

## **DOTS BREAK TRANSPORTATION SERVICES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Updated 9/20/2017 – RMSJr.

### **Q: Where can I find information on these services?**

A: At our website, [www.transportation.umd.edu](http://www.transportation.umd.edu), under the tab marked “Shuttle-UM” and the drop-down menu item marked “Trips”, there is a page called “Break Transportation.”

### **Q: What services are provided / where do the buses go?**

A: We have a free shuttle that runs from Cole Field House to BWI, and buses that depart from Cole Field House stopping (a) in Cherry Hill NJ, (b) at NJTransit Metropark in Woodbridge / Iselin NJ, and (c) in Manhattan NYC just outside of the New York Port Authority Bus Terminal. The specific stop locations are as follows:

- BWI: outbound buses drop off at each airline’s Departures check-in area as needed, and inbound buses pick up at the bus shelter outside of International Arrivals baggage claim at door #18;
- Cherry Hill: the bus shelter on eastbound NJ-38 (Kaighns Ave) in front of Cherry Hill Towers (2145 Kaighns Ave, Cherry Hill, NJ), across the street from Cherry Hill Mall;
- Metropark / Woodbridge / Iselin: at the NJTransit Metropark rail station, in the bus bays between Lot 2 and Lot 3;
- Manhattan, NY: on eastbound 42<sup>nd</sup> St between 9<sup>th</sup> Ave and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, near (but *outside*) the Port Authority Bus Terminal entrance.

### **Q: When do these buses run?**

A: Our Break Transportation services run for **Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break**. The outbound buses are always on the last class day before the break (or for Winter, the last day of finals). The inbound buses are always the day before classes resume. The dates for the 2017-2018 academic year are:

- Thanksgiving: November 21<sup>st</sup> / 26<sup>th</sup>,
- Winter: Dec 19<sup>th</sup> / Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>;
- Spring: Mar 16<sup>th</sup> / 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Q: What times do they depart?**

A: **The BWI shuttles are following a new schedule this year – outbound departures are every 2hrs on-the-(odd)hour from 5am to 7pm, and inbound BWI departures leave the airport every 2hrs on-the-(even)hour from 8am to 10pm.** The outbound NY/NJ buses always depart at 2pm from the front steps at Cole. The inbound departure times are as follows:

- NY Port Authority: 12 noon
- Metropark: 1pm
- Cherry Hill: 230pm

### **Q: What times do they arrive at their destination?**

A: Typically the trip from BWI to campus or vice-versa is about 45 minutes. For the NY/NJ buses, our 2pm departure theoretically results in a dropoff in Cherry Hill at 430pm, Metropark at 6pm, and NYC at 7pm. The inbound NY/NJ buses are slated to arrive at Cole at 5pm. However, this depends on traffic, and traffic over the Thanksgiving holiday in particular is often unpredictable. For Winter and Spring, delays are not as common nor severe.

### **Q: What about if the bus is delayed to the pickup point? How will I know if this is the case?**

A: Delayed departures are rare but they do occasionally occur. On the inbound trip days, the status of the NY/NJ departures will be communicated in three ways: (a) they are posted on our website at

[www.transportation.umd.edu](http://www.transportation.umd.edu), the tab marked “Shuttle-UM”, and the drop-down menu item called “Trips”; (b) updates are sent to our two Twitter accounts, @DOTS\_UMD and @Shuttle\_UM, and (c) e-mails are sent to the ticket purchasers at the e-mail address they provided during registration. This process is to communicate with passengers enroute to catch the buses – therefore, information about traffic delays once the riders are already on-board are NOT reported via these methods.

**Q: What do I need to get on the bus?**

A: For all Break Transportation services, a University ID must be shown.

**Q: How much luggage can I bring?**

A: Our general guideline is **“Not more than you can carry yourself.”** This typically means two suitcases and one small carry-on (like a backpack-sized bag).

**Q: What amenities do the buses have?**

A: The BWI shuttles are basic transit-style buses with no significant amenities. The buses to and from NY/NJ are 50+-seat motorcoaches with padded reclining seats, under-body and overhead luggage storage, a restroom, TVs with DVD, and electrical outlets at each row for plugging in chargers/adapters for electronic devices. Most, *but not all*, will have WiFi, and *some* will have DirecTV service.

**Q: Can I bring my bike with me?**

A: The NY/NJ buses don’t have bike racks, so, most likely **we will not be able to accommodate bikes**. If all passengers load their luggage and there is still enough space underneath to fit it on without damaging anything, we will try it; but otherwise, we’re going to ask you to leave it behind. The BWI shuttles do have bike racks but they are first-come, first served and can only carry a maximum of three bikes. **Bikes cannot be brought into the passenger area** on either the BWI or NY/NJ buses.

