

Transit Bus System Integration:

What It Means to You



Background

The Ulster County Transit System Integration Plan (“Integration Plan”) was initiated in September 2016 by the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) at the request of both the City of Kingston and Ulster County. The request was a result of the Ulster County/City of Kingston Sales Tax Agreement that acknowledged the importance of intermunicipal cooperation and included language to **“facilitate a single bus transit system within the County...”**

The Integration Plan is exploring the current transit service in Ulster County focusing on the City of Kingston and will identify opportunities to create a single transit operator as a means to improve service without increasing costs. This will allow local leaders and the public to clearly and objectively evaluate the benefits and costs associated with consolidating services, particularly when considering the overlapping service areas of UCAT and Citibus.

The Integration Plan envisions a county-wide single carrier transit system that is better able to coordinate bus movements, respond to changes in demand, and make the transit user’s experience much more seamless and service more predictable. A county-wide system is envisioned as one that will offer a single point of contact, feature easier-to-understand schedules, and be more accountable to its users.

The Integration Plan is being developed by TransPro, nationally recognized transit consultants. An advisory committee consisting representatives from Ulster County, the City of Kingston and the transit division of NYSDOT is overseeing the effort. The work is expected to be completed by October 2017.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What will the Integration Plan cover?

A: The Plan will inventory and assess: a) capital assets, such as buses, buildings and equipment (their value and expected service life); b) human resources; c) annual ridership and route productivity; d) costs of operations; d) status of state and federal grants, and; e) applicable state and federal regulations that apply to the integration of the two transit systems into one.

Q: Why do the plan now?

A: There are three major reasons why this analysis is being conducted at this time: 1) responding to the language in the Sales Tax Agreement that calls for facilitation of a single transit system by providing information to the decision-makers in the City of Kingston and Ulster County; 2) providing a path to implementation contained in the transit study completed by UCTC in 2012 that suggested that a single transit system in Ulster County would be able to provide better service at greater efficiency; and 3) declining ridership at Citibus coupled with a recognition that the available federal funding will be hard pressed to meet the needs of two separate systems in the future.

Q: Who is doing the study?

A: UCTC has hired TransPro, a nationally recognized transit consulting firm, to conduct the study, which is being guided by an advisory committee with representatives from both the City and the County as well as the transit division of NYSDOT Region 8. Funding is being provided by the Federal Transit Administration.

Q: Is the UCAT/Citibus bus system integration a 'done deal'?

A: No.

Q: Who makes the final decision?

A: Any final decision will require the support of transit users and agreement by elected officials of the County and the City on how and when to move forward.

Q: What is the anticipated time frame?

A: There is no exact date set for a decision or for final implementation. The study is expected to be completed in October 2017. Any decision to move forward is likely to require 6 months to implement.

Q: Will my Citibus route be cut or changed?

A: Changes in service would only be made after a dialogue with transit users takes place and in keeping with the goal to improve transit service as a whole in and around the City.

Next Steps

Initial technical reports have been completed and are available online at the project website. On-board rider satisfaction surveys and route analysis will take place during July 2017 and an online survey tool open to the public will also be launched at that time. Public outreach is expected to take place after Labor Day 2017.

To Learn More and to Participate in a Brief Survey, Visit:

<http://ulstercountyny.gov/planning/planning/active-studies/transit-system-integration>

Or Contact Brian Slack, Principal Transportation Planner, UCTC

bsla@co.ulster.ny.us • (845) 334-5590

