

GATEWAY eyes rate drop, route changes

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Following a unanimous vote at the most recent Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority board meeting, GATEWAY rural ride rates could decrease from \$8 to \$5.

The decision made by the board is pending approval by the Wayne County Commissioners, and will be voted on at the board's meeting today.

Director Fred Fontana said the new rate is more in line with the average for other counties in North Carolina, and that the decrease should not cause a loss in revenue.

"That's the rate that most systems are charging," Fontana said. "I really do not think we'll lose any revenue because the cheaper or less expensive rides will generate more riders."

Board member Joe Daughtery -- who also serves as a county commissioner -- confirmed during Thursday's meeting that the rate change was an item on the commissioners' agenda.

The transportation authority's new website -- www.ridegwta.com -- is now live.

The new site will incorporate mobile-friendly layouts, updated route maps that can be easily accessed from any computer or mobile device and a news section on the website where any transportation authority updates can be found.

A public hearing regarding proposed new urban bus system routes also was scheduled, but no one from the public came.

There was some debate over several suggested routes, one of which travels out to the Wal-Mart on U.S. Highway 70 West and loops back into downtown Goldsboro.

Several board members suggested that if that route were to be implemented, more stops would need to be placed along the route to maximize use of buses going to that area.

A name change to the routes could also be in the works. Instead of route names, the board is thinking of using colors to differentiate the different routes.

New route maps will not be printed and made final until late June or early July, and will be distributed in August, Fontana said.

"Two things that are real important," Fontana said. "We relocated all our beginning and end points on the routes to the new facility on Carolina Street by Mulberry (Street), that's one change. The other -- we tried to make more of the routes direct so you don't have to ride all the way around your elbow to get to the end. We did that the best we could. They're all going to be color-coded. They're not finalized

yet, but we're thinking strongly of doing away with the names Berkeley, North End, Wayne Memorial, South End and Express, primarily because they didn't really go, necessarily, where the names indicated."

More work will be done regarding the updated routes, and final route suggestions will be brought back before the board at its next meeting in June.

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