

## The Ride Begins At A Bus Stop.

According to an article published by TransitCenter, “From Sorry to Superb: Everything You Need to Know About Better Bus Stops,” “nearly half of all public transit rides in the US begin at a bus stop. Yet our bus stops are woefully underfunded”. The report compares US transit agencies that provide both bus and rail services. Within those agencies, bus facilities receive one-tenth the funding given to rail facilities on a per-trip basis. This is just one example stated in the report that outlines barriers associated with public transit funding associated with bus rider amenities.

A few years ago, PART was ahead of this issue and developed a Bus Stop Amenities Program to address this barrier for our riders. The program includes identifying, funding, and installing bus shelters at strategic locations that best serve our riders. PART being the Regional Transit Authority serving nine counties, this can be a significant undertaking. Our leadership team put in place general guidelines for deciding whether or not a bus shelter is needed, and working with planners, PART assesses stops that have the most need and will benefit the most riders.

In a creative approach to secure sustainable funding, PART is working with a firm, Street Level Media, offering advertising on our PART Express bus tails and inside our vehicles. PART put in place a plan to allocate this advertising revenue solely for our rider amenities. Placing our riders at the core of our mission, PART is currently working to develop

this advertising program further so we can, in turn, offer more amenities, like bus shelters and paved platforms, at our key stops.

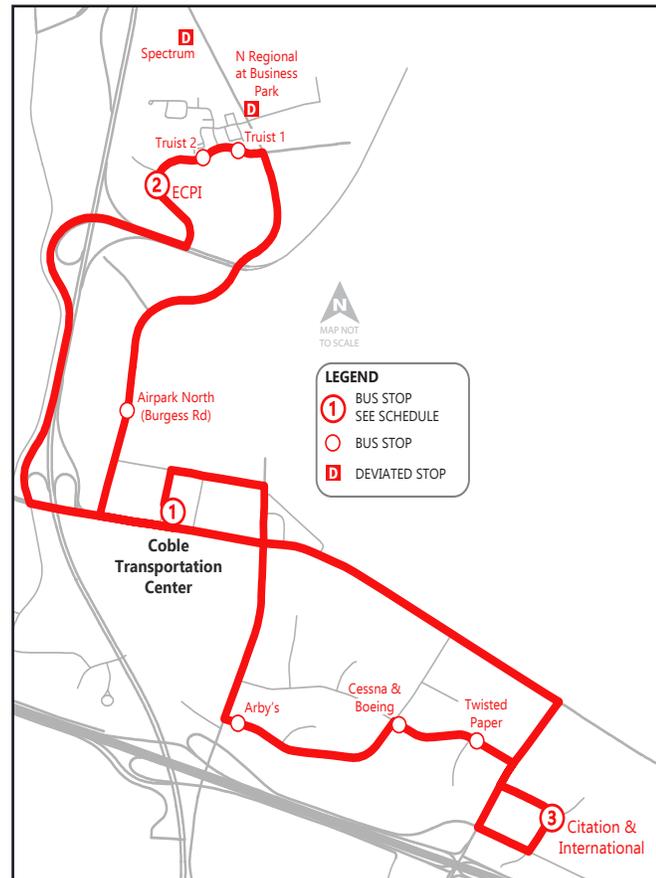
Learn more about this program at [partnc.org/234/Bus-Stop-Amenities-Program](http://partnc.org/234/Bus-Stop-Amenities-Program).



PARTnc.org

## Explore with Express

Route 24 Burgess Regional Road is one of our early morning to late evening routes, running 6:15am-9:15pm. This hard-working route has nine stops along the way and two Deviated Stops, which are available by reservation only. Deviated Stops can be scheduled by contacting our Call Center at 336.883.7278.



**24** BURGESS REGIONAL ROAD  
MONDAY - FRIDAY

## Transit Agency Coordination: Progress and Possibilities

Technology, bus procurement, bus advertising, and a regional call center have been significant initiatives achieved, but much more could be done. Most recently, technology has been at the forefront. For example, three regional agencies now use the same digital fare payment system, Umo. And a fourth is considering it.

Six agencies in the region have or are in the process of implementing real-time bus tracking through a web-based platform, GMV Syncomatics. It also coordinates on-bus announcements and route signage. It provides valuable information to improve the performance and efficiency of the transit service. All agencies utilize the same bus advertising company, Street Level Media, which enables advertisers to maximize their advertising dollars with one phone call.

### What's next?

Making public transportation a valued mobility option for more people comes down to how driving a car compares to taking the bus. The two main comparisons are cost and convenience. In our region, you can travel from Winston-Salem to Greensboro for \$2.50. Local systems are \$1.00 to \$1.50 per trip, with monthly passes as low as \$30.00. Riders find that public transportation cost is far less than the total cost of owning and operating a car. When it comes to convenience, trip length and trip execution are critical. The solution is to get more people on the bus and offer more service and connections. It's feasible, plausible, and has been shown to work.

### What makes it happen?

Getting more people on the bus comes down to removing barriers like knowing when the bus is coming and which bus to take. With current technology, riders can track their bus, plan their trip, and pay their fare digitally across the region. The Umo digital faring system also makes it easy to provide local government employees with free transit across all systems and offers all riders Fare Capping.

Some parts of a transit trip, like getting to the stop, making multiple stops, transferring to another bus, waiting for the next bus, and getting to the final destination, make riding public transit inherently take longer than driving a car. Increasing bus frequency and giving buses priority over cars are two ways to help a transit trip compete with driving a car. The only way to significantly improve the service is to provide more funding. Federal public transportation grant funds offer 50%-80% of operating and capital costs for public transportation. State contributions and local dollars account for as little as 10% of capital cost. This places a heavy emphasis on local funding to improve the operation of local transit services.

In the Piedmont Triad, between 1%-2% of the population use transit. Yet most studies indicate that 20%-40% of people prefer not to drive or should not drive and will use non-auto modes if they are convenient, comfortable, and affordable. Addressing transportation equity and making meaningful improvements to public transportation in our region will take a firm commitment starting with more local funding. North Carolina provides a ¼-½ cent sales tax option for public transportation in Guilford and Forsyth Counties. This could produce over \$54M, significantly improving local and regional transit systems. This option has been available since 2009, but the willingness to act has not materialized.

The options exist, and the future does hold the opportunity to enhance mobility in the Piedmont Triad.

