



Get on the Bus!

BY LINDSAY K. SAUNDERS

Green Transportation in Raleigh

The Triangle is known for its world-class museums, live concerts and Broadway shows, historic sites, professional and amateur sporting events and numerous major retail areas. With all these elements spread out across the Triangle, public transportation is becoming an important topic, especially with more and more urban dwellers moving into downtowns across the Triangle and opting to shed their autos in favor of walking, cycling, car sharing and yes, public transportation. Raleigh is also quite innovative when it comes to its options for transportation in downtown and all around the city.

Capital Area Transit provides bus service throughout Raleigh as well as R-LINE service in downtown Raleigh. Including the Wake Forest Loop, there are 30 routes to choose from. The CAT bus fares are very affordable at \$1 for one way, \$2 for a local day pass (\$4 regional), and free for

both seniors 65 and up and children 12 and under. Cash, check, Visa, MasterCard and Commuter Check are all forms of accepted payment at the Capital Area Transit Operations Office and Moore Square Station Information Booth. Harris Teeter stores also sell 5-Day Passes, Reduced Fare 5-Day Passes and 31-Day Passes.



Ed Duke, Jr. is a Wake County employee who has been riding the CAT part time since summer 2007 and full time since summer of 2008. "At first I started riding the bus as a way to save money and knew I was doing my small part for the environment. Along the way, I've developed several friendships and now look forward to seeing my fellow riders," Duke says. "The drivers are dedicated and work hard to keep everyone on schedule, while providing information and guidance to the new riders."

City Council Member Bonner Gaylord is a big proponent of public transportation in Raleigh and throughout the state. He recently hosted a discussion on the topic with guests Damien Graham of the Triangle Transit Authority and Raleigh City Councilor Russ Stephenson. "There are few downsides to providing good, safe and clean transit for everyone's convenience," says Bonner. His three bullet points for public transportation are:



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- The more people that take buses, the fewer individual cars on the road, leading to less traffic and better air quality
- Public transit is a big factor for economic development and helps draw more companies to the area
- Leaving your car at home and taking the bus can save money in gas and parking

With more members of local City Councils championing for public transportation as Bonner does, we may soon find ourselves living in a greener Triangle area.

One of the most popular Capital Area Transit services is the R-Line, which has its own distinct look and feel from regular Capital Area Transit bus service. The R-Line is downtown Raleigh's FREE bus service which connect employees, residents and visitors to retail, restaurants, entertainment venues and various parking areas in the Central Business District (CBD) or "downtown proper." Its bold colors help make the R-Line easily distinguishable from other buses from almost any distance.

This route is served by three, 40-foot

hybrid electric Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) style buses, with two running the downtown loop simultaneously and one serving as backup. The City of Raleigh chose to use 40-foot buses because they can easily be placed into regular CAT bus service if necessary and the BRT style hybrid because of its environmentally friendly footprint, quiet noise level and distinctive look.

The green and blue colors emphasize its unique "green" attribute, representing blue air and green earth. The design of the bus also symbolizes that the R-Line is a joint effort of the Raleigh Transit Authority, Downtown Raleigh Alliance (DRA) and the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (GRCVB). The "R" logo is part of the DRA's "You R Here" campaign. In addition, the colors of the bus are not only environmentally representative but also just happen to be the colors of GRCVB's logo. The R-Line is an example of the Raleigh Transit Authority's commitment to expand transit service in Raleigh and the City of Raleigh's commitment to help Raleigh become



a "green" city. For more information, visit www.YouRHere.com.

Some of the benefits of hybrid verses traditional buses include significantly reduced emissions that cause smog, greenhouse gases and public health issues; reduced fuel consumption (about >>>

You may be surprised to learn that the diverse transit offerings extend beyond Raleigh's Capital Area Transit (CAT) and Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA) to Cary Transit (C-Tran), Chapel Hill Transit, Duke Transit, NC State University Wolfline, TRACS (Wake County), and Triangle Transit. Triangle Transit ties all the cities together as an intercity system between Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Wake Forest.

More information about general fares and passes around the Triangle can be found at www.gotriangle.org/transit/fares-and-passes. You can find routes, bus pickup times, transfer locations, and more at maps.google.com as well as www.gotriangle.org.



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25 percent); less maintenance; and reduced diesel exhaust odor and vehicle noise.

The diesel-electric hybrid buses use both electricity and diesel, the same concept as hybrid automobiles. The larger bus batteries store energy and recharge when the bus decelerates and when demand for power exceeds battery capacity, the diesel engine provides extra energy. A computer controls the output of the two power sources, diesel and electricity, so the buses always use the most efficient source at the time it's needed.



