

Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey – Final Report

FINAL VERSION



By

Erik C.B. Olsen, Ph.D.
Transportation Planner

Blacksburg Transit, a Department of the Town of Blacksburg

Funded from Transit Planning Funds administered by
the Blacksburg-Christiansburg Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Presented to the Town of Christiansburg



January 28, 2010

DISCLAIMER

The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f) of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey – Final Report

January 28, 2010

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....5
Executive Summary – Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey Final Report (FINAL).....6
Introduction..... 11
Background..... 11
 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan 11
 Metropolitan Planning Organization 2030 Transportation Plan 12
 Town of Blacksburg 2046 Comprehensive Plan (Transportation section)..... 12
 Blacksburg Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis 13
 Other Plans..... 13
 Blacksburg Transit data 13
Purpose 15
Method for Conducting the Survey 15
 Collaborators..... 15
 Conducting the Survey 17
 Developing the Survey..... 17
 Identifying Mailing Addresses 17
 How the Public was Notified 18
 Theme 18
 Press, Advertising, and Marketing 19
 Raffle 20
 Meetings..... 21
Results 22
 Response Rate 22
 Survey Respondent Locations..... 23
 Demographics 24
 Job and Education Status 27
 Destinations..... 31
 Destinations: Constrained-Choice 31
 Daily Destinations 31
 Weekly Destinations 32
 Monthly Destinations..... 33
 Top Destinations: Overall 34
 Top Destinations: Weighted..... 35
 Additional Destinations: Open-Ended 36
 Top Destinations: Overall 39
 Likelihood of Riding the Bus..... 40
 Combining Likelihood to Ride the Bus and Income 42
 When Would You be Most Likely to Ride the Bus?..... 43
 Walking to a Bus Stop..... 43
 Park & Ride Commuter Lots 44
 Likeliness to Use 45
 Experience with Using a Bus for Transportation 45

Using the Bus for Activities.....	46
Important Bus Stop Features.....	47
Important Factors When Deciding to Ride the Bus	48
Desired Types of Assistance for Riding the Bus	49
Improving Bus Service	50
Examples of Respondent Comments	52
Recommendations – Overview of Bus Service Expansion	53
Downtown Loop – “The Explorer”	53
Flexible Route - “Go Anywhere!”.....	57
Mall Circulator - “The Shopper Express”.....	58
Overview of Christiansburg Routes	60
Holiday Option.....	61
Commuter Routes.....	61
Operating Budget	62
Updates and Summary.....	64
Christiansburg Transit Working Group.....	64
Updates to Routes.....	65
Ten Lessons Learned and Topics to Discuss	65
1. Engaging citizens and involving partners is key.	66
2. Additional and regular funding will be required.	66
3. Educating and training of the public should be emphasized.....	67
4. Encouraging the use of transit is important and takes time.	67
5. Over time, citizens will build new travel patterns and habits.	67
6. Routing may change before service starts; it should be maintained for 1 year.....	67
7. These routes will likely become express corridors.....	67
8. Improving the infrastructure will be needed short- and long-term.....	68
9. Satellite locations should be considered for transit vehicles.....	68
10. Branding, route naming, and service in Christiansburg is important.	68
First Day Activities.....	69
Next Steps	69
References.....	69
Appendices.....	71

Acknowledgement

The contributions of many people need to be generally or specifically acknowledged. Administration of the survey, data collection, and much analysis was led by Susan Willis-Walton, Director of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (CSR), and funded from Transit Planning Funds administered by the Blacksburg-Christiansburg Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (BCM-MPO). The staff of the Town of Christiansburg was also instrumental including the entire Town Council, as well as Lance Terpenney, Nichole Hair, and Dayton Poff. Numerous personnel at Blacksburg Transit (BT) helped during this process including the Director Rebecca Martin with special thanks to Debbie Swetnam, Ken Tucker, Fiona Rhodes, and Devon Prater, and others at BT for their assistance with marketing, editing, and data analysis. Harland Brown, Ron Parker, and the entire Operations staff spent numerous hours in reviewing and preparing potential routes, stops, and scenarios. Thank you also goes to Katherine Smith of the Engineering & GIS department of the Town of Blacksburg for guidance throughout this project. Thanks also to Phil Gilbertson of the NRV Planning District Commission for assistance with cartography. Finally, Dan Brugh, Executive Director of the BCM-MPO, deserves a big thank you for his dedicated service to public transportation. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and not necessarily those of any other organization or individuals.

Executive Summary – Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey Final Report (FINAL)

This is a 5-page executive summary of the Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey Final Report. The actual survey is included as an appendix at the end of the full report.

Background: The foundation of Blacksburg Transit (BT) was established over 35 years ago when federal funds were first sought for a transit study of the area. BT has served Blacksburg since 1983; Service began between the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg in 1990. Numerous planning documents and input from citizens continue to support the need for expanded public transportation services in the region. In addition, the need for expanded bus service in Christiansburg was based, in part, upon low ridership in Christiansburg, prior to November 2009. Ridership on the Christiansburg bus route was the lowest of all routes with an average hourly ridership of 7 passengers per hour during weekdays. This is in stark contrast to the system average of 47 passengers per hour, and the most popular routes that have upwards of 80 to 100 passengers per hour.

Purpose: The Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey was completed in alignment with the goals stated in various planning documents including those of the Town of Christiansburg, Town of Blacksburg, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Virginia Tech, and the New River Valley Planning District Commission (PDC). The purpose of the Bus Survey was to receive feedback from citizens, market that expanded bus service is “around the corner,” and to develop proposals for expanded bus service in the Town of Christiansburg.

Method: The survey was administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (CSR) and managed by Blacksburg Transit, a Department of the Town of Blacksburg. Survey development and marketing of its distribution was a collaborative effort including personnel from the Towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg, and the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), with support from the New River Valley Planning District Commission (PDC), Virginia Tech Transportation and Campus Services (TCS), and others. Conducting the bus survey included several steps: survey development, identifying mailing addresses, notifying the public, developing the theme “It’s Around the Corner,” advertising, holding meetings with businesses and organizations, entering and coding responses, and summarizing the survey responses. The survey was mailed during October and December 2008.

Results: A total of 3,777 completed surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 38.3 percent, which is considered to be very good. The response represents at least 8,876 citizens. A total of 58 percent of respondents were received from the central portion of the Town of Christiansburg. The percentage of responses received from households in the western portion of Town was 32 percent and the percentage of responses from the eastern portion was 10 percent of households.

- **Demographics:** The demographics of survey respondents generally reflected what was reported by U.S. Census data. For gender, 57% of respondents were females. Respondents were distributed by age from 18 to 65 or older with 73% between the ages of 25 and 64 years old. Sixty percent of survey respondents were married. The survey revealed that 26% of people in each household were under the age of 16. For housing status, 78% own a home and 17% rent.

- *Income, Job, and Education:* The reported total household income for 33.7% of respondents was \$40,000 or less, 15.0% reported a household income of \$20,000 or less, 6.9% had a household income of \$11,000 or less. A total of 56% of respondents work full-time, 11% part-time, 8% are taking classes, 7% are not employed, and 29% are retired. Employers for those working full-time included Virginia Tech (19%), Montgomery County Public Schools (5%), Radford University (3%), Carilion (2%), Moog (2%), Montgomery Regional Hospital (2%), and Volvo (2%). For those that go to school full-time, schools mentioned were Virginia Tech (39%), Radford University (14%), NRCC-NRV Mall (13%), NRCC-Dublin (10%), and VCOM (7%).
- *Destinations:* Destinations were reported in terms of monthly, weekly, and daily trips. The top five destinations within Christiansburg were Kroger/CVS (10.8%), Wal-Mart (10.3%), the Recreation Center (9.8%), the New River Valley Mall (8.5%), and Spradlin Farms (8.3%). The top destinations outside of Christiansburg included Blacksburg (5.8%), Virginia Tech (5.3%), Radford (3.7%), Montgomery Regional Hospital (3.0%), and Roanoke (2.8%).
- *Likelihood of Riding:* This question was asked in two formats, revealing that 50% to 60% of respondents indicated that they were very/somewhat likely to ride the bus if a new system was available. Households with very low incomes (less than \$11,000 annually) were twice as likely to ride the bus as compared to those with the highest annual incomes (greater than \$120,000).
- *When to Ride:* The most popular times that respondents said they would ride the bus was Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. For Saturday and Sunday popular times are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- *Walking to a Bus Stop:* In all, 66% of respondents indicated they would walk 4 or more minutes to a stop. Only 11% indicated they would walk less than 2 minutes.
- *Park & Ride Commuter Lots:* A total of 45% of respondents were very likely or somewhat likely to use a park and ride commuter lot. The most popular park & ride locations included the New River Valley Mall (7%), Christiansburg Recreation Center (5%), Exit 114 off I-81 (4%), and the Downtown Christiansburg area (4%).
- *Experience with Bus for Transportation:* A total of 22% of respondents indicated they had used the bus to travel within Blacksburg, 12% had used the bus to travel between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, 10% had used the Smart Way, and 7% had used the bus to travel within Christiansburg.
- *Using the Bus for Activities:* A total of 45% of respondents would use the bus to go shopping, 41% to go to special events (concerts, sporting events), 37% to run errands and go to appointments from home, 36% to travel to and from work, 21% to dine out, 13% to run errands and appointments from work, 13% for social visits, 9% for transportation to and from school, and 8% for family activities (childcare, school).
- *Important Bus Stop Features:* A total of 88% of respondents indicated that having a covered shelter was the most important bus stop feature. Other features included schedule information (83%), lighting (78%), benches (76%), trash cans (59%), sidewalks (39%), and a recycling can (24%).
- *Important Factors When Deciding to Ride the Bus:* Safety was most important (91%) followed by on time service (90%), low bus fares (89%), convenient times (88%), saving money on gas (88%), helping the environment (79%), convenience of not having to drive or park (78%), and avoiding traffic or not having to drive (68%).

- *Desired Types of Assistance for Riding the Bus:* Respondents who desired assistance indicated they wanted large print format schedules and bus information (19%), trip planning assistance (10%), physical assistance getting on and off the bus (6%), and getting on the bus with a mobility device (4%).
- *Improving Bus Service:* This open-ended item had over 1,500 responses including more stops (35%), more hours (19%), more bus schedule information (11%), increased frequency (10%), service to Blacksburg from Christiansburg (8%), service in neighborhoods (7%), issues relevant to older people (3%), park & ride (2%), downtown (2%), major employers (1%). Here are a few examples of respondent comments about improving bus service:

“...The current service doesn't run early enough for most commuters...If bus service was available from 6:30 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m. it would be useful ...”

“(Have) an express from Christiansburg to Virginia Tech campus. I don't have time to stop everywhere between here and there so that's why I don't use it.”

“Offering a bus service would (help in) making the roads safe...Also, the Christiansburg economy would be boosted because (we) could...spend money by taking the bus (and going) to shopping areas and the movies...”

“...A bus system serving all of Christiansburg would benefit the community...families would save on gas and the need to buy a car/insurance/inspections/property tax, etc.”

Recommendations: Three proposed routing zones include a north, central, and east zone, with 6 proposed routes to serve the Town. In November 2009 three routes and an option were launched including The Explorer (downtown loop), The Shopper Express (connecting shopping areas), Go Anywhere (call-ahead, flexible service), and extended holiday hours:

- *The Explorer* is a self-sustaining, independent bus route that serves the majority of residents. The focus on downtown enables riders to use the bus for shopping, errands, appointments, and access to government facilities. The loop is a short, frequent service with a 2-block buffer for minor deviations to pick up/drop off passengers (pre-arranged via phone). The Explorer has 12 stops and regular service includes 30-minute service weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. and Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m.
- *The Shopper Express* is a new commercial mall circulator route to provide access to commercial hubs or shopping areas, with frequent service (e.g., every 20 minutes) for customers. The Shopper Express connects to nearby shopping areas and popular destinations such as the NRV Mall, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Spradlin Farms, the DMV, a bowling alley, and the post office. The Shopper Express also links to BT's existing Two Town Trolley-Blacksburg (TTT-B) route at the NRV Mall and to the Smart Way Commuter Bus at K-Mart. The Shopper Express operates with 30-minute frequency weekdays from 9:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and on Saturdays from 12:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

- *Go Anywhere* is a flexible service to provide service within all three routing zones of Christiansburg. A flexible route best serves an area that has a relatively low population density level and is an affordable option compared to a fixed route service. Customers call ahead at least one day in advance to request service between their origin and a destination(s). *Go Anywhere* reservations can be made between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- *Extended holiday hours* were recommended and approved to include extended hours for all proposed routes from Thanksgiving (Thursday, November 26, 2009) to Christmas (Friday, December 25), including approximately 30 hours per week. This also included special early service (e.g., starting at 4:00 a.m.) for the two days following Thanksgiving, Friday November 27 and Saturday November 28, to encourage bus use for personal travel for shopping, errands, appointments, etc. The additional hours provided more service system-wide.
- In addition, the Town of Blacksburg Town Council approved funding for additional hours for the Two Town Trolley between Blacksburg and Christiansburg to improve the service and connectivity of the route.

The remaining options included commuter routes to start in 2010:

- *Commuter routes* are proposed to accommodate daily commuters within Christiansburg and daily commuters to Blacksburg. The service is aimed at providing transportation to and from work at a convenient time for the majority of potential riders. These routes would support survey findings that showed that on a daily basis, 40% of respondents commute to Blacksburg, 32% commute within Christiansburg, 9% commute daily to Radford, and 18% of commute to other areas or work at home. Exact routing would be determined by need as customers call and make requests. This may operate similar to a subscription-service in that potential customers (or a group) would call to request service to an employer or area. Service would likely include morning service (e.g., 6:30-8:30 a.m.) and evening service (e.g., 4:00-6:00 p.m.)

The operating budget included \$211,712 for services including the first four options (Explorer, Shopper Express, Go Anywhere, and extended holiday hours). Additional funds for the commuter options are being sought via a 2011 DRPT grant being submitted on February 1, 2010.

Updates and Summary:

- A Christiansburg transit “Working Group” was established to provide advisory support for transit start-up activities. It included the Mayor, the Town Manager, town staff, the MPO Executive Director, and a member of Town Council. The Working Group was championed by the Transit Director.
- In conjunction with the launch of service, a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony was held on November 23, 2009 at the New River Valley Mall in Christiansburg. Featured guests included representatives from both towns, local businesses, the County, the MPO, the PDC, Virginia Tech, the New River Community College, and various area organizations. Throughout the first day, a live radio broadcast occurred and community volunteers staffed stops along the new routes and on the vehicles with

give-aways, prizes, raffles, food, and other incentives to encourage citizens to ride the bus. Service was fare-free from November 23, 2009 to February 1, 2010.

- Blacksburg Transit has prepared a grant proposal for fiscal year 2011 to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) on February 1, 2010. This document, and the results reported herein, provides the basis for the grant proposal for the commuter routes presented. With continual support from the citizens of Christiansburg, the leaders of the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia Tech, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and from numerous private and public businesses and organizations in the region, Blacksburg Transit is excited about the future of transit in the New River Valley.

Introduction

This document is final report for the Christiansburg Bus Survey. This document includes the following sections: background, method, results, conclusions, and recommendations. In addition, a “lessons learned” section is included from which readers may benefit when preparing for similar survey efforts. Note that some portions of this document are redundant with previous documents, with minor updates included where appropriate.

Background

A brief look at the events leading up to the 2008 Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey reveals that roots were established over 35 years ago. It was then that the New River Valley Planning District Commission decided to seek federal funding for a transit study in the area; the area included Radford, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Pulaski (Harris, 1974; Mayo, 1974). By early 1979 the New River Valley Transit Study was completed (Howard and Stuart, 1978; 1979) and the report outlined a six-leg, seven-bus system of fixed routes in Blacksburg. Soon thereafter steps were taken to bring mass transit to Blacksburg. In the 1980s federal funding was sought (Geran, 1981), a transit manager was hired (Haddad, 1982), and in 1983 Blacksburg Transit started with 8 buses and three routes (Virginia Tech, 1983).

Additional steps were involved in deciding to conduct a town-wide survey by U.S. mail. Bus routes connecting the Town of Blacksburg with the Town of Christiansburg started March 19, 1990 (Bingham, 1990). Various discussions have taken place about changes to or expansions of bus service for Christiansburg. In early 2008 Blacksburg Transit applied for and was awarded additional funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for the purchase of additional vehicles to better serve Christiansburg. As part of that proposal, funding was sought to conduct a survey to “...help finalize routes and stops for expanded service ... (and to serve) as a marketing tool to promote the new service.” Around this same time, funding was approved by the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for conducting a survey of Christiansburg households. In February 2009 an additional, updated grant application was again submitted to DRPT which included a more extensive regional approach including potential expansion within and to the Town of Christiansburg and the City of Radford.

An overview of area comprehensive plans is also included illustrating that several plans have shown support for expanding transit within and connecting to the Town of Christiansburg. This is not an exhaustive overview but simply highlights relevant portions of each document.

Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan (Town of Christiansburg, 2003) supports expansion of bus service to reduce traffic congestion and as an alternative transportation option. The plan includes strategies to 1) promote and encourage the use of Two Town Trolley between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, 2) support regional transportation planning within the New River Valley, 3) support the expansion of bus services throughout and around the Town, and 4) suggests the potential creation and maintenance of bus service between Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Radford. The plan also supports enhanced infrastructure to support an expansion of mass transit including

providing bus shelters with benches, bicycle lock racks at appropriate locations around Town, and includes a desire to use funds to rehabilitate and extend sidewalks into appropriate areas. The Town of Christiansburg supports the 2030 Transportation Plan developed by the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Metropolitan Planning Organization 2030 Transportation Plan

The Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serves the citizens of the Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County. The MPO Transportation 2030 Plan (BCM-MPO, 2005) states that transportation via transit and intercity bus is an integral part of the region's transportation system and the Plan supports expansion of mass transit. The Plan calls for an expansion of BT service in the MPO area, including adjacent jurisdictions making stops at large commercial areas, at local and county facilities, and at high-density residential areas. Specifically, the Plan supports the expansion of BT service into Christiansburg and the MPO area, and park and ride lots at several key locations to serve Radford, Roanoke and Giles County commuters. Additionally the Plan suggests bikeway/walkway improvements which will not only make biking and walking safer and more efficient but will improve transportation by transit. Such improvements include extending the Huckleberry Trail to the downtown areas of both Blacksburg and Christiansburg, widening sidewalks in downtown Christiansburg, construction of sidewalks with new commercial development in villages and towns, and revitalization of downtown Cambria through an improvement program including sidewalks and pedestrian lighting.

Town of Blacksburg 2046 Comprehensive Plan (Transportation section)

The Town of Blacksburg Comprehensive Plan (Town of Blacksburg, 2007) outlines a goal to “provide an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that is safe, efficient and, environmentally responsive while complementing land use and serving a diverse population.” Toward that end the Town is actively involved with the Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is committed to alternative transportation including transit improvements. In support of the MPO commitment, the Town of Blacksburg has developed some strategies to bolster this endeavor. Some strategies are: expand Blacksburg Transit in response to community growth and create more public awareness of the positive environmental impact from using mass transit, as part of an environmental management strategy; utilize public transportation to stimulate economic development, attract new businesses, and help businesses in employee retention; consider transit needs when making land use decisions; expand Blacksburg Transit access to all high-density residential developments, mixed use developments, affordable housing developments, commercial centers, research parks, and industrial parks; help coordinate the provision of public transportation in the New River Valley; support the goals of the MPO's 2030 Transportation Plan to enhance intercity travel including expanding Blacksburg Transit service into the MPO area and adjacent jurisdictions, making stops at large commercial areas and at local and county facilities, and at high-density residential areas, and investigating transit options between Blacksburg and Radford; operate the transit system in a cost-effect, fiscally sound manner that is well supported by federal and state grants by developing subscription

service to target areas, including neighborhoods, where service can be financially supported, and by considering new ways to provide current and expanded service that is less expensive.

Blacksburg Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis

In 2006 a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) was performed of Blacksburg Transit (Urbitran & RLS, 2006). The analysis addressed the service area, an evaluation of current service and standards, and included operational changes. Numerous interesting and relevant findings about Blacksburg and the surround areas were included. For example, the population density of Blacksburg is over 2,000 people per square mile, as compared to 389 for Montgomery County overall, and nearby areas such as Radford and Christiansburg, which generally ranges from a density of 139 to 2078. The population density for Christiansburg is estimated to be 1,199¹.

The COA recommended redirecting the Two Town Trolley route to operate on South Main Street. Adding trip generators including the Montgomery Regional Hospital were suggested. To increase ridership, longer operating hours, beginning at 8:15 on weekdays, were proposed. Expanding the service area by operating in route deviation mode was also suggested. It would serve both to increase ridership and relieve the Blacksburg Transit from providing ADA complementary paratransit service. Blacksburg Transit has already reviewed three different route deviation options for this route (p 66). One of the options would maintain 60-minute frequencies in Christiansburg and is recommended. A smaller bus would be needed for better maneuverability when deviating from the route. Finally, there was mention of expanding this route's service span to begin on Mondays through Saturdays from 7:45 a.m. to 6:10 p.m.

Other Plans

Various other documents support expansion within the region including the New River Valley (PDC 4) Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan (Cambridge Systematics and KFH Group, 2008). This report aligns with the concept of coordinated, regional, interconnected transportation system to serve citizens within the New River Valley. Additionally, a recent report completed by the New River Valley Planning District Commission (VDOT, 2009) described a vision for rural transportation within the New River Valley, which could be implemented in phases over several years. Other documents supporting expansion of bus service include the Virginia Tech Master Plans. For example, the Virginia Tech Campus Master Plan Update 2006 describes a new transit center that supports infrastructure systems that anticipate growth (Virginia Tech, 2006).

Blacksburg Transit data

As a final point, we reviewed a sampling of ridership data for the Two Town Trolley-Christiansburg (TTT-C). This is the bus route that serves (until November 22, 2009) from the New River Valley Mall in Christiansburg to downtown Christiansburg (e.g., County Government Center, Town Hall). Data provided by BT's Data Specialist for a period during October 2008 indicated that the daily ridership was only 29.6 riders for an average weekday. On Saturday, the average was 22.3 riders and on Sunday it was 9.0 riders.

¹ Calculations provided 4/13/09 by Jill Cahoon, Transit Planner for AECOM Transportation, based on population density US Census data for Christiansburg by block group (area of 14.134 square miles).

Comparing these data to those for the Two-Town Trolley-Blacksburg (TTT-B) shows a large contrast. The TTT-B route serves Virginia Tech campus stops (e.g., Burruss Hall, Cassell Coliseum), the Montgomery Regional Hospital, and several stops in Christiansburg (e.g., Mall, Theatre, Wal Mart). Average weekday ridership was 231.1 riders during the same period. This is 7.8 times higher than the average for the TTT-C. For Saturday, the average was 511.0 riders (22.9 times the average of the TTT-C), and on Sunday the average was 228.3 riders (25.4 times the average of the TTT-C).

Further, by looking at the TTT-C on an average hourly basis we can better understand its limitations in comparison to other routes. The TTT-C route service had an average of 7.37 passengers per hour on Monday-Thursday, 4.29 passengers per hour on Friday, 3.33 passengers for Saturday, and 1 passenger per hour on Sunday. In comparison to other routes and the system average per hour we again see a large contrast. For example, one of the most popular routes, Toms Creek A, services an average of 83.05 passengers per hour on Monday-Thursday, 83.12 passengers per hour on Friday, 101.75 passengers per hour on Saturday, and 62.5 passengers per hour on Sunday. Likewise the system average overall is 46.85 passengers per hour Monday-Thursday, 47.32 passengers per hour on Friday, 50.51 passengers per hour on Saturday, and 33.47 passengers per hour on Sunday. In summary the average hourly ridership for the entire system (46.85) was over six times that of the average ridership for the TTT-C (7.37). For the busiest routes, such as the Toms Creek A route, the average hourly ridership was (83.05) was over eleven times that of the average hourly ridership for the TTT-C (7.37). Figure 1 illustrates the number passengers per hour for select routes for Monday-Thursday.

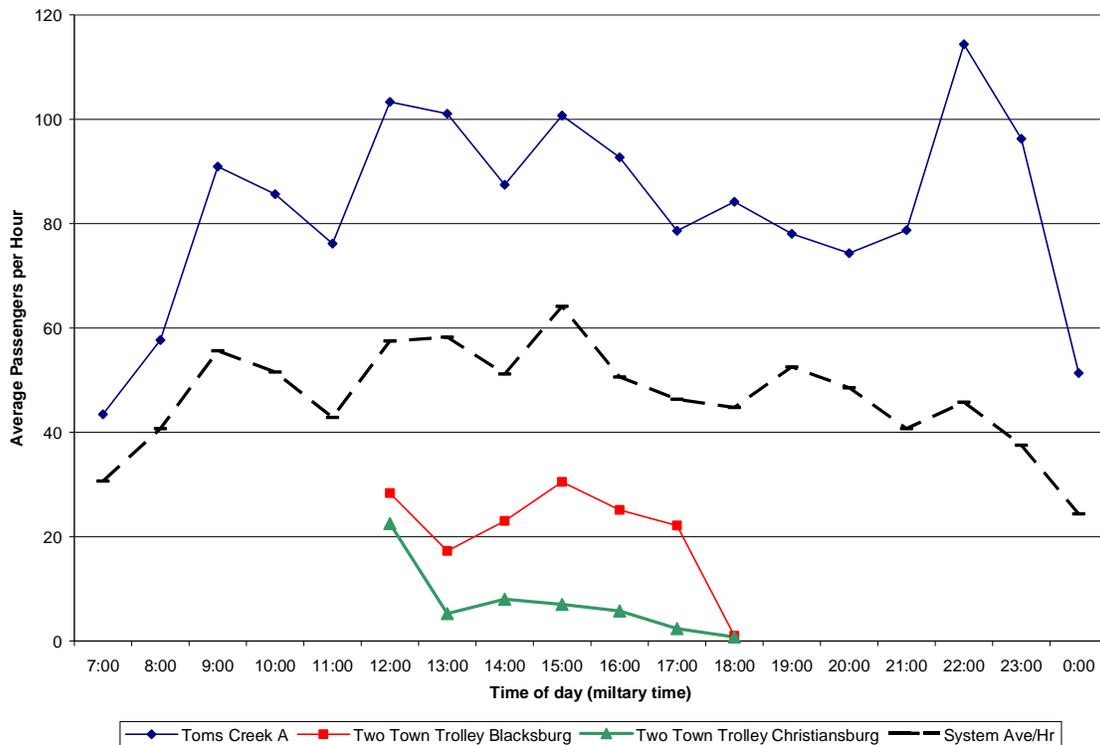


Figure 1. Average Number of BT Passengers per Hour during October 2008

As an additional note, the hours of service for the TTT-B and TTT-C were limited to generally 12 to 6 p.m. for Monday-Friday and Sunday, and 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. on

Saturday for the TTT-B and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday for the TTT-C. This was due to demand, cost, and other factors. In contrast, the services for the other routes generally operate from 7 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Thursday (11 a.m. to midnight on Sunday), 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. on Saturday. This was due to the high demand and large concentration of riders that live near these routes.

Purpose

The main purpose for conducting the Christiansburg Bus Survey was to receive feedback from the community about bus service, origins, and destinations. The information collected from the survey will be used in the development of a plan for expanded bus service in Christiansburg. Additionally, sending out the survey and marketing of it with the associated logo (see Appendix A) will help to let the public know that expanded service is “around the corner” and that public input will be used to provide future, improved bus service.

Method for Conducting the Survey

This section describes the work plan, timeline, and collaborators. Additionally, the processes of conducting the survey and notifying the public are reviewed,

Work Plan

To guide the project a work plan document was created outlining the steps involved. The purpose of the work plan was to provide an overview of the project, describe the purpose of the survey, summarize previous findings, identify collaborators involved, and outline the method, marketing, and reporting of survey results. Overall the work plan provided an overview of how the survey was to be conducted, and an overview of how survey results would be communicated, so that recommendations could then be implemented.

Timelines

Periodic timelines were developed to help guide the project. Appendix B includes an example that was used during this process. Other formats included calendar view and task-date (milestone) styles.

Collaborators

Conducting the Christiansburg Bus Survey involved collaboration among the Town of Christiansburg, Virginia Tech, Town of Blacksburg (Blacksburg Transit), and the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Specific personnel included:

Town of Christiansburg

- Lance Terpenney, Town Manager
- Nichole Hair, Town Planner
- Dayton Poff, Engineering Technician/GIS Analyst

Virginia Tech

Center for Survey Research (CSR)

(VTCSR) conducts a wide variety of survey research projects annually. CSR conducts research design consultation, telephone surveys, mail surveys, and web-based surveys, statistical analyses, proposal development, and other vital data functions for virtually every area of social research, evaluation, and policy analysis. CSR completes projects for local, state, and federal governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, private businesses and organizations, and the Virginia Tech university administration.

- Susan Willis-Walton, Director of the Center for Survey Research

Transportation and Campus Services (TCS)

Formerly the Office of Transportation, TCS contains eight departments including Air Transportation Services, Alternative Transportation, Fleet Services, Mail Services, Parking Services, Printing Services, Records Management Services, and Transportation Planning and Engineering. Director Steve Mouras supported the project overall by assigning staff to be involved during this process including:

- Debby Freed, Alternative Transportation Manager, Transportation & Campus Services

Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making organization serving the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County. The MPO provides the information, tools, and public input necessary to improve the performance of the transportation system of the region. Future transportation needs are addressed, giving consideration to all possible strategies and the community's vision. The Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey was funded from Transit Planning Funds administered by the MPO.

- Dan Brugh, Executive Director

Town of Blacksburg

The Town of Blacksburg, Virginia, established in 1798, is consistently ranked among the country's best places to live. Blacksburg is known for award winning services, a reasonable cost of living, safety, moderate climate, and abundant leisure activities. Blacksburg is proud to be the home of Virginia Tech and major technology companies located in the Corporate Research Center and the Blacksburg Industrial Park, as well as the Edward Via School of Osteopathic Medicine, which all contribute to the Town being recognized as one of the best educated work forces in the country. Town personnel supporting the Christiansburg Bus Survey included:

- Marc Verneil, Town Manger
- Katherine Smith, GIS Coordinator

Blacksburg Transit

Blacksburg Transit (BT), a department of the Town of Blacksburg, was started in 1983 with 3 routes servicing Blacksburg with eight 30-foot buses, one van, and seven full time staff. Currently BT services Blacksburg as well as Christiansburg with 10 routes. The BT vehicles consist of 36 fixed-route buses, 8 body-on-chassis (BOC) vans, and 15 support/service vehicles. For the fiscal year 2008, BT had 2.61 million trips per year. BT has a total of 199 employees including 36 full-time employees and 145 part-time employees, the majority of which are bus operators (133). The website is <http://www.btransit.org>. BT personnel involved in supporting the Christiansburg Bus Survey included:

- Debbie Swetnam, BT Regulatory Manager
- Harland Brown, BT Operations Manager
- Ken Tucker, BT Marketing Manager
- Fiona Rhodes, BT Marketing Specialist
- Tim Witten, BT ITS Manager
- Aneil Samuel, BT ITS Administrator
- Erik Olsen, BT Transportation Planner

Erik Olsen from BT served as Project Manager of the survey effort and Susan Willis-Walton from the VT CSR conducted the administration, including printing and mailing, and statistical analysis of the bus survey data.

Conducting the Survey

The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (CSR) administered the Christiansburg Bus Survey under contract with the Town of Blacksburg. Susan Willis-Walton administered the survey. This process included developing the survey, identifying mailing addresses, printing the survey and envelopes, and entering and summarizing the responses.

Developing the Survey

Development of the survey was a collaborative effort mainly between CSR and BT. Initial drafts of the survey were based on previous surveys conducted for the Fredericksburg Regional Transit bus system (FRED). Initial versions were developed in July 2008. Pilot testing of the survey was conducted by BT in late August 2008 with 18 BT volunteers. The final version of the survey (Appendix E) was accepted in early October. The first wave of surveys was mailed October 24, 2009. The second wave was sent by December 18, 2008.

Identifying Mailing Addresses

All households in Christiansburg were included as the sampling target frame for the study; to maximize the accuracy of mailing addresses, several databases were used for obtaining household addresses. This was necessary because addresses are available through a variety of databases and because database sources include different parameters (with different rate-information updates) for including addresses.

The CSR purchased address records from Survey Sampling International (SSI), a national sampling firm specializing in the development of survey samples, using census block definitions provided by the Town of Christiansburg. These records were then supplemented by records from the Town utility database to include addresses not available through SSI's databases. After obtaining the household records from the national sampling firm, the database was compared to existing Christiansburg government databases, such as utility records databases and planning databases for the inclusion of new construction. The two databases were searched to identify differences among them. The most recent information was used in an attempt to correct any differences in the databases. Even though attempts were made to garner the most viable addresses possible for each household in Christiansburg, some surveys were returned after the initial mailings as ineligible due to undeliverable addresses.

Surveys that were returned as undeliverable were reviewed and updated for inclusion in a second mailing. Numerous phone calls and emails received from people to update their address or request a survey were also received, and included. A total of 11,306 household addresses were included in the pool of available records for the survey. A total of 1,436 of the records used for the initial mailings were ineligible due to undeliverable addresses. The total number of eligible records for the survey was 9,870.

The mail-survey approach was utilized in part to raise awareness of the bus initiatives that were taking place in the community and to gather data from citizens for planning new transit options. While a telephone survey approach may have yielded highly representative responses in terms of statistical representation, the mail survey garnered a great deal of public interest with wide media coverage. The mail survey was designed to elicit input regarding citizen interest in riding a future system, including a wide variety of input that is valuable in the development of the routes and for implementing new types of routes.

Information notices about the survey were published in the media (newspapers and radio), which helped to spread the word about the survey and likely lead to a high response rate. The result of the media coverage helped in the success of collecting citizen input regarding the bus system.

The survey was administered using a three step mailing process. All households were initially sent a full mailing packet including a cover letter, a survey booklet, and a postage paid envelope for the return of the survey. The cover letter asked that only an adult in the household complete and return the survey. Reminder postcards were sent to non-respondents within the first week of the initial survey packet mailing. After the number of received surveys had tapered off a second full survey packet mailing was sent to all remaining non-respondent households.

How the Public was Notified

As mentioned, a series of efforts were taken to notify the public about the bus survey including a marketing theme, advertising, a raffle incentive, and meetings.

Theme

Marketing efforts included creating the theme "It's Around the Corner" with an illustrated drawing showing the Christiansburg Town Hall and a Blacksburg Transit bus with "Christiansburg" on the front (Appendix A). The drawing became the logo of the

marketing effort. It was used for printed 8.5 inch x 11 inch flyers, for 11 inch by 14 inch laminated placards inside buses, and for other documents associated with the survey such as status reports and timelines.

Press, Advertising, and Marketing

A variety of modes were used to market that the survey was going to be conducted and to maximize response-rate. Table 1 summarizes what was completed. The effort included electronic press releases via Blacksburg Alert which were let out October 6 and December 17, 2008. Laminated bus placards were placed in all buses. Flyers were distributed to local businesses for posting, and were handed out at meetings. A series of 25 radio spots were paid for WSLQ-FM (Q99), and 3 morning repeats of a short interview with the BT Transportation Planner were heard on WVTF-FM (NPR) with Beverly Amsler. Newspaper advertisements included 18 spots in the Roanoke Times. There were also six articles (10/22, 11/29/08, and 5/7, 5/17, 5/18, 5/19, 5/21/09 and two editorials (10/12/08, 4/12/09) in the Roanoke Times and two articles (10/23/08, 4/10/09) and an editorial (10/27/08) in the Virginia Tech Collegiate Times.

