

Transit and Economic Development in the Heart of Central New York

TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit) provides an invaluable transit service to the growing community of Tompkins County – home to the City of Ithaca and Cornell University. As they look toward continued economic growth in the future, community leaders see transit as a critical component of an efficient and sustainable transportation system. TCAT went from providing less than 3 million rides in 2007, to over 4 million in 2016 at a rate that outpaced total US bus ridership by 38% over the 10-year period. The facility has been maxed out for about 5-years, impeding TCAT’s ability to grow and adapt. In order that to **meet community demand for transit** and to **support a growing local economy**, TCAT finds itself in **need of a new facility**.



Many studies have demonstrated the tight link between investment in transit infrastructure and long-term effects on economic growth, efficiency, and productivity measures. A 2014 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) report concluded that “Increased public transportation investment can lead to significant economic growth, as a consequence of both the short-term stimulus impact of public transportation outlays and a longer-term, cumulative impact on economic productivity... a program of enhanced investment sustained over 20 years can have a total effect on the economy in the range of 3.7 times the amount being spent annually.”

In Tompkins County, a new transit facility and increased transit service will:

- help attract new businesses and increased investment in the area – it is easier to recruit good talent when there are strong local transportation options;
- reduce traffic congestion leading to direct travel cost savings for business and households;
- help ensure that people of all income groups can reliably get to important job centers from anywhere in the County (and beyond);
- provide cost savings for travel and vehicle ownership for transit riders, a boon for households struggling to deal with an expensive local housing market;
- promote a mode-shift toward more sustainable transportation options

“There is a clear demand for an expanded role for transit in Tompkins County based on ridership expectations, mobility needs and environmental and energy use community goals. In order to provide any realistic opportunity of advancing this vision, TCAT will need, at the very least, significant and continuous additional funding and possibly and entirely new paradigm of how the community selects and funds its priority transportation options.

- Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council
2035 Long-range Transportation Plan

TCAT shares a transit facility with GADABOUT – an innovative and effective provider of paratransit for individuals over 60 and disabled passengers. Given that both organizations are dealing with space constraints at the current facility, TCAT recently commissioned a Facility Assessment and Planning Study that showed: a) the current facility is completely maxed-out in terms of space for buses, maintenance bays, and administrative office space, b) to keep the facility functioning as is currently will cost upwards of \$3 million over the next few years, c) the facility cannot be expanded current site due to limited lot size, and d) a new facility that allows for fleet expansion would cost approximately \$50 million. Local sources of funding are wholly inadequate to build this new facility. TCAT is currently working to make the facility project shovel-ready. TCAT and our stakeholders encourage our elected Federal representatives to actively support transportation funding measures that can make the facility project a reality. By doing so you will be underwriting the continued success of a principal employment center in Upstate NY, providing improved access to jobs and services for thousands of households in our service area, and providing the basis for a more sustainable transportation system for Tompkins County and beyond.



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