

Minutes from Public Hearing regarding
UCAT Route schedules and Fare increases

January 12, 2010

In attendance:

UCAT Representatives: Bob DiBella, Director of Public Transportation; Carol Hargrove, Public Transportation Dispatch & Operations Coordinator; Dennis Doyle, Deputy Director of Public Transportation; Bill Tobin, Principle Transportation Planner; Jane Carroll, Grants & Procurement Specialist

Ulster County Representative: Elliott Auerbach, County Comptroller

Representing the Press: The Kingston Times' Hugh Reynolds, Reporter

Representing MetroPool: Tami Herendeen Rice

Public Representation: Kathy Nolen, Terry Wells, Kathy VanDine, Michelle Smith, Sue Pilla, Pa Loma Kopp, Nicholas Suelkauskas, Vicky Pelle (sp?), and Jennifer Tortorella

- General Purpose: Introduction and explanation of UCAT's plans for new service, new Route Schedules and County-wide mapping System
- U.S. Census: Ulster County has 1,126 miles of land mass- creates challenges to transportation services
- Existing Service and Schedules- Current Deviated/Fixed vs. New Fixed/Route Paransit system: old system creates loss of control of bus schedule whereas fixed route service provides timed stops for the general public and curb to curb service for ADA clients
- Current service provides limited routes, stops and connect services
- New county-wide system map: easier to read with individual stops & schedules shown for each route
- Explanation and visuals of where maps were and where they are now; hub system for routing system is laid out with visual conception of old vs. new system-wide maps
- Expansion on new routing system, schedules and maps; explaining differences occurring in service and how it is improved: Route maps with fare zones giving verbal & visuals showing simplification of new system for all individual service

Comprehensive overview of new routes, connections, transfers etc.

E-Route: SUNY Ulster-Ellenville

- 10 runs from Ellenville to Kingston vs. 8 with old service: 2 trips added to address...
- Issue of SUNY Ulster students getting to class on time with new connecting service
- Earlier drop-off return trips expanded to accommodate student schedules

E-1 Route: Ellenville- Spring Glen

- Request service no longer needed for E and E-1 service. Bus automatically stops at destinations formally requiring call-in service

N-Route: SUNY Ulster- Rosendale

- Change in connection, now at Rosendale Park & Ride vs. SUNY Ulster

U-Route: Kingston- SUNY Ulster

- Option of students connecting & using bus without usual wait; with morning, afternoon, evening trips & connections added to run

K-Route: Kingston- Ulster Mall Area

- K & S route buses now come into mall area at the same time, providing a circular mall service and dramatically reducing ride time to get back to 9W mall area

S-Route: Ulster Mall Area- Saugerties

- Old run had 10 minute lag time, now used to accommodate seniors around town and village (i.e. senior center, Price Chopper shopping center etc); with service every hour

M-Route: Ulster Mall Area

- Initially the “Mall Loop,” the new route has been designed to connect with Kingston/ Saugerties routes and shuttle passengers around the 9W shopping district, but because of store expansion, 15 minute service no longer viable- new schedule will run on the hour with ½ hour service each way

F-Route: Woodstock- Saugerties

- One change. Will now service Saugerties to Woodstock and Saugerties to the Mall- serving route 212 better

Z-Route: Kingston- Shandaken- Belleayre

- Providing the same service, but with 1 added trip daily (from 6 to 7); no request service needed; flag service; automatically going into Woodstock

R-Route: Kingston- New Paltz

- Same service, just laid out more sensibly on map and schedule

G-Route: Kingston- Marlboro

- Formerly the “Highland” bus- but realistically serviced all over with no comprehensive return service
- Now services only 9W corridor, with connections at park and ride and bus going into New Paltz and Poughkeepsie

H-Route: New Paltz- Highland

- Shuttle still exists as it did, but with 10 minutes added for timelier stops

W-Route: New Paltz- Wallkill- Plattekill

- New format. No change in service

X-Route: New Paltz- Newburgh

- Now servicing to Stewart Airport

New Paltz Loop

- Existing as is, only under new format

Fare Structure: Question of reducing service or raising rates?

- Current fare= .75 cents for the first zone and an additional .25 cents for each additional zone
- New Fare= \$1.00 for the first zone with an additional .25 cents remaining for each additional zone

After careful deliberation and learning that Ulster County has the lowest fares in the state, decided that raising initial rate .25 cents far exceeded cost of cutting service to those most in need throughout the county

Types of Fares

1. Cash fare- exact fare needed
2. Bus pass- can be purchased at UCAT, SUNY Ulster and/or on bus
 - Discounted bus pass- save 10% on 20/40 rides
 - \$65 monthly pass with unlimited rides
3. Agency fares- where a local agency, such as Family of Woodstock or UARC, subsidizes bus fare

* Senior discounts and ADA ½ fare price for rides between 10am and 2pm

We're Still the Best Value in the County

- Total fares illustrated for specific routes, as well as cost savings based on AAA's 2009 Average Per Mile Costs for driving and maintaining a vehicle show significant cost savings by utilizing UCAT's bus service

Conclusion and questions & comments encouraged

- Bus pass cost break-down question
- Specific question regarding E-1 Route
- Compliment on new schedules and maps with comments on having these featured on UC Tourism website's "Car-Free Vacations" section
- Comment expressing concern with number of schedules needed to get around
- Press comment regarding % of initial increase vs. decreasing service
- Question regarding bike racks being installed on new hybrid buses
- Ulster/Pkps Link service question and ½ fare question
- Question regarding UCAT holiday schedule

- Question regarding concern of reliance on bus ride from train station with train running late- Carol explains “reimbursement/ guaranteed ride program,” and ability of calling dispatch to request holding bus for late train arrival
- Specific questions about new schedules- easily answered with new route & mapping systems
- SUNY Ulster student comment regarding Kingston Plaza-Pine Hill service, with suggestion of bringing back past service for convenience of SUNY students- Carol explains that newer service was created to fill need of providing mall employees bus service
- Frequent rider comment- Riding bus for 4 ½ years; good service; like the drivers, no problems; will continue to ride. Thank you for the service.
- Letter from Town of Saugerties Planner, Jeremy Kane, read into record expressing concern that Saugerties/ Kingston service not be changed as proposed: answered by Carol during comprehensive overview of K & S Routes
- Question regarding when rates go into effect- answered, February 1st, pending County Executive approval
- Future input and suggestions are encouraged and participants are directed to informational resources for contacting UCAT