

The Commuter

Commuter Contract Awarded To Suburban Transit Effective December 6, 2004

On November 8, 2004 the East Brunswick Township Council awarded the commuter bus contract to Suburban Transit. This contract was awarded consistent with the terms of the Request for Bids (RFB) under which the Township requested bids to deliver commuter bus service to East Brunswick commuters to and from our two park and ride facilities. The contract becomes effective Monday, December 6, 2004 and will remain in force for a three year period. Suburban Transit has been operating this service without a contract since October 2001 when their previous contract expired.

Suburban Transit's contract bid for the standard 10 trip ticket was \$60, \$62 and \$64 for years 1, 2 and 3 of the contract, respectively. Academy was the only other bidder, and it bid \$66.50, \$69 and \$71.75, respectively, for each of the three contract years. According to the terms of the RFB, the bidder submitting the lowest fares, Suburban Transit, has been awarded the contract.

The new fare of \$60 for a 10 trip ticket takes effect on December 6, 2004. The 10 trip fare will remain \$49.50 until that date, and previously issued tickets will remain valid until their expiration date.

Suburban Transit has stated that they plan to discontinue further sale of the 42 existing trip ticket book, but that these tickets will also be honored until their expiration dates. The Commuter Parking Advisory Committee (CPAC) regrets Suburban's decision to eliminate the 42 trip booklet and advocates that it be continued to be made available to interested commuters. If you are interested in having Suburban Transit retain the 42 trip ticket book, the CPAC suggests that you send an e-mail to ronald.kohn@coachusa.com with such a request and we would appreciate your sending a copy of this e-mail to us at ebcommuter@yahoo.com.

They have also announced that a new monthly commuter pass will be soon introduced. This pass will initially be priced at \$220 per month, but commuters who sign up will be given six \$20 discount coupons, making the net monthly cost of this pass \$200 for the first six months. The monthly pass will be valid 7 days a week for unlimited transportation between East Brunswick and New York. The use of this pass requires the commuter having and using a Suburban Transit photo identification card that will be introduced in the next few weeks. Details of how this process will be implemented will be released shortly by Suburban Transit. The CPAC encourages commuters to carefully analyze the economic attractiveness of this monthly pass before purchasing one. At \$200 per month, the break even number of commuting days per month to justify a purchase is 16.7 days per month. At \$220 per month the break even point is 18.3 days.

On December 6 a variety of other service changes will also be implemented. A summary of the most important changes are as follows:

Ticket vending machines: Suburban Transit will be installing ticket vending machines at both Neilson Plaza and the Transportation and Commerce Center (TCC). These ticket vending machines will be available at all times, regardless of whether the ticket office is open. The new machines are expected to be installed and available within 60 days of the contract's implementation.

Jersey City service: The long awaited Neilson Plaza to Jersey City bus will begin operation December 6th. There will be two buses a day in each direction. The fares for this route have not yet been announced by Suburban Transit. This bus will not service the TCC, but TCC commuters may use other Suburban Transit buses to transfer between TCC and Neilson Plaza if they wish to use this

bus. A special e-mail list has been created for information about this service. You can sign up for it by sending an e-mail to ebjc-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Hours of operation for the terminals: Both Neilson Plaza and TCC will be staffed by Suburban Transit until 8:30 p.m., 30 minutes later than the current hours of operation.

Downtown return service extended: The last bus home from Downtown will now be 8 p.m. with additional buses offered between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Late night service expanded: To comply with the minimum requirement times in the new contract, Suburban Transit will be offering two new buses at 10:25 p.m. and 11:25 p.m. from Neilson Plaza to the Port Authority. Returning from New York to Neilson Plaza, Suburban Transit will be offering two new buses at 11:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m.

Expanded Crosstown service: Two new morning buses will be added to the schedule. One additional crosstown return bus will also be added, making return frequency at 20 minute intervals.

Expanded TCC service: Two new TCC to PABT buses will be added in the morning at 6:40 a.m. and 10 a.m.. On the return, Suburban Transit will be adding nine new buses at 7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 5 p.m., 7:15 p.m., 7:45 p.m., 9:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Schedule adjustments: Numerous other minor schedule adjustments are being implemented to even out waiting times as new buses are added to the schedule to meet the contract requirements.

Terminal rent: The rent paid by Suburban Transit for the use of the two terminals will be \$45,000 a month under the contract. It was \$20,000 under the previous contract and has been \$40,000 per month on an interim basis during the contract litigation. The \$45,000 per month rent equates to approximately 50 cents per trip for each East Brunswick bound or originating passenger.

Contract requirements: Numerous other contract requirements will also take effect such as required minimum dispatcher hours and quality of service requirements. The Township intends to regularly monitor that these service requirements are being met. Please notify the CPAC at ebcommuter@yahoo.com if you are aware of any service requirements that are not being satisfied.

NJ Transit To Attend January 6, 2005 CPAC Meeting

At the request of the CPAC, New Jersey Transit is has been asked to send a representative to attend our January 6, 2005 CPAC meeting. The purpose of this portion of the meeting is to discuss service related issues that East Brunswick area commuters have had with NJ Transit's 68, 134 and 138 lines. This is the first time that NJ Transit will meet with the CPAC on NJ Transit service related issues. All interested commuters are encouraged to attend this meeting. If you have any issues you would like to be discussed at this meeting, the CPAC encourages you to forward them to us in advance at ebcommuter@yahoo.com so NJ Transit can be prepared to discuss these issues at the meeting.

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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. To subscribe, send an email to ebcnews-subscribe@topica.com. Then reply when you get the sign up confirmation message. You may cancel your subscription at any time. The CPAC will not disseminate your email address or use it for any other purpose. Our normal e-mail address remains ebcommuter@yahoo.com.