

Transloc launches app to connect ridesharing, public transit

THE HERALD SUN BY ALEX DIXON MARCH 4, 2016



Wool E. Bull escorts Josh Cohen, Director of Strategy & Partnerships for Transloc, onto a GoTriangle bus as a part of an event marking the launch of the new Transloc application at the Durham Station Transportation Center on Thursday. The app connects ride sharing with public transportation. The Herald-Sun | Kaitlin McKeown

DURHAM— Local transportation technology company Transloc launched its Uber-integrated app Thursday, in an effort to incorporate multiple modes of transportation in a user's commute.

The app, called Transloc Rider, addresses what Transloc director of strategy and partnerships Josh Cohen calls the "first-mile, last-mile challenge:" when an individual wants to take public transit but doesn't have a preferred way to get to their final destination after getting off the bus or train.

App users select a destination, and Transloc Rider will integrate Uber ridesharing, public transit and even walking to offer several options with both prices and travel times.

"We're doing it in a way that provides a great experience for the rider," Cohen said. "Just input your destination and get the best transit route from point A to point B to get you to and from that transit stop, especially in areas that don't have access to transit currently."

Cohen said Transloc is leveraging Uber's strengths of a large user base and convenience with public transit's strength of moving larger groups of people for the app. And through the app's partnership with GoTriangle, Transloc estimates that the area's public transit ridership could increase by as much as 300 percent.

“So this isn’t just great for transit riders, it’s also great for our community,” Cohen said. “Everytime we get somebody on transit we’re going to reduce congestion on our roads and reduce pollution in the air.”

The app will launch in Memphis, Tenn., later this month, and more cities throughout the year. Cohen said Transloc plans to integrate other forms of transportation, also, including biking.

“The goal is to make it as seamless as possible,” Cohen said. “It’s what the future of our cities will look like: multimodal trips.”

While the app is still in beta testing with Triangle residents, Durham Bulls mascot Wool E. Bull was the first official user of the new Transloc Rider, catching an Uber ride from DBAP Thursday morning to Durham Station, where he then rode a GoTriangle bus back to American Tobacco Campus.

Mayor Bill Bell said at the launch that Transloc Rider is an example of the first step in what could be a phase of technology that allows for all travel plans to be integrated into one application.

“Eventually, we hope that you’ll be able to do (everything) all on one app...get your travel plans together, get Uber, get your tickets paid for and get to the end of the line where you’re going,” he said. “This is the first step, and we’re very proud of it and we know it’s going to be a success.”

Users interested in signing up to test the app can find information here: hub.transloc.com/uber/

Road Worrier: Uber and GoTriangle could become a dynamic duo

GoTriangle riders will have the option to combine Uber and bus trips

The new partnership relies on Durham-based TransLoc’s smartphone app

THE NEWS AND OBSERVER BY BRUCE SICELOFF FEBRUARY 29, 2016

RALEIGH -- This week we might begin to see whether Uber can help smash public transportation’s “first mile, last mile” barrier.

Yes: Uber, the new-fangled nemesis of old-fashioned taxis everywhere. Uber, so cheap and ubiquitous that it has begun luring riders off Charlotte’s trains and buses.

Why didn’t each of us relax on the bus to work this morning, reading books and digging WiFi? One answer is that most of us live too far away (hi, Cary!) from the nearest stop. First mile.

And maybe the office is a long hike (yo, Research Triangle Park!) from the last stop, too. Last mile.

So we drove the car instead.

Here’s a new option with the potential to overcome this considerable obstacle: Use one smartphone app to plot the best bus route – and, if it helps, book an Uber driver to cover that “first mile” to the bus stop or the “last mile” to the destination, or both. All with the proverbial one click.

Uber has [made modest moves to acknowledge public transit](#) options in other parts of the country. But the San Francisco-based company is going farther with GoTriangle.

It all comes together in the Rider app distributed by Durham-based TransLoc, which shows commuters where their bus is and how soon it will arrive.

“Our mission is to make transit so great that it becomes everybody’s first choice for transportation,” Doug Kaufman, the TransLoc CEO, said in an interview. “This Uber partnership is a way to make transit more viable, by making it easier to get people to the bus stop.”

GoTriangle, better known as Triangle Transit, is the three-county bus agency that hauls students and commuters from one town to another. TransLoc’s Rider app tracks buses for GoTriangle and 140 transit agencies across the country. Rider will be Uber-enhanced for transit users in Memphis, Tenn., starting March 22 – and for GoTriangle riders starting Thursday.

GoTriangle, Uber and TransLoc will roll out the new app in an event scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday at Durham Station, the downtown bus hub. Wool E. Bull and Mayor Bill Bell will be there.

