

# The Commuter

## Approved Service Schedule Changes

Suburban Transit has now been operating under the new contract with the associated service schedule for several months. After monitoring the passenger loads occurring under the contract, Suburban Transit requested that the Township approve certain schedule changes based on passenger counts. Upon reviewing the requested changes, the Township has agreed to only the following schedule changes. These changes are expected to take effect in late April or early May:

**Wall Street a.m. service:** The 8:10 a.m. and the 8:30 a.m. buses will be eliminated. The 8:00 a.m., 8:20 a.m. and 8:40 a.m. buses to Wall Street will be retained.

**Wall Street p.m. service:** The 7:15 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. buses will be eliminated. The 7:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. buses will be retained.

**Port Authority late night return:** The 12:30 a.m. direct bus from the Port Authority to TCC will be eliminated. **The 12:30 a.m. direct bus to Neilson Plaza will continue to operate and will stop at TCC upon request of any commuter.**

**TCC to Port Authority a.m. service:** Service between these two locations will be adjusted to every 12 minutes between 6:30 am and 7:30 am. No buses will be removed from the schedule.

The Township believes that the existing levels of passenger traffic justify these schedule changes. Of course, we are always interested in the views of commuters on this or any other issue. Commuters may comment on this issue by attending our upcoming April 7 Commuter Parking Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting at 8 p.m. to be held in the Municipal Building Conference Room or by e-mailing us at [ebcommuter@yahoo.com](mailto:ebcommuter@yahoo.com). The Township has requested that revised service schedules be available to commuters for at least two weeks before these schedule changes are to be implemented.

We are of course also always interested in circumstances where the current level of service is not sufficient for the current ridership. If you are aware of such a circumstances, please e-mail us or attend our next meeting so we will be able to review the specific Suburban Transit's passenger statistics to see if additional service is warranted.

## WageWorks and other QTE Vendors

There have been a large number of complaints from commuters that have Qualified Transportation Expense accounts with their employers that are administered through third party vendor, especially with WageWorks. These complaints included having not received refunds for unused 42 trip ticket book tickets, receiving new tickets with an inadequate amount of time to use the tickets before they expire and issues regarding the use of TransitCheks with denominations that do not match the cost of Suburban Transit tickets. These complaints have been so numerous and persistent that we will be making a special effort to address these issues at our April 7 CPAC meeting as discussed above. We encourage all WageWorks, TransitChek or other QTE users that have had problems with these programs to attend our meeting so we can attempt to address these issues on a comprehensive and consistent manner. It would be especially helpful if you could outline your issues in writing in advance to [Ronald.Kohn@coachusa.com](mailto:Ronald.Kohn@coachusa.com) with a copy to the CPAC at [ebcommuter@yahoo.com](mailto:ebcommuter@yahoo.com).

## TCC Repaving

As all commuters are no doubt very aware, this winter has been very hard on paved surfaces such as roads and parking lots. This is no less true at the TCC where the surface has been described as a "moonscape" by one exasperated commuter. The Township has already begun the process of repairing the damage that has occurred. This process is expected to take several months to complete due to the magnitude of the work required. While the Township will attempt to minimize the commuter inconvenience that will occur during this repair process, please be careful and cooperate with temporary detours and relocated parking areas during this repair effort. As we all know, no construction can take place without at least some temporary inconvenience. We are sure that when this work is done, we will all appreciate the improved surface areas. . The Township will do everything it can to keep the inconvenience to a minimum.

## **TCC Redevelopment**

The Township is continuing to negotiate with Toll Brothers regarding the proposed redevelopment of the TCC. Several newspaper articles on this issue have been sent to our e-mail list subscribers. Instructions on how to join our e-mail list can be found in the last article of this newsletter. Copies of articles that have been sent to our list can be found at: <http://lists.topica.com/lists/ebcnews/read>. The current status is that the Township's period of exclusive negotiations with Toll Brothers has expired, but that the Township is continuing to negotiate with Toll Brothers regarding this site. The CPAC has been given very little information to date on how and when this redevelopment might affect commuters. Specific concerns of the CPAC regarding the redevelopment include traffic patterns, number of available commuter parking spaces, and funding of the parking structure's construction. The CPAC will keep commuters informed if and when we receive any substantive information regarding any of these issues.

## **Odds and Ends**

***Ticket vending machine:*** As required by our contract, Suburban Transit will be soon installing a ticket vending machine in each of our two East Brunswick terminals. These machines will be placed indoors where they will be hopefully protected from vandals and weather. It is our understanding that these machines will sell only regular tickets and will not sell monthly passes. We will supply additional information about these machines when it becomes available.

***Neilson daily parking collections:*** As regular Neilson Plaza parkers are no doubt aware, the yellow box system is in use after rush hours and on holidays to collect the daily parking fee. From 4:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. a Parking Utility attendant collects the daily parking fee by hand. Certain early morning traffic restrictions have been implemented at Neilson Plaza in order to reduce the ability of daily parkers to circumvent the collection system. The cooperation of all parkers, both daily and monthly permit holders is appreciated to assist this collection system working in a safe and efficient manner.

***NJ Transit #68 service:*** We have had a continuing dialogue with NJ Transit management regarding service related issues on the #68 line to Jersey City. It has come to the attention of the CPAC that the last two buses in the morning have capacity problems at times. We are still in the process of attempting to obtain from NJ Transit information that will permit us to have a better understanding of the frequency and severity of this problem. In the meantime, it would be extremely helpful if commuters on this line sign up for our special site for Jersey City commuters at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ebjc>. In addition, we would appreciate it if commuters will let us know if they have seen #68 buses running at 100% or more capacity so we can follow up with NJ Transit management on this issue.

***Good Friday service:*** Several commuters indicated that Suburban Transit did not operate the Adjusted Weekday service that they said that they would on Good Friday. We are still attempting to determine what did occur and if the promised schedule was not followed, why not. In cases like this, it is important that commuters notify us of any service issues so we can follow up to see that the contract service standards are being implemented. While we do what we can, the Parking Utility and CPAC basically rely upon commuters to notify us when there are issues that need our attention.

***Extra buses on early closings:*** The addition of extra early service on days such as the recent snowstorms was discussed at our last CPAC meeting. Ronald Kohn of Suburban Transit indicated that extra buses means just that, additional buses above and beyond the day's regular scheduled buses. Suburban says that when they are going to run extra buses at 3:00 p.m. or 3:30 p.m., they provide extra service in addition to the day's normally scheduled service.

***Bus from New Brunswick train station to Neilson Plaza:*** Many commuters are not aware that Suburban Transit operates a bus from the New Brunswick train station to Neilson Plaza on its way to the PABT. This bus stops on an Albany St. curb cut across the street from the train station and in front of the PSE&G store. This bus departs every half hour. During service disruptions, this bus is free to East Brunswick commuters taking the train from New York instead of the bus. The commuter can receive the free ride on this bus by showing the driver an East Brunswick commutation ticket.

***Neilson Plaza drive through area repairs:*** The concrete area where the buses exit the loading area will be repaired this spring. This work may cause a one day inconvenience to commuters.

## **Receive Newsletter and Commuter Service Information by E-mail**

The CPAC delivers newsletters and other information by e-mail as it becomes available. Almost 600 commuters have already signed up for this service and are made aware of important commuting developments as they occur. To subscribe, please send an email to [ebcnews-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:ebcnews-subscribe@topica.com). Then reply when you receive 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](mailto:ebcommuter@yahoo.com).