The survey was also mentioned on several websites and blogs. Numerous emails and phone calls were received from both residents within the Town of Christiansburg, as well as people from outside the town, who wanted to contribute their input. Additionally, a survey notice was placed on all Town of Christiansburg water bills in November 2008. Table 1 summarizes press and marketing efforts for the survey. Appendix C lists the newspaper and on-line coverage, including blog articles found between September 2008 and January 2010, and includes documentation from a separate marketing effort and another set of articles launched for the November 23, 2009 first-day-of-service and ribbon cutting ceremony.

Table 1. Press and Marketing Efforts completed for Christiansburg Bus Survey

Press and Marketing efforts	Organization/Format	Dates
Bus Placards	In all 36 BT buses	September-December 2008
Flyers	As handouts for meetings	September-December 2008
Newspaper Articles	8 articles (Roanoke Times)	October, 2008-May 2009
	3 articles (VT Collegiate Times)	October 23, 2008
Newspaper Advertisements	18 advertisements in Roanoke Times	October 8-November 11, 2008
Newspaper Editorials	2 in Roanoke Times	October 12, 2008 and April 12, 2009
Radio Spots	25 spots with WSLQ-FM (Q99 Radio)	September 29 – November 13, 2008
	WVTF-Radio (NPR) -3 morning spots (portion of phone interview w/E. Olsen & B. Amsler)	November 7, 2008
Press Releases	Blacksburg Alert email messages	September 16 and December 18, 2008
Blogs	Think Christiansburg!; DepotDazed; AdvanceChristiansburg	Various dates between October 2008-May 2009
Websites	Town of Christiansburg, BT, MPO	October 2008-May 2009
Water (utility) bill	Town of Christiansburg reminder about completing bus survey	November 2008
Meetings	BT, PDC, MPO, TOC (Town Council), Wal-Mart, Echostar, NRV Free Clinic, NRV Housing Partnership meeting, Montgomery County Schools	Various

Raffle

Raffle prizes, in the form of \$25 gift certificates, were distributed at random to 10 people who mailed in their completed surveys. The raffle was marketed on the flyer and on bus placards, as well as on the cover letter for the mailed survey. Vendors were local businesses including Macado’s, the Coffee Depot, Wal-Mart, Charlie’s Chinese Restaurant, the Farmhouse Restaurant, the New River Valley Mall, Lowe’s, Pizza Inn, Super Bowl, and Due South BBQ.

Meetings

To help spread the word about the survey, meetings were held with BT staff as well as off-site with various parties. These meetings included an overview of the survey with flyers as handouts. The meetings also included periodic updates about the Christiansburg Bus Survey mailings and results were provided throughout this process. These meetings served to update collaborators, internal staff, town council members, and other interested parties including:

Planning meetings with collaborators (TOB, TOC, VT, BT staff)

- 8/8/08 pre-meeting
- 8/8/08 BT staff meeting
- 8/18/08 survey meeting
- 8/21/08 BT Fall kick-off
- 8/28/08 BT Shift Pick (with pilot testing of survey)
- 9/18/08 Call with Nichole Hair
- 11/26/08 data meeting with Nichole, Dayton, Susan, Debbie, and Erik
- 12/10/08 BT Staff meeting (update)
- 12/19/08 and 1/6/09 with Nichole, Lance, Becky, and Erik

Blacksburg Transit

- Updates to BT Staff via “BT Briefs” (BT newsletter with paystubs)
 - 10/22/08
 - 11/19/08
- Email updates to BT Staff
 - 8/27/08 for pilots
 - 10/22/08 re. Roanoke Times article and mailing for 10/27/08
 - 10/23/08 re. George Simmons (Bus Operator) in the Collegiate Times
 - 10/29/08 re. confirmation of mailing
 - 12/1/08 re. Roanoke Times article from 11/29/08
 - 5/21/09 from Director

Town of Christiansburg Town Council

- 8/19/08 overview
- 10/7/08 (during citizen comments)
- 12/2/08 email of MS Word document
- 4/7/09 Proposed Christiansburg Bus Service (presentation of proposed routes)
- 5/18/09 Proposed Town of Christiansburg Bus Service *Update* (Work Session)

Town of Blacksburg Town Manager and Town Council

- 2008-2009 Director Rebecca Martin provided periodic updates to the Town Manger throughout the process
- 4/21/09 Director Rebecca Martin provided an update for Town of Blacksburg Town Council at a Work Session (TOB, 4/21/09)

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- 10/16/08 slides as part of Becky Martin’s presentation during BT Overview

New River Valley Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (NRVTAC), PDC

- 9/16/08 announcement
- 7/21/09 overview of recommendations

Other Meetings

- NRV Housing Partnership Meeting, 10/15/08
- Wal-Mart, 10/27/08
- Echostar/Dishnetwork, 10/27/08
- NRV Free Clinic, 10/29/08
- Montgomery County Schools, 10/30/08

Results

This section provides an overview of results including response rate, participants and survey, survey items, mailing addresses, survey respondent locations, demographics, employment and education, desired destinations, riding the bus, and bus service improvements.

Response Rate

A total of 3,777 completed surveys were returned by respondents to CSR by 2,145 females and 1,594 males with an average age between 35 to 45 years old. The overall response rate was 38.3 percent, a rate which is considered to be very good.²

Participants and Survey

All survey respondents received a survey in the mail at their home address. The 6-page survey consisted of 22 items containing a mixture of forced-choice, multiple choice, and open-ended response items.

Survey Items

The survey items have been grouped in 6 general categories. Demographics included gender, age, marital status, and number of people in household. Another group of items were regarding housing status (own or rent), reported annual income, employment or education status (part- or full-time, retired, or student), and the reported top-employers. A third grouping was for destinations as visited on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. A fourth series of items involved likelihood of riding the bus (likelihood, desired time to ride). A fifth group included items characterizing the bus stop and activities for riding the bus (time to walk to a stop, park & ride lots, bus experience, what activities a bus would be used for, important stop features, important factors for riding, and desired assistance). Finally numerous open-ended comments were offered for improving bus service.

² Kaplowitz, M.D., Hadlock, T. D., & Levine, R. 2004. "A Comparison of Web and Mail Survey Response Rates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68 (1):94-101. The study used a 56-item 15-minute survey. Mail surveys had a response rate of 31.5%; email surveys (with advance notification postcard) had a rate of 29.7%.

Survey Respondent Locations

Survey respondents included a representative sample of households from all areas within the Town of Christiansburg as illustrated by Figure 2. The responses were focused in the central portion of the Town representing 58% of respondents as illustrated by Figure 3. The percentage of responses received from households in the western portion of town was 32% and the percentage of responses from the eastern portion was 10% of households. A total of 3,777 completed surveys were returned by respondents to CSR. A total of 3,339 surveys were completed by households within the Town limits. The remaining 438 surveys were from households within the County that had Christiansburg addresses. The overall response rate of 38.3 percent represents at least 8,876 citizens, out of approximately 20,000 citizens living in the Town.^{3, 4}

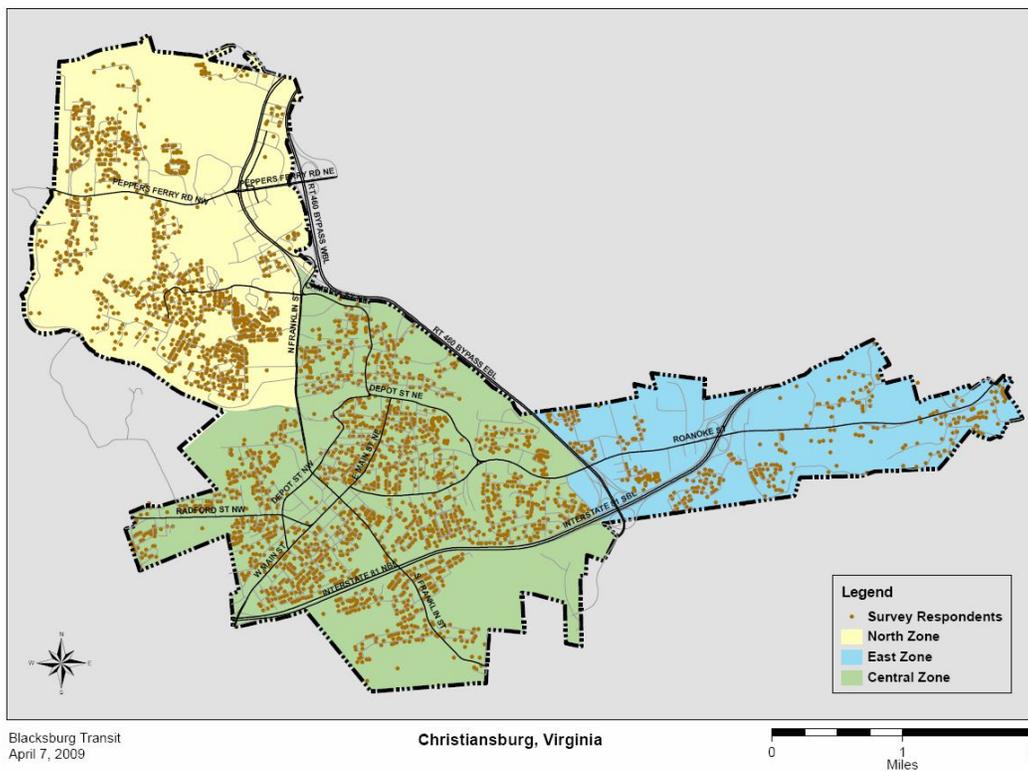


Figure 2. Survey Respondent Locations (3,777 responses) in Christiansburg, VA

³ Average household size is 2.35 people according to Christiansburg demographics information from NationalRelocation.com. Calculations were based on 3,777 surveys.

⁴ According to Christiansburg.org.

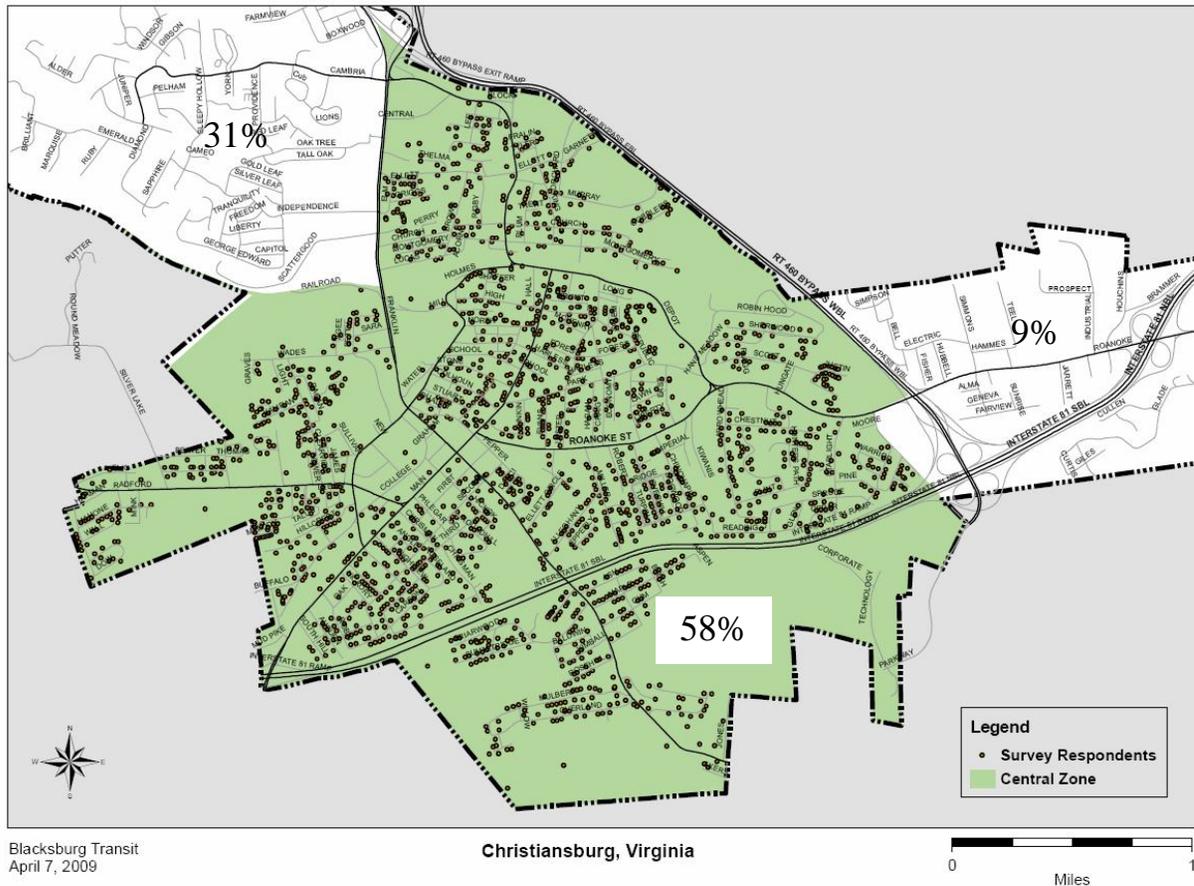


Figure 3. Survey Responses (58%) in central eastern portion of Christiansburg

Demographics

Various questions were included such as gender, age, and marital status of the respondent who completed the survey. Information on household included number of people in the household by age, housing status (e.g., own or rent), and household income. Tables 1-7 and Figure 4 illustrate these findings. The survey findings revealed that this sample of respondents was representative of the entire population of the Town of Christiansburg, compared to U.S. Census data.

For gender (Question 16), the survey revealed that 57% of respondents were females. Typically, more females respond to surveys of any type (email, mail, or phone) than do males. U.S. Census data reported that Christiansburg had a population consisting of 52% females⁵.

Table 1. Gender of Respondent

Gender	Count	Percent
Female	2145	57%
Male	1595	42%
Not answered	37	1%

⁵ U.S. Census data for Christiansburg cited at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiansburg,_Virginia

The average age (Question 17) and marital status (Question 18) of respondent is shown in Tables 2 and 3. Sixty percent of survey respondents were married. According to Census data, 52.6% of households in Christiansburg included married couples⁵. These same Census data reported that 32.2% of households had children under the age of 18 living with them. The current survey revealed that the percent of people in each household (Question 19) under the age of 16 was 26%, as illustrated by Tables 4 and 5.

Table 2. Age of Respondent

Age	Count	Percent
18-24	121	3%
25-34	605	16%
35-44	669	18%
45-54	709	19%
55-64	746	20%
65+	889	24%
Not answered	38	1%

Table 3. Marital Status of Respondent

Marital Status	Count	Percent
Single	484	13%
Divorced, sep.	534	14%
Widowed	370	10%
Married	2262	60%
Not answered	127	3%

Table 4. Count and Percent of People in Household by Age Category (Overall)

Age Category	Count	Percent
<16	981	26%
16-24	561	15%
25-50	1839	49%
51-65	1210	32%
65+	890	24%

Table 5. Count and Percent of People in Household by Age Category and Number of People

	Age Category									
	<16		16-24		25-50		51-65		65+	
# of people	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
0	2	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.1	2	0.2	2	0.2
1	467	47.6	367	65.4	696	37.8	565	46.7	466	52.4
2	344	35.1	140	25.0	1050	57.1	552	45.6	335	37.6
3	117	11.9	18	3.2	24	1.3	6	0.5	3	0.3
4+	30	3.0	5	0.9	0	0.0	1	0.1	2	0.2
not answered	21	2.1	30	5.3	67	3.6	84	6.9	82	9.2
Total	981	26%	534	15%	1839	49%	1210	32%	890	24%

Tables 6 and 7 reflect the housing status (Question 21) and total household income (Question 20) for those respondents of the survey. Note that a total of 33.7% (1,277) of respondents reported a household income of \$40,000 or less, as illustrated by Table 7 and Figure 4.

Table 6. Housing Status

Housing Category	Frequency	Percent
Own or buying home	2942	77.9
Rent a home or apartment	635	16.8
Other housing arrangement	57	1.5
Not answered	143	3.8
Total	3777	100

Table 7. Total Household Income Levels (for 2007)

Total Household Income	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$11,000.00	262	6.9
\$11,000.00 to \$20,000.00	307	8.1
\$21,000.00 to \$40,000.00	708	18.7
\$41,000.00 to \$60,000.00	697	18.5
\$61,000.00 to \$80,000.00	568	15.0
\$81,000.00 to \$100,000.00	385	10.2
\$101,000.00 to \$120,000.00	169	4.5
More than \$120,000.00	184	4.9
Not answered	497	13.2
Total	3777	100.0

Income Levels by Percent

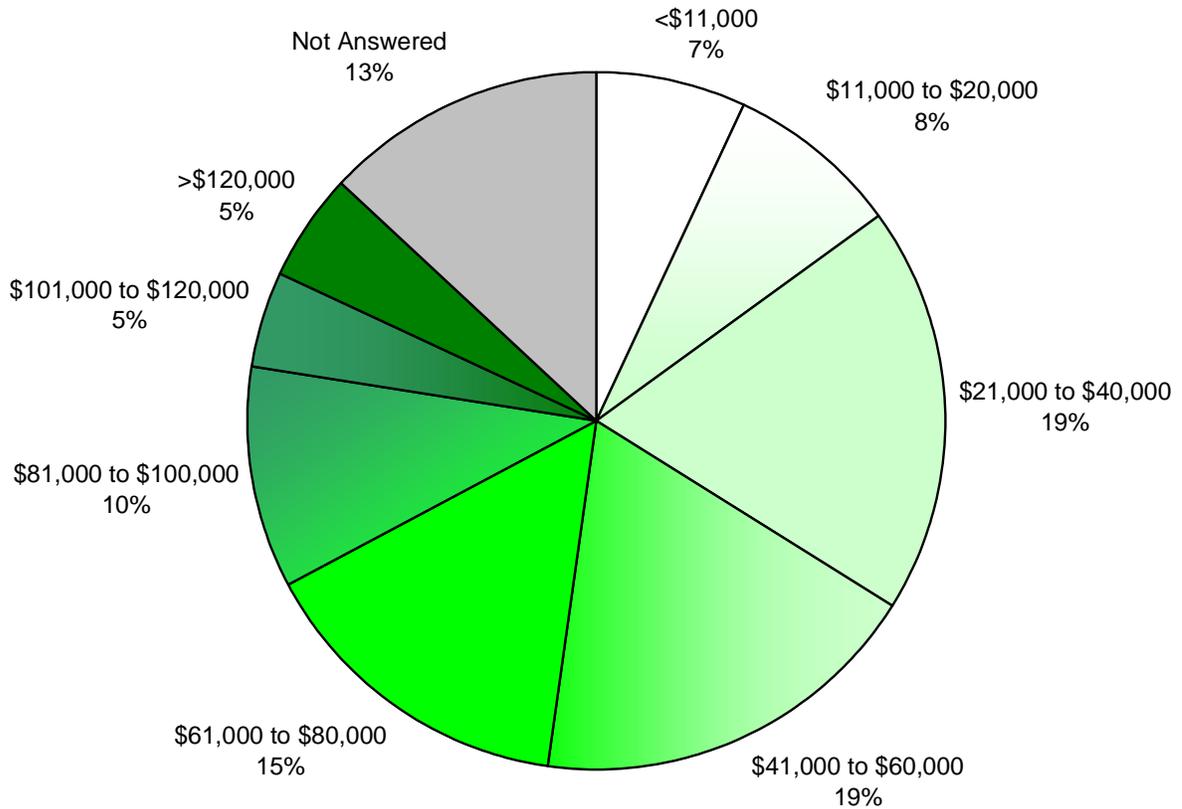


Figure 4. Total Household Income Level for 2007 (percent of respondents)

Job and Education Status

Another survey item asked “What is your current job and education status?” (question 10). The majority of respondents are employed full-time (56%) and 7.8% (294) of respondents are currently taking classes or pursuing a degree, as shown by Table 8.

Table 8. Current Job and Education Status⁶

Current Job and Education Status	Frequency	Percent
Employed Full-Time	2114	56%
Employed Part-Time	415	11%
Taking classes	294	8%
Not employed	268	7%
Retired	1083	29%

⁶ Totals will not add to 3,777 since some people were in more than one category (e.g., part-time work and taking classes)

The preliminary listing of the top Full-Time employers based on 1,826 write-in responses included Virginia Tech (19%), Montgomery County Public Schools (5%), Self-employed (3%), Radford University (3%), Carilion (2%), Moog (2%), Montgomery Regional Hospital (2%), and Volvo (2%). Table 9 lists the top employers for those with 3 or more survey respondents.

Table 9. Top Full-Time Employers (write in answer for question 10: 1,826 responses)

Employer	Count	Percent
VT	345	18.9%
Montgomery County Public Schools	90	4.9%
Self-employed	51	2.8%
RU	46	2.5%
Carilion	37	2.0%
MOOG	30	1.6%
Montgomery Regional Hospital	29	1.6%
Volvo	28	1.5%
ATK	23	1.3%
Montgomery County	22	1.2%
Town of Christiansburg	21	1.2%
Corning	20	1.1%
Stellar One	18	1.0%
Federal Mogul	17	0.9%
Hubbell	17	0.9%
Danaher	15	0.8%
Shelor	15	0.8%
Town of Blacksburg	15	0.8%
Dish Network/EchoStar	12	0.7%
Warm Hearth Village	11	0.6%
NRVCS	10	0.5%
Wal-Mart	10	0.5%
Lewis Gale Hospital	8	0.4%
RAAP	8	0.4%
Techlab	8	0.4%
Duncan (Automotive)	7	0.4%
Roanoke Times	7	0.4%
Tetra	7	0.4%
US Postal Services	7	0.4%
VDOT	7	0.4%
Wades	7	0.4%
Aspen MT	6	0.3%
Cracker Barrel	6	0.3%
NRCA	6	0.3%
Pulaski County	6	0.3%
USDA	6	0.3%
VTTI	6	0.3%
Wolverine	6	0.3%
Anderson and Associates	5	0.3%
CRC	5	0.3%

Kroger	5	0.3%
Luna	5	0.3%
Marshall Concrete	5	0.3%
Montgomery County Social Services	5	0.3%
Norfolk Southern	5	0.3%
Sherrif's Office	5	0.3%
VCOM	5	0.3%
Wachovia	5	0.3%
Yokohama	5	0.3%
APCO	4	0.2%
BBT	4	0.2%
Mailtrust	4	0.2%
McDonald's	4	0.2%
Nanosonic	4	0.2%
NRCC	4	0.2%
Rowe Furniture	4	0.2%
Salem VA	4	0.2%
Target	4	0.2%
US Army	4	0.2%
Verizon	4	0.2%
Carter	3	0.2%
CCS	3	0.2%
Coldwell Bankers	3	0.2%
Commonwealth	3	0.2%
Craftmaster	3	0.2%
Creative	3	0.2%
Family Preservation Services	3	0.2%
Food Lion	3	0.2%
Hampton Inn	3	0.2%
Heritage Hall	3	0.2%
ITT	3	0.2%
OWPR	3	0.2%
Polymer Solutions	3	0.2%
Radford City Schools	3	0.2%
Red Robin	3	0.2%
Subway	3	0.2%
Suntrust	3	0.2%
Town & Country Vet	3	0.2%
UPS	3	0.2%
VTS Inc	3	0.2%

Table 10 indicates the top locations (e.g., town or city) for employers that respondents go to for full-time work (1,816 respondents to this item). Figure 5 illustrates the pattern of travel for the top 3 destinations. A similar pattern exists for part-time employers.

Table 10. Location, Total Number of Respondents and Percent for Full-Time Employers

Location	Total	Percent
Blacksburg	732	40.31%
Christiansburg	579	31.88%
Radford	169	9.31%
Roanoke	113	6.22%
Salem	68	3.74%
Dublin	39	2.15%
Pulaski	17	0.94%

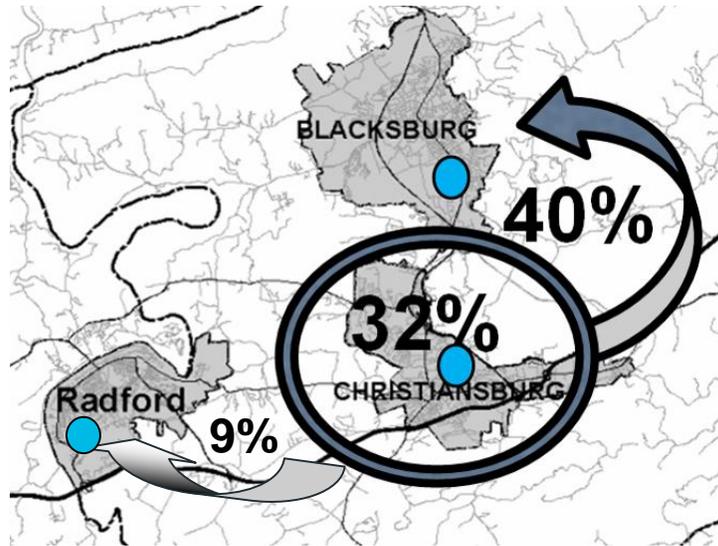


Figure 5. Percentage of Daily Commuters Within Christiansburg and Between Christiansburg and Blacksburg

For those that go to school full-time (294 respondents), the top schools mentioned were Virginia Tech (39%), Radford University (14%), NRCC-NRV Mall (13%), NRCC-Dublin (10%), and VCOM (7%). Table 10 lists the schools mentioned 2 or more times.

Table 10. Top Schools mentioned (write-in from Question 10)

School	Count	Percent
Virginia Tech	112	39.3
Radford University	39	13.7
NRCC-NRV Mall	38	13.3
NRCC-Dublin	27	9.5
VCOM	19	6.7
Online	8	2.8
VT Vet school	8	2.8
VA Western CC	7	2.5
National College	4	1
Jefferson College	3	0.7
Other	33	7.7
Total	285	100

The large majority (95%) of respondents have a valid driver’s license (Question 15) as illustrated by Table 11.

Table 11. Licensure Status

Valid Driver's License?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3581	94.8
No	162	4.3
Don't know	7	0.2
Not answered	27	0.7
Total	3777	100

Destinations

Two survey items addressed destinations respondents travel to.

Destinations: Constrained-Choice

The first survey item (Question 1) was a constrained choice item, “Please indicate how often you go to each of the destinations below.” Eleven (11) popular destinations were listed within Christiansburg, and seven other areas outside of Christiansburg were listed. Respondents were instructed to check one of four categories for each location. The categories were “Less Than One Time Per Month”, “1-3 Times Per Month”, “1-3 Times Per Week”, and “4-7 Times Per Week or More”. In general, responses fell into the top three categories. To aid in understanding these results, the categories will be referred to simply as Monthly (1-3 Times Per Month), Weekly (1-3 Times Per Week), and Daily (4-7 Times Per Week or More), as indicated in the following sub-sections.

Daily Destinations

Tables 12 and 13 show the top daily destinations within and outside Christiansburg.

Table 12. Top Daily Destinations (4-7 Times Per Week or More) within Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
Recreation Center	15.3%	1060
Kroger/CVS	14.4%	997
High School	12.2%	844
NRV Mall	10.7%	742
Downtown	10.1%	698
Spradlin Farms	9.4%	654
Lowe's/K-Mart	8.6%	596
Motor Mile	6.5%	449
Arbor Drive	5.7%	396
S. Christiansburg	4.0%	276
County Gov Ctr	3.0%	210
Total	100%	6922

Table 13. Top Daily Destinations (4-7 Times Per Week or More) outside Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
VT	9.3%	642
Blacksburg	8.1%	563
Radford	5.0%	345
CRC	3.7%	257
MR Hospital	3.6%	247
Roanoke	3.5%	243
Salem	2.7%	189
Total	100%	6922

Weekly Destinations

Tables 14 and 15 show the top weekly destinations within and outside Christiansburg.

Table 14. Top Daily Destinations (1-3 Times Per Week or More) within Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
Kroger/CVS	16.2%	1528
Spradlin Farms	14.2%	1339
Lowe's/K-Mart	13.2%	1246
NRV Mall	12.4%	1172
Recreation Center	10.4%	983
Downtown	9.2%	866
Arbor Drive	8.7%	826
High School	6.2%	566
Motor Mile	4.3%	409
County Gov Ctr	2.8%	266
S. Christiansburg	2.4%	226
TOTAL	100%	9447

Table 15. Top Weekly Destinations (1-3 Times Per Week or More) outside Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
Blacksburg	6.6%	627
Radford	3.8%	357
MR Hospital	3.3%	313
VT	2.7%	255
Roanoke	2.3%	216
Salem	2.1%	194
CRC	1.3%	126
TOTAL	100%	9447

Monthly Destinations

Tables 16 and 17 show the top monthly destinations within and outside Christiansburg.

Table 16. Top Daily Destinations (1-3 Times Per Month) within Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
Arbor Drive	13.5%	1396
Lowe's/K-Mart	12.2%	1269
NRV Mall	12.2%	1266
Spradlin Farms	11.9%	1239
Downtown	11.1%	1147
Motor Mile	8.7%	900
Kroger/CVS	7.9%	818
County Gov Ctr	6.0%	619
Recreation Center	5.9%	613
S. Christiansburg	5.5%	568
High School	5.1%	534
TOTAL	100%	10369

Table 17. Top Daily Destinations (1-3 Times Per Month) outside Christiansburg

Destination	Percent	Number
Roanoke	29.9%	31
Blacksburg	25.2%	950
MR Hospital	25.0%	943
Radford	23.7%	896
Salem	23.0%	869
VT	17.3%	655
CRC	7.6%	287
TOTAL	100%	10369

Top Destinations: Overall

Tables 18 and 19 show the top destinations overall within and outside Christiansburg.

Table 18. Top Christiansburg destinations OVERALL (daily or weekly or monthly).

Destination	Percent(Raw)	Number
Kroger/CVS	9.0%	3343
Spradlin Farms	8.7%	3232
NRV Mall	8.6%	3180
Lowe's/K-Mart	8.4%	3111
Downtown	7.3%	2711
Recreation Center	7.2%	2656
Arbor Drive	7.1%	2618
High School	5.3%	1944
Motor Mile	4.7%	1758
County Gov Ctr	3.0%	1095
S. Christiansburg	2.9%	1070
TOTAL	100%	37043

Table 19. Top destinations outside Christiansburg OVERALL (daily or weekly or monthly)

Destination	Percent(Raw)	Number
Blacksburg	5.8%	2140
Radford	4.3%	1598
Roanoke	4.3%	1590
VT	4.2%	1552
MR Hospital	4.1%	1503
Salem	3.4%	1252
CRC	1.8%	670
TOTAL	100%	37043

Top Destinations: Weighted

To make an estimate of the “weight” or relative importance for all destinations mentioned as daily, weekly, or monthly, a weighted total and percent was created using the formula:

$$\text{Weighted Total} = (22 \times \text{Daily}) + (8 \times \text{Weekly}) + (2 \times \text{Monthly})$$

Where,

22 = the average number of days per month of a “daily” destination (of “4-7 times per week”); calculated assuming the range of trips per month would be between 16 to 28 per month

$$\text{i.e., average number of days per month} = (16+28)/2 = 44/2 = 22$$

8 = the average number of days per month of a “weekly” destination (of “1-3 times per week”); calculated assuming the range of trips per month would be between 4 to 12 per month

$$\text{i.e., average number of days per month} = (4+12)/2 = 16/2 = 8$$

2 = the average number of days per month of a “monthly” destination (of “1-3 times per month”); calculated assuming the range of trips per month would be between 1 to 3 per month

$$\text{i.e., average number of days per month} = (1+3)/2 = 4/2 = 2$$

The percent was then calculated using a weighted total of destinations mentioned, based on the raw totals reported. For example, for Kroger/CVS the percent was calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned} & 35,794 \text{ (total number of weighted responses for “Kroger/CVS”)} \\ & \div 331,456 \text{ (total number of weighted responses overall)} \\ & = 10.8\%. \end{aligned}$$

Tables 20 and 21 show the top destinations weighted within and outside Christiansburg. Note that the top three Christiansburg destinations (weighted) are Kroger/CVS, Recreation Center, and the New River Valley Mall.

Table 20. Top Christiansburg destinations - Weighted

Destination	Percent	Number
Kroger/CVS	10.8%	35794
Recreation Center	9.8%	32410
NRV Mall	8.5%	28232
Spradlin Farms	8.3%	27578
Lowe's/K-Mart	7.7%	25618
Downtown	7.4%	24578
High School	7.3%	24324
Arbor Drive	5.5%	18112
Motor Mile	4.5%	14950
S. Christiansburg	2.7%	9016
County Gov Ctr	2.4%	7986
TOTAL	100%	331456

Table 21. Top destinations outside Christiansburg - Weighted

Destination	Percent	Number
Blacksburg	5.8%	19302
VT	5.3%	17474
Radford	3.7%	12238
MR Hospital	3.0%	9824
Roanoke	2.8%	9336
Salem	2.2%	7448
CRC	2.2%	7236
TOTAL	100%	331456

Additional Destinations: Open-Ended

This was an open-ended question (Question 2) asking respondents to list other locations not included in the previous constrained-choice question. A total of 1,579 unique locations were provided. Tables 22 and 23 list the top 40 locations within and outside Christiansburg; these are listed in descending order by the percent of the total number of locations mentioned.

Table 22. Additional Destinations within Christiansburg from the open-ended question (0.3% and higher)

Location	Total	Percent
Wal-Mart	162	10.3%
Christiansburg Library	61	3.9%
Wade's Supermarket	49	3.1%
Carilion New River Valley Medical Center	47	3.0%
Cambria	44	2.8%
Christiansburg Middle School	39	2.5%
Food Lion	39	2.5%
Roanoke St	23	1.5%
Depot St	14	0.9%
Radford Rd	14	0.9%
Dollar General Market	13	0.8%
Cracker Barrel	12	0.8%
Dollar General Store	12	0.8%
Warm Hearth Village	12	0.8%
First and Main Shopping Center	11	0.7%
Peppers Ferry Rd	11	0.7%
Country Kitchen	10	0.6%
Walgreen's	10	0.6%
Falling Branch Elementary School	8	0.5%
Kroger	8	0.5%
Roanoke Airport	8	0.5%
W Main St	8	0.5%
Big Lots	7	0.4%
Downtown	7	0.4%
N Main St	7	0.4%
New River Valley Mall	7	0.4%
Aquatic Center	6	0.4%
Amelia's Pizzeria	6	0.4%
Country Cookin'	6	0.4%
Dish Network/EchoStar	6	0.4%
Mud Pike	6	0.4%
Radford St	6	0.4%
Rt 11	6	0.4%
Super Dollar	6	0.4%
Corning Inc	5	0.3%
Huckleberry Trail	5	0.3%
New River Village	5	0.3%
Park and Ride Lot Falling Branch Rd	5	0.3%
Spradlin Farms Shopping Center	5	0.3%
Villas at Peppers Ferry	5	0.3%

Table 23 Additional Destinations outside Christiansburg from the open-ended question
(0.1% or higher)

Location	Total	Percent
Riner	26	1.6%
Shawsville	16	1.0%
Dublin	15	0.9%
New River Community College	13	0.8%
Floyd	12	0.8%
Pulaski	12	0.8%
Radford University	11	0.7%
Blacksburg Aquatic Center	9	0.6%
Downtown Blacksburg	9	0.6%
S Main St Blacksburg	8	0.5%
Volvo Truck Plant	8	0.5%
Blacksburg High School	7	0.4%
Meadowbrook Public Library	7	0.4%
Pandapas Pond	7	0.4%
Prices Fork	7	0.4%
RAAP	7	0.4%
University City Blvd	6	0.4%
Blacksburg Industrial Park	6	0.4%
University Mall	6	0.4%
Moog Components Group	5	0.3%
Belview Elementary School	5	0.3%
Blacksburg Public Library	4	0.3%
Ellett Valley	4	0.3%
Plum Creek	4	0.3%
Virginia Tech Transportation Institute	4	0.3%
Bisset Park Radford	3	0.2%
Blacksburg Middle School	3	0.2%
Claytor Lake	3	0.2%
Dialysis Center S Main St Blacksburg	3	0.2%
Elliston	3	0.2%
Kroger (S. Main ST, Blacksburg)	3	0.2%
Wal-Mart (Fairlawn)	3	0.2%
Blacksburg	2	0.1%
Eats	2	0.1%
Federal Mogul	2	0.1%
Kroger (Blacksburg)	2	0.1%
Our Daily Bread Bakery	2	0.1%
Pembroke	2	0.1%
Radford	2	0.1%
Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine	2	0.1%
Wal-Mart (Dublin)	2	0.1%

Top Destinations: Overall

The top destinations overall were identified by combining the responses from Question 1, the constrained choice question, and Question 2, the open-ended question. Table 24 lists the top destinations overall. Note that the totals of those destinations from Question 2 (e.g., Wal-Mart) have a substantially lower total number; for that reason, percentages for Question 1 and 2 were used for making comparisons among destinations, instead of using the totals. In summary, the top five destinations (overall, including both question 1 and question 2) are Kroger/CVS (10.8%), Wal-Mart (10.3%), the Recreation Center (9.8%), the New River Valley Mall (8.5%), and Spradlin Farms (8.3%).

