

The Commuter

Commuter Contract

The last month has been a very eventful regarding the commuter contract. As reported in the last issue of *The Commuter*, the Township had previously released a Request for Bids (RFB) for commuter bus services to be supplied from the two Township operated parking facilities. These RFBs were due from bidders by June 7, 2004.

Shortly before this date, Suburban Transit submitted an unsolicited offer to the Township to purchase Neilson Plaza and be awarded exclusive rights to service the Transportation and Commerce Center (TCC). A copy of this Suburban Transit offer will be available soon at our web site at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EBCommuter/files/RFB/offer.doc>.

In response to the receipt of this offer, Mayor Neary canceled the RFB until the offer could be evaluated by the Township. This action was challenged in Superior Court by a competitive bidder. The Superior Court evaluated the situation and then ordered the Township to release one or more RFB(s) by July 30, 2004.

The Township is planning to comply with this court order and release one or more RFBs regarding the furnishing of commuter bus services at these two facilities by July 30. The responses to these RFB(s) will be due several weeks thereafter. If normal bid procedures are followed, the bids would be evaluated by the Township, a winning bidder determined and the contract would be awarded according to the terms of the RFB and the winning bid.

The detailed requirements of the previous RFB can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EBCommuter/files/RFB/Specifications.doc>. A copy of any new RFB(s) will also be posted at this site. Commuters will be notified via the Topica e-mail list discussed below as additional information on this process becomes available. Information on how to subscribe to this e-mail list can be found below. Given the highly contentious nature of this process, and the considerable involvement of the courts to date, it is expected that one or more parties will request additional court involvement in this process before this process is completed.

Neilson Plaza Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation work on Neilson Plaza is now in its final phases. For the last several weeks work has been proceeding on level P2. This has required the closing of the facility to new entrants at approximately 9:00 a.m. each weekday morning. Commuters may leave the facility after this time by exiting via level P7 and crossing over to an adjacent section of the garage complex. Once the facility is closed, all additional commuter parking is available ONLY at the TCC for the remainder of the work day. Commuters with a Neilson Plaza parking permits are also honored at the TCC during this period.

After work on level P2 is completed, which should be soon, work will commence on level P5. At that time, parking will be permitted on levels P7, P6, P3, P2 and P1. The work on level P5 should be completed in August 2004. When P5 is completed, all work in Neilson Plaza will have been completed. SPS will then move to non-Parking Utility portions of the garage. Once the rehabilitation work is completed the facility should not require this type of maintenance for another 15 years. The Parking Utility thanks commuters for their cooperation during this difficult, but nonetheless important, project.

Jersey City Service

The Commuter Parking Advisory Committee (CPAC) has created a special web site and e-mail list for the planned Neilson Plaza / Jersey City service that is currently under development by Suburban Transit. It is expected that commuter bus service between these two points will begin shortly after the completion of construction at Neilson Plaza.

Suburban Transit is planning to start the service on a trial basis with two buses per day in each direction. The buses would service the Exchange Place / Newport Plaza area and would connect to Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, PATH and ferries to New York. Suburban Transit is also attempting to arrange a special joint fare arrangement with NY Waterway.

The CPAC has already sent an invitation to join our new list of interested commuters for this service to all commuters that previously expressed an interest in this service and supplied the CPAC with their e-mail address. We strongly advise commuters interested in this new bus service to sign up for this list if they have not already done so. You can do so by simply sending an e-mail to ebjc-subscribe@yahoo.com. Please encourage all commuters interested in this service to sign up for this list if they have not already done so. The more interested commuters that are signed up for this list, the better we will be able to communicate with these commuters and justify the implementation of this service.

Daily Parking Rates Increasing on July 1

As previously approved by the Township Council in 2003, daily parking rates will be increasing at both terminals on July 1, 2004. The daily parking rate at Neilson Plaza will be increasing on July 1, 2004 to \$4 per day. This rate applies both during weekdays and on weekends. As a reminder, TCC permit holders are now permitted to park at Neilson Plaza at no additional charge on days when there is no bus service at TCC.

The daily rate at TCC will be increasing to \$3 per day on weekdays. There will be no charge to park there on days when there is no bus service operated at the TCC (weekends and holidays).

All fees will continue to be collected in the normal manner (yellow boxes, hand collection by Parking Utility staff) as circumstances dictate. If you have any further questions about these changes, please contact the Parking Utility at parkandride@eastbrunswick.org or 732-390-6836.

TCC Redevelopment

The TCC redevelopment process is continuing. The Township Council voted to begin exclusive negotiations with Toll Brothers Inc. to develop an agreement with them regarding the sale of the property and upon the development details for this site in addition to 1,500 commuter parking spots. Three public forums have been held on this topic to ascertain comments from interested residents and commuters. The CPAC has also distributed numerous Topica e-mails related to the TCC Redevelopment proposal. You can find additional information on this project and the proposal at our Topica web site <http://lists.topica.com/lists/ebcnews/read>.

Receive Newsletter and Commuter Service Information by E-mail

The CPAC delivers newsletters and other information by e-mail as it becomes available. Over 500 commuters have already signed up for this service and are made aware of important commuting developments as they occur. To subscribe, send an email to ebcnews-subscribe@topica.com. Then reply when you get the sign up confirmation message. You may cancel your subscription at any time. The CPAC will not disseminate your email address or use it for any other purpose. Our normal e-mail address remains ebcommuter@yahoo.com.