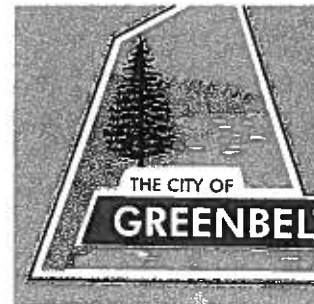


# CITY OF GREENBELT, MARYLAND

25 CRESCENT ROAD, GREENBELT, MD. 20770 - 1886



May 15, 2008

The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner  
Prince George's County Council  
County Administration Building  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3042

**CITY COUNCIL**  
Judith F. Davis, Mayor  
Rodney M. Roberts, Mayor Pro Tem  
Konrad E. Herling  
Leta M. Mach  
Edward V.J. Putens

Dear Council Member Turner:

The City Council recently received a briefing from City Planning staff on the Prince George's County *Draft Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP)*. The City Council would like to thank you for requesting that Department of Public Works and Transportation staff reach out to the City of Greenbelt and initiate discussions with the City on its initial thoughts/ concerns with the draft TSOP. City Planning staff met with DPW&T staff on March 5, 2008, and the meeting was very productive.

The City is very supportive of the County's efforts to expand on, and improve, transit services within the County. The City was very excited to learn several years ago that the County was initiating an update to its 1995 Transit Service and Operations Plan and has been anxiously awaiting the completion of the Plan. It has been the City Council's hope that the updated TSOP would establish a framework for improving the efficiency and use of transit service within the City, along with operating guidelines that would set service standards that meet the transit needs of Greenbelt residents (i.e., weekend service and later operating hours).

The City is pleased to learn that the draft TSOP addresses demand response services and makes a series of recommendations that are intended to improve the supply and efficiency of existing demand response services. These services, including County support for the Greenbelt Connection, provide invaluable transit services to Greenbelt residents, particularly our senior and disabled residents.

While the City acknowledges that there are areas of Greenbelt where there is duplication of Metrobus and TheBus service, it is the City's hope that rather than focusing on eliminating routes and/ or reducing transit investment in the City as reflected in the proposed draft TSOP, the County would work closely with the City on developing a plan that best utilizes existing transit resources. This Plan may involve rerouting existing routes to serve areas of the City not currently served by transit and/ or reallocating resources to expand operating hours/ days to address citizen concerns that there is not sufficient weekend or late night service. The City would urge the County to consider operating TheBus on Sundays and to expand Saturday service to TheBus Route 15.

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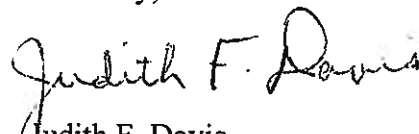
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The proposed draft TSOP proposes a 3,259 reduction in vehicle hours for TheBus and a 6,010 reduction of vehicles hours for Metrobus, totaling a \$771,000 reduction in annual operating costs within the City of Greenbelt. The City has concerns about how these proposed reductions will impact transit service in the City. There is concern that the recommendations contained in the Greenbelt Rationalization Study may not provide for sufficient bus service to the Federal Courthouse and Capital Office Park, and that areas of the City that are currently served by transit will no longer be served. In addition, the plan makes no reference to the planned development at Greenbelt Station and how transit will serve this major-mixed use transit oriented development. Attached for your information is a memorandum prepared by Terri Hruby, Assistant Planning Director, that highlights specific concerns that the City has with the draft TSOP.

The City would like the opportunity to work closely with the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation staff on addressing the City's concerns, prior to the County Council's consideration of the draft TSOP. As you may be aware, the City is currently working with a transportation consultant, through the Metropolitan Council of Governments Transportation/Land-Use Connections program, on a Greenbelt transit efficiency/ improvement plan. The Plan is anticipated to be completed by July 1, 2008, and the City hopes that, if timing allows, the findings/ recommendations of the Plan may be incorporated in the County's TSOP, as appropriate.

The City looks forward to working with the County on this very important initiative and is hopeful that our concerns will be satisfactorily addressed prior to the adoption of the TSOP. If you have any questions please contact Terri Hruby, Assistant Planning Director at 301.474.0569.

Sincerely,

  
Judith F. Davis  
Mayor

JFD:th

cc: City Council  
Haitham A. Hijazi, Director,  
Prince George's County Department of Public Works  
Obie Pinckney, Municipal Liaison  
Lawrence A. Glick, Bus Operations Specialist  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

**City of Greenbelt**  
**Department of Planning and Community Development**  
15 Crescent Road, Suite 200, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770  
(301) 345-5417 Fax (301) 345-5418

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## Memorandum

**TO:** Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager  
**FROM:** Terri S. Hruby, Assistant Planning Director  
**VIA:** Celia W. Craze, Director of Planning and  
Community Development  
**DATE:** March 13, 2008  
**RE:** County's Draft Transit Service and  
Operations Plan

### Overview

The City has received a draft copy of the Prince George's County Transit Service and Operations Plan (TSOP). The objective of the plan is "*to provide Prince George's County with a comprehensive plan that will guide transit investments by the County over the next five years*". The TSOP includes an analysis of the County's TheBus fixed route service, County demand response service (i.e., Call-A-Bus, Senior Transportation Services, etc.) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrobus fixed route service. At the request of County Councilmember Turner, DPW&T staff recently met with City planning staff to review the contents of the Plan and to discuss initial concerns and questions.