Table 24 Top Destinations Overall (within and outside Christiansburg from both Question 1, the constrained-choice question and Question 2, the open-ended question)

Destination	%	Total
Kroger/CVS	10.8%	3343
Wal-Mart*	10.3%	162
Recreation Center	9.8%	2656
NRV Mall	8.5%	3180
Spradlin Farms	8.3%	3232
Lowe's/K-Mart	7.7%	3111
Downtown	7.4%	2711
High School	7.3%	1964
Blacksburg	5.8%	2140
Arbor Drive	5.5%	2618
VT	5.3%	1552
Food Lion Area*	5.1%	80
Library Area*	4.7%	74
Motor Mile	4.5%	1758
Cambria Area*	4.1%	64
Radford	3.7%	1598
Wade's*	3.1%	49
MR Hospital	3.0%	1503
Carilion Med. Ctr*	2.8%	45
Roanoke	2.8%	1590
S. Christiansburg	2.7%	1070
Middle School*	2.5%	39
County Gov Ctr	2.4%	1095
Salem	2.2%	1252
CRC	2.2%	670

*From Question 2, Open-ended response (total of 1,579 responses)

Likelihood of Riding the Bus

Two survey items addressed the likelihood that respondents would ride the bus, given that an expanded system was available. Question 3 followed questions 1 and 2 about destinations and asked “How likely would you be to ride a bus to any of the locations listed in Questions 1 or 2?” Figure 6 illustrates that 23% (860) of respondents were very likely to ride the bus and that 27% (1,033) were somewhat likely. In combination, 50% (1,893) of respondents reported that they were very likely or somewhat likely to ride the bus to any of the destinations listed in questions 1 or 2. Thirteen percent (485) indicated somewhat unlikely and 24% (908) indicated not at all likely. Eight percent (312) indicated “don’t know” and 5% (179) did not answer the question.

How likely would you be to ride a bus to any of the locations listed?

50% - Very or Somewhat Likely

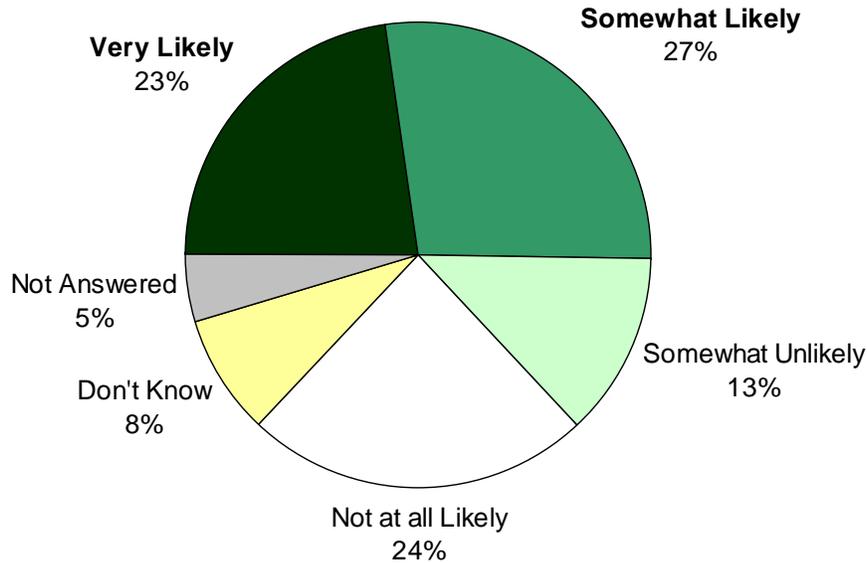


Figure 6. Likelihood that respondents would ride the bus (question 3).

The other item regarding likeliness to ride was “If a Christiansburg bus system was available in the next year, how likely would you be to use it?” (question 13). The findings for this question generally followed those of the previous question; however, over 60% (2,271) of respondents indicated they were either very likely or somewhat likely to ride the bus. Respondents indicated that 27% (1,026) were very likely, 33% (1,245) somewhat likely, 11% (422) somewhat unlikely, 17% (634) not at all likely, 11% (410) don’t know, and 1% (40) did not answer. Table 25 shows the responses.

Table 25. Likelihood that respondents would use a bus system in the next year

Category	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Very Likely	1026	27.2
Somewhat likely	1245	60.1
Somewhat unlikely	422	71.3
Not at all likely	634	88.1
Don't know	410	98.9
Not answered	40	100
Total	3777	

There was a total of 795 Christiansburg respondents who indicated either “Somewhat unlikely” and “Not at all likely” for question 13, each of which included an open-ended portion of the response, “please specify why” in association with this selection. Of the

respondents to this question, 313 (40%) said that they either preferred to drive their own car or would drive as long as they were able. However, many of them mentioned using the bus if they had no car (i.e., car in the shop) or they became too old to drive themselves. A total of 127 respondents (16%) stated that locations of stops and routes were among the top reasons for not riding the bus. Some people said that bus stops would be too far away for them to walk to; others said that the bus wouldn't go to where they needed to go. There were 118 respondents (15%) that mentioned a need for flexibility in their schedule, citing work and children's activities as motivation to drive. Altogether, 61 respondents (8%) mentioned having small children as their reason why they did not want to ride the bus and 76 (10%) said that work was a contributing factor. A total of 105 respondents (13%) indicated that convenience was a deciding factor. A total of 47 respondents (6%) indicated that physical reasons and age influenced their decisions whether to ride the bus.

Combining Likelihood to Ride the Bus and Income

In an attempt to better understand the relationship of income (question 20) and likelihood to ride (question 3), data were combined. For this only those respondents that said "very likely" were included. Inspection of Figure 7 reveals that households with incomes less than \$40,000 are almost twice as likely to ride the bus (30.4% or 388/1277) as compared to households with incomes greater than \$40,000 (19.6% or 393/2003). For families with incomes less than \$11,000 (42%) compared to those with incomes greater than \$120,000 (19.6%), 2.1 times as many households with lower incomes were likely to ride the bus.

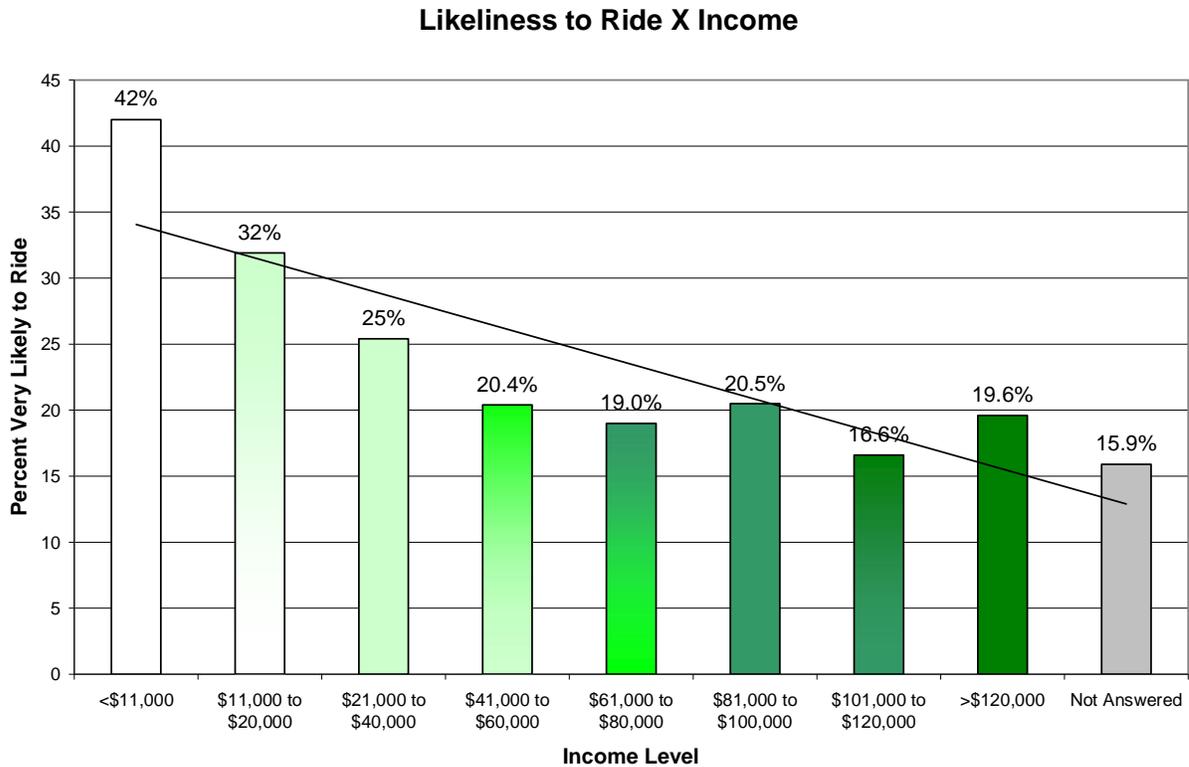


Figure 7. Likelihood to Ride ("Very Likely") the Bus and Income Level

When Would You be Most Likely to Ride the Bus?

Survey item 8 was an in-depth item that asked, “If a bus was available, please indicate below when you would be most likely to use it?” (question 8) with all hours of the day and days of the week listed. Table 26 lists the percentage of responses for all possible time of day/day of week combinations. Although popular throughout the day, the grey highlights show that most popular times (i.e., > 12.6%) for Monday through Friday are 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. For Saturday and Sunday popular times are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., ranging from 15 to 19 % on Saturday and 10 to 14 % on Sunday.

Table 26. Percentage of Respondents by Time of Day and Day of Week (5 a.m. to 4 a.m.)

		Day of Week							
Time		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	M-F (avg)
AM	5	5.3%	5.1%	5.1%	5.0%	5.1%	2.3%	1.9%	5.1%
	6	13.0%	12.7%	12.9%	12.5%	12.5%	4.1%	2.8%	12.7%
	7	24.0%	23.7%	23.9%	23.7%	23.9%	6.7%	4.5%	23.8%
	8	15.2%	14.6%	15.0%	14.6%	14.9%	9.3%	7.0%	14.9%
	9	13.2%	12.9%	12.9%	12.4%	13.0%	15.7%	11.1%	12.9%
	10	12.7%	12.2%	11.8%	11.6%	12.1%	17.6%	12.3%	12.1%
PM	11	10.4%	10.2%	10.3%	9.8%	10.7%	16.7%	11.5%	10.3%
	12	12.3%	12.5%	12.1%	11.8%	12.6%	19.1%	14.6%	12.3%
	1	11.3%	11.0%	11.0%	11.0%	11.8%	17.9%	13.0%	11.2%
	2	12.4%	12.0%	11.9%	11.6%	12.4%	17.5%	12.6%	12.1%
	3	14.8%	14.6%	14.7%	14.5%	15.0%	17.3%	12.7%	14.7%
	4	19.1%	18.7%	18.9%	18.6%	19.5%	17.3%	12.9%	18.9%
	5	28.5%	28.0%	28.0%	28.1%	29.0%	18.4%	13.2%	28.3%
	6	15.9%	15.6%	15.9%	15.6%	17.3%	16.5%	11.7%	16.1%
	7	10.7%	11.0%	10.8%	11.0%	13.3%	15.2%	10.1%	11.4%
	8	7.9%	7.8%	8.0%	7.9%	10.7%	13.1%	8.0%	8.5%
	9	6.2%	6.2%	6.3%	6.5%	9.3%	11.2%	6.7%	6.9%
AM	10	4.8%	4.7%	5.0%	5.0%	8.0%	10.1%	5.7%	5.5%
	11	2.9%	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%	6.3%	7.7%	3.9%	3.6%
	12	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	5.0%	6.0%	3.0%	2.4%
	1	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.4%	3.7%	4.6%	2.2%	1.7%
	2	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	2.4%	3.1%	1.6%	1.2%
	3	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	1.6%	1.8%	1.2%	1.2%
	4	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.3%	1.8%	1.3%	2.0%

Walking to a Bus Stop

A survey item asked “What do you consider to be the longest reasonable walking time from your home to the nearest bus stop?” (Question 5). Table 27 illustrates that 7% (246) of respondents would walk less than 2 minutes, 11% (412) would walk 2-3 minutes, 28% (1,066) would walk 4-5 minutes, 20% would walk 6-10 minutes, 8% (297) would walk 11-15 minutes, and 10% (385) would walk more than 15 minutes. A total of 11% (416) said “don’t know” and 6% (217) did not answer the questions. In all, 66% (2,486) of respondents indicated they would walk 4 or more minutes to a bus stop.

Table 27. Longest Reasonable Walking Time to a Bus Stop

Walking Time	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2 minutes	246	6.5
2-3 minutes	412	10.9
4-5 minutes	1066	28.2
6-10 minutes	738	19.5
11-15 minutes	297	7.9
More than 15 minutes	385	10.2
Don't know	416	11.0
Not answered	217	5.7
TOTAL	3777	100.0

Park & Ride Commuter Lots

One open-ended question asked respondents to “Please write the street name and general area where you would most like to see a commuter parking lot (Park and Ride) located?” (Question 12). A total of 1,890 people responded to this question. Here are some examples of the most popular requested locations, as illustrated by Figure 8: The New River Valley Mall (129 or 7%), Christiansburg Recreation Center (88 or 5%), Exit 114 off I-81 (80 or 4%), Downtown Christiansburg area (75 or 4%), Roanoke St. (63 or 3%), Kroger/CVS (54 or 3%) and Falling Branch (29 or 2%). Numerous other locations were mentioned such as Christiansburg High School, K-Mart, Peppers Ferry Road, Radford Road, Roanoke Street/Shelor Motor Mile area, Montgomery County Government Center, Roanoke Street Food Lion, Roanoke Street Wade’s, etc.

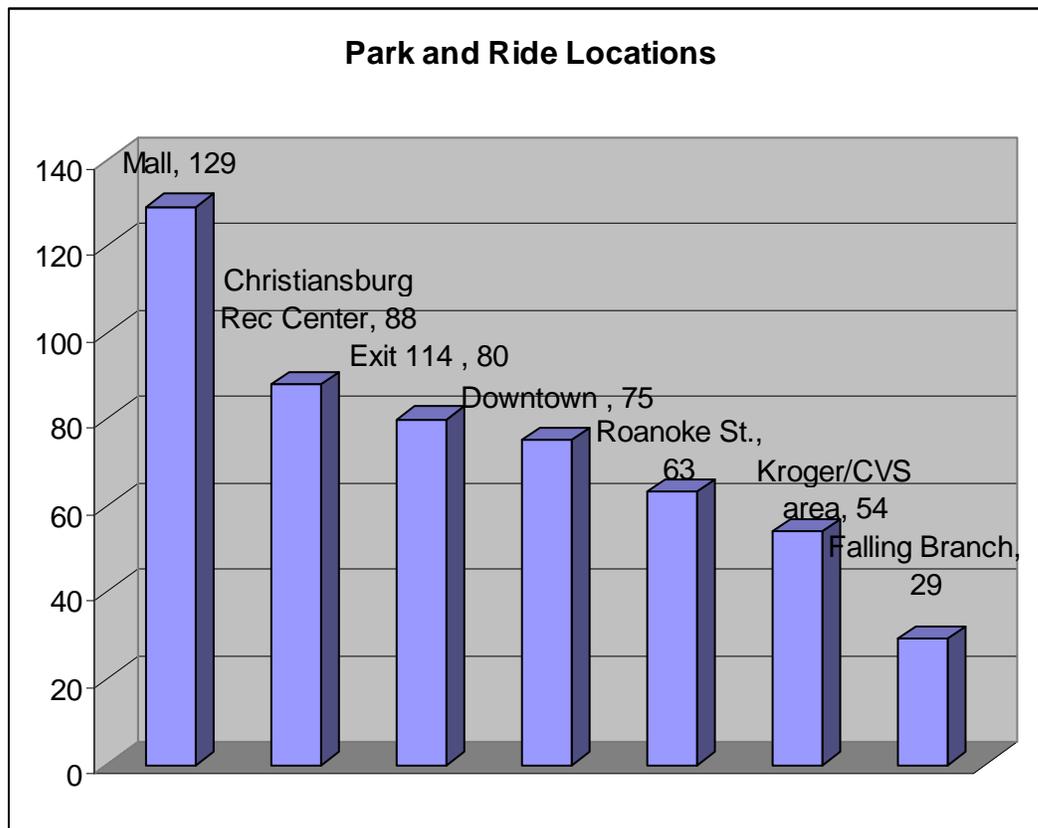


Figure 8. Number of Comments Listing Park & Ride Locations (top 7 categories)

Likelihood to Use

Another question asked “How likely to use a park and ride commuter lot?” Table 28 illustrates the survey responses. A total of 45% of respondents were very likely or somewhat likely to use a park and ride commuter lot.

Table 28. Likelihood that Respondents would use a Park and Ride Lot

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very likely	678	18	18
Somewhat likely	1016	26.9	44.9
Somewhat unlikely	561	14.9	59.7
Not at all likely	1083	28.7	88.4
Don't know	395	10.5	98.8
Not answered	44	1.2	100
Total	3777	100	

Experience with Using a Bus for Transportation

A survey item asked “What is your experience with using a bus for transportation?” (Question 6). Twenty-two percent (844) of respondents indicated they had used the bus to travel within Blacksburg. A total of 12% (445) of respondents had used the bus to travel between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, and another 10% (390) had used the Smart Way. A total of 7% (263) had used the bus to travel within Christiansburg. A total of 41%, (1,554) had used another bus elsewhere, and 36% (1340) had never used a bus for transportation. Figure 9 illustrates these findings.

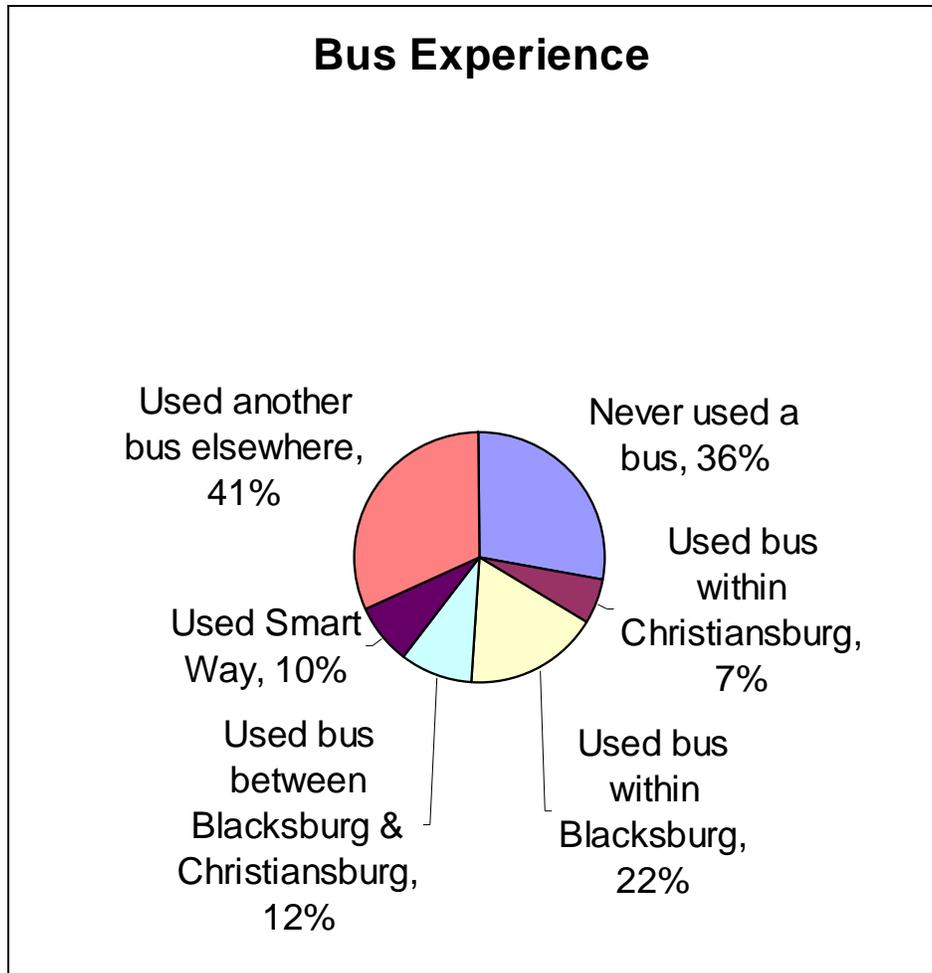


Figure 9. Reported Experience Using a Bus for Transportation (question 6).

Using the Bus for Activities

One question asked “For what activities below would you be most likely to use a bus?” (Question 4). Figure 10 demonstrates that 45% (1670) of respondents would use the bus to go shopping and 41% (1539) would ride the bus to go to special events like concerts and sporting events. Also, 37% (1413) of respondents would be willing to use the bus service to run errands and go to appointments if they were leaving from home; while 36% (1,367) would use it to go to and from work. To a lesser extent, respondents would use the bus to dine out (21%, 785), run errands and appointments from work (13%, 503), for social visits (13% 473), for transportation to school (9%, 351), for family activities, like going to childcare or school activities (8%, 298) and for other reasons (7%, 265).

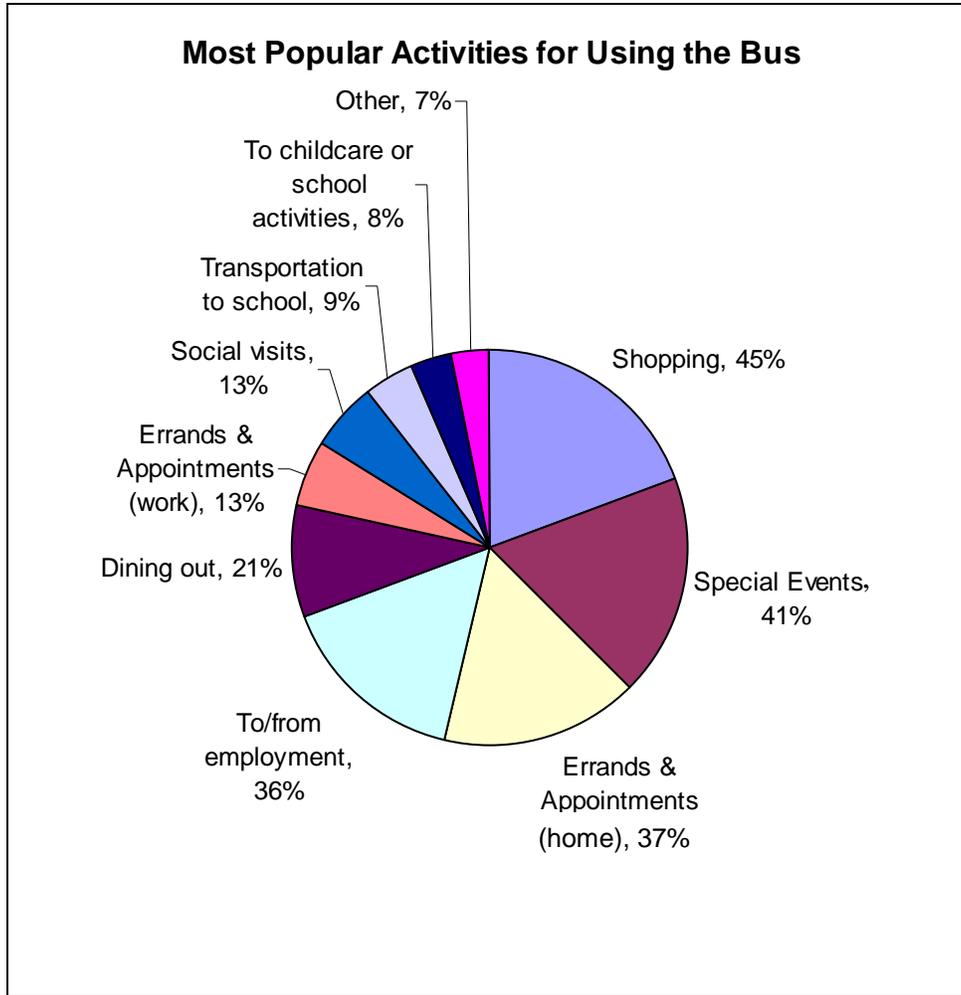


Figure 10. Activities for Using the Bus (question 4).

Looking more closely at the 237 respondents that had write-in responses for “other” reasons to ride the bus revealed that 59 of respondents (25 %) indicated they would take the bus to parks, the recreation center, or the aquatic center. A total of 34 respondents (14%) said they would use the bus to go to medical appointments and another 34 respondents (14%) said they would use it to go to church. A total of 26 respondents (11%) stated they would take the bus to special events (i.e., concerts and sporting events). A total of 15 respondents (6%) mentioned using the bus as a designated driver, when going to bars on the weekend. A total of 12 respondents (5%) mentioned using public transit to go to the airport; another 12 (5%) stated that they would use the bus if their cars were in the shop. Other activities that were mentioned were movies (9, 4%), to go to the library (5, 2%), to go to work (4, 2%), to go to Roanoke (4, 2%), for environmental reasons (1, <1%) and because of disability (1, <1%).

Important Bus Stop Features

Another question asked “What features do you feel are important to have at a bus stop?” (question 7). An impressive amount of respondents (88%; 3328) indicated that having a covered shelter was the most important bus stop feature. Other features included bus

schedule information (83%, 3,119), lighting (78%, 2,935), benches for seating (76%, 2861), trash cans (59%, 2,205), sidewalks (39%, 1,486) and recycling cans (24%, 888). Figure 11 illustrates these findings in terms of reported important bus stop features.

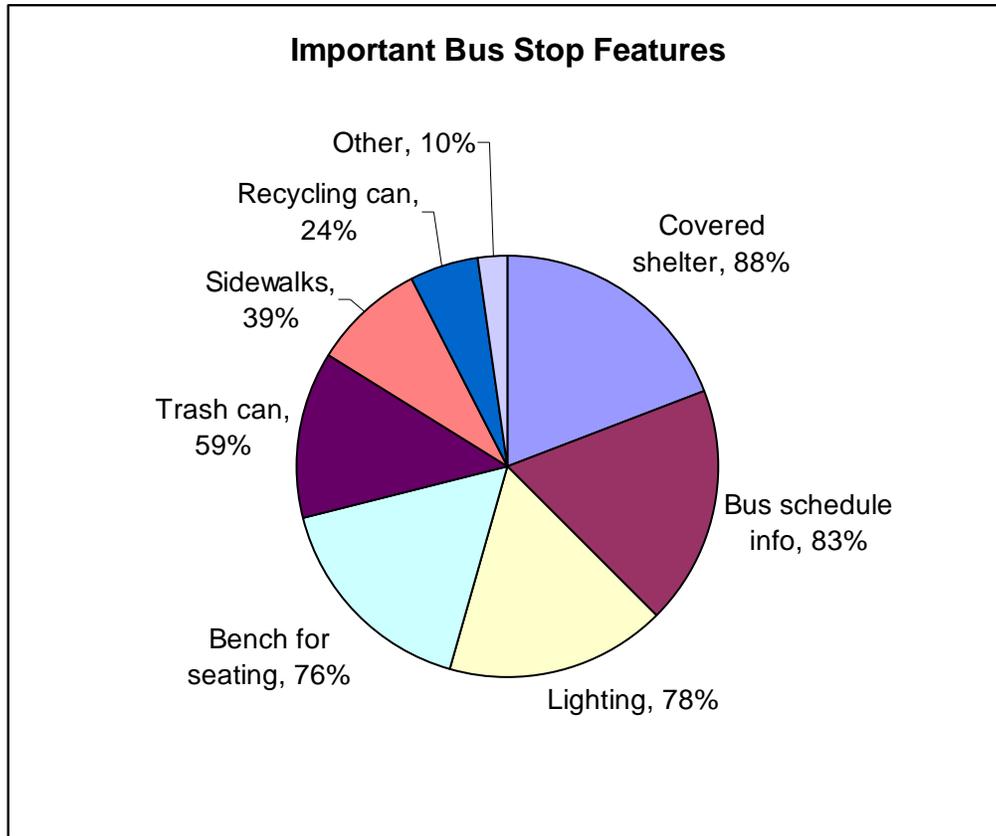


Figure 11. Important Bus Stop Features

In addition to the seven forced-choice response items, this survey item also included an open-ended option for “other” important features. These responses were reviewed and organized into separate categories. A total of 10% of respondents (338) included write-in responses for the “other” category. Of the total of 338 responses, percentages were calculated as follows. A total of 40% (135 out of 338 responses) specified an emergency phone or other emergency accessories as important features; there were 15% of responses (50) indicating that a payphone would be an important feature. Other features listed were a map/schedule (7%, 22), handicap access (5%, 16), a bike rack (4%, 13), snacks (3%, 11), an ashtray (3%, 11), a sign (3%, 10), and a bathroom (3%, 10). A small number of write-in responses included shelters/pads (3%, 9), heat (2%, 7), no smoking (2%, 7), a clock (2%, 6), parking (1%, 5), newspaper stands (1%, 5), wireless (<1%, 3), and a cross walk (<1%, 2) as important features to include at a bus stop.

Important Factors When Deciding to Ride the Bus

One question examined respondents’ motives for deciding to ride the bus; it asked “Please indicate how important each of the factors below is when deciding to ride the bus.” (question 9). Overwhelmingly, respondents selected safety (91%, 3448) as their

most important deciding factor. Respondents said that service always punctual (on-time), (90%, 3380), low bus fares (89%, 3363), convenient times for offered service (88%, 3314), and saving money on gas (88%, 3304) were important deciding factors for riding the bus. Helping the environment (79%, 2960), the convenience of not having to drive or park (78%, 2927), and avoiding traffic or not having to drive in traffic (68%, 2579), were considered only slightly less important. Nice weather (47%, 1763) and other factors (7%, 271) were not considered as important factors when deciding to ride the bus. Figure 12 illustrates these findings regarding important factors when deciding to ride the bus.

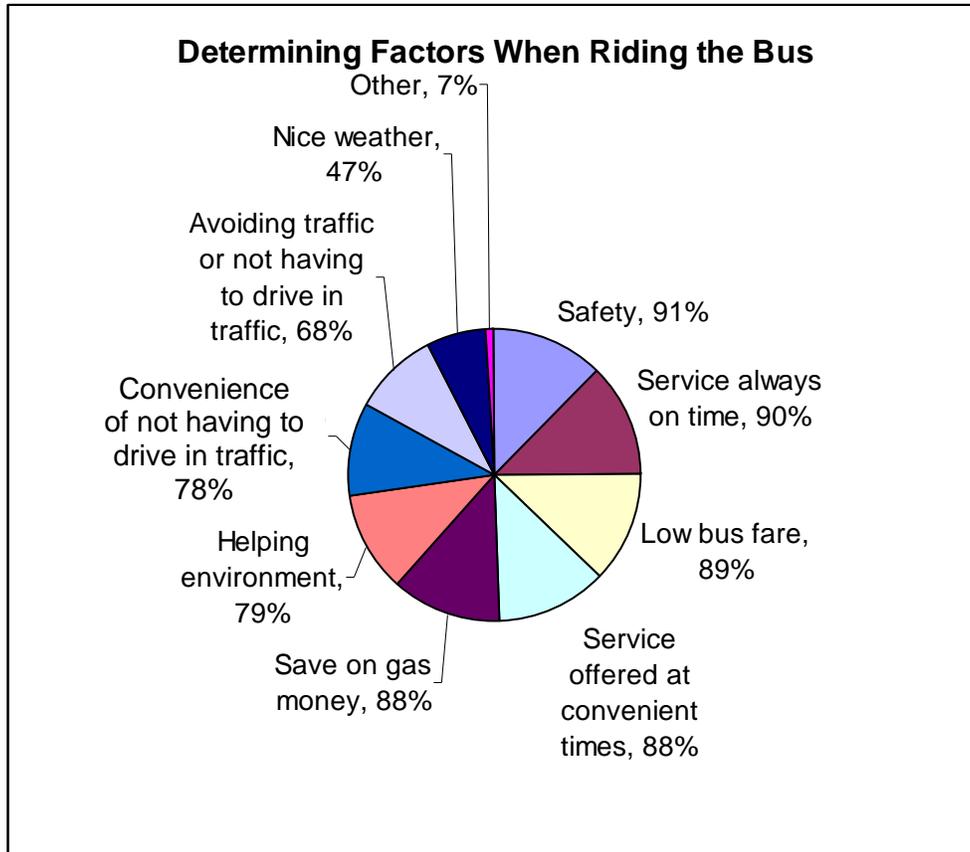


Figure 12. Important Factors When Deciding to Ride the Bus

Desired Types of Assistance for Riding the Bus

Another survey question was “What types of assistance below would you use to ride the bus?” (question 14). The largest response was for large print format schedules and bus information (19%, 695). Trip planning assistance (10%, 364), physical assistance getting on and off the bus (6%, 240), and getting on the bus with a mobility device (4%, 143) were also indicated. Other special needs (3%, 108) were also listed. Figure 13 illustrates the desired types of assistance for riding the bus.

