

Ulster County Transit System Coordination & Development Plan



Update on the Ulster County Transit Plan - April 2012

The Ulster County Transportation Coordination and Development Plan started in September 2011. It is a collaborative effort among Ulster County and the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC), in conjunction with the City of Kingston's Citibus and the Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT). The goal of the Plan is to provide better service and integration between transit systems and to provide public transportation that is more responsive and accessible to residents and visitors of the County at a lower cost.

The Ulster County Transportation Coordination and Development Plan has continued to advance over the past several months. A complete public outreach effort, including stakeholder interviews, rider and non-riders surveys, public meetings and informal kiosk

information sessions were held through the months of October and November 2011. Since that time, the Study Team has conducted a peer service analysis and a series of in-depth route profiles for each route in service for Citibus and UCAT. The Study Team has developed some preliminary options for service improvements based on information collected through the public outreach efforts and the route profile studies. These options are still in draft format. Comments and thoughts on them will be collected prior to final recommendations being made in the summer of 2012.



Findings of Peers Analysis and Route Profiles

UCAT and Citibus are trying to provide a significant amount of service with limited resources. In the route profile studies, the Study Team explored the efficiency of each route and how it might be improved to better serve the citizens of Ulster County.

Citibus

For Citibus, the main limiting factor is the number of vehicles in the fleet. Although the service operates in a relatively small area, providing more frequent service requires multiple vehicles per route. Even with a limited number of vehicles, Citibus is attempting to serve as much of the community as possible.



However, the result is a transportation system that sacrifices directness of service for coverage area. In an effort to assign only one vehicle to each route, and still maintain hourly frequency, Citibus employs large one-way loops on the B and C Route. While this allows vehicles to avoid "retracing their steps," it also imposes very long trip lengths on passengers wishing to go to a destination that is very near-by, but

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UCAT

Whereas Citibus is limited by the number of vehicles it has, UCAT's greatest challenge is its 1,126 square mile service area, which includes several population centers and two major educational institutions separated by large swaths of sparsely populated territory. As with Citibus, UCAT is making a valiant effort to provide service to as many people and places as possible, with some corridors just served once or twice a day.



Potential Improvement Options

If service is too limited, it is only likely to accommodate the travel needs of a very small number of passengers. Like Citibus, UCAT may

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in the opposite direction of travel from the one-way loop.

Potential Improvement Options:

Rather than trying to link every possible destination with a fixed route, Citibus may wish to consider a two-pronged approach to service:

- ◆ Develop two or three key transit corridors with frequent bi-directional service, strong anchors (major destinations), and improved passenger amenities.
 - Broadway to Port Ewan and Albany Avenue to Hudson Valley Mall would be two strong candidates.
- ◆ Use innovative approaches to serve more dispersed ridership activity.
 - This could include anchored “flex” service that defines specific time points, but not the path of travel between those points. This would allow for predictable connections between major destinations and flexibility in areas of dispersed ridership.

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also wish to consider a two-pronged approach to service:

- ◆ Concentrate on serving its most productive corridors well.
- ◆ Consider methods like anchored flex service to reach more dispersed pockets of ridership.

Other changes recommended for UCAT include:

- ◆ Better passenger information regarding the opportunities of single-seat connections through inter-lines.
- ◆ Express service from Saugerties to SUNY Ulster a few times a day.
- ◆ The introduction of Saturday service to Ellenville.
- ◆ The elimination and consolidation of redundant services in and around New Paltz.

These general service improvement concepts will form the basis for specific service change recommendations that will become the products of this Plan.

Jurisdiction of Citibus and UCAT within Ulster County

The issue of territory and jurisdiction affect Citibus, UCAT, and Ulster County residents. In passenger surveys, the Hudson Valley Mall is the most often-cited destination where Citibus passengers would like buses to go. However, due to current operating rules, this destination is off-limits to Citibus. Similarly, UCAT vehicles traveling to the mall operate closed-door through most of Kingston, frustrating potential passengers who must travel to Kingston Plaza to access the service.

Potential Improvement Options

A possible solution would be to allow both systems to operate in Kingston and to the mall, but in somewhat different ways: UCAT could provide limited-stop service along the Albany corridor while Citibus provides a more local level of service. UCAT stops could be spaced every five to ten blocks or just at major intersections, while Citibus could have stops every two to three blocks, or even operate along local streets such as Downs or O’Neil, parallel to Albany on the way to Hudson Valley Mall.

Contact for Information:

Comments or questions may be directed to **Kelly Coral** by phone: 888-579-6643 or via email: kcoral@fhiplan.com

Comments can also be mailed to:
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