The TSOP has several components including a discussion of current transit operating conditions, fixed route service recommendations, demand response service recommendations, facility and vehicle replacement recommendations, staff recommendations and funding options. Within the Fixed Route Service Recommendations chapter are service rationalization studies for Greenbelt, Bowie (includes recommendations for three new local circulator routes to serve areas of the City that are not currently served) and Laurel. The recommendations contained within the Service Rationalization section will have the greatest impact on transit service in the City. Overall, of the three rationalization studies, only Greenbelt will experience a reduction in TheBus service, in terms of vehicle hours and annual operating costs.

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**Greenbelt Service Rationalization Study**

Currently there are four TheBus fixed routes (Route 11, 15, 15X and 16) and seven Metrobus fixed routes (Routes 87, 88, C2, R12, T15, T16 and T17) that provide service in the City. In addition there are five different demand response services in the County (i.e., Call-A-Bus, Senior Transportation Services, Call-A-Cab, Municipal Call-A-Bus and WMATA Metro Access), which City residents can participate in if they are eligible. The TSOP includes service recommendations for fixed route systems, as well as for demand response services.

The TSOP includes a Greenbelt Service Rationalization study that involved an overall service evaluation of existing bus routes within the City to identify overlaps and other service issues. The Rationalization Study resulted in a number of route changes being proposed, all of which are proposed to be implemented in Implementation Year 2. A number of the changes proposed are due to the duplication of service that exists between TheBus and Metrobus within the City. Overall, the proposed changes for the City would result in a reduction of 3,259 vehicle hours for TheBus, a reduction of 6,010 vehicles hours for Metrobus, the loss of one TheBus vehicle and a loss of two Metrobus vehicles, all resulting in an estimated \$771,100 reduction in annual operating costs. The following is a summary of the major changes proposed within the Greenbelt Service Rationalization section of the TSOP:

1. Remove a segment of the Metrobus Route C2 between the Greenbelt Metro Station and Historic Greenbelt – The C2 currently runs between the Wheaton Metrorail Station in Montgomery County and Greenbelt Metrorail Station, Golden Triangle and Roosevelt Center. The TSOP comments that the C2 service area east of the Greenbelt Metrorail Station is also currently served by TheBus Route 15, 15X, Metrobus Route 12 and the Metrobus Route T16 and T17. Staff is concerned that the elimination of Metrobus Route C2 would result in no bus service being provided to Golden Triangle, Greenbelt Park, Lakecrest Drive, Westway, and a portion of Ridge Road which is currently served by Metrobus. Also, for a person wishing to travel west of Cherrywood Lane they would have to transfer to the C2 at Greenbelt Metrorail Station.
2. Split the Metrobus Route 12 into two Metrobus Routes to reduce run time – The current one-way weekday morning peak run time for R12 is 92 minutes, which results in a very long trip time. The splitting up of R12 will decrease trip time and result in more reliable service. Under the proposal, the route segment between the Deanwood Metrorail Station and the Greenbelt Metrorail Station will remain

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R12 and the segment between the Greenbelt Metrorail Station and New Carrollton would be renamed the T14.

3. Eliminate TheBus Route 11 – TheBus Route 11 currently serves the Greenbelt West area. Areas served include Greenbelt Metrorail Station, Springhill Lake, Beltway Plaza, the Federal Courthouse, Capital Office Park, and residential areas just north of Greenbelt Road. The rationalization given for the elimination of Route 11 is that it would remove service duplication associated with the Metrobus Route 12. However, as noted above the R12 is proposed to be split in to two routes, and the new Route T14 is proposed to be moved south to Greenbelt Road as discussed in number 4. The relocation of the T14 and the elimination of TheBus Route 11 would result in a significant reduction in service for Capital Office Park. The TSOP makes no mention of the planned development in Greenbelt West, and staff believes that rather than eliminating TheBus Route 11, the County should look at using TheBus Route 11 to serve planned development in Greenbelt West and/or explore the City's desire/willingness to expand bus service to residential areas not currently served by Metrobus and TheBus. TheBus Route 11 may be an opportunity to provide a dedicated City bus route that connects all areas of the City.
4. Move the new Metrobus Route T14 south to Greenbelt Road – As discussed above, the Metrobus T14 is proposed to replace a portion of the Metrobus R12 to provide service between Greenbelt Metrorail Station and New Carrollton Metrorail Station. It is recommended that the new T14 be moved south to Greenbelt Road to address the duplication that exists with Metrobus Route T16/17, and to provide a greater balance between the north and south sides of Historic Greenbelt. The TSOP contradicts itself in terms of this recommendation. While the text supports the relocation of the Metrobus T14, the graphics (Figure 3.22) do not. Staff has requested clarification on this recommendation. If it is the intent of the plan to recommend the relocation of the Metrobus T14 to the south, the impact on riders that currently use the R12 must be carefully considered. The R12 provides major service from Greenbelt East to Historic Greenbelt and Greenbelt West. For example, with the relocation of T14 to the south, residents living south of Greenbrook Drive would have to transfer in order to take public transit to Buddy Attick Park. Also, a person residing in several portions of Historic Greenbelt would have to transfer in order to take public transit to Doctors Hospital and points south.