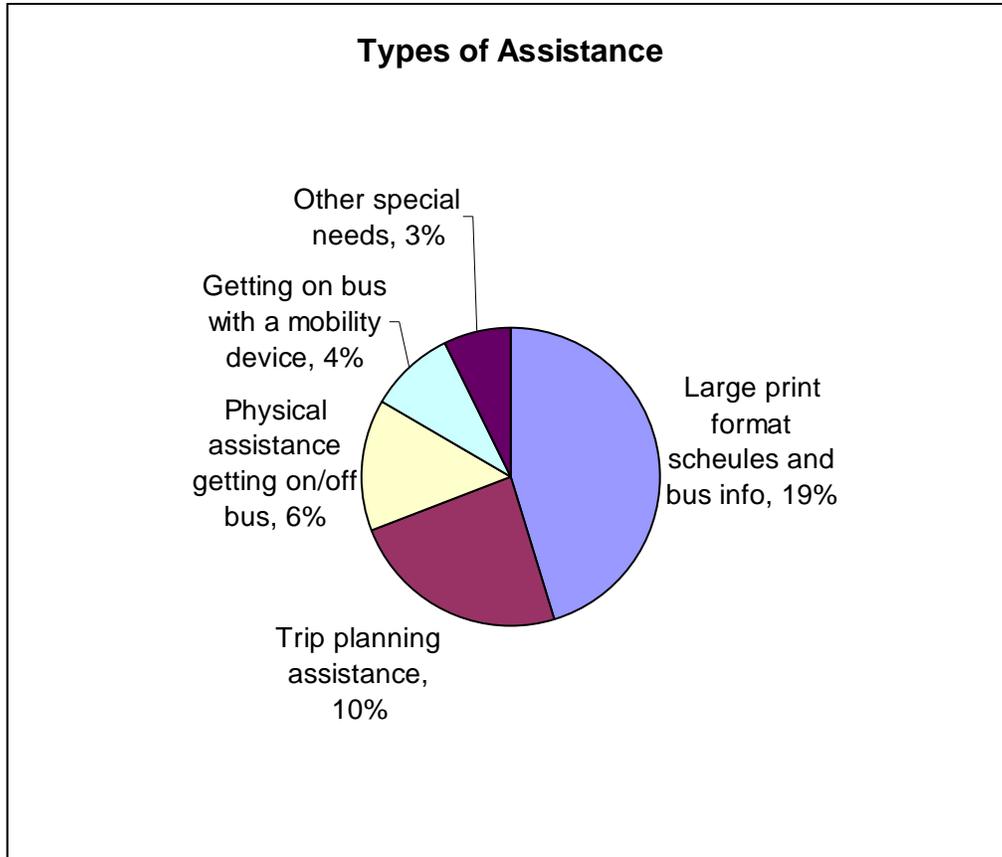


Figure 13. Types of Assistance Desired for Riding the Bus

In looking closer at the “Other special needs” response item for question 14, several themes became apparent. There were a total of 35 respondents (33%) that mentioned a bike rack, either on the bus or near a bus stop; 16 responses (15%) were for general assistance while 14 responses (13%) requested the allowance of seeing eye dogs on the bus; 8 responses (7%) referred to the use of a walker or cane and would need assistance getting on and off the bus; another 6 respondents (5%) indicated room for strollers. Other needs included wheelchair access, oxygen, air-conditioning (AC), free-fare, handrail, low step, and sidewalk.

Improving Bus Service

One open-ended question asked respondents “What could the Town of Christiansburg do to improve bus service?” (question 22, open-ended response). Although answers were diverse, several categories emerged. Of 1,533 respondents, there were 1,591 separate responses. A total of 1,591 responses were tabulated since some respondents had comments that were put into more than one category. Of the total number of responses, 35% of responses (554) involved adding more stops as a method of improving the bus system. Another 19% of responses (299) were for adding more hours to the existing bus schedule. A total of 11% (175) of responses indicated that more bus schedule information was desirable. Another 10% (164) indicated that an increase in frequency would enhance current service. Respondents requested service to Blacksburg (or Virginia Tech) from

Christiansburg (8%, 133) and requested bus service in neighborhoods (7%, 115). Figure 14 illustrates a categorization of the top 6 categories of responses. Other categories included older citizens (3%, 40), disabilities (2%, 29), park & ride (2%, 29), downtown (2%, 27), near major employers (1%, 21), and Spradlin Farms (<1%, 5). Table 29 illustrates the count and percent for each category.

Further analysis of these responses is warranted, but a brief inspection of the comments indicates that respondents are interested in improved bus service with more stops, expanded hours, higher frequency of service, improved schedule information, downtown or neighborhood routes, and routes to and from Blacksburg.

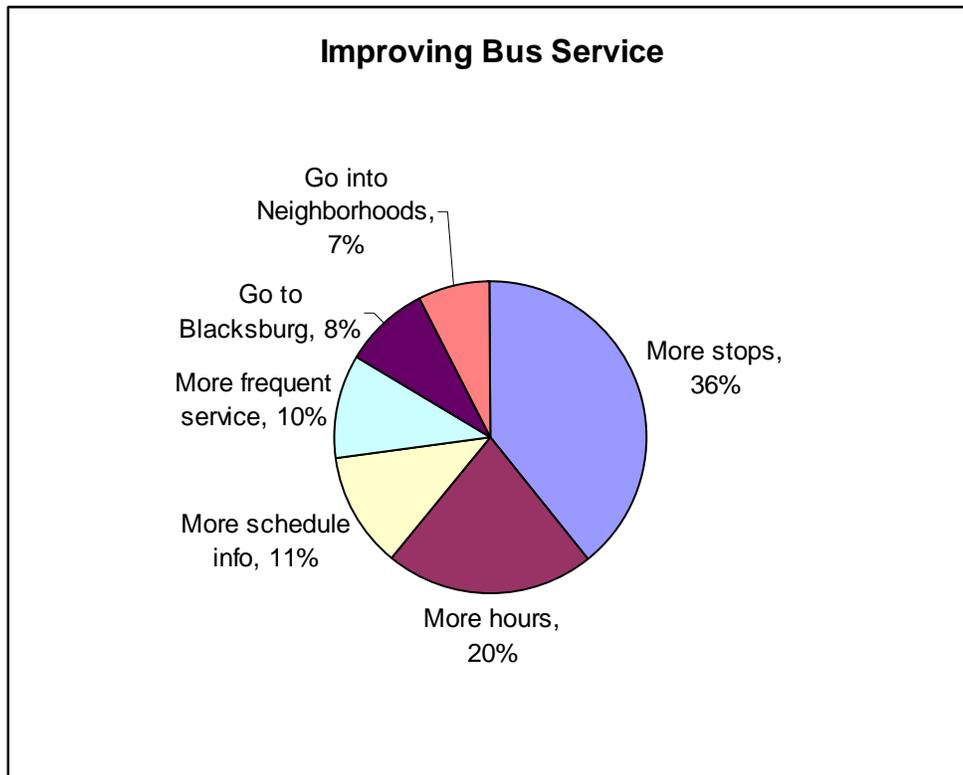


Figure 14. Responses Regarding Improving Bus Service

Table 29. Response category, count, and percent regarding Improving Bus Service

Category	Count	Percent
Stops	554	34.8%
Hours	299	18.8%
Schedule info	175	11.0%
Higher frequency	164	10.3%
To Blacksburg/VT	133	8.4%
Neighborhood	115	7.2%
Older citizens	40	2.5%
Disability issues	29	1.8%
Park & Ride	29	1.8%
Downtown	27	1.7%
Near Major Employers	21	1.3%
Spradlin Farms	5	0.3%
TOTAL	1591	100.0%

Examples of Respondent Comments

Here are some examples of some respondent comments about improving bus service:

More stops (36%)

Increase morning stops in Christiansburg. Have a single route to Blacksburg, (with) no delay at the mall. I would ride and pay a decent fare five times a week if just these things were changed!

Have more and closer stops. Please. I could work full time if I had transportation.

More hours (20%)

Provide a fuller schedule; the current service doesn't run early enough for most commuters. What good is a bus that doesn't start until the afternoon when most need to be at work by 8 or 9 a.m.? If bus service was available from 6:30 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m. it would be a useful service...

More schedule information (11%)

Mail bus schedule or print in (the news)paper like (the Roanoke Times') Current ... (with) prices.

Have schedule/route information on a website... (where you) enter start/finish and it will tell you what stop to go to and what bus routes to take.

More frequent service (10%)

Good hours of operation and frequency is a must. (The) current Two Town Trolley would not allow me to complete my commute.

Go to Blacksburg (8%)

An express from Christiansburg to Virginia Tech campus. I don't have time to stop everywhere between here and there so that's why I don't use it.

Other – Safety, economic development, and car costs

Offering a bus service would cut down on the need for teens to drive, thus making the roads safe... Also, the Christiansburg economy would be boosted because teens could... spend the money they earn by taking the bus to shopping areas and the movies... A bus system serving all of Christiansburg would benefit the community... families would save on gas and the need to buy a car/insurance/inspections/property tax, etc.

Other – Downtown Loop

Offer an in-town bus (that only circulates in Christiansburg).

Other – does service even exist?

I never see a bus near my community. Does Christiansburg even offer services? I've seen schedules but never have seen a bus actually stop at the bus stop near my home...

Recommendations – Overview of Bus Service Expansion

This section describes the recommendations for expanded bus services within the Town of Christiansburg with highlights from the Christiansburg Bus Survey that supports routing recommendations. The basis for this section came from the 6-page document, “Christiansburg Bus Service: An Overview of Recommendations with Survey Highlights,” distributed at the April 7, 2009 Town Council meeting (Appendix D). Updates have been added into the following sections; maps have also been updated to reflect recommendations based on internal BT discussions.

As a reminder, part of the purpose of the Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey was to ensure that the public transit needs of citizens were met, by soliciting input from Christiansburg respondents, and to get the word out that expanded service was “Around the Corner.” Based on the input received, Blacksburg Transit proposed six routes as described. These recommendations fit in well with town plans for expansion of bus service as it has long, well-documented support in the Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan⁷, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation 2030 Plan⁸, Town of Blacksburg Comprehensive 2046 Plan⁹, and other specific plans for Blacksburg Transit, the New River Valley, and Virginia Tech.

Downtown Loop – “The Explorer”

Three proposed routing zones include a north, central, and east zone, with 6 proposed routes to serve the Town. A new Christiansburg downtown loop called “The

⁷ Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan (2003). Available on-line at <http://www.christiansburg.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=68>

⁸ Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area 2030 Transportation Plan (2005, November): Available on-line at: <http://www.montva.com/departments/mpo/downloads/bcmfinal2030techreport.pdf>

⁹ Blacksburg 2006-2046 Comprehensive Plan. On-line: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/Index.aspx?page=269>

Explorer” is proposed to replace the current TTT-Christiansburg route. This is a re-invented service that is a self-sustaining, independent bus route. It serves the majority of respondents, and is based on both the Town and regional comprehensive plans and the survey data. The focus on downtown will enable riders to use the bus for shopping, errands, appointments, and access to government facilities downtown from many nearby neighborhoods within Christiansburg. The loop is intended to be a short, frequent service (e.g., every 20 minutes).

The route will provide service to the core of downtown. The route assumes a 2-block buffer for minor deviations to pick up/drop off riders, and assumes a 10-minute walking buffer, since a total of 66% of respondents would walk 4 minutes or more to get to a bus stop. The original proposed downtown loop is illustrated in Figure 15.

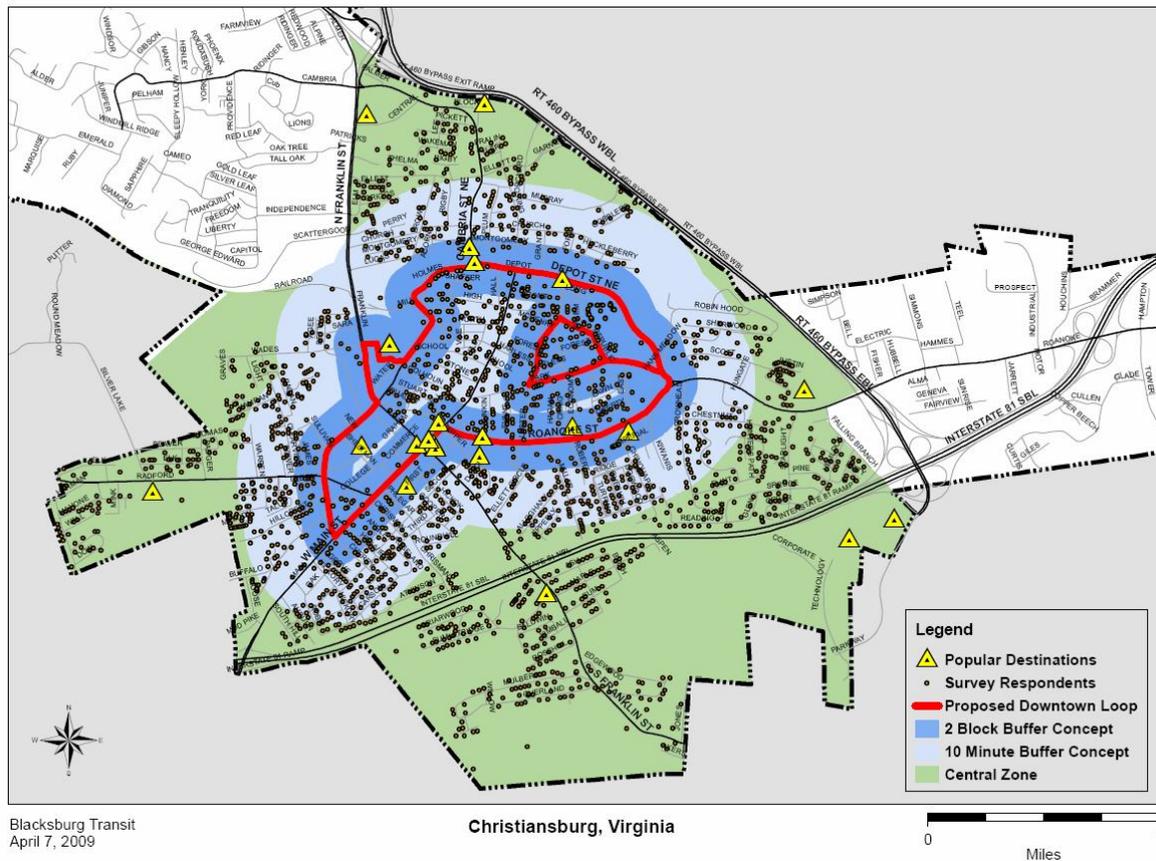


Figure 15. Proposed Christiansburg Downtown Loop (as of 4/7/09)

It was the recommendation of the BT Director that the loop be kept very short and relatively fast/convenient, and that the original route proposed in April 2009 be used with some minor changes. Figure 16 illustrates an updated map of The Explorer with 12 stops. One of the most significant changes entailed the southwest portion near stop 8. Instead of continuing down Depot Street past Radford St, it was suggested that the loop proceed left onto Radford St and then left onto W. Main St. By keeping the original loop in the central downtown area, the route avoids the busy area to the north near the traffic light at Cambria, which might delay an otherwise short loop. Other changes included adding in a

stop for the Aquatic Center (stop 6), and moving the stop near the CVS (stop 7) back so that the bus could safely make the turn to service Kroger (stop 8).

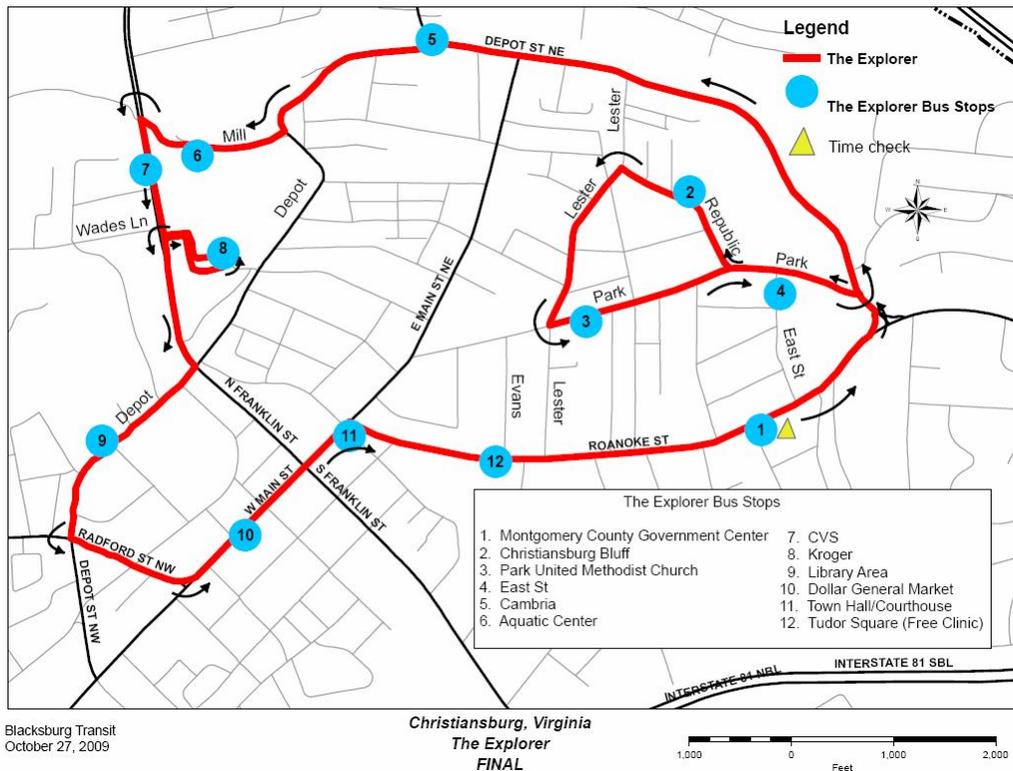


Figure 16. Explorer Route showing 12 Bus Stops and Time check

Since the April 2009 presentation, discussions continued about additional potential stops, loops, or deviations along the Explorer. The final routing was decided upon as of October 27, 2009 just prior to launch of the new service. Additionally, it is possible that “trippers” or extra vehicles will be used to supplement high ridership if warranted. Regular service includes 30-minute service weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. and Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. A limited number of requests to leave the route are accepted as well (e.g., to go to a location within about 2 blocks or 2 minutes from the route). Requests must be made the day before by calling BT at (540) 443-7111. The route is as follows:

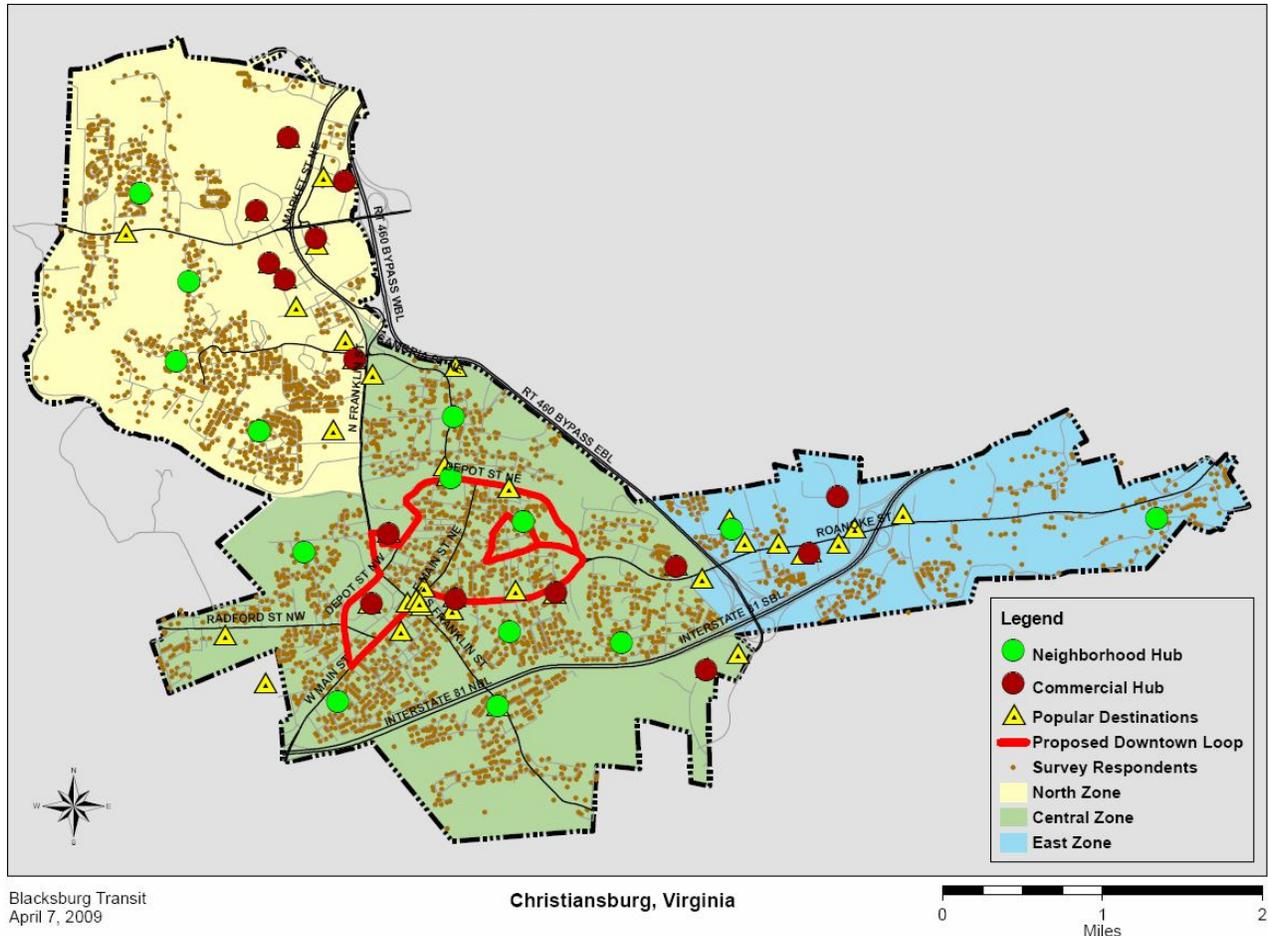
- 1) Start at the Montgomery County Government Center and proceed east on Roanoke Street; turn left (northwest) onto Depot Street to Park Street (west) to Republic Road northbound (right) to:
- 2) Christiansburg Bluff, an apartment complex on Republic Road; proceed to Lester Street turning left (southwest) and then east (left) onto Park Street to:
- 3) Park United Methodist Church; continue eastward to a stop near the intersection of:

- 4) East Street and Park Street (near Cheadle’s Trailer Park); turn left (northwest) onto Depot Street.; continue on Depot Street past East Main Street to:
- 5) Cambria in front of the old railroad station; continue through the intersection of Depot Street and Cambria Street and veer left onto Depot Street, turning left onto Mill Lane to the:
- 6) Aquatic Center; currently staying on Mill Lane but possibly going into the Aquatic Center property if needed and approved; continue on Mill Lane turning left (south) onto North Franklin Street to the:
- 7) CVS stop, just before Sara Street; continue on North Franklin and turn left onto Wades Lane to the:
- 8) Kroger stop; proceed right onto the street in the Kroger plaza (called Stone Street past Depot Street), go past the credit union and turn left to go around the southeastern portion of the Kroger parking lot; stop at the southeastern edge of the property near the corner at what used to be Blockbuster Video; continue back out through the parking lot; turn right onto Stone Street and then turn left (west) onto Wades Lane; proceed left (south) at the traffic signal onto North Franklin Street and make a left (southwest) onto Depot Street to the:
- 9) Library Area stop which is just past the Sheltman Street on Depot Street; continue on Depot Street; veer left and pass Middle School Road, and proceed left (east) on Radford Street; turn left (northeast) onto West Main Street, past a fast food restaurant and a grocery store to the:
- 10) Dollar General Market stop, located in front of the Main Street Baptist Church (across from Christiansburg Presbyterian Church). Continue along West Main Street to the:
- 11) Town Hall/Courthouse stop (near the future Courthouse, under construction), just past the Montgomery Circuit Court Clerk; continue on West Main Street to Roanoke Street and turn right (east) to the:
- 12) Tudor Square stop across from Evans Street (near the Free Clinic); continue east on Roanoke Street back to the Montgomery County Government Center (stop #1).

Additionally, the vehicles for the “Go Anywhere” flexible route (see next subsection) are able to supplement The Explorer if citizens continually request stops further up North Franklin Street, in the vicinity of Cambria Street, or anywhere else that makes sense or is justified by rider requests, BT safety requirements, and review by both the Town of Blacksburg and the Town of Christiansburg.

Flexible Route - “Go Anywhere!”

The Christiansburg Go Anywhere route is a "flex route," that provides service within all three routing zones of Christiansburg (Figure 17). A flexible route best serves an area such as Christiansburg that has a relatively low population density level (Higgins & Cherrington, 2005). The Go Anywhere route option is more affordable than running fixed route service because fewer resources (buses, personnel) are needed throughout the day. Customers call ahead 24-hours in advance to request service between pre-defined neighborhood or commercial flex stops or hubs.



Blacksburg Transit
April 7, 2009

Christiansburg, Virginia

0 1 2
Miles

Figure 17. Service Area (entire town) showing population destinations, proposed commercial and neighborhood hubs, and Town Routing zones (as of 4/7/09)

A flex stop is a stop at which a pre-arranged pick-up (or drop-off) has been made by a reservation along a flex route (Levin & Davis, 2008). A hub is a designated transit-transfer point, often involving transit or park-and-ride terminuses, usually located where the concentration of activities generates relatively high ridership counts, allows for efficient routing, and eases the transfer process (Urbitran, 1999). Hubs may also serve as bus stops for other routes, such as regular fixed-service routes. For the purposes of the Go Anywhere Route, hubs may be either in neighborhoods or commercial areas, and are strategically located within the town. These hubs are at locations where customers can be

picked-up or dropped off. Pick-up/drop-offs may also be made near a customer's home or at a specific address if that is more convenient or safe. However in the case of the Go Anywhere, pick-ups or drop-offs are only provided by pre-arranged trip requests.

The Go Anywhere service is very customer-initiated and neighborhood-focused. The service is also very flexible, allowing for future expansion. Additional vehicles or stops can be added as needed and routes can be selected by operators “on the fly” if necessary with dispatcher guidance and approval. Frequent Go Anywhere requests can later be used to guide the development of fixed routes or deviated fixed routes if ridership (and funding) justifies it. To maximize flexibility of the service no exact routes are established; however, BT staff will identify routing options for common requests to maximize efficiency for BT operators and customers.

Mall Circulator - “The Shopper Express”

The Shopper Express is a new circulator route designed to provide access to commercial hubs or shopping areas, with frequent service (e.g., every 20 minutes) for customers. The Shopper Express connects to nearby shopping areas and popular destinations such as the NRV Mall, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Spradlin Farms, and the Arbor Drive area (e.g., DMV, Super Bowl, Post Office). The Shopper Express also provides service to link to BT's existing Two Town Trolley-Blacksburg (TTT-B) route (at the NRV Mall) and the Smart Way Commuter Bus (at K-Mart). Minor changes were required on the TTB to facilitate smooth operations and connections between routes. Another advantage of The Shopper Express is that it provides a safe way to cross the road (Pepper’s Ferry and North Franklin). The Shopper Express operates with 30-minute service weekdays from 9:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and on Saturdays from 12:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

The Shopper Express route serves the following bus stop locations: 1) NRV Mall; 2) Wal-Mart; 3) Spradlin Farm; 4) Farmview Road/Ridinger Ext. 5) Kmart; 6) Peppers Ferry Rd, NE at Laurel Street; 7) Arbor Dr. – DMV; 8) Arbor Dr. – Post Office; 9) Arbor Dr. at Market St.; 10) Market Place near Applebee's; 11) Market Place near OfficeMax, 12) Best Buy (at the top of the stairwell); 13) Regal Cinema (at the NRV Mall behind Dick's Sporting), and back to the NRV Mall (stop #1). Figure 18 shows the original circulator route as of April 7, 2009 and Figure 19 illustrates the final version of the Shopper Express route with each of the thirteen stops.

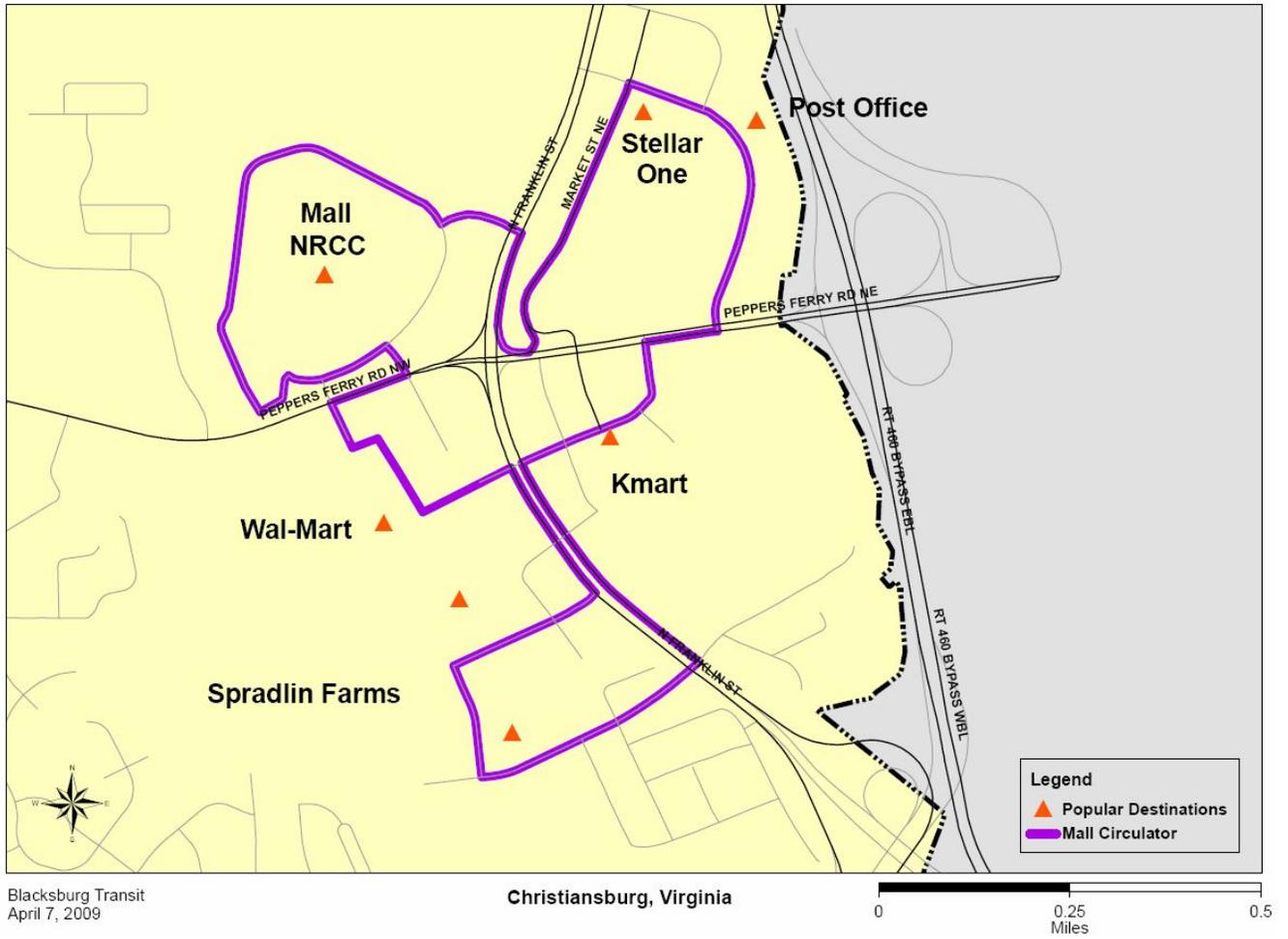


Figure 18. Proposed Mall Commercial Circulator (from April 7, 2009)

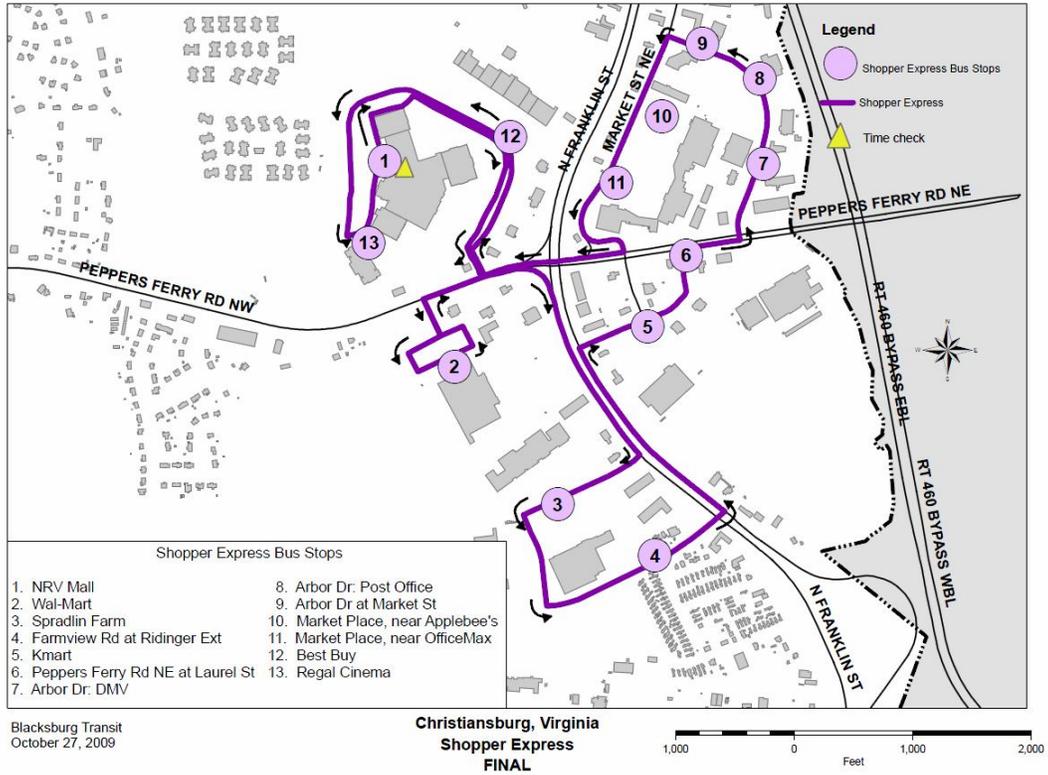


Figure 19. Final Version of Shopper Express (as of 10/27/09)

Overview of Christiansburg Routes

Figure 20 illustrates an overview of The Explorer (downtown) and the Shopper Express (mall circulator).

routes and times would be determined at a later date, but the concept is that morning service, such as 6:30-8:30 a.m. and evening service, such as 4:00-6:00 p.m. would be provided. The service would be aimed at providing transportation to and from work at a convenient time for the majority of potential riders. A proposal for additional funds is planned for submission to DRPT for 2/1/10 as a request for further, planned expansion of the Christiansburg public transportation bus system.

Operating Budget

The proposed operating costs for the recommended route expansion are summarized in Table 32. The table only includes the recommended costs that were approved by the Christiansburg Town Council. Figures 21 and 22 were presented April 7, 2009 and includes the reduced cost-options presented to Town Council as well (not approved).

