



DATE: December 10, 2015

TO: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
THROUGH: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
FROM: Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director

Subject: GoDurham Service Performance Annual Report FY 2015

Executive Summary

On behalf of the City of Durham, GoTriangle conducts the planning, operation and management of the GoDurham bus system. This report presents an analysis of the performance of the GoDurham system and routes in FY 2015 (July 2014-June 2015). Performance is measured compared to the same time period in the previous year. An analysis of the system performance is necessary to understand how the GoDurham service is being used and how it can be improved.

In FY2015, GoDurham improved service delivery by providing a more reliable and frequent service. 84% of trips were completed on-time. Customers reported higher customer satisfaction ratings overall in the on-board survey compared to 2011 and showed higher satisfaction in reliability, service frequency, and connections to other buses. While system ridership declined by 1% in FY 2015, similar drops in ridership are seen at peer agencies in North Carolina and the region. External factors such as declining fuel prices and a declining unemployment rate may be influencing people to drive a car rather than take the bus.

Looking ahead, GoDurham will retain current riders by improving service delivery in terms of customer service, on-time performance, and improving bus stop conditions. GoTriangle recommends that the City of Durham consider a new commuter route from South Durham to Duke/VA Medical Centers as a way to attract new riders. In addition, growth in residents living downtown near bus routes is expected to bring new customers to the GoDurham services. We will engage new downtown residential and hotel developments as strategy for attracting new customers to transit.

Recommendation

Receive a presentation on the GoDurham Service Performance Annual Report FY 2015.

Background

GoTriangle conducts the planning, operation and management of the GoDurham bus system on behalf of the City of Durham. In this report, we will present the performance of the GoDurham system and routes in FY 2015 (July 2014-June 2015) compared to the previous year. We will utilize industry standard performance indicators to analyze system and route trends. We will use service utilization measures such as ridership and productivity and on-time performance as our service quality measure.

An analysis of the system performance is necessary to understand how the GoDurham service is being used and how it can be improved. In this report, we will discuss some reasons for changes in performance and how the agency will respond to improve the service.

Issues/Analysis

The following is a summary of the key findings:

- **GoDurham is more reliable.** On-time performance improved from 82% on-time in FY2014 to 84% in FY2015. The greatest increases were seen on routes that had service changes to address on-time performance problems (Routes 1, 2, and 6). Late trips declined overall from 13% to 10%.
- **Customers are more satisfied with the service.** Since 2011, improvements to satisfaction ratings have been seen in service frequency, ease of connections between buses, and buses running on time. Customers want to see continued improvements to on-time performance, the time the buses stop running in the evening and service frequency.
- **Ridership declined by 1% in FY15 while new service was added.** GoDurham provided 6.2 million passenger boardings in FY2015, a 1% decrease in boardings compared to FY2014. Service hours were expanded by 4% during the year and productivity decreased by 4% from 33 boardings per hour in FY2014 to 32 boardings per hour in FY2015. New service was not as productive as existing service. However, it is expected that productivity will decline in the short term with the addition of new service, but is expected to climb as current customers adapt their travel to the changes, and new customers learn about the service.
- **GoDurham is a highly productive service compared to peer transit agencies.** Compared to 32 boardings per hour for GoDurham in FY15, Charlotte is at 24 boardings per hour and GoRaleigh is at 25 boardings per hour (July 2014-April 2015). In addition, similar trends showing ridership and productivity declines have been experienced by peer transit agencies in the last two years.
- **Drops in system ridership occurred primarily in second half of the year.** Ridership was down in the third and fourth quarters of FY15 (January-June 2015) compared to the same time period in FY14. These declines may be attributed to severe weather events, declining fuel prices and decreasing unemployment, which may cause some customers to switch back to auto use.
- **Increases in ridership were seen on routes with additional service.** Ridership is up on Routes 10, 12 and 15 due to the service increases in FY15.

To further increase ridership, GoDurham must attract new customers while retaining current customers. We will retain current riders by improving service delivery in terms of customer service, on-time performance, and improving bus stop conditions. GoTriangle recommends that the City of Durham consider a new commuter route from South Durham to Duke/VA Medical Centers as a way to attract new riders. In addition, growth in residents living downtown near bus routes is expected to bring new customers to the GoDurham services. We will engage new downtown residential and hotel developments as strategy for attracting new customers to transit.

Staff Contact

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Attachments

GoDurham Service Performance Annual Report FY15