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Why they ride - a sampling of CCTA bus passengers

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As negotiations continued between CCTA bus drivers and authority leadership, the Burlington Free Press asked riders how they rely on local bus service. Here are some responses:

• **Penny Martin Hathaway, 22, Colchester:** For Penny Martin Hathaway, 32, Chittenden County Transportation Authority bus service is part of her routine. Most mornings she must leave her home in Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester to make it to her job, via the bus, by 9 a.m.

She was pulling for an agreement between the CCTA management and the drivers' union so she wouldn't have to impose on friends for rides. She said she knows many who rely on the bus.

"A lot of people I work with take the bus to go to work," she said.

• **Gabriel Ayuen, 32, Colchester:** Ayuen, 32, also lives in Fort Ethan Allen. He says he relies upon CCTA for almost all of his travels, including trips to work, shopping and meetings in Burlington.

"I have no car," he said.

For instance, he was scheduled to meet with his probation supervisor in Burlington at 8 a.m. today. He said he had no idea how he'd get there had there been a strike.

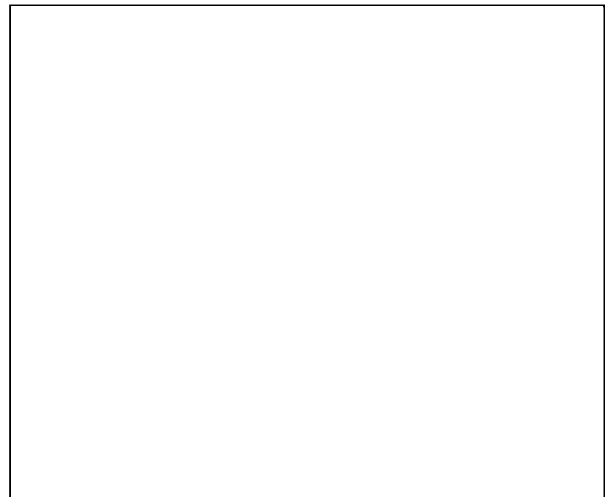
"What can I do? I have to come in. I need to take the bus," he said.

This morning's meeting wasn't the only reason he needs the bus. He works at Twincraft, a bar soap manufacturer in Winooski, and needs transportation to and from work, he said. CCTA buses are the only way he can be on time for work at 7 most mornings, he said.

• **Roch Thibodeau, 50, South Burlington:** Thibodeau can put away his walking shoes after all. Had CCTA bus drivers gone on strike, he said he would have been doing a lot of walking.

His daily routine is to take a cab from his South Burlington home to work at Fletcher Allen Health Care. The cab ensures he

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arrives on time. In the afternoon, he takes a CCTA bus home, since he doesn't have to be there at a certain time.

Had CCTA bus drivers joined picket lines, Thibodeau said he would have had to hoof it. He estimates it would take up to 45 minutes to walk home from work.

He's a regular bus rider, beyond the afternoon commute.

"I use the bus for transportation, for going to dinner, shopping," he said. He takes the bus to Burger King to eat, or to treat himself to meals at the Texas Roadhouse restaurant in Williston.

• **David Dalley, 26, South Burlington:**

Most days, David Dalley drives his own car to work at the University Mall Taco Bell in South Burlington, but Thursday his vehicle was in the shop, so he took the bus, like many of his employees.

Before news of a tentative settlement that averted a strike surfaced, Dalley was trying to think through contingency plans. Most of his employees take CCTA buses to work.

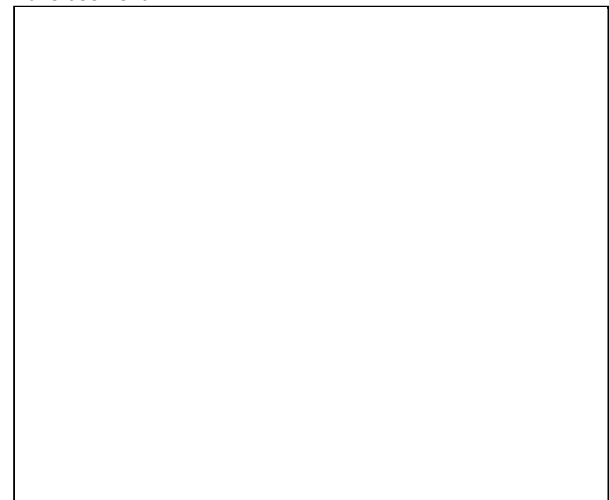
"I might have to go pick people up at home," he said earlier in the day, while the bus drivers' strike still loomed.

— Matt Sutkoski, Free Press

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