Table 32. Summary of Recommended Route Options (presented April 7, 2009) accepted by the Christiansburg Town Council May 19, 2009

Route	Start Date	Purpose	Hours /Days	Approx Operating Cost	Local match FY10	Federal Match	Total	Approx Local Match FY11
#1: Downtown Loop	Oct 09	Connect neighborhood and commercial hubs in downtown area	40/ M-Sa	\$92,235	\$46,118	\$46,118	\$122,980	\$61,490
#2: Flex Route	Oct 09	Connect neighborhood hubs to commercial hubs and to current services	60/ M-Sa	\$138,353	\$69,176	\$69,176	\$184,470	\$92,235
#3: Mall Circulator	Jan 10	Connect commercial hubs in the mall area	40/ M-Sa	\$92,235	\$46,118	\$46,118	\$122,980	\$61,490
#6: Holiday	Oct 09	Extended hours from Thanksgiving to Christmas, all routes		\$15,400	\$7,700	\$7,700	\$15,400	\$7,700
#4: Commuter within Christiansburg	Jan 10	Route from Town to employment hubs within the Town	20/ M-F	\$28,600	\$14,300	\$14,300	\$57,200	\$28,600
#5: Commuter to Blacksburg	Oct 09	Route from Town to employment hubs within Blacksburg		\$28,601	\$14,301	\$14,301	\$57,202	\$28,601
#7: Vehicle Depreciation.	N/A			\$14,000	\$14,000	N/A	\$14,000	\$14,000
Total Operations				\$409,424	\$211,712		\$574,232	\$294,116
Total Capital					\$46,000			

Operating							
		FY 10			FY 11		
Route	Purpose	Start Date	APPROXIMATE Total Operating Cost (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE TOC Local Operating Match (50%) (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE JARC Federal Operating Match (50%) (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE Total Annual Operating Cost	APPROXIMATE TOC Local Operating Match starting FY 11
#1 Recommended - Revised Base Route: Downtown Christiansburg Loop	Based on survey results, this Downtown Loop will connect major neighborhood and commercial hubs in the the downtown area. No Sunday service is included. Hours are approximately 40 per week.	Oct-09	\$92,235	\$46,118	\$46,118	\$122,980	\$61,490
#1A Option - Revised Base Route: Downtown Christiansburg Loop	Based on survey results, this Downtown Loop will connect major neighborhood and commercial hubs in the the downtown area. No Monday or Sunday service included. Hours are approximately 30 per week.	Oct-09	\$72,930	\$36,465	\$36,465	\$97,240	\$48,620
#2 Recommended - Town of Christiansburg FLEX Routes	To move the public from neighborhood hubs to commercial hubs in the Town of Christiansburg. This service will help connect the public to the current BT services. No Sunday service is included. Hours are approximately 60 per week.	Oct-09	\$138,353	\$69,176	\$69,176	\$184,470	\$92,235
#2A Option - Town of Christiansburg FLEX Routes	To move the public from neighborhood hubs to commercial hubs in the Town of Christiansburg. This service will help connect the public to the current BT services. No Sunday service is included. Hours are approximately 50 per week.	Oct-09	\$109,395	\$54,698	\$54,698	\$145,860	\$72,930
#3 Recommended - Town of Christiansburg Mall Circulator	To move the public between the commercial hubs in the Mall area. No Sunday service is included. Hours are approximately 40 per week.	Jan-09	\$92,235	\$46,118	\$46,118	\$122,980	\$61,490
#3A Option - Town of Christiansburg Mall Circulator	To move the public between the commercial hubs in the Mall area. No Sunday service is included. Hours are approximately 30 per week.	Jan-09	\$72,930	\$36,465	\$36,465	\$97,240	\$48,620
#6 Recommended- Holiday Downtown Christianburg Loop, Flex Routes, and Mall Circulator	Extended hours for all proposed routes from Thanksgiving to Christmas. This is the total cost assuming no current service is provided.	Oct-09	\$48,125	\$24,063	\$24,063	\$48,125	\$24,063
#6A Recommended- Holiday Downtown Christianburg Loop, Flex Routes, and Mall Circulator	Extended hours for all proposed routes from Thanksgiving to Christmas. This is the total cost assuming current service proposed above is being provided. This is the incremental increase only.	Oct-09	\$15,400	\$7,700	\$7,700	\$15,400	\$7,700

Figure 21. Route Options 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3, 3A, 6, and 6A (presented April 7, 2009)

Operating							
Route	Purpose	Start Date	FY 10			FY 11	
			APPROXIMATE Total Operating Cost (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE TOC Local Operating Match (50%) (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE JARC Federal Operating Match (50%) (with adjusted start date)	APPROXIMATE Total Annual Operating Cost	APPROXIMATE TOC Local Operating Match starting FY 11
#4 Recommended - Commuter Route within the Town of Christiansburg	Commuter route to take citizens from the Town of Christiansburg to employment hubs within the Town. (Approximate 4 hours per weekday)	Jan-09	\$28,600	\$14,300	\$14,300	\$57,200	\$28,600
#4A Option - Commuter Route within the Town of Christiansburg	Commuter route to take citizens from the Town of Christiansburg to employment hubs within the Town. (Approximate 2 hours per weekday)	Jan-09	\$14,300	\$7,150	\$7,150	\$28,600	\$14,300
#5 Recommended - Commuter Route from the Town of Christiansburg to the Town of Blacksburg	Commuter route to take citizens from the Town of Christiansburg to employment hubs within the Town of Blacksburg. (Approximate 4 hours per weekday)	Oct-09	\$28,601	\$14,301	\$14,301	\$57,202	\$28,601
#5A Option - Commuter Route from the Town of Christiansburg to the Town of Blacksburg	Commuter route to take citizens from the Town of Christiansburg to employment hubs within the Town of Blacksburg. (Approximate 2 hours per weekday)	Oct-09	\$14,300	\$7,150	\$7,150	\$28,600	\$14,300
#7 Recommended - Vehicle Depreciation	This would allow the Town of Christiansburg to depreciate the cost of the local match for replacement buses. This amount is approximate only.	N/A	\$14,000	\$14,000	N/A	\$14,000	\$14,000
Total Operating of All Recommended	To include: Recommendations #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6A, #7		\$409,424	\$211,712		\$574,232	\$294,116
Total Operating of All Options	To include: Recommendations #1A, #2A, #3A, #4A, #5A, #6A, #7		\$313,255	\$163,628		\$426,940	\$220,470
Total Capital				\$46,000			

Figure 22. Route Option 4, 4A, 5, 5A, 7, Total of Recommended Routes, Total of Options, and Total Capital (presented April 7, 2009)

Updates and Summary

After data collection and analysis was completed, continued progress was accomplished toward the launch of expanded bus service in Christiansburg.

Christiansburg Transit Working Group

Blacksburg Transit recommended and the Town of Christiansburg established a Christiansburg Transit committee (the working group) to help throughout the process of developing, establishing, providing, and improving expanded bus service for the Town of Christiansburg. The Town decided to call the committee the “Working Group for Start-Up.” All recommendations regarding fares, schedules, and stop/hub or route changes were then submitted to Town Council for final approval.

The purpose of the Working Group included:

1. review recommendations for and develop specific recommendations for routes, stops, hubs, and times of service;
2. develop a recommendation for the fare structure;
3. review and summarize input from citizens prior to and after new service is launched;
4. identify and review any areas of concern related to expanded service and make recommendations for service, route, stop, and hub changes;

5. develop what the buses are to look like and what, if different, the service is called;
6. understand and discuss the role that public transportation plays in economic development for the Town and the region, and
7. assist BT in exploring marketing and business-partnership opportunities, particularly in the downtown and major economic hubs (e.g., Marketplace, Food Lion, Spradlin Farms).

The Town of Christiansburg Mayor and Town Manager appointed the following members to this group: Mayor Richard Balengee, Lance Terpenney, Barry Helms, Nichole Hair, Dan Brugh, and a Member of Council, Jim Vanhoozier. The purpose of the group was to review major decisions; provide advisory support as needed; and to keep their respective groups (that the individual represents) educated on transit start-up activities. The Working Group was championed by the Director of Blacksburg Transit (Rebecca Martin), with support from the Executive Director of the BCM-MPO (Dan Brugh), the Transportation Planner of Blacksburg Transit (Erik Olsen), and other BT staff as needed at various times for specific areas of expertise such as Operations, Marketing, Regulations, Maintenance, and Information Technology.

The initial meeting was scheduled for August 12, 2009 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. and the Working Group met weekly through November 2009 until expanded service began. It was recommended that regular meetings continue to be held on a quarterly basis.

Updates to Routes

Minor updates and refinements were continually implemented prior to launch of the new bus routes, and additional refinements will be implemented as needed. As shown throughout this report, prior to launching service, all maps, routes, stops, schedules, etc. were updated to reflect recommendations based on internal BT discussions, as well as from input received by the BT Director, the Christiansburg Transit Working Group, and ultimately the Town of Christiansburg Town Council.

The final routes for the Town of Christiansburg were based on the funding approved by the Christiansburg Town Council (as well as by the Town of Blacksburg), and upon recommendations made by the Christiansburg Transit Working Group. With few exceptions, *it is the recommendation of BT to keep routes and stops constant for a one-year period after the service is launched.* This enables data collection to be held constant of routing, ridership, and phone call request data, so it can be collected and monitored. Then potential improvements can be identified, and implemented in a regular, systematic manner.

Ten Lessons Learned and Topics to Discuss

As a reminder, the 22-item survey was administered focusing on items involving destinations, travel patterns, and scheduling, as well as demographic and preference information.

Results from the survey indicates that Christiansburg citizens have called for expanded service within the Town of Christiansburg and to better connect to other areas. Expansion of bus service has long, well-documented support in the Town of

Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan¹⁰, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation 2030 Plan¹¹, Town of Blacksburg Comprehensive 2046 Plan¹², and other specific plans for Blacksburg Transit, the New River Valley, and Virginia Tech. These plans and the response by citizens justify increased service, so that more people can enjoy the benefits of public transit, including saving money for citizens¹³ and having alternative public transportation that is safe¹⁴ and energy efficient.¹⁵

Various issues will continue to be reviewed and discussed by Blacksburg Transit and with other people from the Town of Blacksburg and Town of Christiansburg as well as citizens that care about the success of the expanded transit services within the Town of Christiansburg. The following list includes some of the “lessons learned” that are worthy to contemplate during further expansion of public transportation in this region. This is in no way a complete and exhaustive list but simply a place from which to start discussions.

1. Engaging citizens and involving partners is key.

As evidenced by the high response-rate for the mailed survey, citizens care about transit services within and to Christiansburg. Additionally, businesses and other organizations want to partner with transit and see it as important for the community and for economic development. Evidence for this exists from the letters of support received from numerous organizations during both the February 2009 and February 2010 DRPT grant funding process, from the extensive press coverage received during the survey effort, and from involvement by leaders in the recent regionalism activities lead by BT. Partners will be essential to help fund improved and expanded bus services and routes.

2. Additional and regular funding will be required.

With expanded service comes expanded budget requirements. The Blacksburg and Christiansburg Town Councils and BT need to continue to work together to ensure that funding is available for continued service beyond the initial routes provided. Creative funding opportunities should be pursued via a partner program with businesses, particularly those that will be receiving service or have bus stops nearby. Extensive service to these areas should be provided only with a matching financial agreement. Numerous marketing and advertising opportunities exist for businesses or participating/potential partners as well, including the possibility of advertising on buses, on shelters, at stops, etc.

¹⁰ Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan (2003). Available on-line at <http://www.christiansburg.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=68>

¹¹ Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area 2030 Transportation Plan (2005, November): Available on-line at: <http://www.montva.com/departments/mpo/downloads/bcmfinal2030techreport.pdf>

¹² Blacksburg 2006-2046 Comprehensive Plan. On-line: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/Index.aspx?page=269>

¹³ [Despite Dramatic Dip In Gas Prices, Public Transit Users Save Almost \\$9,000 Per Household Annually](#), American Public Transportation Association, November 6, 2008.

¹⁴ [Distribution of Transportation Fatalities by Mode \(Table 2-4\)](#), Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Sept. 5, 2007

¹⁵ [Public Transportation Reduces Greenhouse Gases and Conserves Energy](#). American Public Transportation Association, February, 2008.

3. Educating and training of the public should be emphasized.

Education and training about the benefits of transit is needed, such as how transit operates and how multiple modes of transportation can be used in conjunction with transit. This process may need to be repeated on a regular cycle (e.g., bi-annually), similar to how a university offers fall and spring orientation events to new students and their parents. The education and training process will be essentially the same material, with improvements implemented over time, integrated within the material for each new cycle.

4. Encouraging the use of transit is important and takes time.

New concepts such as the Go Anywhere flexible route and the idea of flexible stops, neighborhood and commercial hubs, and the use of park and rides, need to be clearly and simply defined, understood, and explained. This process is important so that citizens can become informed about how expanded routes operate, and how connections can be made between routes and to other transportation providers (e.g., Smart Way Commuter Bus).

5. Over time, citizens will build new travel patterns and habits.

In general, the goal will be for routes to maintain a high rate of frequency such as four buses per hour (e.g., buses available every 15 minutes on the Explorer and the Shopper Express). With buses scheduled every 15 minutes, the "service headway" (time interval between buses) allows for about a 7-8 minute wait for customers arriving at random at a bus stop, on average; this provides a very high degree of flexibility and generally attracts transit riders since they can simply go to a stop and not worry about the specific schedule (TRB, 2007). Lower frequencies (and therefore longer wait times) "effectively eliminate traditional local bus service from consideration for all but dependent or particularly loyal riders, especially if schedules are unreliable (TRB, 2007)."

6. Routing may change before service starts; it should be maintained for 1 year.

At the time this report was first started the goal was to launch the first phase of the expanded service between October and December 2009, with later phases to start by Spring 2010. The actual start date was November 23, 2009 for the first phase. After new services are started, service will be modified as ridership data are collected and customer feedback is received. However, as previously stated, it will be the goal to maintain service with no (or only minimal) changes for a one year period before changes are implemented. This will enable ridership to stabilize and for ridership data to be collected with all factors constant. If routes are changed throughout the year, then understanding ridership patterns is more difficult.

7. These routes will likely become express corridors.

Corridors are routes designed to provide service to destinations along a major corridor. Citizens will likely travel to stops along these routes by walking, biking, driving (e.g., using a nearby official or unofficial park and ride lot), or by transferring from another bus route including existing BT routes (e.g., Two Town Trolley from Blacksburg), the new Go Anywhere flexible service, or possibly from another services such as the Smart Way Commuter Bus. Research has shown that express routes are most effective when there is an integrated, connective system of local service. With a supporting local service (e.g.,

serving neighborhoods), the "express" routes can maintain high-frequency service (CTA, 2009).

8. Improving the infrastructure will be needed short- and long-term.

During the months leading up to service launch, BT surveyed the Town roadways and landscape for candidate stop or hub locations. To simplify this process, a checklist was developed by the Operations Department to inventory each candidate location. BT notes various factors such as roadway width and condition, the presence (or absence) and condition of sidewalks and curb-cuts (e.g., for wheelchairs), evidence of shared pathways (e.g., bike lanes or dirt paths), lighting conditions, line of sight (how well drivers can see the location), signage, amenities (seating, trash cans, or nearby businesses), canopy (tree-cover or nearby building roofs or awnings), existing (or need for) bike racks, and the presence of nearby parking areas or parking lots. For this latter topic, the issue of unofficial, official, or "sponsored" park & ride or parking lots should be discussed further, especially as citizens may want ways to connect to bus stops via automobile, walking, or bicycle.

As it is understood presently, all permanent stops/hubs should be accessible in accordance with ADA requirements. For this reason, locations were selected that were immediately useable. As infrastructure changes and improves, new stop locations can be provided. For example, a stop should have a waiting area, a safe place to put a post and sign, a nearby sidewalk with curb-cut to accommodate wheel chairs and bicycles, and preferably seating and trash amenities. For those candidate locations that cannot be immediately used, BT will work together with the local municipalities to seek private, local, state, and federal resources for transit-related improvements. In some cases, federal grant programs exist for such improvements, taking advantage of local-match contributions for capital improvements.

9. Satellite locations should be considered for transit vehicles.

Previous, informal discussions with the Town of Christiansburg have involved the concept of a satellite bus location. The main purpose would be to serve as central, "pre-approved" locations for transit vehicles to park and wait between trips. These locations would be safe locations where drivers could take rest breaks as well. Two locations come to mind. The Market Place shopping center, where the old Books-A-Million store was located, appears to be a logical location for a potential satellite location. Additionally, the Food Lion at 1530 North Franklin Street should be considered.

In the future, these locations could serve additional purposes including the possibility of 1) a time-check location for future, permanent bus stops; 2) a major destination for customers to pick-up the bus; 3) a park & ride location for customers (and possibly operators) to park their cars and ride the bus; 4) a convenience store with shelter, seating, coffee shop, food, magazines, books, etc. A local business partner might be particularly interested in this last concept.

10. Branding, route naming, and service in Christiansburg is important.

Blacksburg Transit was very content with the Working Group and their involvement in developing the "look and feel" of the new services, including the look of vehicles. As the system continues, it would be wise to use this same process to influence to design of

stops, signs, shelters, etc. Regardless, it is recommended that the service will still be “BT” service (just as all service and routes on FRED are) and that Christiansburg will have input into what the routes are named, what the color scheme may be, and what, if any, logo(s) may be developed in association with bus services in Christiansburg.

First Day Activities

In conjunction with the launch of service, a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony was held on November 23, 2009 at the New River Valley Mall, in Christiansburg. Featured guests included representatives from both towns, local businesses, the County, the MPO, the PDC, Virginia Tech, the New River Community College, and various area organizations. Then, throughout the first day, a local radio station provided a live radio broadcast, and community volunteers staffed stops throughout the new routes and on the vehicles with give-aways, prizes, raffles, food, and other incentives to encourage citizens to ride the bus. Service was fare-free from November 23, 2009 to February 1, 2010.

Next Steps

Blacksburg Transit has prepared a grant proposal for fiscal year 2011 to be submitted to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT) on February 1, 2010. This document and the results reported herein, provide the basis for the grant proposal for the two commuter routes presented. With continual support from the survey respondents and citizens of Christiansburg, the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia Tech, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and numerous private and public businesses and organizations in the region, Blacksburg Transit is excited about the future of transit in the New River Valley.

References

- Bingham, L. (1990). Town transit panel approves new bus route. *The News Messenger*, February 15, 1990. p. 1A and 8.
- Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. (2005, November). Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area 2030 Transportation Plan: TECHNICAL REPORT. Available on-line at: <http://www.montva.com/departments/mpo/downloads/bcmfinal2030techreport.pdf>
- Cambridge Systematics, Inc. and KFH Group (2008, June). New River Valley (PDC 4) Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan (June 2008). Prepared for Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Available on-line at: http://www.montva.com/departments/mpo/downloads/2008_nrv_pdc4_chsm_plan.pdf
- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) (2009). CTA to Increase Frequency of Express Bus Service on Select Routes. January 14. On-line at: <http://www.transitchicago.com/news/default.aspx?ArticleId=2273>
- Geran, G. (1981). Mass Transit takes step towards reality. May 13, pp. 1-2. *News Messenger: Blacksburg-Christiansburg, VA*.

- Haddad, K. (1982). Transit manager plotting routes to connect Blacksburg by bus. Roanoke Times. October 31, p. 1 and 5. New River Valley bureau, Christiansburg, VA.
- Harris, W. (1974). Transit Study Funds Sought. The Roanoke Times, August 23, 1974. p. 19.
- Higgins, L. L. & Cherrington, L. K. (2005). Experience with Flex Route Transit Service in Texas. Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, TX. September.
- Howard, W. A., and Stuart, R. C. (1978, October 31). New River Valley Transit Study: Summary Final Report. Draft for Public Review and Comment. Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. For the New River Valley Planning District Commission.
- Howard, W. A., and Stuart, R. C. (1979, January 15). New River Valley Transit Study: Summary Final Report. Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. For the New River Valley Planning District Commission. Available as of 12/30/08 at ftp://ftp.blacksburg.gov/Blacksburg%20Transit/BT%20History/Transit_Study_1979/Howard_and_Stuart_1979/.
- Levin, J., and Davis, J. (2008). Suburban hubs will draw tomorrow's renters. Colliers International. December 11.
- Mayo, A. (1974). Transit Study Being Sought by Blacksburg. The Roanoke Times, January 17, 1974. p. M-1.
- Town of Blacksburg. (2007, May 8). Blacksburg 2006-2046 Comprehensive Plan. Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/Index.aspx?page=269>
- Town of Blacksburg (2009, April 21). Work Session Minutes (Blacksburg Transit - Christiansburg Bus Service section). Author, Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: http://blacksburg.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=blacksburg_91d67cd29a21b3fcfb62867998eb10b7.txt
- Town of Christiansburg (2003). 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Available on-line at <http://www.christiansburg.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=68>.
- Transportation Research Board (TRB) (2007). TRCP Report 95: Transit Oriented Development. Washington, D.C. Available on-line at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_95c17.pdf
- Urbitrans Associates, Inc. & RLS & Associates, Inc. (2006, May). Blacksburg Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis: Recommendations.
- VDOT (2009, January). VDOT Multimodal Planning Grant: Employment Mobility. Completed by the New River Valley Planning District Commission. Available on-line at: <http://www.nrvpdc.org/Transportation/Employment%20Mobility%20Study%20-%20report%20only.pdf>
- Virginia Tech (2006). Virginia Tech Campus Master Plan Update 2006. Author, Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: <http://www.oua.vt.edu/masterplan/VA%20Tech%202006-2016%20Master%20Plan.pdf>
- Virginia Tech (1983). Virginia Tech 1983-1993 Master Plan: Concepts, Data, and Strategies for Implementation. Author, Blacksburg, VA.

Appendices

See separate documents for each Appendix.

Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey Final Report

APPENDICES

Appendix A: “It’s Around the Corner” Logo 73
Appendix B: Timeline 75
Appendix C: Newspaper and on-line Coverage..... 80
Appendix D: An Overview of Recommendations with Survey Highlights 123
Appendix E: Christiansburg Bus Survey 131



By

Erik C.B. Olsen, Ph.D.
Transportation Planner

Blacksburg Transit, a Department of the Town of Blacksburg

Funded from Transit Planning Funds administered by
the Blacksburg-Christiansburg Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Presented to the Town of Christiansburg



January 28, 2010

Appendix A: “It’s Around the Corner” Logo

It's Around the Corner!

Bus Service in Christiansburg!

We need your input!

It's Around The Corner . . . Christiansburg Bus Survey, October 2008

The Christiansburg Bus Survey will be mailed to all Town of Christiansburg Residents.
New bus service will be based on your survey responses . . .

PLEASE RESPOND, return your survey for a chance to win a \$25 Gift Certificate

Where would **you** like to go in Christiansburg?

Questions? Call (540) 961-1185 or email btransit@blacksburg.gov

It's Around the Corner logo (created by Walter Hearn)

Appendix B: Timeline

Christiansburg Bus Survey Timeline (Textual format)

Fall '10	Evaluate Bus Service
Spring '10	Launch commuter service
2/1/10	Funding deadline (JARC)
By 11/09	Launch new services (Mall, Downtown, Flex)
8/12/09	9:30 a.m. First Christiansburg Bus Working Group Start-up Meeting
Spring '09	Final recommendations to Town Council presented
2/1/09	Funding deadline (JARC)
2/1/09	VT Research Agreement Ends
1/15/09	MOU in place with Town of Christiansburg
1/16/09	Public Notice must be advertised
1/6/09	10:00 AM - Becky and Erik to meet with Lance and Nichole (2nd meeting)
12/19/08	10:00 AM - Becky and Erik to meet with Lance and Nichole (1st meeting)
12/18/08	Start summary of survey results from other efforts for final report
12/10/08	BT Staff Meeting & Update
12/5/08	Susan to supply sampling of completed survey (N=898)
12/2/08	Erik provided written summary to Town Council
12/1/08	Email to BT Staff re 11/29 RT article
11/26/08	GIS Meeting at TOC
11/19/08	BT Briefs Update
11/4/08	(Monday) – 5 minute update to Town Council (Erik)
10/30/08	Meeting with Montgomery County Schools
10/27/08	Meeting with Echostar; meeting with Walmart
10/23/08	Email re. CT article to BT Staff
10/22/08	Email out re. RT article; BT Brief update sent out to BT Staff
10/21/08	(Tuesday) - Survey sent out
10/16/08	Overview of survey with MPO
10/15/08	Meeting with NRV Housing
10/14/08	(Tuesday) – Official date of Press Release
10/8/08	Newspaper ads start (through 11/9)
10/7/08	(Wednesday) – 5 minute update to Town Council (Erik)
10/6/08	(Wednesday) - Radio spots start (through 10/31)
9/29/08	Draft Marketing package reviewed by Becky
9/26/08	Becky reviewed and approved survey; email sent to Susan to go ahead and print
9/25/08	Survey edits back from Susan
9/23/08	Debbie Swetnam signed marketing contracts for Q99 (radio) and RT
9/22/08	Susan sent updated survey to Erik. I emailed her back details for most questions based on 9/17 meeting with Becky et al.
9/19/08	Updated workplan and emailed; emailed Susan to meet about survey edits
9/18/08	Edited survey and emailed to Susan; spoke with Nichole; spoke with Susan
9/16/08	1:30 PM Erik mentioned Cburg survey at RPO TAC meeting at PDC
9/12/08	10:30 AM – Marc Verneil signed Research Agreement
9/11/08	Emails and calls to Susan and Sharron McElroy for an edited agreement

9/10/08 1:31 PM – Larry emailed 2 contract changes; Erik met with Dianna re. budget

9/9/008 Erik took Research Agreement to Marc to sign – he referred to Town attorney

8/28/08 6:00 PM – Erik pilot-tested survey at BT’s Shift Pick

8/27/08 Email to BT Staff re. need for pilots

8/26/08 12:30-2 PM – Erik and Debbie met with Susan/CSR to complete Survey draft

8/21/08 1:00 PM – Erik presented survey overview at BT Fall Kick Off Business Meeting

8/19/08 7:30 PM – Erik presented survey overview to Cburg Town Council (with Debbie Swetnam and Dan Brugh)

8/18/08 2:00 PM – Erik held survey kick-off meeting at BT with, Nichole Hair, Dan Brugh, Debbie Swetnam, Ken Tucker, Katherine Smith, Nichole Hair, Dayton Poff, Fiona Rhodes

8/8/08 3:30 PM – Erik held survey overview meeting at BT with Debbie Swetnam, Ken Tucker, Tim Witten, Harland Brown, Taran Hutchinson, Ron Parker, Nichole Hair, Katherine Smith, Rebecca Martin, Fiona Rhodes,

8/7/08 4:46 PM – Emailed IRB completion certificate to Susan

8/7/08 2:28 PM – Susan emailed; she will make submission to VT-IRB w/final draft

8/5/08 4:43 PM - Susan sent email to follow up on approval

7/24/08 Susan sent updated quote of \$87.4K based on # of households

7/23/08 3:19 PM – Erik left voce mail for Susan re. # of households.

7/23/08 1:18 PM – Erik sent email to Susan re. # of households; Should be ~10,600

7/23/08 11:54 AM – Debbie emailed to find out if estimate was based on households or population

7/23/08 11:50 AM – Erik completed draft of survey (based on FRED survey)

7/22/08 5:18 PM – Cost estimates received from Susan

7/22/08 7:43 AM – Comment files (2) from 2008 VT survey received from Susan

7/17/08 4:40 PM – Lisa Sedlak performed OCR on VT PDF file for me and will email it back to me.

7/17/08 4:20 PM – Completed summary from the '06 TOB Community Comments

7/17/08 10:00 AM – Left voice mail and sent an email to Chip Holdren about the Roanoke Valley Metro survey to request a copy and results.

7/17/08 9:45 AM – Sent email to Dianna w/cc to Debbie S. documenting exemption for going through RFP process for government to government purchase orders

7/17/08 9:15 AM – spoke with Susan Willis-Walton; she has permission from Steve/Debbie and received my email; she will contact me soon

7/16/08 12:59 PM - Debbie S. heard from Bonnie Preas; The Procurement Code does not apply to government to government purchases and BT is not required to go through the RFP process to contract with a VT. This we can use CSR

7/13/08 Erik sent reminder to Debbie S. about Bonnie (she had not heard back).

7/11/08 Debbie Freed granted Susan permission to release VT survey results
7/10/08 9:00 AM - Erik & Debbie S. met with Susan Willis-Walton from CSR.
Susan will write up overview for survey w/rough budget and rationale for
mail
7/8/08 3:34 PM – Erik set meeting for 9 AM, 7/10/08 at CSR
7/3/08 Kim Kirk sent link to the Virginia Tech Transportation Survey, May 2008
7/3/08 5:22 PM - Erik sent email to Susan to set up meeting for 7/10/08.

Appendix C: Newspaper and on-line Coverage

Newspaper Advertisements and Articles

From oldest to newest (some available on-line)

- Town of Blacksburg. (September 16, 2008). Bus Survey to Be Sent to All Christiansburg Households in October. Blacksburg Alert, Available on-line at: <http://www.blacksburg.va.us/index.aspx?recordid=305&page=304>
- Roanoke Times. (October 12, 2008). It's Around the Corner: Bus Service in Christiansburg (Advertisement). The NRV Current, p. 19. Author.
- Roanoke Times. (October 12, 2008). Christiansburg needs buses (New River Forum: Editorial). The Current, p. 8. Author. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/wb/180155>
- Graham, L. (October 22, 2008). Blacksburg Transit eyes new routes in 2009: Finding out what residents need. Roanoke Times. NRV Current: p. 1, 3. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/181257>
- Tobat, T. (October 23, 2008). A day in the life: On the road with retired-biology-professor-turned-Blacksburg-Transit driver. Collegiate Times. Page 5. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/12290>
- McVey, G. (October 29, 2008). Blacksburg Transit seeks rider input. Collegiate Times. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/12371>
- Graham, L. (November 29, 2008). BT bus survey fuels high response rate. Roanoke Times. NRV Current, p. 4. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/185884>
- Town of Blacksburg. (December 18, 2008). Second Wave of Christiansburg Bus Surveys Mailed. Blacksburg Alert, Available on-line at: <http://www.blacksburg.va.us/index.aspx?recordid=463&page=304>
- Graham, L. (April 9, 2009). Survey shows interest in expanding bus service. Roanoke Times. NRV Current, p. 7. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/200485>
- Collegiate Times (April 10, 2009). BT could begin service in Christiansburg. Author. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Roanoke Times. (April 12, 2009). Expand bus service in Christiansburg (New River Forum: Editorial). The Current, p. 10. Author. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/wb/200842>
- Graham, L. (May 7, 2009). Council stalls plans to add to bus service. Roanoke Times. The NRV Current, p. 7. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/203824>
- Graham, L. (May 17, 2009). Residents wait for green light on more bus routes: Council faces decision on bus service. Roanoke Times. The Current, p. 1, 4, 5. Available on-line at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/205020>
- Graham, L. (May 19, 2009). Council listens to transit pitch again. Roanoke Times, The NRV Current, p. 4. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/205235>

- Graham, L. (May 21, 2009). Transit plan rolls forward: Christiansburg town council OKs budget, new bus service. Roanoke Times. The Current, p. 1, 5. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/205486>
- Murillas, P. (May 28, 2009). Christiansburg to add, replace BT routes. Collegiate Times, p.2. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Available on-line at: <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/13761>
- Lin, D. (June 21, 2009). Blacksburg Transit helps students get around. Collegiate Times. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Available online at <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/13858/blacksburg-transit-helps-students-get-around>
- Bardin, S. (July 8, 2009). Blacksburg Transit adding space, vehicles. Roanoke Times, The NRV Current, p. 3. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/211040>
- Bardin, S. (August 22, 2009). An introduction to the BT: Transit Training. Roanoke Times, The NRV Current, p. 1, 4. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/216243>
- Prendergast, R. (September 1, 2009). BT fleet builds up to meet demands. Collegiate Times, Virginia Tech. Available online at: <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/14092/bt-fleet-builds-up-to-meet-demands>
- Sutpin, M. (September 15, 2009). Letter: Make Blacksburg transportation a major priority. Collegiate Times, Virginia Tech. Available online at: <http://www.collegiatetimes.com/stories/14185/letter-make-blacksburg-transportation-a-major-priority>
- Bardin, S. (October 22, 2009). Blacksburg Transit's expanded service to roll out Nov. 23. Roanoke Times, The NRV Current, p. 4-5. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/223356>
- Bardin, S. (November 4, 2009). Blacksburg Transit sets fares for Christiansburg routes. Roanoke Times. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/224950>
- Bardin, S. (November 13, 2009). BT seeks volunteers to help with routes. Roanoke Times, NRV Briefs. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/226173>
- Town of Blacksburg. (November 13, 2009). Blacksburg Transit to Begin Christiansburg Service (Blacksburg Alert). Available online at: <http://www.blacksburg.va.us/Index.aspx?page=10&recordid=1013&returnURL=%2FIndex.aspx>
- Bardin, S. (November 21, 2009). Ready to roll: All aboard in Christiansburg. Roanoke Times, The Current, p. 1, 4-5. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/226173>
- Bardin, S. (January 20, 2010). Ridership results are in: Officials encouraged by new bus routes' numbers. Roanoke Times, The Current, p. 1, 4-5. Available online at: <http://www.roanoke.com/news/nrv/wb/233568>.



[News](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Agendas & Minutes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Codes](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Latest News

Bus Survey to Be Sent to All Christiansburg Households in October

Posted Date: 9/16/2008

The Town of Christiansburg in conjunction with Blacksburg Transit, the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia Tech, and Montgomery County* are working together to increase public transportation and commuting options within the Town of Christiansburg. The first step in this process is the completion of a survey that will be mailed to Christiansburg residents to determine the use/need of expanded bus service in the Christiansburg area.

The bus survey offers a unique opportunity for each citizen to contribute and help design the future of bus service in Christiansburg. The results of this survey, which will be sent to every household in the Christiansburg area, will serve as the foundation for the new service; hence every response is critical. Christiansburg Town Manager Lance Terpenny, commented "The great thing about this survey is that it allows our citizens to contribute to the planning process; ultimately building their own service."

The survey will be mailed early October 2008, with the estimated implementation of the routes set for late 2009.

For further information regarding the survey contact Erik Olsen, Transportation Planner at (540) 961-1185 or email eolsen@blacksburg.gov.

* Survey funded by the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

THE ROANOKE TIMES
Sunday, October 12, 2008

Current **19**

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Tech was picked ninth in the same preseason poll, so it's safe to say the start has surprised some people. Third-year coach Chris Riley knows opponents will be keying on the Hokies now.

"Anytime you win [I] straight everyone is going to pay attention," he said. "We are going to have to come in ready to play every time. We have to make sure ... the other team knows 5-0 in conference is not a fluke."

Middle blocker Willoughby leads the Hokies with 49 kills. The Mossburn, Calif., native also leads the team in hitting percentage and blocks. Willoughby's .405 hitting percentage ranks No. 15 in the country.

Juniors Betsy Horowitz and Taylor Parrish along with freshman Justine Record join Willoughby with more than 100 kills. Freshman setter Erin Lenser is the team leader with 512 assists.

Despite the success, the Hokies know potential pitfalls await both in the short and long term.

"We have all taken a greater personal accountability for the program that is part of the building process," Riley said. "We have been OK the

Past Tech volleyball winning streaks

1982-11
Final record: 26-20
1992-11
Final record: 29-11

last couple of years but knew it was time to make a bigger splash. Honestly, we are just in the beginning. Win streaks are great. Wins are great. But it's still a process to get where we want to be consistently."

What will keep things moving in the right direction? "Heart," Willoughby said. "You have to work and you have to push yourself every day. That is what this program needs to be successful."

Even though they have the big picture in mind, that hasn't discouraged the players from enjoying themselves right now.

"Having people talk about us and coming to watch us play is a great feeling," Willoughby said. "We have to continue to pick it up and work hard for them."

"We just love to play the game," Riley said. "It is great to get an e-mail from someone in the Class of '32 wishing you good luck. These are the things that keep us going."

SHARE YOUR VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY IN "YOUR BEST SHOT!"

Send your photos with caption information to The Roanoke Times, "Your Best Shot" for Current, P.O. Box 2491, Roanoke, VA 24010 or email digital photos to newsriver@roanoke.com.

THE ROANOKE TIMES
roanoke.com

It's Around the Corner!



Bus Service in Christiansburg!

We need your input!

It's Around The Corner . . . Christiansburg Bus Survey, October 2008

The Christiansburg Bus Survey will be mailed to all Town of Christiansburg Residents. New bus service will be based on your survey responses . . .

PLEASE RESPOND, return your survey for a chance to win a \$25 Gift Certificate

Where would you like to go in Christiansburg?
Questions? Call (540) 951-1155 or email transit@blacksburg.gov

Dr. John Robertson and staff are pleased to Welcome Dr. Jay M. Bass to their family dentistry practice in Blacksburg.



Dr. Bass received his DDS degree from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry. Dr. Bass, his wife Robin, his son Addison, and his daughter Jillian are excited to become part of the Blacksburg and New River Valley community. Dr. Bass and Mrs. Bass are Virginia Tech graduates.

