

**CONNECT TRANSIT**  
**Minutes of PUBLIC HEARING**  
Connect Transit Board Room, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL  
Revised Route Restructure  
Public Hearing for Service Changes Effective August 2013

**Public Hearing #1**

Date: Thursday, July 25, 2013  
Time: 5:30 pm  
Location: Connect Transit Board Room  
351 Wylie Drive  
Normal, IL 61761

**Public Attendees:**

Charles Smith, CEFT  
Janet Shobe, CEFT  
Vincent Radcliffe, CEFT  
Marilyn J. Evans, CEFT  
Glenda Perry, Bloomington  
Wallace Tudor, Bloomington  
Rose McGlothlin, Bloomington  
Larry Radcliffe, Normal  
Teresa Radcliffe, Normal  
Lee Tewell, Bloomington

**Board Members Present:**

Judy Buchanan, Chairman  
Ryan Whitehouse  
Bill Wilson

**Staff Present:**

Andrew Johnson, General Manager  
Roy Rickert, Operations Director  
Dave White, Safety & Training Director  
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director  
Chris Wold, Operations Assistant  
Ami Armitage, Executive Assistant  
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

## **Introduction**

Mr. Andrew Johnson, Connect Transit General Manager, welcomed everyone to the first Public Hearing for the Revised Proposal for Connect Transit Route Restructuring. Mr. Johnson introduced the Board Members present: Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, Mr. Bill Wilson, and Mr. Ryan Whitehouse. Mr. Johnson introduced the staff present: Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, Mr. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director, and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Assistant.

Mr. Johnson explained the Route Restructure process began in the fall of 2012 with a proposal for major route changes. At the Public Hearings the staff listened to the community and realized the proposed changes were too much, too quick. Over the winter, the proposal was re-examined and the changes were re-evaluated. It was decided to do a "Phased-In" approach. The revisions made some impactful changes but did not make the changes as wide spread and as wide scale as the original proposal. Three Listening Sessions were held at the beginning of the year. Connect Transit hosted three Open Houses this past spring to introduce the revised plan and to give the public ample opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and opinions. The public input was greatly appreciated. The active engagement of the community is helping to get the restructure service tailored to what the people need. The resulting Revised Route Restructure Phase I is what brings us to this Public Hearing.

Mr. Johnson stated the Listening Sessions and the Open Houses were the opportunities for open dialogue. The Public Hearing is the opportunity for the Board and Connect Transit to receive final comments from the public on this Phase I Revised Route Restructure Proposal. The Trustees and staff will be listening and will make clarifications if necessary. There will not be open dialogue. Mr. Johnson stressed the public is free to contact staff anytime to ask questions, get clarifications, express a concern, or to state what you are thinking about Connect Transit. That is encouraged whole heartedly.

Mr. Johnson explained the initial Phase I Revised Route Restructure Proposal raised some concerns. Staff has re-examined the data, spoken with members of the community, and we are going to advise the Board to make some changes to that Proposal, which was published in the Public Notice. Before we start the Public Hearing, Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, will explain the changes on the initial Phase I Proposal we plan to recommend to the Board. Mr. Johnson stated we wish for

Mr. White stated he would begin to explain the biggest change, which is with the Teal J Route. Mr. White reported he received many comments regarding the ridership on GE Road. In response to those comments the route was amended. The Teal J will depart Eastland Mall on Fairway Drive to Eastland Drive, will take Hershey Road to GE Road, travel down GE Road to Leslie and resume a route that is very similar to what it runs now, which is Leslie to Pamela, Ekstam out to and around CIRA Drive, to Empire, back to Hershey Road and Fairway Drive into Eastland Mall. This will provide service to the Airport and to those riders employed on GE Road. Mr. White stated staff looked at ridership data, talked with drivers, rode the route, and watched bus videos when considering all route changes.

One other item mentioned in the Public Hearing Notice was the discontinuation of the late Night Shuttle Bus that runs between Uptown Normal and Downtown Bloomington. This route will stay in service and continue as it is now. It is basically a late night extension of the Green A bus route on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

Mr. White continued the proposed changes to the Blue E route have been eliminated. There will be no changes made to the Blue E route at this time. The Blue E route will run as it is now.

Mr. Larry Radcliffe, Blue E route rider, introduced himself and read a statement concerning the changes proposed for that route. Mr. Radcliffe stated ten years ago he became disabled from a traumatic brain injury and will never be able to drive again. He was also paralyzed on the right side of his body and has very limited mobility on that side. He catches the bus on Henry Street and does not understand why Connect Transit will be changing from Henry Street to Towanda Avenue, which only has houses on the west side of the street and farmland on the east side. Henry Street has homes on both sides of the street; therefore it has the potential of more riders. Mr. Radcliffe continued he rides the bus for his monthly blood work, among other activities and errands. Mr. Radcliffe concluded he is not the only one who catches the bus on Henry Street. This change would create a huge inconvenience for him to catch the bus elsewhere.

Mr. White assured Mr. Radcliffe there will be no changes made to the Blue E route at this time. Mr. Radcliffe was very happy and grateful to hear this news.

Mr. White concluded stating all the other changes are the same proposals that were made in May.