IT WILL ACTUALLY GIVE YOU THE ABILITY TO HAIL AN UBER FOR THE LAST MILE – SO IT’S THERE WHEN YOUR BUS PULLS UP, AND IT’S READY TO TAKE YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION.

Doug Kaufman, TransLoc CEO

“It will give you the full itinerary from beginning to end,” Kaufman said. “Let’s say the best option for you includes an Uber on the first mile and again on the last mile. It will actually give you the ability to hail an Uber for the last mile – so it’s there when your bus pulls up, and it’s ready to take you to your destination.”

In Florida, a Tampa Bay-area bus agency has struck a different deal with Uber and a local taxi service. The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority subsidizes the cost of that first-mile drive to the bus stop. Pinellas officials think this will reduce pressures to expand their bus network into more neighborhoods.

Uber says it welcomes the chance to work with TransLoc and GoTriangle.

“As a company devoted to innovation, Uber believes that integrating with TransLoc is a positive step towards providing safe and reliable rides for all at the touch of a button,” Raj Naik, Uber’s general manager for North Carolina, said by email.

It’s not clear whether the local agencies in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill are ready to embrace the competition. Charlotte’s bus and rider counts fell by about 10 percent in the past year, and transit officials say they lost some of those customers to Lyft and Uber.

“This is a challenge for the transit industry,” John Lewis, CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System, [told the Charlotte City Council last week](#). “The shared ride community is having an impact on transit.”

GoTriangle’s intercity buses haven’t felt serious price competition from Uber so far.

“Since a lot of our trips are very long, being a regional transit authority, you will still see riders getting their last link through Uber as opposed to using Uber for the entire trip,” GoTriangle spokeswoman Natalie Murdock said. “We jumped at this opportunity for a partnership with Uber.”

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A CLUNKY TEST DRIVE

TransLoc’s Uberized Rider app is in beta. It allows the option to combine Uber trips only with GoTriangle rides.

And for now, local bus services in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill are off limits. Diplomatically, the app declines to offer Uber trips that would compete directly with GoRaleigh, GoDurham or Chapel Hill Transit options.

So it took Alex Gibson, a TransLoc product manager, a few tries Monday afternoon to come up with a hypothetical trip that demonstrated the appeal of an Uber alternative.

There are three options for making a trip from TransLoc's office near Research Triangle Park to a residential neighborhood off Morrisville Carpenter Road.

The first option starts with a quarter-mile walk to GoTriangle's regional transit center, then the 311 bus to Cary. Exit at a stop on N.C. 55 and catch an Uber car for the final mile to the destination. Travel time: 23 minutes. Cost: \$2.25 for the bus plus \$6 for Uber.

If you walk that last mile instead, it takes 38 minutes and you save the \$6 Uber fee.

Or skip the bus and take an Uber car for the entire trip: 22 minutes for \$18.

Parking safety concerns downtown stakeholders

THE HERALD SUN BY LAUREN HORSCH MARCH 5, 2016

DURHAM — Recent incidents in downtown Durham parking facilities have raised concerns about the safety precautions being taken by the city to protect those who decide to park in the city-operated facilities.

On Feb. 24 a 55-year-old man was attacked in the stairwell of the Corcoran Street parking deck on his way to work. In December a fist fight broke out in the same deck that resulted in injuries and a broken window.

Downtown Durham Inc., along with other downtown businesses, has penned a letter to the City Council urging for "swift action to deter this type of crime in the future."

"While there have been some improvements to lighting and appearance in the decks, people still express concerns over parking deck safety," the letter reads.

Along with safety concerns DDI — along with other downtown stakeholders near the Corcoran deck — laid out specific ways they'd like to see improvements, including using video cameras, more lighting in decks and along the pathways of travel between the decks and downtown destinations and more safety patrols.

Currently the city contracts its parking services to Republic Parking, a Tennessee-based company, which started working with Durham in August after the council unanimously approved the company's contract with the city.

Per contract, Republic staffs "a minimum of four security officers that cover four" of the city's parking garages. Those security officers are instructed to contact police "in response to all requests for assistance or observation of any suspicious or illegal activity."

The four parking garages — Chapel Hill Street, Church Street, Corcoran Street and Durham Centre — have security patrols in them from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. every day.

In the letter, signators urged the city to increase the patrols and possibly increase bike patrols by Durham police.

Other safety considerations outlined in the letter included emergency call boxes, adding mirrors to stairwells of decks and considering adding windows to stairwells to "improve visibility and lighting."

When it comes to changes in any city-owned facility, how to pay for said changes comes up. In the letter, it's suggested that the city use parking revenues along with the city's general fund to help pay for security improvements — including making an allotment in next fiscal year's budget.

Days after the latest incident in the Corcoran deck, Thomas Leathers, parking division manager for the city, addressed the City Council during a budget retreat.