The R-Line is also incredibly convenient for those out and about to experience the nightlife options that Raleigh has to offer. "I know that the R-Line makes loops around downtown, so if I'm out at night and need to get from one side of

downtown to the other, it can be very handy," says Raleigh resident Gary Moe.

Another thing that makes the R-Line convenient—aside from the fact that it's free—is its mobile smartphone app, which allows riders to locate and track each bus as it circles downtown. Morrisville resident Chip Ratledge was excited to find this tool in 2012 and hasn't looked back since. "The handiest part is the phone app tracking the buses," says Ratledge. "You know when to expect the next bus and time your arrival at the stop with it using the 'You R Here' icon for reference. Great feature and no guessing when the next bus will show up."

On average, there are 793 riders each day: 876 weekday riders, 827 Saturday riders, and 351 Sunday riders. For more information on getting around downtown with the R-Line and to download the app, visit www.godowntownraleigh.com/get-around/r-line.

More and more people deciding not to own a car and live completely within the confines of downtowns. Almost everything a resident might need can be found within walking distance or by taking the bus around downtown and beyond. All sorts of regular goods and services are accessible in downtown Raleigh from dental care at Downtown

Dental, salon services at Tesoro Hair Design, and fitness at Heat Studios. Downtown is still missing a grocery store, but it's only a short bus ride over to Harris Teeter or The Fresh Market in Cameron Village or NoFo in Five Points. When in a hurry, residents can always drop into one of Taz's locations for fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, meats, and more. The benefits are nearly endless.

One of the more recent earth-friendly transportation organizations is the Triangle Air Awareness Program (TAA), a public-private partnership between the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Division of Air Quality (NCDAQ) and the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP). Triangle Air Awareness serves 13 counties throughout North Carolina and its goal is to help everyone in the Research Triangle Region learn how to be informed, take action, and help reduce air pollution to keep our air clean and healthy.

Find out more about Triangle Awareness on their website <http://triangleairawareness.org>, on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/TriangleAir or Twitter @TriangleAir.





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Busing around the Triangle

The City of Durham's public transportation system includes the Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA) and the DATA ACCESS service for persons with disabilities. The City's planners and the Department of Transportation acknowledge that the provision of a sound transportation system is critical to maintaining a strong economy. DATA's mission is to provide safe, reliable, convenient, and accessible transportation for the citizens and visitors of the Triangle region.

A fleet of 53 buses serves area riders going to and from their destinations. In 2009, the downtown terminal was relocated to a new transportation center (Durham Station) that also serves Triangle Transit Authority and Greyhound Lines buses.

One of the best things about DATA is the fact that they have service almost every day of the year, where as other bus systems in the Triangle are closed on a number of holidays. DATA also runs later in the evening than other bus systems, and the drivers are always pleasant and helpful.

Traveling by bus may not be as convenient as jumping in your car; however, it's definitely a way residents can reduce their carbon output and do something good for the environment. The cost of

a one-way pass is \$1, an unlimited all-day pass is \$2 and senior citizens ride free. This makes it a smart financial move to incorporate more bus riding. If you paid for an unlimited pass every day at full price, you'd still only be spending \$730 per year. Not bad compared to a hefty car payment each month, plus gas and maintenance.

There are 18 routes available to assist you in getting around with DATA. Visit www.gotriangle.org/transit/data-schedules-maps for more information about schedules and maps.

Durham's counterpart to the R-Line, the Bull City Connector, is equally convenient and environmentally friendly. Launched in August 2010, it's a fare-free route that runs from Duke to Golden Belt, with stops on Ninth Street and in downtown Durham. It's easy to get from the east side of Durham's busy downtown all the way to Duke University Medical Center and there's a special spur providing service to North Carolina Central University. Bull City Connector runs daily 15 minutes in each direction from 6:20am until 6pm, then every 25 minutes until 10pm. Friday and Saturday routes run every 25 minutes until Midnight.

Each Bull City Connector bus has a special logo

and design distinguishing it from other Durham Area Transit Authority buses. Special signage denotes Bull City Connector stops along the route as well. The Bull City Connector is on GoLive, the real-time arrival tool from GoTriangle and Transloc, the same local company that provides the GPS tracking for Raleigh's R-Line.

For real-time information on the current locations of the Connector buses, visit their website at <http://live.gotriangle.org>, click on "DATA-Durham Area Transit Authority," then click on "BCC-Bull City Connector." You can also download and install the TransLoc App for Android or iPhone or visit <http://live.gotriangle.org> on your mobile browser.

You can even text: `golive [insert bus stop code] to 41411`.

Learn more at www.bullcityconnector.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bullcityconnector or follow them on Twitter@BullCityConnect.

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