Mr. Johnson asked if anyone had any questions about the updated information Mr. White just explained.

Mr. Wallace Tudor, Rider, stated he noticed when the transfer center was changed in Uptown Normal to Uptown Station that the shelters are still standing in front of Watterson Towers and they are full of all kinds of signage, including outdated bus schedules. Some of the route information signs are placed too high making it very difficult to read for the average person and if a wheelchair bound person needs to read it they might as well forget it. Mr. Tudor inquired if the information would be updated and if the schedules could be posted at the Downtown Bloomington transfer center shelters. Mr. Tudor said everyday he sees riders getting on the bus asking the driver where the bus is going. The signs are outdated, faded, and too high to read. Mr. Tudor asked if new route maps will be available. Mr. Tudor added the map on the website is outdated as well. Mr. Tudor inquired if anything will be printed to inform the public of the changes that are being made. Currently, there is no information for the riders about these new changes. Nothing has been posted anywhere in Bloomington explaining these changes.

Mr. Johnson responded every route map on the website should be absolutely up to date. You should not be getting the old maps any longer. Mr. Tudor stated when he prints the maps from the website it is the same as the map he printed three years ago. Mr. Tudor said the DoubleMap is updated, but not the route maps on the website. Mr. Johnson added Connect Transit is looking at bus stops and shelters. It is a project that will begin very soon and we will go through all the existing shelters and remove outdated materials. The shelters outside of Watterson Towers at ISU are the property of ISU and we are working with ISU to repurpose some of those shelters. Mr. Tudor stated he was actually surprised to see the routes posted on the shelters in Normal, because he has never seen anything posted in the Bloomington shelters. Mr. Tudor continued all the riders asking the drivers questions about the routes and where the bus is going slows the driver down and makes the route run late. Mr. Tudor requested that Connect Transit please update the route notices at the stops.

Mr. Johnson announced the start of the Public Hearing and requested those wishing to make comments regarding the revised route proposal to please state their name before making their comment.

Mr. Charles Michael Smith introduced himself and stated he lives in Normal. Mr. Smith said he is the Chairman for the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit. Mr. Smith read a statement dated July 19, 2013. He read aloud. "CEFT (Committee to Ensure Fair

Transit) after careful study and discussion has voted to unanimously support Part A of Connect Transit's current route change plan. We would like to commend Connect Transit for its willingness to listen to members of the community and work with them to build a better Transit System. We have two reservations: 1) the exclusion of going into certain drives, such as Phoenix Towers and Woodhill. While we understand the technical reasons for this, we would still like to express our concerns for the residents of those facilities and hope that Connect Transit will find a way to accommodate them in the future. 2) The exclusion of going through Market Square by the Lime I bus may affect a percentage of the population that uses the facilities."

Mr. Smith stated he feels the Transit has come a long way with the route restructure process and has learned a lot, and learned to interact with the community. When this process began last fall there was a huge disconnection between Transit and the community. Mr. Smith now feels much of that is no longer true. Mr. Smith still thinks there will be times that CEFT will be needed to give the outside opinion and we are certainly not closing up shop. Mr. Smith commended Transit for its efforts to work with the community, especially seeing the examples of the most recent route adjustments since the last Open House. Mr. Smith thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Lee Tewell introduced himself stating he lives in Bloomington. Mr. Tewell stated he has been working with the Transit to ensure he still has access to the Teal J route. Mr. Tewell lives on the Teal J route and he cannot express enough how relieved he was to learn the Transit was able incorporate GE Road back into that route. When Mr. Tewell moved to his home last August one of the main attractions of the home was that it was on a bus route. The house location was also the shortest distance for him to walk to get to a route that he could find in the current system. Mr. Tewell stated having a route within his restricted ability to navigate, allows him to remain as independent as possible. Mr. Tewell continued he would like to work with Transit staff to regulate the timing of the routes so he can make connections with other bus routes under the newly proposed changes. Mr. Tewell thanked the staff for taking the time to listen to his concerns.

Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Tewell for their comments and asked if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing no one, Mr. Johnson stated this would conclude the Public Hearing. Mr. Johnson stated he appreciated everyone for coming and added everyone should feel free to come to staff with any concerns, suggestions, or questions. The staff is there to attend to your needs.

Ms. Janet Shobe introduced herself and inquired as to when these route changes would go into effect and exactly when will the public be able to get a map showing the new routes.

Mr. Johnson responded the plan is for the new route changes to begin August 12<sup>th</sup> and the new route maps should be available a few days before that date.

Ms. Shobe inquired if the Heartland bus will be called Heartland or Green A and what will the start date be for that route.

Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, responded it will be called the Heartland Express and will begin running the following week, August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Shobe thanked everyone for the information.

Ms. Marilyn Evans inquired if the new maps will be available on the Special Service buses, because currently there are no maps on those buses. The Special Service riders could take and study a map to see if any of the fixed routes might be another option for them, but there are none on the SS buses.

Mr. Johnson was not aware the Mobility buses did not have maps and brochures on them. There should be and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Supervisor, will be sure that is taken care of.

Mr. Johnson asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Mr. Johnson thanked everyone for coming to the Public Hearing and concluded the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.