## **New Service and Route Modification Recommendations**

In terms of new routes, the TSOP recommendations focus on providing service to areas of the County that are currently not served or on providing more direct connections between key origins and destination in areas of the County currently served. National Harbor is a major focal point of the TSOP new service recommendations. National Harbor is the only destination recommended to receive seven day a week bus service, to be provided by both Metrobus and TheBus. In addition to several new routes recommended to serve National Harbor, southern Bowie, southern Prince George's County, Konterra Mixed Use Development (originating at Greenbelt Station) and several other Town Centers (i.e., Largo Town Center and Westphalia Town Center) are recommended to benefit from new TheBus service. Overall the TSOP recommends the addition of 73 peak TheBus vehicles and seven peak Metrobus vehicles over five years, accounting for an estimated annual operating cost increase of \$13.3 million and a total vehicle capital cost of \$28.6 million.

In addition to new routes, the TSOP recommends extending certain existing routes to serve areas that are not currently served or are under served. Of the route extensions recommended, one involves the extension of a route that currently serves Greenbelt. TheBus Route 15 is recommended to be extended to northern Bowie, to serve Bowie State University and northern and central Bowie before terminating at the Bowie Park and Ride lot just south of U.S. Route 50. While this would result in a much larger service area for Route 15, the introduction of additional buses would allow for peak hour and off peak frequency to improve to 30 minutes and 60 minutes for R15 riders.

Service on all County TheBus routes currently run on weekdays only. The TSOP includes recommendations to expand service on certain routes to Saturday in an effort to improve transit service for County residents. Each route in TheBus system was evaluated to determine which routes would best meet unmet transit needs if expanded to Saturday and which would likely be successful. The criteria used were route productivity, daily ridership and destinations that are accessible on Saturdays. Of the eight routes recommended for expansion to Saturday service the only one that provides service in Greenbelt is Route 16. This route provides service between the Greenbelt Metrorail Station and the New Carrollton Metro Station and is proposed to be expanded to include Saturdays during the second year of plan implementation. TheBus Route 16 does not serve Historic Greenbelt.

The TSOP also looks at operating hours and makes recommendations on improving hours of service on various routes for both TheBus and Metrobus. The plan sets standards for TheBus system, which state that the first trip in the morning on a route

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should leave no later than 6:30 AM and that the last trip in the evening should leave no earlier than 7:30 PM. All of the City's existing TheBus service meets this standard. As with TheBus, the TSOP sets new standards for minimum hours of Metrobus service on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The defined Metrobus standards are 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays. City Metrobus routes impacted by these new standards are the T16 and T17 which would be expanded to 6:30 a.m. on Saturday mornings during implementation year four versus the current 8:27a.m.

**Demand Response Service Recommendations**

Prince George's County currently has four demand response programs: Call-A-Bus, Call-A-Cab, Senior Transportation Services (STS), and the Municipal Transportation Programs. WMATA also provides demand response service through its MetroAccess program. The TSOP recognizes that the County's goal by the end of the plan period is to meet 50 percent of the unmet need for trips for the elderly and disabled based on an estimate of six trips per month and usage by 20 percent of the elderly and disabled population within the County (estimated to account for 2,518,258 trips per year in the County). The plan recognizes that current demand response demand exceeds supply and in order for the County to meet its goal increases need to be made to staffing and vehicle fleet. The TSOP provides a framework for the County to meet its demand service goal.

**Conclusion**

The TSOP is a comprehensive five year plan that contains a plethora of service recommendations, a number of which will have impacts on City transit service. Ironically, for its comprehensive nature, the plan makes no reference to the issue of marketing transit to County residents. The lack of marketing has been a concern raised by City Council on a number of occasions when the County is proposing to modify TheBus service due to low ridership in the City.

This week staff met with DPW&T staff and raised a number of questions and concerns with the TSOP with respect to its impact on the City. The absence of consideration of Greenbelt West development, the elimination of Route 11, deletion of Metrobus C2 and the lack of clarity on the relocation of T14 are all concerns of staff, and have been shared with DPW&T.

Due to the complexity of the TSOP it may be worthwhile to schedule a work session with City Council on the plan. The County plans to hold three public hearings on the plan this spring