

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 14, 2025**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on January 14, 2025, at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit training room. The following were present:

**Members:**

James Buckner  
Chris Franks  
Debra Hairston  
Anna Kautzman, Chairperson  
Tyrell Payne  
Earl Reynolds

**Staff and Other Participants:**

Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director  
Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Asst.

**Guest:**

***Elisabeth (Lib) Rood, AICP Senior Transportation Planner, KFH Group***  
***Tiffany Dubinsky, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Statewide Transit Planning Manager – Via Zoom***

The Transportation Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm by Chairperson, Anna Kautzman.

**Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

**Approval of Minutes**

James Buckner moved that the minutes of the August 29, 2024, Transportation Advisory Committee meeting be accepted as presented and Tyrell Payne seconded the motion. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

**Regional Bus Feasibility Study Discussion**

Lib Rood, Senior Transportation Planner with the KFH Group, was present for the meeting and completed a presentation regarding the Regional Bus Service Feasibility Study. Lib Rood completed an overview of the feasibility study process completed to date, which is identified below.

- Completed Stake Holder discussions
- Distributed surveys and received over 800 survey results
- Considered service alternatives
- Discovered that Intercity bus service from North Carolina will be starting soon
- Completed draft recommendations
- Determined that federal and state funding levels to subsidize the operation are uncertain
- Identified Next steps moving forward

### **Regional Bus Feasibility Study Discussion (Continued)**

Stakeholder Outreach was completed as part of the study. The following groups were contacted.

- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) – Integrated Mobility Division
- Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART, NC)
- SKAT (Reidsville, NC)
- Greensboro Transit Authority
- Greater Lynchburg Transit Authority
- RADAR (Martinsville, VA)
- Ceasar’s Virginia
- Danville Office of Economic Development
- Microporous (Mega Park)
- Western Piedmont Planning District Commission

Surveys were completed to gain insight concerning the need and demand for regional bus service in the Danville Area. The surveys were taken from mid-September through October 2024. They were distributed onboard the Danville Transit buses, at the Danville Transfer Center, and online. The survey results were discussed with the Transportation Advisory Committee. Of significance, out of the 849 survey respondents, the corridor between Danville and Greensboro via Reidsville was the number one preferred corridor identified by those surveyed. Eighty-three percent of the respondents confirmed they would use the service if it met their travel needs. In addition, seventy-five percent of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay \$4 to \$7 dollars for a one-way trip and twenty-five percent of the respondents confirmed they would be willing to pay \$8 to \$10 for a one-way trip.

Lib Rood said that when she spoke to the North Carolina DOT representative she explained what the regional bus study was about and the representative informed her that North Carolina was planning to operate an intercity bus route between Winston Salem, Greensboro and Danville to establish intercity bus travel on the US 29 corridor starting in January 2025. This service will be called the Triad-Danville Connector and will be operated by Sunway Charters and connect with existing Virginia Breeze service. It was mentioned that the North Carolina DOT bus service could supplement Danville’s regional commuter bus service, if provided.

KFH Group identified the following service recommendations for the study.

- Corridor service: Survey data reflects the Greensboro-Reidsville-Danville corridor is the most popular based on stakeholder input.
- Service Level: It is suggested to complete one morning round trip and one afternoon/evening round trip. Service days to be determined, either Monday through Friday or Monday through Saturday.

### **Regional Bus Feasibility Study Discussion (Continued)**

- The service schedule could accommodate the 7:00 am to 3:00 pm shift at the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill. All shifts cannot be accommodated due to the proposed level of service that could be directly operated by Danville Transit.
- Two buses would be needed to support service requirements; one in operation and one as a spare.
- Microporous indicated that they would like service to begin in January 2027.
- It is recommended that the service should be operated by Danville Transit.
- The main route would provide service between the Greensboro Station and the Danville Transit Transfer Center, with one stop at the Walmart in Reidsville, North Carolina.
- Passengers who want to go to the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill would transfer to a Danville Transit vehicle at the existing West Main Street and Edgewood Drive bus shelter. The connecting vehicle would travel directly to the Megasite.
- Estimated annual operating expenses are \$94,669 for Monday through Friday service or \$113,231 for Monday through Saturday service, using Danville Transit's marginal operating costs, adjusted for FY2027.
- The total estimated capital cost to acquire two buses is \$507,170.
- Other ancillary costs might involve the acquisition of bus shelters and bus stop signs.
- The fare structure is recommended to be consistent with the proposed Triad-Danville intercity bus fares.