New Patients are welcome and are currently being scheduled in our office located at 200 Washington Street in downtown Blacksburg.

Phone (540) 552-2551

LIVE AT THE LYRIC

135 College Avenue, Blacksburg VA



Two performers, twelve large puppets and a wonderful, projected world. Don't miss this unique show. Four lucky puppeteers from the audience even get to help with the final puppet scene. Interactive stories and projected animations, what more could you want? It is magical, fun and has great audience involvement. How many weird, wild and wonderful ways are there to tell a story? You'd be surprised!

Check out www.the lyric.com for information on this exciting!

BOX OF LIGHT THEATRE

Oct 26 2008. 3pm. \$10 Adult/\$7 Children
Call 540.951.4771 or visit us online at www.the lyric.com

This project is partially supported by a grant from Florida Space Technology, LLC as their inaugural award and funded by The Space Foundation, the William and Kate Foundation, the SpaceShipOne Foundation, the Space Shuttle Foundation, and the New Orleans Foundation.

Editorial

Christiansburg needs buses

Regional planners want citizen input on transit.

For years, Christiansburg residents could only gaze jealously at Blacksburg's transit system. Sure, one bus route came into Christiansburg and hit a few central stops, but it was never good enough for regular commuting.

As the cost of gas rose, that jealousy slid into deadly sin. The price at the pump might have moderated a bit lately, but we suspect there are still a good many people in Christiansburg who envy Blacksburg's buses.

The two towns, Virginia Tech and Montgomery County want to find out for sure. Later this month, they will send survey forms to every household in Christiansburg asking what sorts of bus

services citizens want.

Residents should keep an eye out for the forms and return them promptly so that the data accurately reflect the wants and needs of the community.

Christiansburg definitely needs something more.

The Two Town Trolley that rolls into town courtesy of Blacksburg Transit does the central loop, but it runs only in the afternoons during the week. That means it is useless for workers and students who must travel between the towns. Judging by traffic on U.S. 460 during rush hour, there are plenty of such commuters.

Christiansburg could use better internal coverage, too. The TTT hits only the commercial and government highlights. Routes into residential areas could serve far more people.

These days, public transportation makes sense on multiple levels. Riding the bus saves money, reduces the individual carbon footprint and eases congestion on area roads.

What's not to like?

Christiansburg residents also should pay attention over the next year. New routes, if any, would tentatively launch in late 2009. Before then, Christiansburg and Blacksburg will need to hammer out the details, including funding and oversight.

Maybe they will collaborate through Blacksburg Transit. Maybe Christiansburg will start its own transit agency. Citizen input will be important while making those choices.

For now, complete the survey and tell officials Christiansburg needs transportation alternatives, too.

THE ROANOKE TIMES
roanoke.com

DEBBIE MEADE
President and Publisher

DAN RADMACHER
Editorial Page Editor

CHRISTIAN TREJBAL
Editorial Writer,
New River Valley Bureau

ELIZABETH STROTHER
LUANNE TRAUD
Editorial Page Staff

Family, friends and residents pay respects to a familiar Blacksburg figure. **PAGE 4**

New River Valley **CURRENT**

WEDNESDAY

THE ROANOKE TIMES

OCTOBER 22, 2008



MATT GENTRY / The Roanoke Times
Justin Belcher of Christiansburg rides the Blacksburg Transit system's Two Town Trolley Loop and says he uses the bus for his daily commute to work at the Red Robin restaurant outside the New River Valley Mall. Additional bus runs would help him immensely, he says.

Finding out what residents need

Christiansburg residents will receive a survey this month that Blacksburg Transit officials hope will help gauge transportation needs. "We're identifying destinations that people travel to for work, school and shopping, so that we can do our best to meet their travel needs," says Erik Olsen, Blacksburg's transportation planner. **PAGE 3**

COMING THURSDAY: Art Under the Sun, a Floyd co-op run by a group of artists, has expanded.

October 22, 2008, Page 1

Blacksburg Transit eyes new routes in 2009

An upcoming survey will give Christiansburg residents the chance to discuss their needs.

By Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com
301-0621

Blacksburg Transit's planned route extension throughout Christiansburg will be tailored to the way residents say the system would best serve them.

A survey administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research is scheduled to reach every home in Christiansburg later this month to gauge residents' transportation needs.

"We're identifying destinations that people travel to for work, school and shopping, so that we can do our best to meet their travel needs," said Blacksburg's transportation planner, Erik Olsen.

According to Susan Willis-Walton, director of the Center for Survey Research, the 22-question survey, in addition to identifying destinations, also addresses bus stop locations, the kinds of routes used to get to various destinations and the time of day participants would most like to see the bus run.

Other issues, such as bus stop structure and accommodations for riders with disabilities, will also be addressed.

The demand for Blacksburg Transit is rising, Olsen said. Ridership increased by about 8 percent from fiscal years 2007 to 2008, jumping from about 2.4 million riders to a little more than 2.6 million.

Olsen said he wants to get an idea of Christiansburg's needs now, so that once Blacksburg Transit is prepared to expand farther into the town, new routes can be implemented more efficiently. He said new routes are set to begin in late 2009.

Blacksburg Transit currently provides 11 bus routes in Blacksburg, compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Cen-



Jennifer Eldridge and her husband, James (right), of Christiansburg ride the Blacksburg Transit system's Two Town Trolley Loop with their three sons, (from left) Mikal, Aydan and Jaice, on Franklin Street in Christiansburg. The Eldridges say they depend on the bus for transportation and would like to have additional Christiansburg service. Rider Anthony Gannello of Christiansburg is also pictured.

ter on Roanoke Street.

While Blacksburg routes begin as early as 7 a.m. and end at 12:15 a.m. during the week, and as late as 2:30 a.m. on weekends, Christiansburg's lone Two Town Trolley Loop runs from 12:45 p.m. to 6:08 p.m. during the week and Sundays and from 10:45 a.m. to 6:08 p.m. Saturday.

The survey, which will cost \$88,000 after postage and printing, has been in planning phases for three to four months.

The Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is funding the survey. Executive Director Dan Brugh said the organization spared no expenses with the survey, because a cheaper, less efficient one would not have given the results needed to best serve the town.

"I just hope that we get lots of participation," Willis-Walton said.

She said because participation will determine how

Transportation around the valley

According to the New River Valley Planning District Commission, the number of people in the New River Valley using public transportation and ride-sharing options is growing. The commission reports that:

- Pulaski Area Transit's ridership increased 27 percent from 2007 to 2008
- The SmartWay Bus, which travels from Blacksburg and Christiansburg to Roanoke, averaged 167 riders per day in March, which increased to 223 in June.
- Membership in Ride Solutions, the grant-supported car pooling network, has increased from 161 to 322.

SOURCE: New River Valley Planning District Commission

the town's needs will be addressed, residents should take the survey seriously.

In an effort to increase participation, all respondents will be entered into a drawing to win prizes offered by local businesses. In addition, the organization will be following up with reminder cards and packages to those that haven't responded.

"Generally, it's about a six-week open process," Willis-

Walton said, including the tabulation of data, waiting for responses and sending responder reminders based on when the first wave begins to dwindle.

"It really just depends on when people send back their surveys," she said.

Some Christiansburg residents who depend on the bus service are looking forward to the prospect of having extended service.

"I think it'd be great having it extended; it'd really help me out a lot," said Justin Belcher, an employee at the Red Robin restaurant outside the New River Valley Mall.

Belcher said he has difficulty getting to work on time because the buses don't run in Christiansburg during the week until nearly 1 p.m.

That makes it necessary for Belcher to plan his schedule around Blacksburg Transit's pickup times. He said his employer "isn't really happy about it," but he has no other choice since his transportation is limited.

"I think there's a lot of families that would really appreciate it," said Jennifer Schaefer, also a Christiansburg resident.

She said her family depends on the bus service to get around. Because service is limited in Christiansburg, she said, Blacksburg Transit's stops are too far apart to adequately serve their needs.

A day in the life: On the road with retired-biology-professor-turned-Blacksburg-Transit driver

TERESA TOBAT
CT features reporter

When retired biological sciences professor George Simmons was asked to speak at the biology department's graduation, he wore the traditional Black gown and hood — and his Blacksburg Transit uniform.

"I stood up there and said, 'I know you've always wanted to know what we wear under that and then I snipped my gown,'" Simmons said, who revealed his BT gear and donned his driver's cap. "I remember thinking this is either going to work or people are going to call me Dr. Dumb."

His speech must have been well received as Simmons remembered walking to his truck afterward and hearing someone yell, "BT rocks!" from their car. A Washington Post reporter even asked for a copy of his speech, but Simmons declined.

Associate professor of biological sciences Jack A. Crawford has worked with Simmons for 12 years and remembered Simmons' speech well.

"He comes out and says, 'I'm going to tell you what the bus driver sees,'" Crawford said. "It was absolutely hysterical. It was like an actor taking on a role. He was so engaging."

Crawford said that Simmons captivated all Burns and Burton.

"George is a director," Crawford said. "He plays lots of good natured puns on people."

Crawford and Simmons banter back and forth regularly.

"It'll be like, 'George, you lost money in the stock market today. And hell no. Well, you lost more,'" Crawford said, referring to their different retirement plans.

Crawford remembers feeling as though Simmons was a friend when he was first met him. Simmons picked up Crawford at Roanoke Airport when Crawford was interviewing at Tech for a job 12 years ago.

Crawford's first distinct memory of Simmons was the car that Simmons kept in his car that he used to spit the remnants of his chewing tobacco.

"I remember thinking, 'I must be in the south,'" Crawford said, who is from

San Francisco.

Simmons is from Newket, N.C., and after he retired from teaching full time in spring 2002, he wanted to pick up a part-time job as a truck driver. He interviewed with a truck driving recruiter and remembered thinking it would be too much of a commitment.

Shortly afterwards, Simmons' wife saw a newspaper ad looking for BT drivers. He went through training and described the process as excellent. Simmons had prior knowledge of the company, which made training easier for him. The drivers start driving on Rumble Road and eventually make their way through downtown Blacksburg and then on campus.

Simmons recalled one man who dropped out of training because he couldn't handle navigating the roads of downtown Blacksburg.

"Somebody can drive a bus, but not everybody can be a bus operator," Simmons said.

He also trains new bus drivers and advises them on what to watch out for when they are first starting out.

"The BT doesn't hit things. It crushes them," Simmons said of what he asks newer drivers to keep in mind.

Simmons doesn't have a favorite route and he doesn't prefer the newer buses over the older ones. There are 36 regular BT buses and 10 BT Access buses for handicapped clients. The bus is on again age from one to 10 years old.

"I love all the buses," Simmons said. "The buses are like the snakes. Each one has its own personality and characteristics. Sometimes the windows rattle. And some handle like a different."

Simmons since taking the job has gained a new perspective of the community he is immersed with undergrads who are working or doing research at the Corporate Research Center. He likes talking to students that about their studies while on the bus and enjoys knowing they're working hard.

Simmons' teaching assistant of three semesters, AJ Prusini, said at first he couldn't believe that Simmons worked for the BT. But Prusini, a senior biology and biochemistry major, believes that driving the Simmons' character well.

"It always makes you feel like every-



BT bus driver George Simmons once joked to his teaching assistant Kristin Fleming-Dahl that he does his best advising while driving the BT bus.

thing is going smoothly," Prusini said. "He always gives me good advice when I need it."

Prusini recalls memory of Simmons is when he "hiked" from Blacksburg to Mountain Lake for the biological sciences' annual retreat this past summer. Simmons sold his truck and now bikes everywhere to save money and to support more ecological transportation.

One of Simmons' responsibilities as a driver is to help passengers calm down as they board the bus and be chided as to where they're going. Sometimes Simmons has to help nervous interviewees find exactly where they need to be on their way to the Corporate Research Center.

Kristin Fleming-Dahl, a senior biology major, has been Simmons' teaching assistant for a semester and said Simmons' energetic personality and sense of humor keeps his students

interested. Fleming-Dahl said that Simmons joked that he does his best advising while driving.

Simmons has also encouraged many international visitors in Blacksburg.

He once picked up three teachers from Switzerland who were at the Inn at Virginia Tech for a conference. Simmons said all three had cars they thought were bus passes. He remembered thinking those weren't BT passes, but he also remembered his duty as a driver.

"They were all excited. Europe has some of the best public transportation with their trains and public buses," Simmons said, who allowed them on the bus because, "This is not about business. This is about the United States of America. Which is about Virginia Tech. Which is about Blacksburg Transit. All of this is focused on you, and I was not going to let them down. I wanted

them to be able to remember their ride on the BT."

Simmons recalled picking up a father and his two children who were visiting Blacksburg from Japan. When they got off the bus at Burns Hall, Simmons tried his best to tell the father when the bus was returning.

Simmons kept his eye out for the family and when he made his very last run and stopped at Burns Hall, the bus was out of service, the family was waiting.

He walked in and asked if he could take the family back. He got permission and took them back home.

"When all else fails, the BT will come through for you," Simmons said. He feels that if people remember nothing else about their experiences in Blacksburg, they'll remember him as a driver.

Simmons made a big impression on one rider from India. He told Simmons

that he was impressed with his punctuality and his courtesy. The rider even wrote BT a letter about how much he admired Simmons.

Simmons is as devoted to the BT as he has been to his studies and students. The photo on the wall of his Fleming Hall office one of Antarctica — where Simmons researched fresh water lakes. There is a plaque declaring Simmons' induction into the Academy of Advising Excellence. And another framed certificate of a student-nominated Faculty Appreciation Award.

Despite all his successes, Simmons is considered to be a humble man. He compared his aquatic biology research to his work at the BT. "Once you leave it, you leave it. You have to be completely devoted to your work," said Simmons. "I was trying to solve water quality problems on the Chesapeake. That was big. Certainly BT fills on that spectrum."

Blacksburg Transit seeks rider input

GABE MCVEY
ct news reporter

Blacksburg Transit and the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg are surveying Christiansburg households this month to measure the demand for bus routes both between the towns and within Christiansburg.

Blacksburg Transit, a local government-owned commuter bus service, is sending out surveys throughout Christiansburg in an effort to gauge the depth and kind of demand for expanded public transportation and commuter service, according to a press release.

The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research will conduct the \$88,000 survey that is funded through the Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, a federally mandated transportation planning body.

Blacksburg Transit will then col- late the surveys and plan new routes that will go into service in late 2009, according to a press release.

"We've sent out eight- or nine-thou- sand surveys, one for each household in Christiansburg," said Blacksburg Transportation Planner Erik Olsen.

Olsen said demand for Blacksburg Transit is rising. Ridership increased by about 8 percent in the past fiscal year, rising to more than 2.6 million riders from 2.4 million.

"We're identifying destinations that

people travel to for work, school and shopping, so that we can do our best to meet their travel needs," Olsen said. "We're looking at how often people would take the bus, what times they're interested in and how long a walk they'd be willing to take to use the bus."

Blacksburg Transit currently oper- ates the Two Town Trolley route between Virginia Tech's campus and the New River Valley Mall and sur- rounding businesses.

"We're looking at federal matching funds; if Christiansburg can put up \$100,000, then the federal government contributes \$100,000"

- ERIK OLSEN
BLACKSBURG TRANSIT
TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

"The great thing about this survey is that it allows our citizens to contribute to the planning process, ultimately building their own service," said Christiansburg Town Manager Lance Terpenney.

Funding for the new routes would come from a mix of local, state and federal sources, Helms said.

"We're looking at federal matching

funds; if Christiansburg can put up \$100,000, then the federal govern- ment contributes \$100,000," Olsen said.

Blacksburg routes begin as early as 7 a.m. and end at 12:15 a.m. dur- ing the week and as late as 2:30 a.m. on weekends. Christiansburg's Two Town Trolley Loop runs from 12:45 p.m. to 6:08 p.m. during the week and Sundays as well as from 10:45 a.m. to 6:08 p.m. Saturday.

"If we could just expand — say double — the operating hours for the current route, that'd be a huge improvement for us," Olsen said.

"We want to serve commut- ers, the people of Blacksburg and Christiansburg as well as possible," Olsen said.

Blacksburg Transit has cooper- ated with Christiansburg on the Two Town Trolley for a long time, said Christiansburg Assistant Town Manager Barry Helms.

"It's been at least 15 years," Helms said. "We meet with (the) BT from time to time, and this subject has come up in bits and parts over the last year."

There are currently no plans in place specifying new routes.

"We want what the community wants; we don't have any presump- tions," Helms said.

Olsen added that the town would not have further details on new routes until they evaluate the results of the surveys.

October 30, 2009 (page 2)

BT bus survey fuels high response rate

Organizers say more than 25 percent of Christiansburg residents have already responded.

By Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com
381-8621

With Blacksburg Transit eyeing new routes in Christiansburg next year, the survey intended to gauge the town's needs has those planning the extension optimistic.

"We are excited about the relatively high response-rate and hope for even more," said Blacksburg transportation planner Erik Olsen.

So far more than 2,300 completed surveys have been received. Olsen said that is a 26 percent response rate, and they are on target to reach between 30 percent and 40 percent.

The survey, administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research, was sent to every home in Christiansburg in October to gauge residents' transportation needs.

According to Susan Willis-Walton, director of the Center for Survey Research, the 22-question survey, in addition to identifying destinations, also addresses bus stop locations, the kinds of routes used to get to various destinations and the time of day participants would most like to see the bus run.

The survey also addresses such issues as bus stop structure and accommodations for riders with disabilities.

A second mailing will be sent out on or before Dec. 12 to reach everyone who has not returned the first survey.

"Generally, a large boost in response is seen just after the second wave mailing to non-respondents, so we anticipate receiving quite a few more surveys over the next couple of months," Willis-Walton said.

She said the list of addresses will also be updated.

Missing your survey?

If you haven't received a survey or would like to give feedback, contact Erik Olsen at 961-1185 or btransit@blacksburg.gov.



The Roanoke Times | File October

Though an end date has not been determined, the Center for Survey Research is entering the actual survey response data as they come in and will be cleaning and tabulating all of the data at the beginning of 2009.

While it is too early to determine what influence the survey will have on the implementation of new routes and service, Willis-Walton said that she has received great ideas and written comments from respondents along with

their returned surveys.

"It seems like citizens are highly interested in the public transit and bus issues in Christiansburg," she said.

The information about desired stops, scheduling and services have been helpful thus far, and a strong response rate from the second mailing would provide an even better representation of the town's needs, Willis-Walton said.

Olsen said that while the current survey focuses on travel within and from Christiansburg, he anticipates that residents would like a regional bus service that reaches across town limits to include areas such as Radford and Giles, Floyd and Pulaski counties.

"BT is exploring expanded service into these areas and hopes to work in conjunction with other service providers in our region," Olsen said.

As an incentive for completing the survey, \$25 gift certificates for local restaurants and other businesses will be raffled off to 10 households that sent in responses.

November 29, 2009 (page 4)



[News](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Agendas & Minutes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Codes](#) | [Contact Us](#)

News

Second Wave of Christiansburg Bus Surveys Mailed

Posted Date: 12/18/2008

The Town of Christiansburg Bus Survey has been sent out in a second mailing to Christiansburg households. The mailing includes addresses for households that have not returned their original survey, as well as additional and updated mailing addresses. Thus far, over 11,000 surveys have been mailed. The response rate from the first October mailing is 31%.



The survey is designed to identify destinations that people currently travel to so that expanded bus service can better serve our citizens.

The survey also includes questions about bus stop locations, routes used, and when citizens want the bus to run.

Feedback received from the bus survey will be the basis for further expansion of service within and connecting to Christiansburg. All citizens are requested to return their survey within 5 days of receipt so all feedback from each household can be included.

The survey was funded by the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research.

For further information about the survey please contact Blacksburg Transit at (540) 961-1185, email btransit@blacksburg.gov.

Survey shows interest in expanding bus service

If Christiansburg Town Council agrees, expanded Blacksburg Transit service in town could begin by October.

Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com, 381-8621

In a recent Blacksburg Transit bus survey, 60 percent of people who responded said they would use the service if the company expands farther into Christiansburg.

"Just the amount of return tells you a lot about the interest level in transit to the area," Transit Director Rebecca Martin said. Overall, Martin said, the survey got a 38 percent response rate, which was 3,777 people.

She delivered the results of the survey conducted in late 2008 at Tuesday's Christiansburg Town Council meeting.

According to the results, 40 percent said they commute to Blacksburg daily, while 32 percent said they commute within Christiansburg. Some 45 percent indicated shopping as the main reason they would take advantage of the service.

The survey, administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research, was sent to every home in Christiansburg in October to gauge residents' transportation needs, with a follow-up sent out in December to those who hadn't responded.

According to Susan Wil-

lis-Walton, director of the Center for Survey Research, the 22-question survey also addressed bus stop locations, the kinds of routes used to get to various destinations and the time of day participants would most like to see the bus run.

Blacksburg Transit currently provides 11 routes in Blacksburg compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center. Martin said the system currently serves 2.6 million riders a year.

Martin presented a variety of route options to the council, based on the manner in which respondents said they would use the service.

The first proposed route, the Christiansburg Downtown Loop, would replace the current Two Town Trolley, which Martin said has low ridership and limited connectivity to neighborhoods. The route would focus on downtown commercial areas and would serve riders who need to shop, run errands or visit government facilities.

Martin described the next route as a new concept that localities around the country have tried.

The Christiansburg Flex

Route would focus on neighborhood access and convenience for riders. Riders could call 24 hours in advance to request service between various town hubs.

"You guys can be on the cutting edge here of being cost-effective and efficient," she told the council.

The third option, the Mall Commercial Circulator, links to other proposed routes, as well as the Blacksburg portion of the Two Town Trolley. Martin said the advantage of this route would be the ability to connect to various shopping places near the mall while offering a safe alternative to crossing busy Peppers Ferry Road and Franklin Street.

The last two options are commuter routes intended to circulate to popular areas throughout Christiansburg, while also connecting to Blacksburg. This route would also operate as a van pool, Martin said, by allowing riders to contact Blacksburg Transit for rides to their jobs.

The total cost of implementing all the routes is \$253,712, which includes \$46,000 in capital costs and \$207,712 in operating costs. The extended service would be a joint effort between Blacksburg



The Blacksburg Transit bus stops at the New River Valley Mall by the New River Community College entrance. In a recent Blacksburg Transit bus survey, some 45 percent of respondents indicated shopping as the main reason they would take advantage of expanded bus service.

Transit, Christiansburg and Blacksburg.

Blacksburg has requested public transportation funds for the upcoming fiscal year. Blacksburg Transit has applied for the federal Job Access Reverse Commute program, which would provide 50 percent of operating funds.

Martin said of 90 percent

of capital costs for more buses are typically handled at the federal and state level, with a 10 percent local match required.

The next step is for the town of Christiansburg to make a decision in May, at which point Blacksburg Transit would order buses. Service could begin as early as October.

BT COULD BEGIN SERVICE IN CHRISTIANSBURG

A Blacksburg Transit bus survey of 3,777 people revealed that 60 percent of respondents would use BT service if it provided further access to Christiansburg. The survey was administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research, and was sent to every home in Christiansburg. Several routes were proposed at Tuesday night's Christiansburg Town Council meeting, including a Christiansburg Downtown Loop to replace the Two Town Trolley and a Mall Commercial Circulator connecting shopping centers near the mall. The town of Christiansburg will make a decision in May, and if affirmed, could see service begin in October.

April 10, 2009, page 1

SUNDAY FORUM

10 THE ROANOKE TIMES

APRIL 12, 2009

The Roanoke Times Editorial board

President and Publisher
Debbie Meade
Editorial Page Editor
Dan Radmacher

Editorial Writer, NRV Bureau
Christian Trejbal

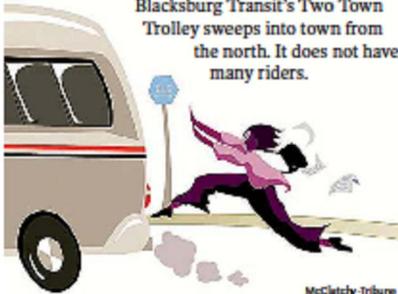
Editorial Page Staff
Elizabeth Strother
Luanne Traud

Expand bus service in Christiansburg

The survey results are in, and town residents want additional transit options.

In Christiansburg, the best way to get to work or the shop is by car. It's not as if there's a bus to ride, let alone convenient bike lanes and sidewalks.

All right, so that's not entirely true. Blacksburg Transit's Two Town Trolley sweeps into town from the north. It does not have many riders.



Christiansburg Town Council last week received the results of a townwide survey on public transportation. Demand for better service exists. Sixty percent of respondents said they would use a bus system and most were willing to walk a bit to get to a stop.

Based on the detailed responses that included where potential bus riders live and where they want to go, Blacksburg Transit proposes expanding its service in Christiansburg. Ideas include a downtown loop that would include Kroger, Main Street, Roanoke Street and Depot Avenue, a mall circulator that covers the sprawling commercial area at the north end of town and "flex rides."

Flex rides would be buses that people could call 24 hours in advance for a pickup. They would come to riders' door and take them to their destinations, picking up and dropping off others along the way. Over time, ridership patterns could reveal where fixed routes are feasible. Such services have suc-

editorial

Editorials contain the opinion of The Roanoke Times editorial board.

ceeded in many other towns of comparable size.

There could also be options for commuter services akin to ride-shares. Forty percent of commuters travel from Christiansburg to Blacksburg.

To make it all happen,

Christiansburg would need to spend \$250,000 in the next fiscal year on capital and operational expenses. Subsequent years would require at least as much.

That's a lot of money when budgets are tight, but this is a town willing to spend millions on an aquatic center. The least it can do is help people get to it.

Implementing only some of the recommendations would cost less but also would deliver less.

Blacksburg Transit and the town of Blacksburg are reaching out to their southern neighbor. If everyone works together, Christiansburg residents could have access to transportation services they want — and need in this day of higher gas prices and global warming.

April 12, 2009, page 10

Council stalls plan to add to bus service

Christiansburg leaders say they want more information before giving Blacksburg Transit \$163,000.

Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com, 381-8621

CHRISTIANSBURG — Town council members balked Tuesday night at funding increased bus service.

Councilman Ernie Wade said he wouldn't support the town's proposed 2009-10 budget with the Blacksburg Transit expansion plan included, because the town is already having to tighten its belt during this time of economic turmoil.

"We need to know more before we can vote on this," Wade said.

Town Manager Lance Terpenny said the allocation for Blacksburg Transit would be about \$163,000 of the town's proposed \$36 million budget.

Transit officials have requested that the council make a decision this month about a plan to expand bus service throughout

Christiansburg, giving them time to order additional buses.

Blacksburg Transit's decision to add routes came after a survey of Christiansburg residents conducted late last year showed that 60 percent or respondents would use the transit system if it expands farther into town.

Vice Mayor Brad Stipes said council members should view the economic troubles as a reason they should include the expanded route service into the budget.

"There are a lot of people out there that are having problems, increasingly, getting from one point to another," Stipes said.

He said including the plan in the budget would be the first step in a service that would prove beneficial for town residents for years to come — and councilmen shouldn't expect the service to be "ringing bells" from launch.



The Blacksburg Transit bus may not go very far into Christiansburg if Christiansburg Town Council pulls funding for a plan to expand the bus routes.

Councilman Mike Barber described the decision as a "no-win situation," because some residents will be upset that the town is overspending to implement the service, while others will criticize the council for not taking advantage of the opportunity.

He said he also feels the council should take its time

with the decision — but including the funding in the budget couldn't hurt.

"We can very easily put it in the budget. Because it's in the budget doesn't mean it has to be funded. It can be provided to do so," Barber said.

Though the survey covered many factors, Barber said it failed to disclose what

the routes would cost riders, which would factor into his decision.

"The one thing that I don't believe came out is at what rate are you willing to support this," Barber said.

The council held a public hearing on the budget Tuesday night and had its first reading of the budget ordinance, the first of two necessary before council can officially approve it.

Mayor Richard Ballengee suggested council use this available time to schedule a work session with Blacksburg Transit to discuss the possibilities of implementing the new routes.

"It's not a good time to be adding stuff to the budget, and I'd like to have more information with respect to expanding the bus service before we jump into this," Ballengee said.

Council's second budget reading will be held during the May 19 meeting.

May 7, 2009 (page 7)

NRV CURRENT

SUNDAY

MAY 17, 2009

newrivervalley.com

THE ROANOKE TIMES



Residents wait for **green light** on more bus routes

Riders who use Blacksburg Transit's one Christiansburg route say extended service would benefit residents. But during a recent Christiansburg Town Council meeting, council members said they were reluctant to include the \$163,000 expansion project because of the recession. **PAGE 4**

May 17, 2009 (page 1)



Christiansburg resident Barry Bowling gets off the bus at New River Valley Mall to go to his job at Hot Topic. Bowling, a frequent rider, says he hopes Christiansburg Town Council agrees on plans for Blacksburg Transit to expand its routes farther into Christiansburg.

Council faces decision on bus service

Blacksburg Transit officials would like to add more routes in Christiansburg. Christiansburg Town Council, however, isn't so sure this is the right economic time to do it.



Bus passengers and Christiansburg residents Blair Maupin (foreground) and Morgan Hoover ride the Two Town Trolley Christiansburg Loop. According to a resident survey conducted late last year, 60 percent of respondents said they would use the buses if the transit system expanded its routes farther into Christiansburg.

Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com, 203-6621

CHRISTIANSBURG — Residents who use Blacksburg Transit's one route in Christiansburg say they are on board with a plan to expand the bus service. The question is whether the Christiansburg Town Council is, too.

"I hope it happens. I'd like to see it happen," said Barry Bowling, a frequent rider.

The Two Town Trolley Christiansburg Loop is Bowling's primary source of transportation to his job at Hot Topic, a clothing store in the New River Valley Mall.

Evelyn Sensabaugh also uses the bus to get to her job at Hardee's on Roanoke Street and said expanding the service would benefit residents.

With the project resting in the hands of the town council, Sensabaugh didn't hesitate to say what decision should be made.

"I think they need to do it," she said.

At the May 5 council meeting, a month after Blacksburg Transit presented the results of its surveys of Christiansburg residents, council members balked at the idea of funding for the expansion in the town's \$36 million budget for 2009-10.

According to the survey conducted late last year, 60 percent of respondents said they would use the buses if the transit system expanded its routes farther into Christiansburg. Currently, the bus service provides 11 routes in Blacksburg compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the

Continued on next page

From previous page

New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center.

Overall, the transit system serves 2.6 million riders a year, Director Rebecca Martin said.

But during a public hearing on the budget at that meeting, council members said they were reluctant to include the \$163,000 project because of the recession.

"We need to know more before we can vote on this," Councilman Ernie Wade said then.

Vice Mayor Brad Stipes said the sum is a small price to pay to provide a service to help residents in need.

"There are a lot of people out there that are having problems, increasingly, getting from one point to another," Stipes said.

Council will address the company with these questions at a special work session Monday afternoon, and a representative from the bus service plans to be there.

"We're pretty optimistic that if we answer their questions they should have everything they need to move forward," said Erik Olsen of Blacksburg Transit.

The council will then gather Tuesday night for its regular meeting, at which it is scheduled to vote on the 2009-10 budget — with or without the transit funding.

Based on the survey results, Blacksburg Transit has created a variety of routes for council to choose from to fit the riders' needs.

The Christiansburg Downtown Loop would replace the current Two Town Trolley, which Martin said has low ridership and limited connectivity to neighborhoods. The route would focus on downtown commercial areas and would serve riders who need to shop, run errands or visit government facilities.

The Christiansburg Flex Route would focus on neighborhood access and convenience for riders. Riders could call 24 hours in advance to request service between various town hubs.

The third option, the Mall Commercial Circulator, links to other proposed routes, as well as the Blacksburg portion of the Two Town Trolley. This route would also connect to various shopping places near the mall.

The last two options are commuter routes intended to circulate to popular areas throughout Christiansburg, while also connecting to Blacksburg. This route would also operate as a van pool, Martin said, allowing riders to contact Blacksburg Transit for rides to their jobs.

Olsen said Blacksburg Transit could begin the Downtown, Circulator and Flex routes this year. Should council opt for the commuter routes, the company would plan to launch them by next spring, which allows time for additional research on route times and funding.

During the first run of the Two Town Trolley Christiansburg Loop on Wednesday afternoon, the bus had some 10 to 15 riders. Most passengers were making a trip to work. The loop begins at 12:45 p.m. during the week.

"I think they need to do some more routes, especially in the morning," Sensabaugh said.

Jason McGinnis, an employee at Southern Classic Auto Wash, said he takes the bus to work three times a week, and offering earlier times would make his commute easier.

Chris Rhoades, who works at Famous Anthony's in Blacksburg, said a wider variety of pickup times would generate a lot of new riders, especially among Christiansburg residents who commute to Blacksburg for work.

"It would help people on the farther end of town get and keep good jobs," he said.

Rhoades said he has trouble with his commute because the route starts so late. He rides the earliest run of the Two Town Trolley loop, which begins more than an hour before he has to clock in, and often arrives at work 15 minutes late. Also because the loop stops running shortly after 6 p.m., he has to pack bags of clothes and "crash here and there" at friends' houses after working late evenings, because the bus is his only way back home.

Rhoades said he thinks many residents deal with the same issue. And for them, a vehicle "just isn't in the budget."

Rhoades said "you can't beat" the current 50 cent charge to ride the bus and understands the price could go up if routes are added.

Given the importance of the service to residents, Rhoades said he would "find it sort of rude" if the price rose above \$1 per ride. But if it rose to just \$1 he would comfortably pay it. It beats the \$20 alternative of taking a cab, he said.

Olsen said while it will cost the town to expand service, the council is getting a good deal, because the town would pay only 10 percent of capital costs for more buses. Federal and state grants would pay the rest. Operation costs would be split 50-50, Olsen said.

"If they decide within the next week to go forward, we should be up and running by October," he said.

This week's meetings

■ A council work session is scheduled for 2 p.m. Monday for further discussion of the Blacksburg Transit expansion.

■ The council is expected to vote on the budget — and whether it contains the \$163,000 for the expanded bus service — at its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.



Currently, the Blacksburg Transit bus service provides 11 routes in Blacksburg, compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center.

I think they need to do some more routes, especially in the morning."

Evelyn Sensabaugh
Rides the Blacksburg Transit bus to get to work



Bus riders Brian Connell (left) and Chris Rhoades get off the bus from Christiansburg at the New River Valley Mall. Rhoades works at Famous Anthony's in Blacksburg.

It would help people on the farther end of town get and keep good jobs."

Chris Rhoades
A Blacksburg Transit rider,
speaking about a wider variety of bus pickup times

Council listens to transit pitch again

Town leaders came to no conclusions during a work session about expanded bus service.

Lerone Graham
lerone.graham@roanoke.com, 381-8621

CHRISTIANSBURG — Town council received a crash course from Blacksburg Transit on Monday afternoon as representatives addressed their concerns about including new service plans in the next town budget.

A public hearing and council vote is set tonight on the 2009-10 budget. Council members are being asked to decide whether to keep the \$163,000 funding to expand transit routes in Christiansburg, and Blacksburg Transit officials stressed that the bus system is an essential service for residents.

"We've got to realize that public transportation is not a luxury for a lot of people, it's a need," Dan Brugh, executive director of the local Metropolitan Planning Organization, told council members during a special work session.



MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times

Today's public budget hearing could decide whether Christiansburg will receive expanded Blacksburg Transit service.

Council members listened and discussed at Monday's meeting but came to no consensus.

At the May 5 council meeting, a month after Blacksburg Transit presented the results of its surveys of Christiansburg residents, council members balked at the idea of funding the expansion in the town's \$36 million budget because of the recession.