Leathers told the council prior to the incident he and the transportation department had already identified the need for additional cameras and surveillance measures in the parking decks.

"Going forward we're working with general services and doing a security assessment," Leathers said.

Beyond improving security the letter also suggested additional cleaning and maintenance of the decks, and insuring that elevators in the decks are fully functional.

Raleigh-Durham International Airport: January by the numbers

TRIANGLE BUSINESS JOURNAL BY LAUREN K. OHNESORGE MAR 7, 2016

Four months prior to the debut of [Raleigh-Durham International Airport's one-way service to Paris](#), international travel was up in January.

That's according to numbers released by the RDU Airport Authority.

RDU carriers enplaned 340,226 passengers, a 3.6 percent increase from the 328,348 passengers the airport saw in January 2015.

Of those passengers, 7,196 were international, a 9.4 percent increase over the same time period last year.

International travel has been increasing at RDU over the past couple of years, despite limited options. The only direct flight across the Atlantic right now is to London.

Enplaned international passengers at RDU through the years:

- **2015:** 98,953
- **2014:** 96,189
- **2013:** 92,562
- **2012:** 93,561
- **2011:** 93,610
- **2010:** 82,306

The Delta (NYSE: DAL) flight to Paris debuts May 12 and means more than just increased air traffic. A report published by N.C. State University economist [Michael Walden](#) predicted that a new international flight would mean an increase to the area's gross domestic product by \$1.4 billion. Additionally, the report projects the flight would create 14,000 jobs over 25 years.

But international flights [are costly to implement and maintain](#). [American Airlines](#) (NYSE: AAL) began its own Paris service out of RDU in 1988, but the numbers didn't work, leading the airline to cancel the flight six years later.

In other airport numbers, the month of January saw an average of 171 daily departures out of RDU, on par with last year. The largest carriers by passenger count were Delta (104,799 passengers, a 10 percent increase), American/US Airways (94,836 passengers, a 12 percent decrease) and Southwest (70,936, a one percent decrease).

RDU saw 5.9 million pounds of enplaned cargo.

And a total of 145,398 cars exited its daily lots, an 11 percent increase from last year.

Early data suggests pedestrian deaths surged in 2015

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS BY JOAN LOWY MAR 8, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pedestrian deaths surged by an estimated 10 percent last year as the economy improved, the price of gas plunged and motorists put more miles behind the wheel than ever before, according to an analysis of preliminary state traffic fatality data.

The growing use of cellphones distracting drivers and walkers may also be partially to blame, states a report released by the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents governors' highway safety offices. Warmer weather and shorter winters along with a greater awareness of health benefits may also be encouraging people to walk more.

"This is really sobering news," said Richard Retting, co-author of the report. "Pedestrian safety is clearly a growing problem across the country."

The data analyzed were from the first half of 2015. If the trend holds true for the full year, it would be the largest year-to-year increase in pedestrian deaths since 1975 when the current federal system for recording traffic deaths was created.

The report is based on state traffic fatality figures, extrapolated for the full year by researchers at Sam Schwartz Consulting, which specializes in transportation matters.

There were 2,368 pedestrians killed in the first six months of 2015, compared to 2,232 during the same period in 2014 — a six percent increase. Researchers arrived at a 10 percent increase for the entire year by factoring in that fatalities for the first half of the year are typically underreported, and that for at least the last five years an average of 25 percent more pedestrian deaths were recorded in the second half of the year, which includes warmer summer months, Retting said.

Total traffic deaths, which had been trending downward for the past decade, were also up an estimated 8 percent last year. But pedestrian fatalities have been rising since 2005, and now account for 15 percent of total traffic deaths. The last time pedestrian deaths accounted for that large a share of traffic deaths was 25 years ago.

Nearly three-quarters of pedestrian deaths occur after dark, and a third of those killed had been drinking alcohol, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data. By comparison, about 15 percent of motorists involved in those crashes had a blood alcohol content at the legal limit or higher.

Four large population states — California, Florida, Texas and New York — accounted for 42 percent of the pedestrian deaths in the first six months of 2015. States with the highest rate of pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 residents were scattered across the country — Florida, 1.35; Arizona, 1.27; Delaware, 1.27; South Carolina, 1.12; Mississippi, 1.07; Oregon, 1.04, and New Mexico, 1.01. The District of Columbia also tied Oregon for the sixth highest rate, 1.04.

In a related issue, the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents city bus drivers, estimates that roughly one pedestrian is killed every 10 days by a city bus because of blind spots in poorly designed buses. Wide "A pillars," which connect the windshield to the driver's side window, and poorly placed side mirrors frequently obstruct drivers' view of intersections, according to the union.

"Until the industry demands a change in the design of buses to remove the unnecessary blind spots like European buses, people will continue to die in these preventable accidents," said Larry Hanley, the union's president.