

**THE YORK DISPATCH**
York County's Afternoon Paper

Why wait? Go take the bus

EDITORIAL *The York Dispatch*

Updated: 03/31/2010 10:45:42 AM EDT

Wouldn't it be nice to just hop in your vehicle in the morning, tell it where you want to go, then sit back and relax? Maybe take a nap, read a book or get some work done on your way to the office.

That's not so far-fetched.

Long envisioned by futurists, the driverless car could be just around the corner.

In an essay this month for the Wall Street Journal, Randal O'Toole -- a senior fellow with the Cato Institute and author of "Gridlock: Why We're Stuck in Traffic and What to Do About It" -- writes that making today's modern vehicles completely automated involves little more than a software upgrade.

Driverless cars will be safer, reduce the need for new roads and will be greener -- both because they'll ease traffic congestion and they'll be lighter due to reduced collision risks, he says.

O'Toole notes that General Motors vice president of research Lawrence Burns "predicted that completely driverless cars would be on the market by 2018. He added that the primary obstacles were legal and bureaucratic, not technological."

While we wait for our robot cars, Yorkers who work in Maryland can enjoy many of those same promised benefits by taking advantage of a Rabbit Transit program -- one we're in danger of losing unless more people get on board.

Rabbit Transit early last year launched an express bus service for commuters who live in York County but work in Hunt Valley and Timonium.

However, the route isn't attracting enough riders, and unless the company can fill 80 percent of the seats the service could end in 2012, according to Richard Farr, Rabbit's executive director.

They think one way to boost ridership is to add another Maryland destination. Rabbit Transit has launched an online survey -- available at www.rabbittransit.org for about two more weeks -- to gauge interest in adding service to Towson, Farr said.

We know this service might not be for everyone -- for one thing it involves a time commitment.

Unlike in Towson, where many businesses are within walking distance of each other, employment centers in Hunt Valley and Timonium tend to be too far apart for riders to walk, Farr said.

The distance means more stops, which slows down the route -- now about two hours -- and could discourage commuters from riding, Farr

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said.

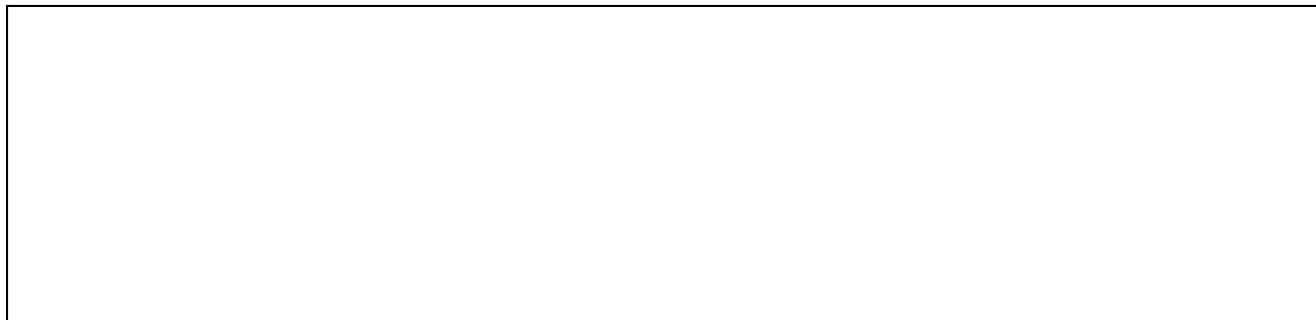
But some people might be able to work that time into their schedules, spending it on other tasks -- like, for instance, taking a nap, reading or getting some work done on the way to the office ...

At the same time they'd be relieving traffic congestion, cutting down on greenhouse gases and reducing the need for new roads.

So let Rabbit Transit know if you're interested -- perhaps you can offer suggestions to improve the route.

It would be a shame to lose this service -- even if it does require an old-fashioned driver.

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