According to the survey conducted late last year, 60 percent

of respondents said they would use the buses if the transit system expanded its routes farther into Christiansburg. Currently, the bus service provides 11 routes in Blacksburg compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center.

When addressing one of council's major concerns — the cost of fare — BT Director Rebecca Martin said having riders pay more to make the

system self-supporting isn't a feasible option. She urged council members to keep in mind that transit is a service, much like police, rescue and fire, and the price of fare should be affordable to reflect that.

Martin also told the council that transit is an opportunity for economic development within the town. Meetings have been held with area businesses, she said, which can set the tone for future endeavors.

"We've started the groundwork for partnership," Martin said.

She said the BT made \$100,000 in bus ads last year from Blacksburg businesses, and she wants to have similar success in Christiansburg.

The timetable for action calls for town council to approve the proposal at tonight's meeting, which would give Blacksburg Transit time to order buses later this month. Advertising and marketing would begin early fall, with the service to launch in October.

May 19, 2009 (page 4)

NRV CURRENT

THURSDAY

MAY 21, 2009

newrivervalley.com

THE ROANOKE TIMES



The Two Town Trolley Christiansburg Loop makes an afternoon run.

MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times

Transit plan rolls forward

After weeks of debate, Christiansburg Town Council members gave their nod of approval to the 2009-10 operating budget, including \$163,000 in funds to add more Blacksburg Transit routes in town. The new service could launch as early as October. **PAGE 5**

Council OKs budget, new bus service

Two councilmen voted against Christiansburg's \$36 million spending plan, citing the economy.

Lerone Graham
lgraham@timesonline.com, 351-6621

CHRISTIANSBURG — Town council adopted on Tuesday a \$36 million budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, including full funding to expand Blacksburg Transit bus service in town.

The vote was split 4-2, with Henry Showalter and Ernie Wade choosing to vote "no."

With weeks of debate among councilmen over, Blacksburg Transit officials said they will order buses this month and prepare for an October launch for the new service.

During the initial May 5 budget reading, a majority of council members said they needed more information about the bus service expansion before they could approve the budget.

According to a survey Blacksburg Transit had conducted late last year, 60 per-

cent of respondents indicated interest in the system, with 27 percent saying they were "very likely" to use the new Christiansburg routes if they began this year and 33 percent saying they were "somewhat likely."

Currently, there are 11 routes in Blacksburg compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center.

The budget allocates \$163,000 to Blacksburg Transit for additional routes to be implemented.

Earlier this month, Wade said he would vote against the budget if the Blacksburg Transit money were included because the town needs to tighten its belt during the recession. Though he maintained his no vote, he said the town using more than \$500,000 from its reserves, not Blacksburg Transit's expansion, was his main reason.



After Christiansburg Town Council voted to expand Blacksburg Transit bus service in town, transit officials said they will order buses this month and prepare for an October launch for the new service.

"I think before I could support a deficit budget I'd need to know how we're going to turn it around next year, and so far we don't have a plan for that," Wade said.

During a separate vote, the council unanimously approved water and sewer fee increases.

The water authority will

increase rates by 7 cents per 1,000 gallons used; the solid waste authority is increasing its tipping fee \$3 per ton.

The town also budgeted for new positions, including an IT technician, a school resource officer, a police dispatcher, a planner and an inspector trainee. In addition, \$100,000 was

budgeted for step increases for town employee salaries.

During an April 17 budget work session, Showalter spoke against using money from reserves to give raises for town employees because it could dig the town into a hole for years to come should the economy continue to worsen.

He also said that giving raises now could cause layoffs later, which the town has been able to avoid thus far. He maintained his stance Tuesday when voting against the budget.

"I don't believe that raises are justified to come out of the reserves for town employees. ... I can see the reserves paying for services like bus service or capital improvement, but we're not letting anybody go — we're actually adding positions," he said.

Councilman Jim Vanhozier disagreed, saying the town had an "inferred moral obligation" to give employees the raises they were promised upon hire.

May 21, 2009 (page 5)

Christiansburg to add, replace BT routes

PHILLIP MURILLAS
managing editor

The Christiansburg town council approved a \$36 million budget on Tuesday that includes \$163,000 to expand Blacksburg Transit in the town.

The current plan would establish three fixed routes and two flexible routes in Christiansburg, replacing the current Two Town Trolley.

Christiansburg Assistant Town Manager Barry Helms said that the new proposed routes would consist of a revised downtown loop, a loop to the mall and back to downtown, and a standard commuter route.

Additionally, a flex route would be included, in which patrons would call ahead and wait for the bus at a designated location. Finally, commuters could also request a BT carpool service to pick up groups heading to work out of Christiansburg.

"I'm hoping a number of people will get advantage out of it," Helms said. "It could be very beneficial for

people without vehicles and beneficial for others if they want to save fuel and have time to ride the bus."

Blacksburg Transit marketing manager Ken Tucker also sees a positive outcome from a Christiansburg expansion. "You're not only giving access to people in Christiansburg," Tucker said. "You're giving access to anyone who rides the bus if you expand and that's a benefit."

Routes have not been finalized, as the budget has only recently been approved. "We have not sat down to work out the details," Tucker said. "We don't know how that money is going to be spent."

Assistant Town Manager Helms says he hopes many Christiansburg residents take advantage of the new routes.

"It's going to save fuel and take vehicles off the road so the roads won't be so crowded." He is also aware of modern attitudes toward public transport. "It's a little bit inconvenient to ride a bus," he admitted.

Blacksburg Transit currently plans to launch the new Christiansburg service in October.

May 28, 2009 (page 2)

Blacksburg Transit adding space, vehicles

Ridership on the public bus service is up 12 percent from last year, officials say.

Sharla Bardin
sharla.bardin@roanoke.com, 381-1669

Blacksburg Transit has headed full speed into an expansion that includes a renovated building, the purchase of more buses and adding transit services in Christiansburg.

Transit Director Rebecca Martin attributes much of the activity to increased interest from residents in the transit service. This year, the transit has seen about a 12 percent increase in riders from last year, and is serving nearly 3 million riders.

Martin said she thinks some of the increase in riders is because more people are trying to be environmentally conscious with their transportation and others started riding after last year's high gas prices.

"It's just really exciting to be a part of a regional system," she said about the transit growth.

Another part of the efforts will include more employees. Martin spoke with the Blacksburg Town Council on Tuesday about plans to hire 10 part-time employees and two full-time staff members. The positions include a mechanic, financial analyst and part-time drivers.

The council is expected to review the personnel proposal at the July 14 meeting. The transit system is a town service.

Town, transit and state officials also recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the expanded transit building at 2800 Commerce St. in the Blacksburg Industrial Park. The building has expanded from 60,251 square feet to 94,655 square feet, said Debbie Swetnam, regulatory manager with Blacksburg Transit.

The renovation cost about \$4 million. The work included a new conference center, the addition of 20 covered bays to the indoor bus parking area

and an expanded maintenance area, Swetnam said.

The extra room will come in handy for the fleet. Blacksburg Transit has 36 buses and seven vans.

It is adding 14 buses and four vans, which are for the Christiansburg service. Seven of the buses will be replacing older buses and some of the added vehicles are for expansion needs.

Funding for the vehicles comes from the transit's budget, which is made up of state, federal and local funds.

Blacksburg Transit expects to receive \$4.5 million from the federal stimulus package and will purchase seven 40-foot buses, which are hybrid electric vehicles. The money will also go toward equipment and technology upgrades.

Martin said the money should be released to Blacksburg Transit next month, and the new vehicles should



MATT CENTRY | The Roanoke Times
Employees Jerry Stoneking (left) and Jacob Keller stand next to one of the new buses in the recently expanded maintenance area of Blacksburg Transit's facility in the Blacksburg Industrial Park.

arrive next year.

Expanded service into Christiansburg is still on track to start in late fall, Martin said.

In May, the Christiansburg Town Council allocated \$163,000 to expand the bus service in town.

Currently, there are 11 routes

in Blacksburg compared with one in Christiansburg that loops from the New River Valley Mall to the Montgomery County Government Center.

According to a survey Blacksburg Transit had conducted in Christiansburg late last year, 60 percent of respon-

dents indicated interest in the system, with 27 percent saying they were "very likely" to use the new Christiansburg routes if they began this year and 33 percent saying they were "somewhat likely."

There were 3,777 people who responded to the survey.

NRV CURRENT

SATURDAY

AUGUST 22, 2009

newrivervalley.com

THE ROANOKE TIMES



Harland Brown of Blacksburg Transit times the mall circulator route, which will transport riders around the New River Valley Mall and other shops in the Arbor Drive, Conston Avenue, Market Street, Peppers Ferry Road area. JUSTIN COOK | The Roanoke Times

An introduction to the BT

Blacksburg Transit personnel started learning the lay of the land and different locations in Christiansburg on Friday during a mock service demonstration that was intended to help employees prepare for the expanded service in town and to get residents used to seeing the buses. **PAGE 4**

COMING TOMORROW

Brush up on the Hokies

Get ready for game day by learning 26 random facts about Virginia Tech and its football program.



And don't miss ...

Check out the special section in Sunday's paper for tips and tidbits about college sports this fall.

LIVING

'An answer to a prayer'

Dublin Baptist Church now participates in the Angel Food Ministries, a program that provides families with quality food at an affordable cost. **PAGE 6**

OTHER NEWS

Qualities of a leader

Montgomery County School Board members agree on the qualities that those interested in the superintendent post should possess. **PAGE 3**

Transit training

Blacksburg Transit conducted a demonstration on Friday to help prepare for expanded service being offered in Christiansburg in the fall.

Sharla Bardin
sharla.bardin@roanoke.com, 201-1009

CHRISTIANSBURG — The town's streets will soon include some new vehicles.

Blacksburg Transit personnel started learning the lay of the land and different locations in Christiansburg on Friday during a mock service demonstration that was intended to help employees prepare for the expanded service in town.

The service is expected to start in late fall, but an exact date has not been determined. The practice run gave transit employees the chance to run the planned service and make any changes needed before it starts, transit officials said.

The demonstration also was an effort to help make residents aware that they will see more transit vehicles and staff around Christiansburg.

"It's kind of like that first introduction to Blacksburg Transit," said Transit Director Rebecca Martin.

The practice run included trips to different parts of Christiansburg, including a circulator service around the New River Valley Mall that drove by nearby stores, such as Walmart, Target, Home Depot and Kmart.

Transit personnel took part in the service exercise in different ways, such as by serving as drivers, navigators with maps, timers and pretend passengers, transit officials said.

Once the afternoon exercise was over, employees were going to regroup and talk about the day's events and what improvements were needed.

The initial reaction to the mock demonstration was positive.

"I think it's going really well," said Jenny Mills, access supervisor with Blacksburg Transit. "Everybody seems to be doing well."

Transit officials received responses last year that indicated an interest in the service in Christiansburg.

According to a survey Blacksburg Transit had conducted in Christiansburg last year, 60 percent of respondents indicated interest in the system, with 27 percent saying they were "very likely" to use the new Christiansburg routes if they began this year and 33 percent say-



Blacksburg Transit officials talk in the Kmart parking lot in Christiansburg before a practice run Friday. In addition to giving employees the chance to run the planned routes and make any changes needed before it starts, the exercise also was an effort to help make residents aware that they will see transit vehicles and staff around Christiansburg.

JUSTIN MOORE | The Roanoke Times

Spreading the word

Blacksburg Transit representatives will make presentations to groups beginning in September regarding the upcoming service. To schedule a presentation or to find out more information on the upcoming Christiansburg service, contact Fiona Rhodes at frhodes@blacksburg.gov or 961-1185.

For more information about the service, e-mail btransit@blacksburg.gov or visit the Web site at www.btransit.org.

ing they were "somewhat likely."

There were 3,777 people who responded to the survey.

"There is a lot of excitement behind it," Nichole Hair, a planner with the town of Christiansburg, said about the service.

The Christiansburg service is planned to include a downtown loop, which will move riders around the downtown area to destinations such as the courthouse, post office, library and local businesses, Fiona Rhodes, marketing specialist with Blacksburg Transit, wrote in an e-mail.

A mall circulator service will transport riders around the New River Valley Mall and other shops in the Arbor Drive, Conston Avenue,

Market Street, Peppers Ferry Road area.

Another planned service is the flex route that will take residents from their neighborhood to any location in Christiansburg and will operate on a call-ahead basis. The route will not follow a set time schedule, according to Rhodes.

Routes were developed based on resident input from the Christiansburg bus survey in 2008.

New personnel also will be coming on board to help with the expanded service.

The Blacksburg Town Council approved an ordinance earlier this month that authorizes the creation of additional full-time and part-time positions to provide opera-

tions, maintenance and administration support for the additional Christiansburg service, according to a report to the council from Martin.

Blacksburg Transit is a department of the town of Blacksburg.

In May, the Christiansburg Town Council approved its budget, which included local operating and capital funding of \$200,500 to support the transit service expansion in the town.

With federal and state matching funds, Christiansburg's total operating budget for transit is \$401,000, according to Martin's report.

The new positions added for the additional Blacksburg Transit services are two full-time positions, which are a mechanic and financial analyst. There are also 10 new part-time positions that include bus operators, a scheduler and receptionist, according to the report.

The report also states that Blacksburg Transit will be increasing the fleet by 11 buses, four of which are related to the new Christiansburg expanded service. The vehicles for the Christiansburg service are expected to arrive in late fall.

BT fleet builds up to meet demands

RILEY PRENDERGAST
ct news reporter

Adjustment is the word of the day at Virginia Tech. Adjusting to new driving patterns all over campus, adjusting to parking spaces being moved because of new construction, and adjusting to more crowded buses.

The Blacksburg Transit is will offer a temporary plan to help students get to campus on time, adding 13 more buses to the normally schedules routes.

This is simply a trial period for the BT and will last from today, Sept. 1 to Friday, Sept. 11, according to an official press release.

"It's pretty exciting to see a shift from students driving to campus to taking advantage of the BT," said Debbie Freed, alternative transportation manager. "Students have already paid to ride the bus with their transportation fee, so using it really makes a lot of sense."

There has been a drastic increase in the amount of students riding the bus to and from campus.

"There has been about a 17 percent increase in the amount of students taking the bus from this week last year," Freed said, "I think it's partially due to a shift in thinking, from wanting to take your car to hoping on the bus."

For students who are still looking to drive themselves and park on cam-

pus, all of the spots lost in the Prices Forks Road lot have been moved to the Duck Pond lot formerly reserved for campus residents.

Although they have been moved, no commuter spots have been lost. Residents who would have lost spots can now park on the Chicken Hill lot located behind the stadium.

How this shift in student transportation will affect parking permit sales has yet to be seen as parking services will not have all of the final numbers until later next week.

"Students usually take these first couple of weeks to iron out their travel routes, and the buses usually adjust accordingly," Freed said. "But the numbers are much higher this year and they are going to add these buses for a short time until the rush calms down."

Most of the buses will be trippers that will drop off on Perry Street near campus instead of the normal stops on the Drillfield, in an attempt to increase efficiency, according to the BT official press release.

The routes that will be affected with an increase of buses are Hethwood, Toms Creek A/B, Main Street and Patrick Henry.

The BT also recommends trying to leave a window of 45 minutes to get to class on time, or take advantage of the trippers that are now dropping off at Perry Street.

Make Blacksburg transportation a major priority

Today, the Active Commute Celebration on the Drillfield marks the middle of Virginia Cycling and Pedestrian Awareness Week. Cyclists are learning about bike registration and safety, Blacksburg Transit riders are picking up copies of the latest schedule, and U Car Share members are finding out how to register and unlock a vehicle.

In an era with more students bringing their cars and trucks to campus and parking spaces moving farther from academic and residential buildings, we need to do all that we can to reduce traffic and ensure that everyone can find a way to campus and downtown Blacksburg. Not everyone can take a bus to work or ride a bike to school, but we must increase opportunities for those who can and do.

In 2008, the American Public Transportation Association found that a person who forgoes a personal vehicle in favor of a bus or metro pass saves an estimated \$8,700 each year. If more Blacksburg residents ride the bus, fewer vehicles will be on the road, reducing the town's carbon footprint. What's more, a community that promotes walking and cycling is a healthy one.

Blacksburg already has an extensive network of sidewalks and greenways, but we can always do more to expand them and create pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Bike lanes cover much of Blacksburg, but we still lack

a fully connected bike path and "share the road" loop in our historic downtown. Our local elected officials must not only continue public support of BT but also expand service in selected areas, including our commercial centers and student neighborhoods where service nears capacity.

As with any type of growth, Blacksburg must take long-range planning into consideration. Many of my colleagues at Virginia Tech commute from Roanoke, Floyd and Giles. Some take the SmartWay bus as a low-cost way to travel to and from Roanoke, and others search for carpool and van-pool opportunities. They also benefit from RIDE Solutions, a regional ridesharing program developed by the New River Valley Planning District Commission and the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission. Recognizing that the town's workforce lives throughout Southwest Virginia, Blacksburg should also support the expansion of regional Park-and-Rides.

In 1904, the Huckleberry line first connected Blacksburg and Christiansburg by rail. Designed and built in part by an engineering professor and his students, the railroad revolutionized travel in and out of Blacksburg. Although our community has grown, our technology has changed, and our understanding of how this technology impacts our environment has improved, the university and the town still have the talent to find transportation solutions for a new century.

Michael Sutphin
Town Council candidate
'06 alumnus, communication



Final version of Go Anywhere! Christiansburg log developed 10/14/09

Expanded transit service to roll out Nov. 23



The Roanoke Times | File August

Christiansburg officials have requested free fare for Blacksburg Transit service for a limited time to encourage ridership and provide for a smoother start-up, according to an ordinance that the Blacksburg Town Council is expected to consider Nov. 10.

Free fares are planned for a limited time for Blacksburg Transit's new Christiansburg routes.

Sharla Bardin
sharla.bardin@roanoke.com, 381-1669

CHRISTIANSBURG — Residents may want to give the expanded transit service in town a try, especially since plans are to offer free fares for a limited time.

Plans are to begin the expanded Christiansburg routes offered by Blacksburg Transit on Nov. 23 and to allow free fares on those routes between Nov. 23 and Dec. 31, said Transit Director Rebecca Martin.

Martin said the hope is that people will use that time to try out the service.

The Blacksburg Town Council is expected to consider an ordinance Nov. 10 to allow for the initial free fares in Christiansburg. Blacksburg Transit is a department of the town of Blacksburg.

The ordinance states that the town of Christiansburg has requested the free fare transit service for the limited time. The effort is meant to encourage ridership and provide for a smoother start-up, it says.

Prior to the Blacksburg meeting, Martin will make a presentation to the Christiansburg Town Council on Nov. 2 about the fare structure, the routes and the first-day activities for the service.

Martin said officials are in the process of setting fares, which will begin Jan. 1.

In Blacksburg, for example, an adult fare is

50 cents. A one-month pass for an adult is \$8 and a six-month pass is \$37.50, according to the Blacksburg Transit Web site.

Martin said transit personnel have been preparing and are ready for the service in Christiansburg.

In August, Blacksburg Transit conducted a mock service demonstration that was intended to help employees prepare for the service. The practice run also gave transit employees the chance to run the planned service and make any changes needed before it starts, transit officials said then.

The Christiansburg service is planned to include a downtown loop, which will move riders around the downtown area to destinations such as the courthouse, post office, library and local businesses, transit officials have said.

The planned mall circulator service will transport riders around the New River Valley Mall and other shops in the Arbor Drive, Conston Avenue, Market Street and Peppers Ferry Road area.

Another planned service is the flex route that will take residents from their neighborhood to any location in Christiansburg and will operate on a call-ahead basis.

Routes were developed based on resident input from a survey in 2008.

"We've accommodated the major needs that

Continued on next page

From previous page

came back in the survey," said Christiansburg Town Manager Lance Terpenney.

According to the survey, 60 percent of respondents indicated interest in the transit system, with 27 percent saying they were "very likely" to use the new Christiansburg routes if they began this year and 33 percent saying they were "somewhat likely."

There were 3,777 people who responded to the survey.

"I think it's going to be well received," Terpenney said about the transit service in town.

New personnel also will be coming on board with Blacksburg Transit to help with the expanded service.

The Blacksburg Town Council approved an ordinance in August that authorized the creation of

additional full-time and part-time positions to provide operations, maintenance and administration support for the additional Christiansburg service.

The new positions added are two full-time positions, which are a mechanic and financial analyst. There are also 10 new part-time positions that include bus operators, a scheduler and receptionist, according to a report presented to the council at that time.

Martin said the hiring process is under way.

Blacksburg Transit also is increasing the fleet by 11 buses, four of which are related to the new Christiansburg expanded service.

The vehicles for the Christiansburg service are expected to arrive in time for the service to start Nov. 23, Martin said.

Blacksburg Transit sets fares for Christiansburg routes

CHRISTIANSBURG — The town council offered its support Monday to the routes and fares planned for Blacksburg Transit's expanded service in town.

The new Christiansburg routes begin Nov. 23, and riders can use them for free through Dec. 31.

Transit Director Rebecca Martin presented information about the routes and the fees to the council.

The new service includes the "Shopper Express" that will transport riders around the New River Valley Mall, Walmart and other shops in the area. Fares are 50 cents per ride or 25 cents for people 65 and older or with disabilities.

"The Explorer" will move riders downtown to destinations such as the courthouse,

post office, library, government offices and businesses. Fares are 50 cents per ride or 25 cents for people 65 and older or with disabilities.

The "Go Anywhere! Route" will take residents from their neighborhood to any location in Christiansburg. It will operate on a call-ahead basis. Fares will be \$2 round trip plus \$1 for each additional stop. The maximum cost is \$5 per day.

Rates are effective Jan. 1 and children younger than 3 ride free.

The Blacksburg Town Council is expected to consider an ordinance Tuesday to allow for the initial free fares in Christiansburg. Blacksburg Transit is a department of the town of Blacksburg.

— Sharla Bardin

Roanoke Times newspaper advertisements, November 6 – 13, 2009

go anywhere!
christiansburg 11-23-09

<p>Shopper Express Route:</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>For more information on how you can Go Anywhere! in the mall area, visit www.btransit.org or call 540.961.1185.</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>	<p>The Explorer Route:</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>For more information on how you can Go Anywhere! in the central business district, visit www.btransit.org or call 540.961.1185.</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>	<p>Go Anywhere Route:</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>Go Anywhere! in Christiansburg. Taking trip reservations beginning 11/16 - Call 540.443.7111</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>
--	---	---

NEW CLIENT 5 Friday, November 6, 2009

go anywhere!
christiansburg 11-23-09

<p>Shopper Express Route:</p> <p>Start riding 11-23-09</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>For more information on how you can Go Anywhere! in the mall area, visit www.btransit.org or call 540.961.1185.</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>	<p>The Explorer Route:</p> <p>Start riding 11-23-09</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>For more information on how you can Go Anywhere! in the central business district, visit www.btransit.org or call 540.961.1185.</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>	<p>Go Anywhere Route:</p> <p>Start riding 11-23-09</p> <p>YOU ARE HERE</p> <p>Go Anywhere! in Christiansburg. Taking trip reservations beginning 11/16 - Call 540.443.7111</p> <p>BT Blacksburg TRANSIT</p>
---	--	--

NEW CLIENT 7 Friday, November 13, 2009

Phase II Newspaper Advertisement (with stamp), 11/11/09 – 11/13/09

TRANSIT

BT seeks volunteers to help with routes

Blacksburg Transit is looking for volunteers to help riders on the expanded Christiansburg routes scheduled to start Nov. 23.

Volunteers will staff tables at new bus stops and assist riders along the route, according to a news release from the transit service.

To get involved, you must attend a one-hour training session. The next session is at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at Christiansburg Town Hall.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new routes is set for 8:30 a.m. Nov. 23 at the food court entrance of the New River Valley Mall in Christiansburg. The buses begin running at 9 a.m.

Residents can try out the new routes for free through Dec. 31.

Buses will not run on Thanksgiving Day. Service resumes at 4 a.m. Nov. 27 for Black Friday shoppers and at 7 a.m. Saturday for weekend shoppers.

To volunteer, contact Erik Olsen at eolsen@blacksburg.gov or 443-7100, ext. 2601. For more information about Blacksburg Transit, call 961-1185 or to go www.btransit.org.

- Welcome
- FAQs
- Demographics
- Education
- History of Blacksburg
- Hospitals
- Latest News
- Location
- Public Safety
- State and Regional Resources
- Tourism and Economic Development
- Virginia Tech
- Weather

Our Community

News

Blacksburg Transit to Begin Christiansburg Service

Posted Date 11/17/2009

The Town of Blacksburg and the Town of Christiansburg will launch expanded Blacksburg Transit bus service in Christiansburg on Monday, November 23, 2009 at 9 a.m. This expansion of the existing public transportation system includes three separate routes that will allow riders to not only go anywhere within the Town limits of Christiansburg, but also make connections to public transportation in Blacksburg and Roanoke.



"This expansion of the system in Christiansburg, and the connections it provides, is an important step in regional transportation to the citizens of the New River Valley," said Blacksburg Transit Director, Rebecca Martin.

The three routes that comprise the expanded system include: *The Shopper Express*, a circulator around the mall shopping area of Christiansburg; *The Explorer*, a circulator around the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods and the *Go Anywhere! Christiansburg* route which provides service from anywhere to everywhere in Christiansburg.

The *Go Anywhere! Christiansburg* route requires advance reservations. This service provides transportation from the start of the ride (typically in a neighborhood) to a safe location near the rider's destination anywhere within the Town limits of Christiansburg. Blacksburg Transit is now accepting reservations for this route. Call 540-443-7111 to make a reservation or 540-961-1185 for more information.

To launch the new service, and encourage the public to try it out, extended hours and fare free service will be provided through December 31. "We really want the public to try the new system and see how easy it is to get from any point in Christiansburg to anywhere else in Town," said Christiansburg Mayor, Richard Ballengee. "Since it's the holidays, both money and time are tight, so we hope our riders will enjoy the temporary free service."

The hours and routes will also change during the holiday period for the Two Town Trolley Blacksburg which serves as the connection route between the two towns. The revised route will now include major shopping destinations along Main Street in Blacksburg, allowing citizens of both towns to shop and still attend events in Blacksburg.

"We really want people to have fun and be excited about this new service," said Martin. "On the first day of service volunteers will be stationed at the bus stops from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., to acquaint riders with the system and give away gifts from area retailers." Q99 will host a live remote from the Mall, and riders will also have the opportunity to play the BT Passport game. The more stops a rider visits on that day, the more stamps they get in their passport and the more chances they will then have to win raffle prizes drawn every 30 minutes. The grand prize drawing will be held at 1:30 p.m. and riders do not need to be present to win.

On Friday, November 27th service will begin at 4 a.m., to allow the public to take advantage of the early shopping and sales following Thanksgiving. Blacksburg Transit will give away reusable shopping bags filled with coupons and gifts while they last.

For more information on the routes and times of service visit www.btransit.org or call 540-961-1185.

go anywhere!
BT
christiansburg 11·23·09

Christiansburg Bus Service

begins

Monday, November 23rd

Ride the bus from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
for chances to win prizes!

Drawings to be held throughout the day at
the NRV Mall,
listen to Q99 for more information or
call 540.961.1185

BT Blacksburg
TRANSIT

**FARE FREE
UNTIL
JAN 1, 2010**

Roanoke Times, NRV Current, First-Day of Service ads, 11/20/09 – 11/22/09

NRV CURRENT

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 21, 2009

newrivervalley.com

THE ROANOKE TIMES



MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times
Carlton English, an operations supervisor with Blacksburg Transit, exits the driver's seat of a new 20-passenger bus that will be used for the service's expanded routes in Christiansburg.

Ready to roll

Blacksburg Transit's new bus service for Christiansburg residents starts Monday. Volunteers will be on hand to help riders along the way. PAGE 4

COMING TOMORROW

Taking care of business

As Blacksburg's First & Main shopping center completes its first year in business, there is uncertainty within the ranks of merchants about what the second year will hold.

LIVING

Food bank to relocate

The owners of Spiritual Roots Ministry Food Bank in Blacksburg must find a new location for the pantry by January because its current property may have a buyer. PAGE 6



OTHER NEWS

Nonprofit's new location

Safe Haven Child Visitation Centers — a nonprofit that gives parents a place for supervised visitation or to exchange children — opens a Christiansburg site. PAGE 3

tuesday | business | wednesday | education | thursday | weekend | friday | sports | TODAY FOCUS ON NEW RIVER LIVING | sunday | community

NRV Current, front page, November 21, 2009

All aboard in Christiansburg

The expanded bus routes in town start Monday and mark the first major expansion of Blacksburg Transit.

Sharla Bardin
sharla.bardin@roanoke.com, 301-1669

CHRISTIANSBURG — The field trip isn't scheduled until next week, but the excitement is already present.

Children from the My Second Home day care are eager about traveling on a new bus service to take them to the Christiansburg library, said Sabrina Davidson-Ratcliffe, owner of the day care.

"They are really excited. Some of them have never rode on a bus," Davidson-Ratcliffe said. "I think it's going to be a lot of fun for them."

Five children and two adults from the day care on Tower Road will be taking advantage of one of the new routes that Blacksburg Transit is starting in the community Monday. It marks the first major expansion for BT, which is a department of the town of Blacksburg, said Transit Director Rebecca Martin.

The service also reflects a two-year planning process to make it a reality in Christiansburg. The effort has included plotting the new routes, hiring personnel and publicizing the expanded service.

The marketing has included community presentations from transit staff, such as with civic and social services organizations, as well as mailings about the routes, advertisements and distributing the new route schedules.

"It's really exciting to see it all come together," Martin said.

Riders can use the Christiansburg routes for free through Dec. 31, a move that the Christiansburg and Blacksburg town councils have supported as a way to help entice people to ride.

That free tryout did catch the interest of Davidson-Ratcliffe. Her day care group will be using the new "Go Anywhere!" service that operates on a call-ahead basis and will take riders from their neighborhood to any location in Christiansburg.

Davidson-Ratcliffe said using the bus service will help the group save on gas and from having to take separate vehicles.

"This way they can all be together," she said. "I think it will be a lot



Above: Harland Brown, an operations supervisor with Blacksburg Transit, adjusts a foldable child's seat in the front row of a new 20-passenger bus. Below: The new bus on the BT's "Go Anywhere!" route is decorated with a wrap featuring scenes of Christiansburg and also features overhead baggage storage and leather hand straps.

MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times



and more affordable for people," said Christiansburg Town Manager Lance Terpenney.

A service survey

Terpenney said for several years he has talked with Martin about the possibility of BT expanding into Christiansburg beyond the existing two-town trolley service.

"With two-town trolley between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, the citizens were probably going to expect or at least anticipate more opportunities for mass transit," he said.

Terpenney said he also thinks the rise in gas prices two years ago got people thinking about ways they could save money on commutes.

BT and town officials then decided to find out Christiansburg residents' interest in services and their travel patterns by sending out a survey in

of fun."

She estimates the day care will use the service "at least three times a month if not more" once the free period ends.

The other routes offered are the "Shopper Express" that services the New River Valley Mall, Walmart

and other shops in the area and "The Explorer" that travels downtown to destinations such as the courthouse, post office, library, government offices and businesses.

"I hope it makes commuting and shopping or just getting from one place to another ... more convenient

Continued on next page

NRV CURRENT A © 2009 Blacksburg



Try these routes for free

Expanded Blacksburg Transit bus routes through Christiansburg begin Monday. Riders will be able to hop on one of the three new routes for free through the end of the year.

The new service includes the "Shopper Express" that will transport riders around the big shopping areas. (Starting Jan. 1, fares will be 50 cents per ride or 25 cents for people 65 and older or with disabilities.)

"The Explorer" will move riders downtown to destinations. (Starting Jan. 1, fares will be 50 cents per ride or 25 cents for people 65 and older or with disabilities.)

The "Go Anywhere" service will take residents from their neighborhood to any location in Christiansburg. It will operate on a call-ahead basis. (Starting Jan. 1, fares will be \$2 round trip plus \$1 for each additional stop. The maximum cost is \$5 per day.)

Children younger than 3 always ride free.



From previous page

2008. There were 3,777 people who responded to the survey.

According to the survey, 68 percent of respondents indicated interest in the transit system, with 27 percent saying they were "very likely" to use the new Christiansburg routes if they began this year and 33 percent saying they were "somewhat likely."

The new routes that have been developed for Christiansburg are based on resident input from the survey.

"It's really a good partnership between the town of Blacksburg and the town of Christiansburg to make this happen," Blacksburg Town Manager Matt Venzel said earlier this month.

Martin said transit expansion before now has involved adding routes and adjusting routes in Blacksburg, while the new Christiansburg routes represent the transit department's "first major expansion" in its 26 years of operation.

Making it happen

The undertaking has involved bringing in new personnel and buses for the service, plotting the routes and a mock service demonstration in August to help employees prepare for the service.

The funding for the expanded service has involved a combination of federal and local money.

In May, the Christiansburg Town Council approved its budget, which

included local operating and capital funding of \$200,000 to support the service. With federal and state matching funds, Christiansburg's total operating budget for transit is \$480,000.

New employees also are coming on board for the work. The new positions involve two full-time positions, which are a mechanic and financial analyst, and 10 new part-time positions that include bus operators, a scheduler and receptionist.

Only the financial analyst position remains open now, and Martin said the hope is to fill it soon.

There are also four buses for the new expanded service.

Another part of the expansion is helping residents better understand the service.

About 50 community and transit staff volunteers will work Monday to help offer information about the routes at more than 15 Christiansburg bus stops during the day, as well as riding on the buses to better explain the service.

The next step with the expanded service is for ongoing evaluation of the ridership on the routes and to survey riders to gauge whether the routes are meeting their needs, Martin said.

Tompson said he thinks the service in Christiansburg will be a success based on what town officials have already seen with the interest in the 2008 survey.

"I think it's probably going to expand even more. I think it's going to be very popular," he said.

go **anywhere!**
BT
christiansburg 11·23·09

**Christiansburg Bus Service
Service starts at 4 a.m.
Friday 11/27 and 7 a.m.
Saturday 11/28**

Fare Free until Jan 1st, 2010!
Free shopping bags with coupons, gifts and prizes...Friday only, while supplies last.
call 540.961.1185 for more information

**BT Blacksburg
TRANSIT**

**FARE FREE
UNTIL
JAN 1, 2010**

NRV CURRENT **3** Wednesday, November 25, 2009

Roanoke Times, NRV Current, Black Friday Service ads, 11/24/09-11/27/09

NRV CURRENT

WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 20, 2010

newrivervalley.com

THE ROANOKE TIMES



Rodney Quesenberry gets off a Blacksburg Transit bus on Main Street in Christiansburg. Quesenberry says he loves the new service. MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times

Ridership results are in

Blacksburg Transit started three new Christiansburg routes in November and the average ridership during the first six weeks of service reflects 76 people per day or 458 riders per week, according to a recent report. **PAGE 4**

Officials encouraged by new bus routes' numbers

Three new routes in Christiansburg saw an average 76 people a day for their first six weeks.

Sharla Bardin
sharla.bardin@roanoke.com, 381-1669

CHRISTIANSBURG— Al Witherspoon credits Blacksburg Transit for making his travels not only easier but also more pleasant.

"It's more efficient. It's more economical," the 52-year-old said last week while riding one of the new Christiansburg routes. "The bus gives me time to think and relax."

Blacksburg Transit started the three Christiansburg routes in November and during the first six weeks they carried an average of 76 people per day or 458 riders per week, according to a report from Transit Director Rebecca Martin.

Martin describes the service as a success and said she thinks ridership will continue to grow throughout the year as the weather becomes warmer and people have the chance to try the system.

