



NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** County Executive Jen Metzger

****For Immediate Release****

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Ulster County Announces UCAT Service Changes

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT) will implement a series of service changes beginning **Wednesday, September 10, at 5 a.m.** These adjustments are designed to improve our public transportation system, helping riders reach their destinations faster and with fewer delays, and are aligned with the ongoing Route Optimization Plan.

“We’ve listened closely to riders, operators, and community partners, and these changes reflect their priorities — making transit more reliable, efficient, and responsive to community needs,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “We understand that any change to transit service can feel disruptive, and we appreciate our riders' flexibility and patience during this transitional time.”

Key Service Changes Include:

- **Improved Service between Kingston, New Paltz and Newburgh:** Changes to the X Route and the CL (College Loop, connecting SUNY Ulster and SUNY New Paltz via Kingston) will now provide an additional 5 trips/day to Newburgh and an additional 6.5 trips/day between New Paltz and Kingston.
- **Shortened trip times between Ellenville and Kingston:** The existing EU Route will be reconfigured and renamed as the E Route with two 8-hour shifts (E AM and E PM), eliminating the 10-hour U shift. CL will connect with the E Route, shortening trip times to Ellenville and improving access for rural riders.
- **Yellow Route (City of Kingston) and T Route Merger:** These routes will combine to serve the Kingston Inn and City of Kingston. Service to Port Ewen will shift to the KPL Route, with convenient transfers available at Garraghan Drive and Development Court.
- **Fixed Schedule Route for New Paltz:** Service in the New Paltz area will be provided by fixed service routes, specifically the KPL, UPL, and CL Routes. This will result in

more accurate arrival and departure times while maintaining existing coverage. The NPL Route will be discontinued.

- **ADA Paratransit Expansion:** UCAT will now operate up to 5 paratransit vehicles daily (up from 3), improving access and the ability to meet ride requests for riders with disabilities.

Like many transit systems across the region and nationwide, UCAT has faced persistent staffing shortages. These upcoming service changes are not only designed to improve efficiency and rider experience — they also provide critical support to UCAT’s workforce by aligning routes with standard 8-hour shifts, helping to reduce driver fatigue and enhance coverage. Thanks to recent hiring efforts, all but one full-time driver position is now filled. To further stabilize operations and reduce reliance on part-time coverage, County Executive Metzger will propose converting several part-time roles to full-time in the 2026 budget. Once these staffing changes are in place, all weekday routes will be staffed by full-time drivers, with three additional floaters available to cover call-outs or leaves, ensuring more consistent and reliable service for riders.

To further enhance rider experience, UCAT has hired two **bus stewards** who will ride key routes to assist passengers, provide resources and information, prevent/de-escalate any conflicts, and support drivers and a safe and enjoyable transit experience for all.

“These strategic adjustments are about strengthening system reliability, supporting our drivers, and improving the experience for our riders,” **said UCAT Director Toni Roser.** “We’re committed to making public transit work better for Ulster County.”

It’s important for riders to know that only the changes listed above will go into effect on September 10. No other routes or schedules will be impacted at this time. Riders can expect their usual service outside of these updates, and UCAT will continue to provide clear communication as future phases of the Route Optimization Plan are considered. These service changes will be forthcoming on ucat.ulstercountyny.gov, listed on UCAT buses, and on the UCAT Facebook page.

The Route Optimization Plan is ongoing, and is being conducted in partnership with the Ulster County Transportation Council, with extensive public input shaping how transit service could evolve. These changes reflect the first step toward a more reliable, rider-focused system. For more information on the Route Optimization Plan, visit <https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/ucat-route-plan>

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