Lib Rood said that once the service is implemented ridership and cost would be monitored over an 18-month period to determine the feasibility of the operation. Service schedules could be adjusted as needed to meet the needs of the riders and if successful, additional corridors could be added if there is interest and funding is available to provide the service. Currently, the availability of possible federal and state funding sources to support the service is unknown. Local funding may be necessary to fund all related operating and capital costs. Microporous indicated that they budgeted about \$500,000 per year to support employee mobility needs, however this amount includes funding for childcare so it is unknown at this time how much could be provided for the regional bus service.

Marc Adelman will submit a grant application by February 1, 2025, to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to purchase two 28- passenger expansion vehicles to be used for the Regional Bus Service. If awarded, Danville Transit will place an order for the vehicles in July 2025. Currently, vehicle delivery is estimated to take 18 months after the order is placed. Danville Transit staff will continue to seek guidance from DRPT regarding the possibility of a State Demonstration Program Funding for FY2027. In addition, communications will continue with NCDOT regarding the progress of the Triad-Danville intercity bus service.

### **Regional Bus Feasibility Study Discussion (Continued)**

Anna Kautzman asked if it has been determined how many passengers are needed to make the service sustainable. Lib Rood responded at this time; it has not been determined. Marc Adelman said based on Danville Transit's marginal operating cost that approximately six, one-way trips per hour would need to be completed to cover related expenses based on an average fare of \$6. Lib Rood added that if a private operator provided service the cost would be significantly greater. Discussion continued.

### **Financial, Ridership and Employee Status update**

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee concerning financial data, ridership, and the transit system's employment status for the period of July through November 2024. Danville Transit currently employs 26 full-time drivers with one driver being on inactive status due to medical issues. Total operating costs for the period were under budget by \$328,050 (16.2%). Salary and wage expenses were under budget by 16.6% for the period. Overtime expenses are over budget by 6.2% or \$3,204 for this timeframe. Marc Adelman said an overtime analysis was completed and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Passenger revenue realized for the period is under budget by 13.7% or \$21,771. The FY25 budget figure for cash fares was increased by \$20,000 compared to the budget amount for FY24. Unfortunately, insufficient fare revenue is being generated to meet the budget target. Federal operating aid is currently under budget by \$153,046 due to the reduced operating deficit compared to budget figures. Advertising revenue is very close to the budgeted amount for this fiscal year.

Marc Adelman said an analysis was completed to see what factors are influencing overtime charges. He indicated the biggest factor that contributes to overtime expense is the total number of full-time drivers employed due to holiday pay. The average wage rate has increased from \$18.00 to \$18.40 for all drivers. The transit system operates on holidays when other city departments are closed. When public transportation service is provided on city holidays full-time drivers make double time. Forty-five percent of Danville Transit's overtime hours are directly related to holiday pay.

Other factors that contribute to overtime occurs when full-time drivers clean buses in addition to driving for 40 hours per week and if full-time drivers additionally fill in when full-time staff take annual and sick leave. Discussion continued.

## Comparison of FY2025 and FY2024 Year-to-date Ridership Data

FISCAL YEAR	FIXED ROUTE TRIPS	SENIOR TRIPS	RESERVE A RIDE TRIPS	HANDIVAN TRIPS	TOTAL TRIPS
July-November 2024	84,690	6,385	16,598	2,236	12,855
July-November 2023	86,991	6,498	15,702	2,295	14,909
<b>DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>+5%</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>-1%</b>

Marc Adelman stated that fixed route ridership continues to decline marginally instead of rebounding since the pandemic. The Reserve A Ride service continues to be popular and increased 5% compared to the same period last year.