**Q: How early do I need to arrive in order to get on?**

A: The buses depart as close to the exact published times as possible. **15 minutes is a good general guideline**; but, as is the case with all things, the more important it is to you, the earlier you should plan to be. (The earlier you plan to arrive, the less likely an unforeseen delay will cause you to miss the bus.)

**Q: How do I purchase tickets?**

A: The BWI shuttles are free and do not require tickets – only a University ID. Tickets for the NY/NJ buses may ONLY be purchased at our website, [www.transportation.umd.edu](http://www.transportation.umd.edu), using the student’s University Directory ID and password. Tickets go on sale at 10am approximately one month before each trip and are sold until approximately one week before the trip. The specific sale dates will be posted on our website several weeks in advance. **At the precise time the sale begins, the website will be updated and a link marked “Click Here to purchase Break Transportation Tickets” will be added to both the front page and the “Trips” page (as described above).** The student will have to enter their University Directory ID and password, then which destination they are going to and whether they want a one-way or round-trip ticket, then will be given the option to pay via credit card or have the charge posted to their student account at the Bursar’s office. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED AND PAID FOR, PERIOD.

**Q: Once I purchase, can I cancel for a refund?**

A: The deadline to do so is approximately 10 days before the trip. The specific refund cutoff date will be included in the information on the web page described above.

**Q: Can parents log on and purchase on behalf of their children?**

A: Official University policy is that a student's Directory ID and Password combination is not to be shared with anyone. We would be remiss if we instructed students and their parents to violate this policy. However, of course it happens, and DOTS has no way of policing / enforcing it.

**Q: Are the buses ever sold out?**

A: The BWI shuttles are first-come, first-serve; but in the ten years or so that we've been running them, none have ever filled to capacity. The buses seat up to 40 people and the average peak ridership per trip has so far been about 25 people. We also just re-aligned the schedule for these to include 8 daily runs rather than six. It is possible, but very, very, very unlikely we would ever have to turn someone away. The NY/NJ buses do very frequently sell out, although we do our best to adjust available seats to meet demand, and usually (but not always), tickets are available as late as about 2 weeks before the trip.

**Q: If I end up on the waitlist for a NY/NJ bus, should I give up hope?**

A: Unless it's approaching a week until the trip, there's usually still a good chance we will have a seat for you. There are cancellations, and, if demand is sufficient, we will do our best to add resources in order to open up additional seats. Also, if sales for one destination are unexpectedly high while another's is unexpectedly low, we will adjust the allocation of seats accordingly. We do our best to finalize things about a week out, so if you get within that time and still don't have a confirmed seat, it's best to contact us and inquire about the status and/or start thinking about other arrangements.

**Q: If my preferred NY/NJ destination is sold out but another is still open, should I just buy a ticket for that one instead? They're all the same buses, right?**

A: **NO, PLEASE DO NOT DO THAT.** Purchase your ticket for the destination you actually intend to ride to / from. Depending on demand (i.e. if there are enough passengers going to the same stop to fill one or more entire bus), some buses may service only one destination. So in many cases, if you buy a ticket for that bus, that's where you're going, period.

**Q: What other companies provide services to BWI, NJ, and NY?**

A: To BWI, passengers can take our #104 to College Park Metro, then the Metrorail to Greenbelt, then the WMATA B30 to BWI. The B30 runs Monday thru Friday every 40 minutes, and a schedule for this is available at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com). To NY/NJ – Greyhound, Boltbus, and Megabus all offer DC to NYC bus routes at comparable prices to ours – the drawback is that they typically leave either from DC or Greenbelt, and not the campus. However, if our schedule doesn't match your needs or you're buried hopelessly down the waitlist, these services can be a low-cost alternative to making your own arrangements.

**Q: Where can I find additional information about these services?**

A: E-mail any additional questions to [dotstrips@umd.edu](mailto:dotstrips@umd.edu).

***NOTE:** Internally, please note that ticket sales / registrations / waitlists / cancellations / refunds are overseen by Karen Pennington (x5-1222 or use the [dotstrips@umd.edu](mailto:dotstrips@umd.edu) address), and all logistical and operational issues are overseen by Rob Shearman (x4-7182 or [rmsjr@umd.edu](mailto:rmsjr@umd.edu)). Direct any further questions as appropriate.*