Officials from both towns have touted the expanded service as a good partnership between the two towns and BT, which is a department of the town of Blacksburg, and a way to increase alternative transportation services to residents.

Still, Christiansburg Councilman Ernie Wade said Tuesday he is taking a "wait-and-see approach" to the service.

Wade expressed concerns in May about funding for the service because he said the town needed to tighten its belt during the recession.

Now, he said, "I think we've got to try it for a year and see what kind of ridership we'll get and see what the costs are going to be."

Residents can try the service for free until Jan. 31.

The Christiansburg Town Council in May adopted a \$36 million budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, including funding to expand Blacksburg Transit bus service in town.

Wade voted "no" to the council's adoption of the budget, citing his concerns about the town's finances.

The funding for the expanded transit service has involved a combination of federal and local money.

The town's budget included local operating and capital funding



Al Witherspoon (right) of Blacksburg looks over bus schedule information while riding Blacksburg Transit's "The Explorer" route on Main Street in Christiansburg. "It's more efficient. It's more economical. The bus gives me time to think and relax," Witherspoon says. Also riding the bus are Rodney Quesenberry (left) and James Anders, both of Christiansburg.

MATT CENTRY | The Roanoke Times

of \$200,500 to support the service. With federal and state matching funds, Christiansburg's total operating budget for transit is \$401,000.

The undertaking has involved bringing in new personnel and buses for the service, plotting the routes and a mock service demonstration in August to help employees prepare for the service.

So far, the "Go Anywhere!" route has been the most popular with 1,119 riders, according to Martin's report. The service operates on a call-ahead basis and takes residents from their neighborhoods to any location in Christiansburg.

Michael Mayo is one of the drivers for the route and said people are using the service for such things as doctors appointments, grocery shopping or to visit relatives and friends in town.

Mayo, who also drives another route, said the transit services are getting good reaction from riders.

"Everything's been very positive,"

Mayo said. "It gives them freedom to get anywhere in town that they need to get to."

The "Shopper Express" had 1,111 riders. The route transports riders around the New River Valley Mall, Walmart and other shops in the area.

"The Explorer" had 523 riders. The service travels downtown to destinations such as the courthouse, post office, library, government offices and businesses.

Last week, Jeanette Babus, a driver for "The Explorer" route, had a handful of riders on board, including Witherspoon.

Witherspoon lives in Blacksburg and said he does not drive anymore because of a medical condition. So, he uses Blacksburg Transit.

Last week, he had an appointment with an eye doctor in Christiansburg and was using "The Explorer" route

Continued on next page

By the numbers

A report from Blacksburg Transit Director Rebecca Martin breaks down ridership for BT's three new Christiansburg routes for the first six weeks:

- **Go Anywhere! 1,119 riders**
The service operates on a call-ahead basis and takes residents from their neighborhoods to any location in Christiansburg.
- **Shopper Express: 1,111 riders**
The route transports riders around the New River Valley Mall, Walmart and other shops in the area.
- **The Explorer: 523 riders**
The service travels downtown to destinations such as the courthouse, post office, library, government offices and businesses.

NRV Current, page 4, January 20, 2010

From previous page

to try to get back to the New River Valley Mall, where he was then trying to connect to a route to take him to Blacksburg.

Witherspoon couldn't find a transit connection, other than the call-ahead route, to get from "The Explorer" route to the mall. After getting off the bus, a motorist who was driving toward the mall offered Witherspoon a ride to the mall so he could get a transit connection to Blacksburg.

Also riding on the same bus as Witherspoon was Rodney Quesenberry, 40, of Christiansburg who was using the service to get to downtown and to the library. His vehicle is in need of repairs so he was using transit to get around.

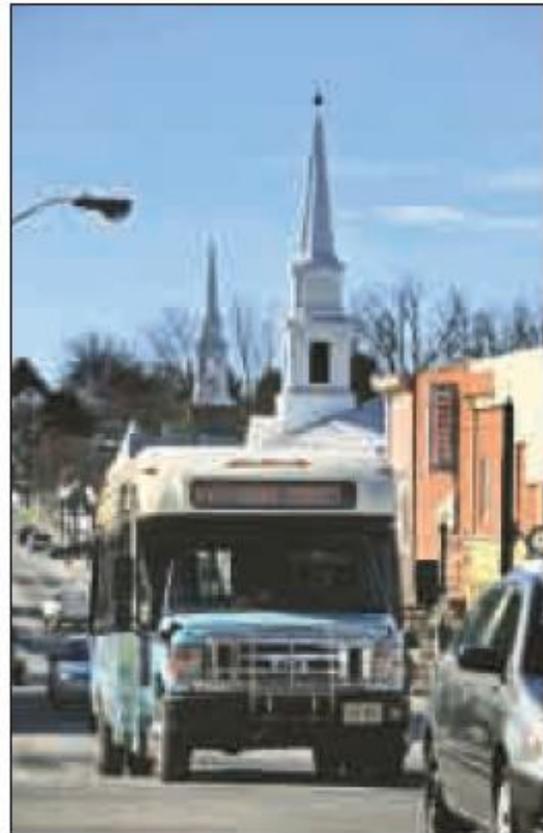
Quesenberry said he thinks the service is good to have in town but sees some areas where it could improve.

"I'm not sure if everybody really knows about it," he said.

He said more advertising could get the word out and he said he also thinks a route should extend to the Christiansburg Recreation Center, a suggestion that was also mentioned by other riders that day.

"All in all, I think this is good," Quesenberry said about the transit services in town.

The transit expansion in the town grew out of responses to a 2008 survey of



MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times

Blacksburg Transit driver Jeanette Babus steers a bus down Main Street in Christiansburg. Babus drives "The Explorer" route, which travels to downtown destinations.

residents. There were 3,777 people who responded to the survey and a majority of respondents indicated interest in the transit system. The new routes that have been developed for Christiansburg are based on resident input from the survey.

Blog Articles

- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). October 10, 2008 – Town Council Notes.
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/oct-7-town-council-notes.aspx>
- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). October 30, 2008. Expand Your Transportation Options.
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/expand-your-transportation-options.aspx>
- Stipes, B. November 24, 2008. Get on the Bus Gus. Advance Christiansburg (blog). On-line at:
<http://www.advancechristiansburg.com/advancechristiansburg/2008/11/24/get-on-the-bus-gus.html>
- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). April 9, 2009. Bus Service Recommendations.
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/bus-service-recommendations.aspx>
- Lindstrom, C. May 10, 2009. DepotDazed (Blog). Christiansburg, VA Town Council Worksession - Bus Route. <http://www.depotdazed.com/depotdazed/christiansburg-va-town-council-worksession-bus.aspx>
- Lindstrom, C. May 10, 2009. DepotDazed (Blog). Christiansburg Bus Service: People and Council Failure will it never end?
<http://www.depotdazed.com/depotdazed/christiansburg-bus-service-people-and-council.aspx>
- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). May 17, 2009 –Fair Fare.
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/foia-open-government-taxes-budget-council-mayor.aspx>
- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). May 18, 2009. Pennywise, Pound Foolish?
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/pennywise-pound-foolish.aspx>
- Think Christiansburg! (Blog). May 23, 2009. Town Bus Approved??
<http://www.thinkchristiansburg.com/confoundedinchristiansburg/town-bus-approved.aspx>

Appendix D: An Overview of Recommendations with Survey Highlights



Christiansburg Bus Service: An Overview of Recommendations with Survey Highlights

April 7, 2009

Blacksburg Transit, a Department of the Town of Blacksburg

Document Purpose: This document outlines proposals for expanded service in the Town of Christiansburg and highlights findings from the Christiansburg Bus Survey that supports routing recommendations. The purpose of the survey was: 1) to ensure that the public transit needs of citizens were met, by soliciting input from Christiansburg residents, and 2) to administer a wide-reaching survey by U.S. Mail to get the word out that expanded service was “Around the Corner” and that Blacksburg Transit is making plans based on the input received. Six proposed routes are described.

Survey Administration: The 22-item survey was administered by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research and focused on items involving destinations, travel patterns, and scheduling, as well as demographic and preference information.

The citizens have called for expanded service within the Town of Christiansburg and to better connect to other areas. Expansion of bus service has long, well-documented support in the Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan¹, the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation 2030 Plan², Town of Blacksburg Comprehensive 2046 Plan³, and other specific plans for Blacksburg Transit, the New River Valley, and Virginia Tech.

These plans and the response by citizens justify increased service, so that more people can enjoy the benefits of public transit, including saving money for citizens⁴ and having alternative public transportation that is safe⁵ and energy efficient.⁶

Survey Demographics: As an overview of the results the following includes some demographic information about the respondents:

1. 57% of respondents were female
2. Respondents ranged from 18 years to 65 or more years old.
3. 60% of respondents are married
4. For the number of people in the household, 49% are between 25-50 years old, 25% are under 16, and 25% are over 65 years old.
5. 56% of respondents work full-time, 29% retired, 11% work part-time, 8% student
6. 34% of households reported an annual income level of \$40,000 or less
7. 95% of respondents have a driver’s license

¹ Town of Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan (2003). Available on-line at <http://www.christiansburg.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=68>

² Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area 2030 Transportation Plan (2005, November): Available on-line at: <http://www.montva.com/departments/mpo/downloads/bcmfinal2030techreport.pdf>

³ Blacksburg 2006-2046 Comprehensive Plan. On-line: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/Index.aspx?page=269>

⁴ [Despite Dramatic Dip In Gas Prices, Public Transit Users Save Almost \\$9,000 Per Household Annually](#), American Public Transportation Association, November 6, 2008.

⁵ [Distribution of Transportation Fatalities by Mode \(Table 2-4\)](#), Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Sept. 5, 2007

⁶ [Public Transportation Reduces Greenhouse Gases and Conserves Energy](#). American Public Transportation Association, February, 2008.

Survey Highlights: The following includes some additional highlights of findings from the survey:

1. An excellent survey response-rate was achieved⁷, with over 38% of households responding (3,777 completed surveys). This represents at least 8,876 Town residents, out of approximately 20,000 living in the Town.^{8, 9}
2. The survey revealed that 58% of responses were from the central portion of the Town, 31% percent were from households in the western portion, and 9% were from the eastern portion. This indicates that all portions of the Town were represented by the survey.

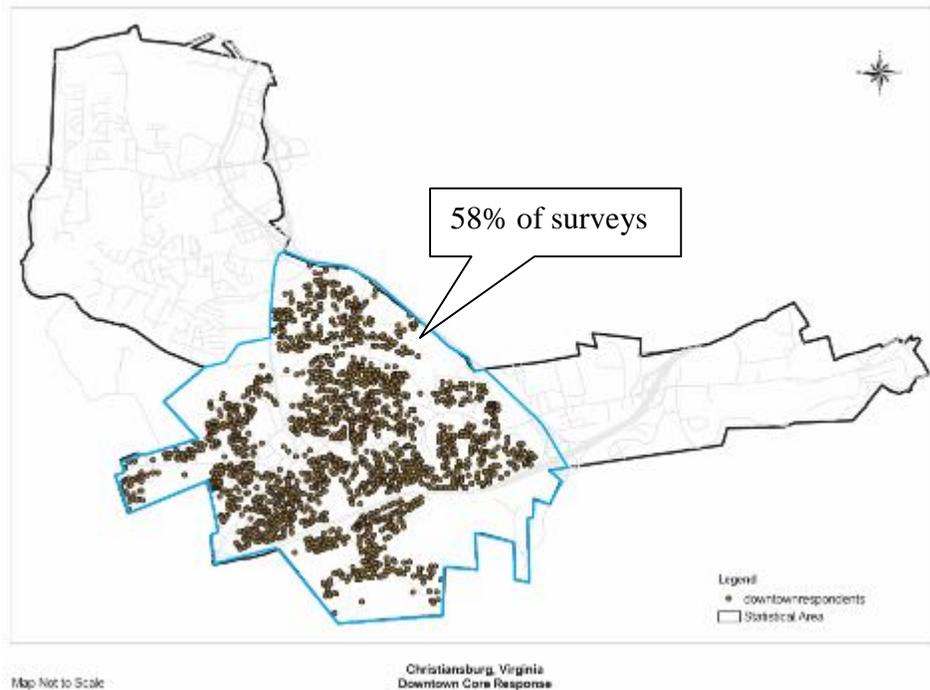


Figure 1. Map illustrating that 58% of surveys were from the Central Zone of Town

3. The survey revealed that 45% of respondents indicated shopping was the number one activity that they would most likely use a bus for. Other activities included concerts/sporting events (41%), errands and appointments (37%), transportation to/from work (36%), and dining out (21%).

The top destinations near downtown were #1: Kroger/CVS, #7: Downtown, and #11: the Library. The top destinations within and outside of Town are:

⁷ Kaplowitz, M.D., Hadlock, T. D., & Levine, R. 2004. "A Comparison of Web and Mail Survey Response Rates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68 (1):94-101. A 56-item 15-minute survey was mailed and had a response rate of 31.5%; email surveys (with advance notification postcard) had a rate of 29.7%.

⁸ Average household size is 2.35 people according to Christiansburg demographics information from NationalRelocation.com. Calculations were based on 3,777 surveys.

⁹ According to Christiansburg.org.

Destinations within Town	Percent
Kroger/CVS	10.8%
Wal-Mart	10.3%
Recreation Center	9.8%
NRV Mall	8.5%
Spradlin Farms	8.3%
Lowe's/K-Mart	7.7%
Downtown	7.4%
High School Area	7.3%
Arbor Drive Area	5.5%
Food Lion Area	5.1%
Library Area	4.7%
Motor Mile	4.5%
Cambria Area	4.1%
Wade's	3.1%
S. Christiansburg	2.7%
Middle School	2.5%
County Gov Ctr	2.4%

Destinations Outside Town	Percent
Blacksburg	6%
VT	5%
Radford	4%
MR Hospital	3%
Carilion Med. Ctr	3%
Roanoke	3%
Salem	2%
CRC	2%

Additional interesting survey results included:

4. For the survey item asking what is the longest reasonable walking time to get to a bus stop, a total of 66% would walk 4 minutes or more to get to a stop. In summary, 17% indicated 0-3 minutes, 28% indicated 4-5 minutes, 20% indicated 6-10 minutes, 8% indicated 11-15 minutes, and 10% indicated 15 or more minutes.
5. 60% of respondents indicated they were very likely or somewhat likely to use a bus system in Christiansburg.
6. For daily commute, 40% of respondents commute to Blacksburg and 32% commute within Christiansburg; 9% commute to Radford, 6% commute to Roanoke, 4% commute to Salem, 2% commute to Dublin, and 1% commute to Pulaski.
7. Households with incomes less than \$40,000 are almost twice as likely to ride the bus as compared to households with incomes greater than \$40,000
8. Respondents that mentioned colleges included VT (49%), NRCC-NRV (17%), RU (15%), NRCC-Dublin (10%), and VCOM (9%).
9. Top full-time employers included VT (18.6%), Montgomery County Public Schools (4.9%), self-employed (3%), RU (2.4%), Moog (1.7%), Carilion (1.6%), Volvo (1.5%), MR Hospital (1.4%), TOC (1.2%), Corning (1%), Stellar one (1%)
10. Important factors when deciding to ride the bus are safety (91%), on-time service (89%), low bus fare (89%), convenient times (88%), save gas money (87%).

Current Service provided by Blacksburg Transit: Blacksburg Transit provides service to 2.6 million riders annually, and serves the population dense portions of Blacksburg with routes in Blacksburg and the Two Town Trolley (TTT) routes that connect towns. The TTT-Blacksburg provides service between the Town of Blacksburg and the Town Christiansburg with destinations in Christiansburg including two stops at the New River

Valley Mall and Wal-Mart. The purpose of this route is to move riders between the two towns and provides service for shopping and entertainment. Ridership is high with average daily ridership for Monday-Thursday of approximately 150; Friday and Saturday average daily ridership is between 500 and 600. Minor proposed changes for the TTT-Blacksburg include adding service to the Arbor Drive area.

The TTT-Christiansburg provides hourly service between 12:45 and 6 p.m. from the New River Valley Mall area to the Montgomery County Government Center at 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Daily ridership averages between 30 and 50 riders per day; in contrast the average HOURLY rate on other routes is over 40 passengers PER HOUR. Residents within the central core of the Town are not served well by this route because it does not connect Christiansburg town neighborhoods, has limited hours, and the route is lengthy (about a 1 hour loop). Further the route does not serve downtown residents or downtown shopping areas, and has limited service to other Town zones.

Proposed New Routes

Three proposed routing zones include a north, central, and east zone, with 6 proposed routes to serve the Town. A new Christiansburg Downtown Loop is proposed to replace the current TTT-Christiansburg route. This is a re-invented service, that is a self-sustaining, independent bus route. It serves the majority of residents, and is based on both the Town and regional comprehensive plans and the survey data. The focus on downtown will enable riders to use the bus for shopping, errands, appointments, and access to government facilities downtown from many nearby neighborhoods within Christiansburg.

The exact route will be determined after Town Council reviews our recommendations. A proposed route would service the core of downtown. The route assumes a 2-block buffer for minor deviations to pick up/drop off riders, and assumes a 10-minute walking buffer, since a total of 83% of respondents would walk 4 minutes or more to get to a stop.

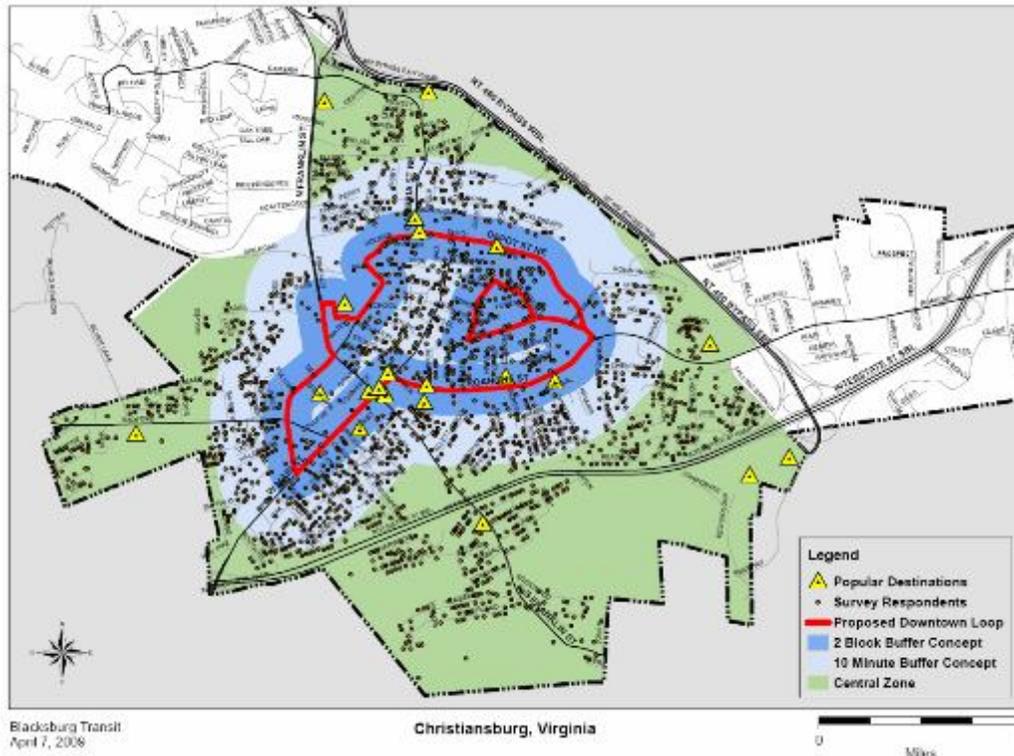


Figure 2. Proposed Christiansburg Downtown Loop

A Christiansburg Flex Route is a new concept, proposed to provide service within all three zones of Christiansburg. A Flex route best serves an area such as Christiansburg that has a relative low population density level. It is neighborhood-focused, connecting neighborhood hubs to commercial hubs. The service is customer-driven, in that customers call ahead 24-hours in advance to request service between hubs. The service is also very flexible, allowing for future expansion, is affordable, and cost-effective.

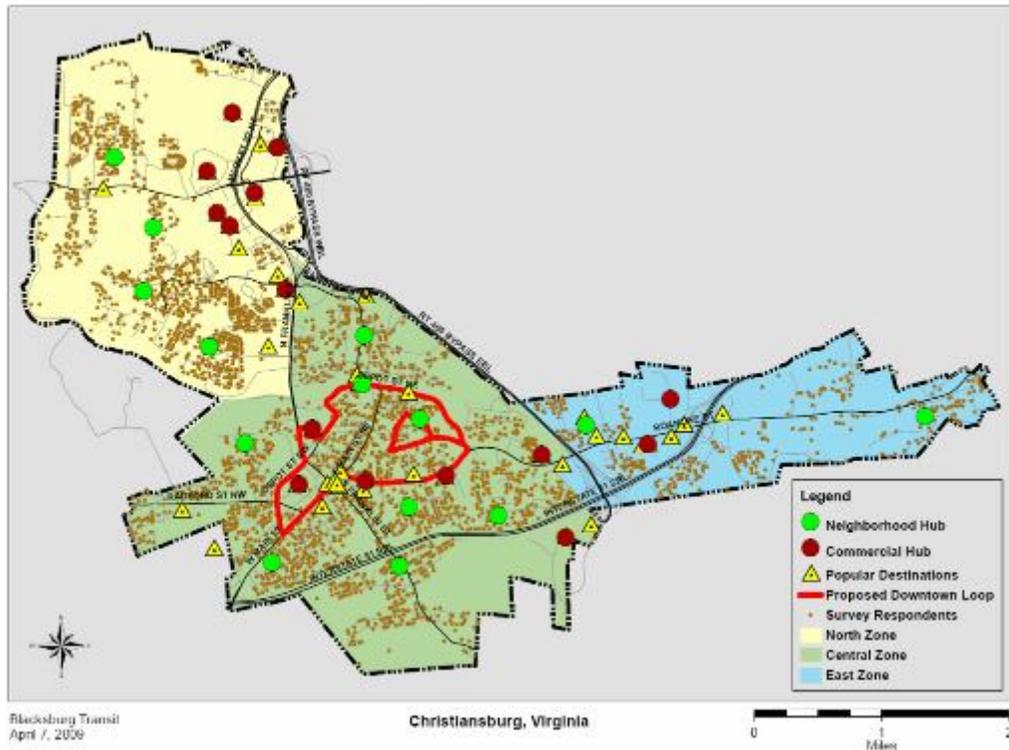


Figure 3. Proposed Flex Route and Service Area showing population destinations, commercial and neighborhood hubs, and Town Routing zones

A Mall Commercial Circulator a new route proposed to provide service to link to the other proposed BT routes including the Downtown Loop, Flex Route, as well as the existing Two Town Trolley-Blacksburg (TTT-B) route. A minor change will be made to facilitate smooth operations and connections between routes. The Mall Commercial Circulator takes advantage of commercial hubs and provides frequent service (e.g., every 20 minutes) for customers. Other advantages include offering a safe way to cross the road (Pepper’s Ferry and North Franklin), and connecting shopping areas such as the NRV Mall, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Spradlin Farms, and the Arbor Drive area (e.g., DMV, Super Bowl, Post Office).

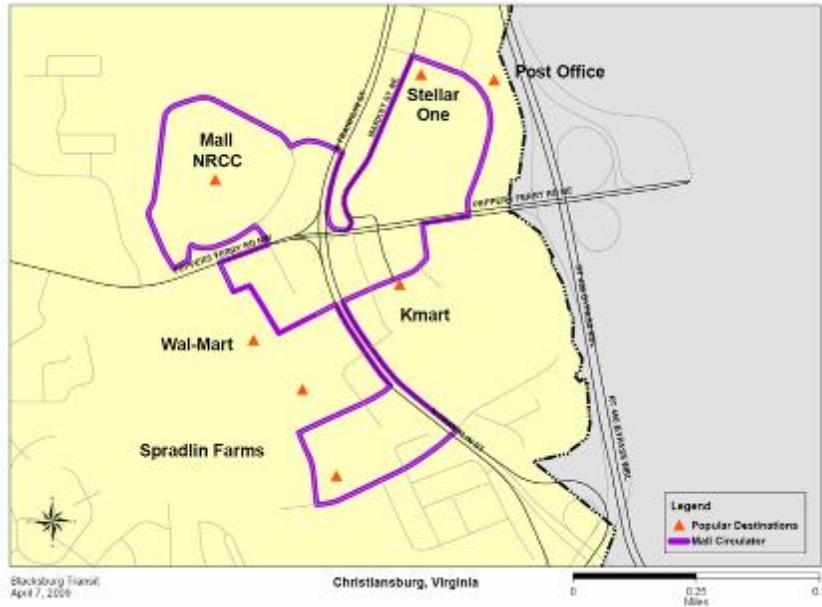


Figure 4. Proposed Mall Commercial Mall Circulator

To accommodate commuting citizens within the Town of Christiansburg, and those that commute daily to the Town of Blacksburg, two commuter routes are proposed. Survey data revealed that on a daily basis, 40% of respondents commute to Blacksburg, and 32% commute within Christiansburg. This would operate similar to a “van pool” concept in that potential customers or a group of customers would contact BT and put in a request for service to a particular employer or area where several employers are grouped.

Serving Citizens

The purpose of expanded service is to better serve citizens within the Town of Christiansburg. This document has included proposed routing with survey highlights.

Appendix E: Christiansburg Bus Survey



2008 Christiansburg Bus Survey

Administered By the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research

The Town of Christiansburg is interested in ensuring that the public transit needs of the citizens of Christiansburg are met. To assist the Town in achieving this goal, it is important that we receive input from all Christiansburg residents. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of public transportation planning. Thank you for your help.

1. Please indicate how often you go to each of the destinations below.

	Less Than One Time Per Month	1-3 Times Per Month	1-3 Times Per Week	4-7 Times Per Week
-----Please Check One For Each Location-----				
a. Arbor Drive Area (U.S. Post Office, DMV)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Christiansburg High School Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Christiansburg Kroger/CVS Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Christiansburg Recreation Center Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Downtown Christiansburg Area (Post Office, Courthouse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Lowe's/K-Mart/Starbucks Area (Arbor View Plantation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Montgomery County Government Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. New River Mall Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Shelor Motor Mile Area (East Roanoke Street)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. South Christiansburg Area (Summit Ridge Road)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Spradlin Farms Shopping Area (Target, Barnes & Noble)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Areas (Outside Christiansburg)				
l. Montgomery Regional Hospital Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Other Blacksburg Locations (Not on VT Campus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Radford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Roanoke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Salem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Virginia Tech Campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Are there any other local areas not listed above that you go to on a regular basis? If so, please write the location names and street names (if known) in the spaces provided below.

3. How likely would you be to ride a bus to any of the locations listed in questions 1 and 2?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Not at all likely
- Don't know

4. For what activities below would you be most likely to use a bus?

(Please Check All Response Options That Apply)

- Transportation to/from employment
- Transportation to/from school
- Errands and appointments (leaving from home)
- Errands and appointments (leaving from work/school)
- Dining out
- Social visits
- Shopping
- Family activities such as transportation to childcare or children's school related activities
- Special local events such as concerts or sporting events
- Other activities (please specify any other activities: _____)

5. What do you consider to be the longest reasonable walking time from your home to the nearest bus stop?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Less than 2 minutes
- 2-3 Minutes
- 4-5 minutes
- 6-10 minutes
- 11 to 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- Don't know

6. What is your experience with using a bus for transportation?

(Please Check All Response Options That Apply)

- I have never used a bus for transportation
- I have used the Blacksburg Transit (BT) bus for travel within Christiansburg
- I have used the Blacksburg Transit (BT) bus for travel within Blacksburg
- I have used the Blacksburg Transit (BT) bus for travel between Christiansburg and Blacksburg
- I have used the Smart Way bus to travel to or from Roanoke
- I have used another bus elsewhere

**7. What features do you feel are important to have at a bus stop?
(Please Check All Response Options That Apply)**

- A bench for seating
- A covered shelter
- Bus schedule information
- Lighting
- Recycling can
- Sidewalks
- Trash can
- Other (please specify features you feel are important to have at a bus stop: _____)

8. If a bus was available, please indicate below when you would be most likely to use it.

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		-----Please Check All Times That Apply-----						
a.	5:01 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	6:01 a.m. - 7:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	7:01 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	8:01 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	9:01 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	10:01 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	11:01 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	12:01 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i.	1:01 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	2:01 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k.	3:01 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l.	4:01 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m.	5:01 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n.	6:01 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o.	7:01 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p.	8:01 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q.	9:01 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r.	10:01 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s.	11:01 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t.	12:01 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u.	1:01 a.m. - 2:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v.	2:01 a.m. - 3:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
w.	3:01 a.m. - 4:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
x.	4:01 a.m. - 5:00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Please indicate how important each of the factors below is when deciding to ride the bus.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not at All Important
-----Please Check One For Each Factor-----				
a. Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Low bus fare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Save on gas money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Convenience of not having to drive or park vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Bus service always on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Bus service offered at times convenient to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Avoiding traffic or having to drive in traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Helping environment by cutting down on vehicle use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Nice weather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Other (specify factor(s): _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What is your current job and education status? This information will be used to identify areas for potential bus stops and routes.

(Please Check All Response Options That Apply)

Employed Full-time

Name of your employer: _____

Your employer's street address or nearest intersection: _____

Name of the city/town where you are employed: _____

Employed Part-time

Name of your employer: _____

Your employer's street address: _____

Name of the city/town where you are employed: _____

Currently taking classes or pursuing a college degree

Name of your school _____

Name of the city/town where you attend school _____

Not Employed Currently

Retired

11. How likely would you be to use a commuter parking lot (Park and Ride) where you would park and then take a bus or shuttle for a daily trip?

(Please Check One Response Option)

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Somewhat unlikely

Not at all likely

Don't know

12. Please write the street name and general area where you would most like to see a commuter parking lot (Park and Ride) located? _____

13. If a Christiansburg bus system was available in the next year, how likely would you be to use it?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely (please specify why: _____)
- Not at all likely (please specify why: _____)
- Don't know

14. What types of assistance below would you use to ride the bus?

(Please Check All Response Options That Apply)

- Trip planning assistance
- Large print format schedules and bus information
- Physical assistance with getting on and off buses
- Getting on the bus with a mobility device such as a wheelchair
- Other special needs (please specify the type of other assistance needed: _____)
- Would need no special type of assistance to ride the bus

15. Do you have a valid driver's license now?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

16. What gender are you?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Female
- Male

17. What is your current age?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- 18-24 years of age
- 25-34 years of age
- 35-44 years of age
- 45-54 years of age
- 55-64 years of age
- 65 years of age or older

18. What is your current marital status?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Single, Never Married
- Divorced, Separated
- Widowed
- Married

19. How many people in your household are in each of the age categories below?

Please write the total number of people (including you) beside each category and leave the space blank if there are no people in your household in that age category.

- ___ Under 16 years of age
- ___ Age 16-24
- ___ Age 25-50
- ___ Age 51-65
- ___ Over age 65

20. What was your total household income last year (2007) before taxes?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Less than \$11,000.00
- \$11,000.00 to \$20,000.00
- \$21,000.00 to \$40,000.00
- \$41,000.00 to \$60,000.00
- \$61,000.00 to \$80,000.00
- \$81,000.00 to \$100,000.00
- \$101,000.00 to \$120,000.00
- More than \$120,000.00

21. What is your current housing status?

(Please Check One Response Option)

- Own or buying a home
- Rent a home or apartment
- Other housing arrangement (Please specify arrangement: _____)

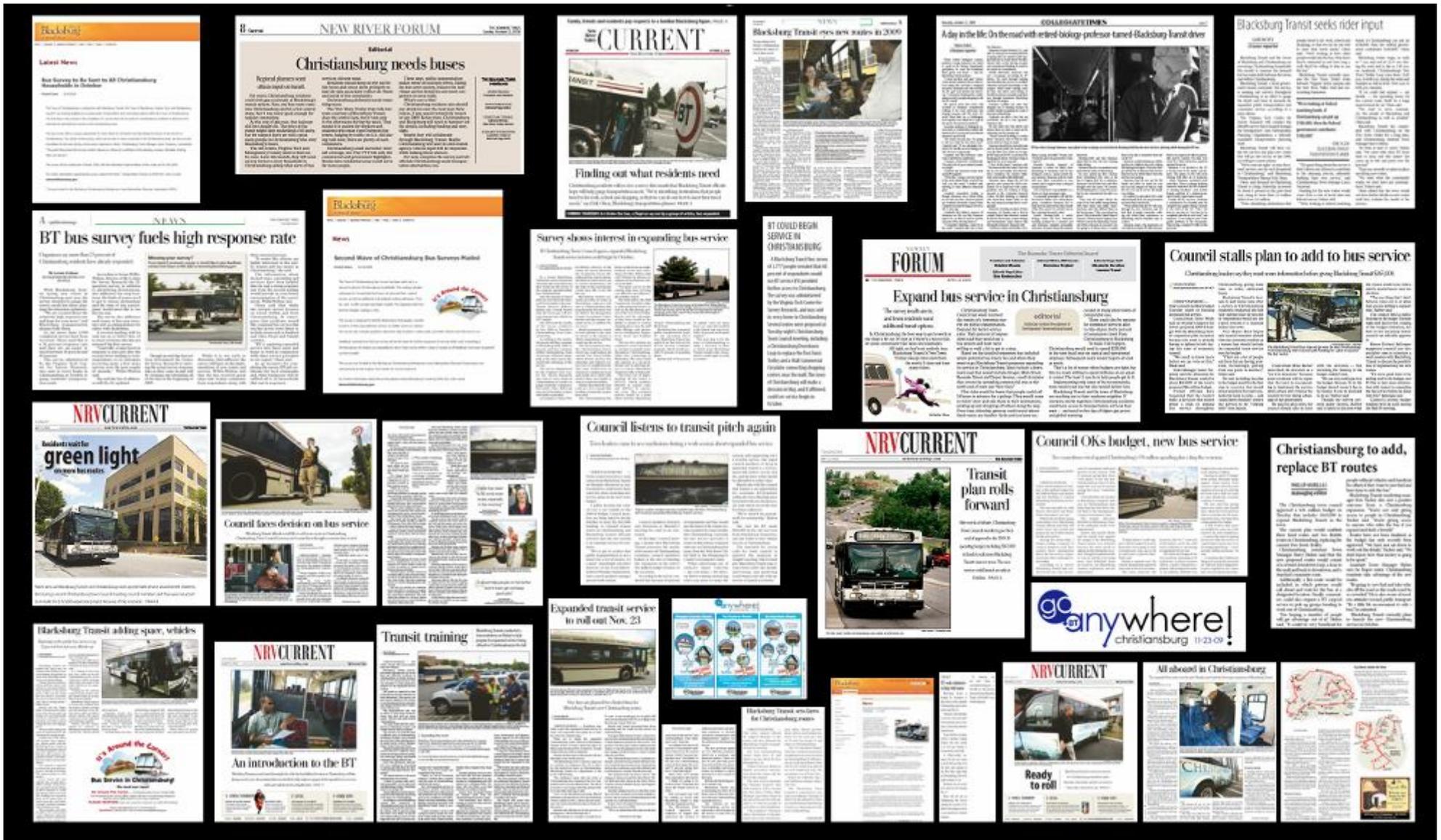
22. What could the Town of Christiansburg do to improve bus service?

Thank you for your help with our study.

Please return your survey today for a chance to win one of ten prizes from local businesses.

Return your completed survey in the envelope provided or to:

The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research, 207 W. Roanoke St., Blacksburg, VA 24061



Blacksburg Transit's Christiansburg Bus Service News Coverage: 9/18/08 to 11/21/09