### Update on Mobile App and Web Portal

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee concerning the decision to discontinue use of the mobile app and web portal to make reservations. He indicated that due to capacity constraints the mobile app and web portal cannot be used most of the time when service is provided. In addition, it was discovered in December that the scheduling software system allowed passengers to schedule trips at times when no drivers were available to complete the trips, which generated passenger complaints. Also, passengers often attempted to double book trips if the pickup time did not meet their interest, which caused multiple scheduling issues. Discussion continued.

### Update on FY24 and FY25 Capital Program of Projects

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee on the status of the FY2024 and FY2025 capital projects as identified below. The Transportation Advisory Committee was informed that the replacement bus shelter at Hardees on Riverside Drive has been installed. This original bus shelter was destroyed during a car accident a few months after installation was completed. The new bus shelter was installed on January 9, 2025.

- Danville Transit received grant funding during FY24 to receive six (6) new 14-passenger buses. All buses have now been placed in service.
- Danville Transit also received grant funding during FY24 to receive one new 28-passenger bus, which has also been placed in service.
- Bids were opened on December 26, 2024, to acquire four (4) new bus shelters that were approved for grant funding for FY25. The shelters will be installed after site prep construction work is completed next summer. The shelters should be delivered by August 2025. The bus stop locations previously discussed were reviewed again.
- Three new 14-passenger buses were ordered this past summer and are expected to be delivered by the fall of 2025.

**Update on FY24 and FY25 Capital Program of Projects (Continued)**

- The maintenance pit was filled with concrete in October 2024. This past summer plumbing modifications were also completed to the maintenance pit so it could be used as a wash bay.
- A contract to install a new bus wash system was issued to a company in December 2024. The new system will be installed in the maintenance pit area since the original bus wash bay is not wide enough after it was renovated several years ago to include a fire escape. The new bus wash system should be installed this spring.

**FY2026 Proposed Operating Budget**

Marc Adelman reviewed the proposed FY2026 operating budget highlights with the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Line Item	Change	Explanation
Cash Fares	Reduce from \$350,000 to \$330,000 <b>(\$20,000)</b>	Based on current passenger revenue levels. The proposed budget amount will be consistent with the FY24 budget figure.
Salary and Wages	Reduced from \$1,985,058 to \$1,890,058 <b>(\$95,000)</b>	Based on bus operator staffing levels.
Repairs and Maintenance Vehicles	Increase from \$293,328 to \$323,328 <b>(\$30,000)</b>	Based on hiring of second mechanic and fleet age. Ten buses in the fleet will be eligible for replacement during FY26.
Salary and Wage adjustments	Increase from \$94,891 to \$100,413 (for all mass transit employees)	Based on input received from the City’s Budget Director.
Admin allocation	Increase from \$781,760 to \$818,250	Based on input received from the City’s Budget Director.
State Operating Aid	Decrease 10% from \$781,760 to \$707,832	Based on input received from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.
Federal Operating Aid	No change (\$2,015,950), <b>although operating deficit could increase</b> if expenses exceed available federal operating funds	Based on input received from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

**FY2026 Proposed Program of Capital Projects**

Marc Adelman reviewed the proposed FY2026 capital projects with the Transportation Advisory Committee as identified on the following page.

**FY2026 Proposed Program of Capital Projects (Continued)**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>FEDERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>STATE FUNDS</b>	<b>LOCAL FUNDS</b>
Bus Replacement, (7) 14-passenger \$191,772 each	\$1,342,054	\$1,073,643	\$214,729	\$53,682
Bus Replacement, (3) 28-passenger \$250,245 each	\$750,735	\$600,588	\$120,118	\$30,029
Expand Fleet –Regional Bus Service (2) 28-passenger diesel \$253,585 each	\$507,716	\$406,173	\$81,235	\$20,309
Crack Seal and Seal Coat Parking lot areas	\$35,720	\$28,576	\$5,715	\$1,429
Recover Maintenance and Administrative Facility roof	\$225,000	\$180,000	\$36,000	\$9,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,861,225</b>	<b>\$2,288,980</b>	<b>\$457,796</b>	<b>\$114,449</b>

After discussion, a motion was made Tyrell Payne and seconded by James Buckner to approve the proposed operating and capital budgets for FY2026 as presented. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 1:19 pm.