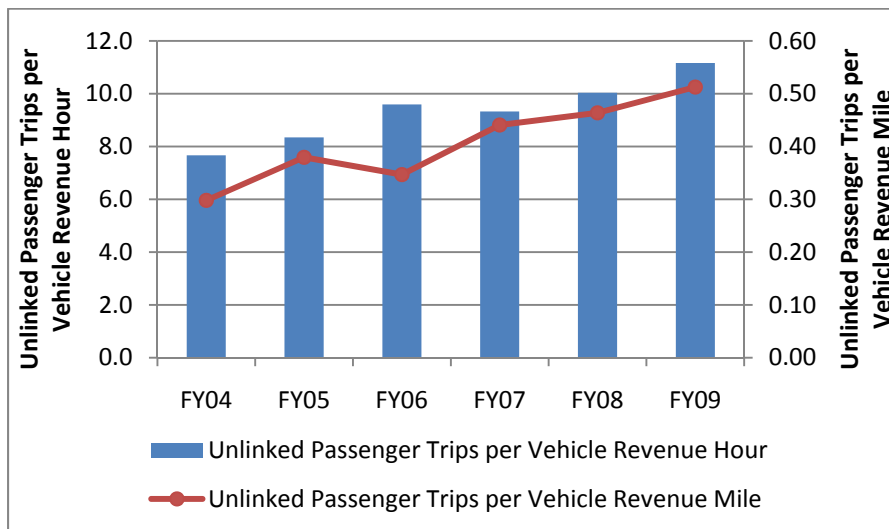
### Indicator 1: Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour

Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour, shown in Figure 1, is Triangle Transit's primary indicator of productivity, as it combines both the level of service provided (hours) and the level of utilization (number of passengers). Performance increased eleven percent from FY08 (10.0 passengers/hr) to FY09 (11.2 passenger/hr).

### Indicator 2: Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Mile

Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Mile, shown also in Figure 1, measures how many passengers are carried per mile of distance traveled. System performance according to this indicator also improved eleven percent from FY08 to FY09.

Figure 1. FY04-FY09 Unlinked Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour and Mile



### Indicator 3: Cost Recovery Ratio

Cost Recovery Ratio, also called Farebox Recovery Ratio, measures the percentage of operating cost that is recovered through the payment of passenger fares. As shown in Figure 2, cost recovery ratio for Triangle Transit services improved steadily from nine percent in FY04 to thirteen percent in FY07, dropped to eleven percent in FY08, and improved to thirteen percent in FY09. The large improvement from FY08 to FY09 is due to both higher fare revenue and lower operating cost.

### Indicator 4: Total Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip

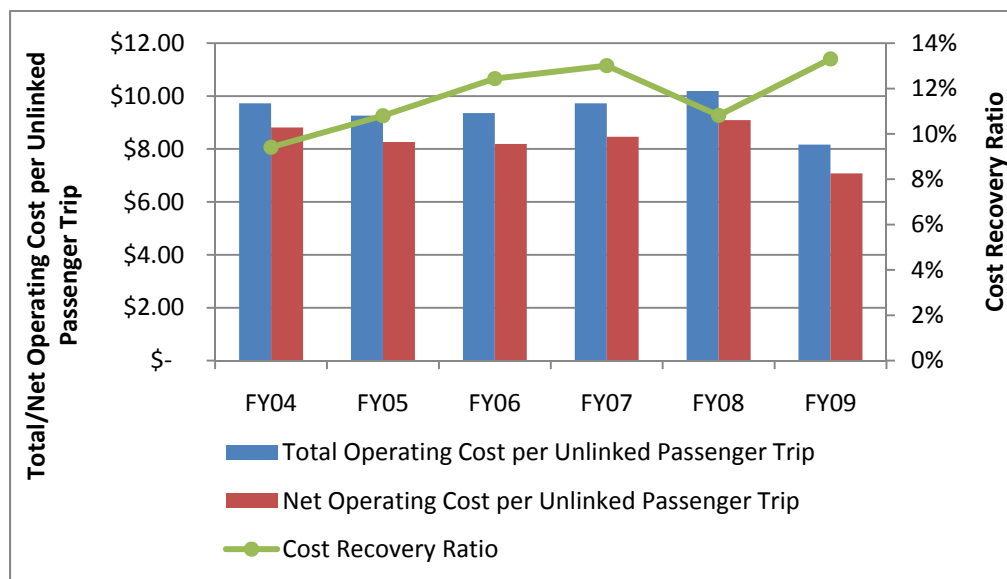
Also shown in Figure 2, Total Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip measures how much Triangle Transit spends to carry one passenger on any individual trip. After falling from FY04 to FY05, this figure rose each year between FY05 and FY08. Due to the decrease in operating costs and increase in

passenger trips in FY09, this indicator fell sharply from \$10.19 per passenger trip in FY08 to \$8.16 per passenger trip in FY09, a decrease of twenty percent.

### Indicator 5: Net Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip

Net Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip, shown in Figure 2, measures the cost of carrying an individual passenger above and beyond the fare paid. This indicator followed the same pattern as Total Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip from FY04 through FY09, with a twenty-two percent decrease from \$9.09 per passenger in FY08 to \$7.08 per passenger in FY09.

Figure 2. Cost Recovery Ratio and Total/Net Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip



## Route-level and Service Category Performance

With very few exceptions, every Triangle Transit route improved in terms of the five performance indicators from FY08 to FY09. A detailed table of route-level performance including summaries for each service type (e.g., Regional Peak, Express, Shuttles) is included as an Appendix.

The Chapel Hill and Durham to Raleigh express routes continue to be among the strongest performers and were the fastest growing routes in terms of productivity during the first half of the fiscal year when gas prices were at their highest. Triangle Transit added two daily trips to each route in October 2008, and productivity remained high in the second half of the fiscal year, albeit not as high as the first half. Midday and Saturday service, which have similar service characteristics (routes and frequency), were strong performers according to all indicators. Night and Shuttle services continue to be the lowest performers, but most routes in these service categories showed improvements from FY08 to FY09 in nearly every performance indicator.