

Fare-Free Busing Delayed Until 2002

A new U bus route begins Jan. 1, 2002 and will give students more options for public transportation.

BY BEN GULLETT
Assistant City Editor

Students will be paying to ride the bus for one more semester, even after approving a fee increase that will eliminate fares for Chapel Hill Transit bus service.

A shortage of resources has kept the project offline until Jan. 1, 2002.

"We deferred instituting it until January because we didn't have enough buses," said Chapel Hill Mayor Rosemary Waldorf.

Carolyn Ellland, vice chancellor for auxiliary services, said the transit system is getting six new buses to handle the strain that is expected to accompany free services.

"It should cut down on (traffic)," she said.

UNC will get two additional transit routes and a new U bus route.

Ellland said the extra U bus, called the EU for East U, will aim to relieve the burden on the U buses and will extend service to the eastern portion of campus, the UNC Law School, Ridge Road and South Road.

Fare-free service will be financed by transit funds from Chapel Hill and Carrboro in addition to the increase in student fees.

The increase that students approved in February will charge undergraduate students an additional \$8.49 per semester in fees, and summer school students will be charged an extra \$1.49 per credit hour.

But Roger Patterson, associate vice chancellor for finance, said the actual amount for the fees has yet to be finalized.

"There are several more steps in the process," he said.

"We'll know more when it goes to the chancellor over the next couple of

weeks."

Patterson also said the fee increases will not be effective until fall 2002.

Chapel Hill Transportation Director Mary Lou Kuschatka said the town was pressed toward fare-free busing by UNC's concession to completely pay for the routes that are exclusive to the University, such as the U routes.

"UNC did agree to make some changes on the way we allocate routes," Kuschatka said.

Waldorf said the total cost of the program will be divided between the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, as well as UNC.

"Basically we split the fare-free by the population percentages," she said.

Waldorf said Chapel Hill will fund fare-free busing through an existing transit fund and that a tax raise will not be required.

"We had to increase the level of funding for busing because of fare-free," she said.

Waldorf added that the state's current budget crisis will not have adverse effects on the town's transit allotment.

"The funding for transit at the state level is amazingly looking pretty good," she said. "Right now it looks like we'll get even more this year."

Waldorf supported fare-free busing because of the positive effects of creating a more widely used transit system and the fact that UNC students had endorsed the measure.

"If (the students) hadn't gone for it I know (the town) wouldn't have," she said.

Waldorf also said fare-free busing has many benefits for the community. Free busing means ridership could increase, possibly decreasing pollution from personal cars.

"Fare-free was very consistent with our community value."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Regulations Fuel Construction Delays

BY JENNIFER SAMUELS
Assistant State & National Editor

UNC-system schools are experiencing a number of construction delays resulting from state regulations aimed at ensuring a fair construction process.

According to the State Construction Office, all construction activity on public property is governed by statutes designed to protect public interest and tax money.

The passage of a \$3.1 billion bond package last November allotted money to each of the 16 UNC-system schools for building repairs and renovations.

Many schools, including UNC-Chapel Hill, are also undergoing major renovations that are not part of the bond package but are aimed at helping the system absorb a projected influx of students.

Construction performed on such a large scale can be problematic because it is often difficult to coordinate the different phases of construction.

The State Construction Office is also involved in the oversight of all projects of more than \$500,000, which includes

most campus construction projects.

N.C. law states that any state building project must have separate bids from individual contractors, helping to assure fair bidding practices among small and large construction companies.

Although bond projects have been exempted from this law, delays in non-bond construction have been seen across the system.

Notably, the UNC-Chapel Hill Student Union has been under construction since June 2000, and the first phase has passed several anticipated finish dates.

Speros Fleggas, State Construction Office Director, said it is hard to pinpoint an exact reason for construction delays. "Over the years we've looked at this very question," he said. "We've looked at a lot of data and when you get into it, it's difficult to put your finger on any one regulation, any facet of the work, that delays work."

As a possible explanation, Kevin MacNaughton, UNC-system finance and property officer, said construction companies are entitled to extra time if there is

some kind of change during the project.

But Fleggas said the key to successfully completing large-scale construction projects on time is to pay attention to details. "I think administering the project simply means more work, it means you have to look after more projects," he said. "It becomes a little more problematic when you are expending large sums of money. You have to be organized in your approach and focused to try and stay on track and keep the project moving."

The State Building Commission exempted the UNC-system bond projects from the state regulation that requires organizations accept multiple bids for each facet of a project, allowing more efficient coordination for construction projects.

Fleggas said approximately 40 of the bond projects are being conducted using a construction manager at-risk process,

allowing the system to hire one general manager to oversee all other facets of construction, rather than have separate contracts with many firms.

MacNaughton said using a construction manager helps anticipate costs. "We're real pleased with the success of these bids. Some of the private ones have dropped off so we're getting some good prices."

Jeff Davies, UNC-system vice president for finance, emphasized that more than 20 bond projects have been started since the bond package passed last November. "We have 60 percent of the projects in some phase of activity," he said. "I think the activity in implementing the bond project is fantastic."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

NATO Leader Ponders Macedonia Deployment

The Associated Press

NIKUSTAK, Macedonia — NATO's supreme commander in Europe launched a fact-finding mission Monday as the Western alliance weighed whether the time is right to deploy 3,500 troops into Macedonia to collect rebel arms.

Gen. Joseph Ralston met with NATO officials already in the Balkan country as well as with President Boris Trajkovski and the nation's defense and interior ministers. He said he was gathering facts for a report to NATO's ruling body, which still must authorize the full deployment.

"Then it will be up to the nations of NATO as to what to decide," Ralston said.

Ralston's visit came as an advance team moved into the countryside to make contact with ethnic Albanian

rebels, who must disarm under a peace deal.

The British liaison team from the 16 Air Assault Brigade traveled to Nikustak, a rebel-held village along the front line about 10 miles northeast of the capital, Skopje. The team was meeting with local rebel commanders to discuss how the British-led weapons-collection mission, dubbed Operation Essential Harvest, would work.

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Know the Facts!
In college populations, 87% of all sexual assaults are between people who know each other (UNC-CH School of Journalism)

Sexual assault is NEVER the victim's fault. It is simply impossible to ask for, or deserve, assault.

75% of of date and acquaintance rapes involve the use of alcohol. It is, by far, the most commonly used date-rape drug. (Warshaw, I Never Called it Rape)

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!
Listen to your instincts, they are there for a reason. If something feels off or makes you uncomfortable, you have a right to take action!

Know Your Options!
The Police (911): You can make a full, partial, or blind (confidential) report (or none at all, it's your choice)

UNC Hospitals and UNC Student Health Services: There are trained nurses who specialize in treating survivors of sexual assault.

The Orange County Rape Crisis Center: If you need support for you or someone you care about, if you need medical, legal, or judicial support, if you have questions or just need to talk, you can call 24-hours a day, toll-free and confidential at 1-866-WE LISTEN (935-4783)

For information about volunteering or about how to sponsor a preventative education program for your organization, please call the office line: 919-968-4647.