

The Commuter

Commuter Contract Request For Bids (RFB) Published

The Township has approved and released an RFB for providing commuter bus service between the East Brunswick park and ride facilities and New York. Vendors are to submit bids to the Township by June 7, 2004. The RFB specifies the terms under which the commuter bus service is to operate. The only criterion upon which vendors will be evaluated under the RFB is the price of a 10 trip commuter ticket book for years 1, 2 and 3 of the contract period. The complete text of the RFB can be found on the Commuter Parking Advisory Committee's (CPAC) web site at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EBCommuter/files/RFB/Specifications.doc>. A future issue of this newsletter will summarize the most important service and other parameters required of bidders by the RFB, but they are in general similar to those contained in the 2001 Request for Proposal.

The winning bidder is expected to be determined by the Township Council in the following few weeks, and the winner should begin operation under the terms of its bid and the RFB sometime thereafter.

Neilson Plaza Rehabilitation

The contractor working for the Parking Utility is Structural Preservation (SPS). The construction work is now entering into its final phases. Work began on May 24 on level P2 that requires the closure of level P1 due to the danger from falling debris. When commuters enter the facility during the morning rush hour, there will be a driveway left open for commuters to proceed up to level P7. Once the garage has been parked full from the top down, the garage will be closed to all new entrants.

Traffic INTO the facility will not be permitted after it is full (approximately 9:00 a.m.) because the construction on level P2 requires that level P1 also be closed to traffic. Once the facility is closed, all additional commuter parking will be available ONLY at the Transportation and Commerce Center (TCC) for the remainder of the work day. Commuters with a Neilson Plaza parking permits will have them honored at the TCC. Commuters who park on Neilson levels P3 through P7 must continue to exit through level P7 and exit out the ramp. This will create some inconvenience because it adds a small amount of additional time to everyone's departure on the way home.

After work on level P2 is completed, which should be sometime around June 28th, work will commence on level P5. At that time, parking will be on levels P7, P6, P3, P2 and P1. The work on level P5 should be completed by the end of the second week of August 2004. **When P5 is completed in August, all work in Neilson Plaza will have been completed.** SPS will then move to non-Parking Utility portions of the garage. Once the rehabilitation work is completed the facility should not require this type of maintenance for another 15 years.

TCC Redevelopment

The TCC redevelopment process is continuing. The Township Council held a public hearing on the various proposals on May 17. At this meeting it was announced that the Golden Triangle Redevelopment Advisory Committee recommended that the Township enter into exclusive negotiations with Toll Brothers Inc., a large national real estate development firm, for the development of this property.

Toll Brothers' plan is to create a downtown "transit village" on the property with three multilevel parking garages and 15 buildings, allowing for 250,000 to 287,000 square feet in retail space, another 250,000 square feet in commercial space, and 210 to 230 units of age-restricted housing.

The property would include 1500 commuter parking spaces in a parking structure similar to Neilson Plaza along with an associated commuter bus terminal. Many of the details about the project remain to be developed through negotiations with Toll Brothers if and when they win the right to do so from the Township Council.

You can find additional information on this project and the proposal at our Topica web site <http://lists.topica.com/lists/ebcnews/read> which contains the e-mails that we have sent out on this subject.

Jersey City Service

The CPAC has created a special web site and e-mail list for the planned Neilson Plaza / Jersey City service that is currently under development by Suburban Transit. We hope that this new commuter bus service between these two points will begin shortly after the completion of construction at Neilson Plaza in early August. Suburban Transit is planning to start the service on a trial basis with two buses per day in each direction. The buses would service the Exchange Place / Newport Plaza area and would connect to Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, PATH and ferries to New York. Suburban Transit is attempting to arrange a special joint fare arrangement with NY Waterway.

We have already sent an invitation to join our new list of interested commuters for this service to all commuters that previously expressed an interest in this service and supplied the CPAC with their e-mail address. We strongly advise commuters interested in this new bus service to sign up for this list if they have not already done so. You can do so by simply sending an e-mail to ebjc-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Please encourage all commuters interested in this service to sign up for this list if they have not already done so. The more interested commuters that are signed up for this list, the better we will be able to communicate with these commuters and justify the implementation of this service to the operator.

Memo from Suburban Transit Regarding Security Precautions

At Coach USA in this past year, we have developed a security training program with the assistance of the Community Anti-Terrorism Training Institute. We are currently in the third of four training modules. The training provides an understanding of terrorism and its characteristics. Our staff has a higher awareness of terrorism and its threats and what to look for and how to react in a suspicious situation. Each training module increases the awareness of the signs of suspicious activities. We have and continue to conduct security assessments on our operations. We have developed internal anti-terrorism working groups and we have developed close liaisons and reporting relationships with security experts. In the future, we will take additional security measures on our buses and in our locations that will enhance the overall security of our operations.

We have developed communications plans; emergency procedures and we have raised the awareness of our people. We are in the process of developing a Coach USA Emergency Operation Center.

In addition, we are also represented on the Trans Hudson Emergency Task Force. The Task Force has developed a Trans Hudson emergency evacuation plan of New York City. The plan has linked the various government agencies and the private carriers to carry out a coordinated transportation system. We have agreed to provide future representation to this task force. A portion of the plan includes communication to passengers. The communication through various media outlets will start in the near future. A major release is planned for the one-year anniversary of the August 14, 2003 power blackout.

Receive Newsletter and Commuter Service Information by E-mail

The CPAC delivers newsletters and other information by e-mail as it becomes available. Over 500 commuters have already signed up for this service and are made aware of important commuting developments as they occur. Recent e-mails have included: April 5 – Addition of new Suburban Transit very early morning service to PABT; April 19 – Update on busing contract; April 22 – Temporary weekend service changes; May 4 - Reconstruction and rehabilitation phasing at Neilson Plaza; May 18 – TCC redevelopment public hearing; May 19 - Request for Bids finalized and made public; May 22 - Neilson Plaza closing to new parking at 9:00 a.m. starting May 24. If you have signed up for this list you would already be aware of these important developments.

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