

OCTC Transit Sub-Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, January 14, 2021
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



Microsoft TEAMS Meeting Information:

Join on your computer or mobile app: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or Call in (audio only): +1 (646) 776-1611

Phone Conference ID: 378 357 480#

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Name:

Julie Richmond
Rob Parrington
Martha Boulanger
Ashlee Long
Jessica Ridgeway
Chris Titze
Christian Higgins
Zack Coleman
Scott Manley
Mike Sweeton
Kevindaryan Lujan
Brendan Cullen

Organization:

Orange County Planning
Transpo Group
Cambridge Systematics
Orange County Planning
Town of Newburgh
Town of Warwick
Orange County Legislator
Chautauqua County

SUMMARY

The Transit Sub-Committee was established in 2019 as a result of recommendations made in the Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 Transportation Policies and Strategies Chapters (2 and 5, respectively) and vision and recommendations from the Orange County Comprehensive Plan (2019) update and supplemental Transportation chapter. The Transit Sub-Committee mission is to carry out continued development of the current countywide transit system, to promote coordination of transit planning and programming activities, and to provide a forum to share information on transit-focused projects and programs taking place within the MPO.

Introductions

- Roll call for those in attendance. This committee is open to new members. Participation is voluntary and advisory in nature. If you would like to sign up for the email list to receive more information and announcements, email OCTC@orangecountygov.com with the subject line "Transit Subcommittee".
- Jessica Ridgeway, Orange County Planner and MPO staff will be taking on facilitation of this meeting for future sessions. The Sub-Committee is supported by OCTC staff and composed of interested OCTC members, Orange County Transit Planners, local Transit Orange operators,

regional transit operators, rider representatives, elected officials, and organizations such as civic and advocacy groups. The committee may involve additional partner agencies based on emerging issues and opportunities. The Transit sub-committee meets outside of the regular MPO Planning and Policy Committee meeting schedules and any meetings will be added to the OCTC calendar.

Old Business

- Rider Reports: There were no riders present.
- Recruitment of Transit Passengers Subcommittee Representatives: The committee is looking for rider advocates to represent transit passengers. There will be time allocated at the beginning of each Transit Sub-committee meeting for rider advocates to make announcements and give comments on transit in Orange County. Rider advocates are also invited to give input and feedback on current Transit Projects discussed during the meetings.

Transit Project Updates

Transit Orange

- Open Trip Planner: the trip planner is available on www.ridetransitorange.com. Use this planner to plan trips across multiple public transportation services, including local transit, paratransit, demand responsive dial-a-bus, and commuter services. Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, many transit operators are providing reduced service. Please be aware of potential service changes and contact Transit Orange staff or transit operators directly for the most up-to-date schedule information.
- Transit Orange Website: Transit Orange is in the process of updating its website, it is currently still in the test phase. The new site will better communicate Transit Orange services and connecting services available to residents, visitors, and commuters in Orange County. The website will feature a full system map, core services of Transit Orange, as well as timetables and fare information.
- Newburgh-Beacon Ferry Analyses: Transit Orange conducted a national review of ferry best practices and similar ferry services, reviewed existing ferry service, analyzed location-based services (LBS) data to determine origin-destination pairs for given study zones and general traffic characteristics and reviewed service alternatives. There are three basic transportation functions of ferries 1. essential ferry routes; where no viable land-based alternative exists; 2. complementary ferry routes; where routes are more efficient than land-based alternatives; and 3. optional ferry routes; where routes have equivalent land-based alternatives. The Newburgh Beacon Ferry is considered optional as described in transportation function 3. The following are the results of the analysis:
 - Existing services (ferry and Newburgh Beacon Bridge) maintain ample capacity to address existing and future ridership.
 - Ferry services maintains the highest annual cost / passenger; as compared to other comparable services.
 - Ferry and comparable shuttle services maintain similar total cross-Hudson travel times (when including docking, parking, and boarding/alighting).
 - Almost two-thirds of observed west-of-Hudson ferry service passengers come from households north of I-84.
 - Non-commuter (west-to-east and/or east-to-west) travel patterns did not demonstrate a significant number of trips (Beacon Main Street exception).
 - Observed trips to Newburgh Waterfront primarily begin in Orange County and west-of-Hudson communities.

- Shuttle bus services would offer a comparable and more cost efficient cross-Hudson service for commuter and recreational travelers.
- Major Employer Transit Service (METS) Plan: Plan goals include: examining best practices in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) transit service models utilized in coordination with major employers, identifying opportunities to expand or improve connections of public transportation to major employers, and developing public transportation service strategies to improve the mobility needs of Orange County for advancement. The project is broken up into five tasks: Task 1: Examine Public Private Partnership Transit Models; Task 2: Transit Market Demand Analysis; Task 3: Feasibility Assessment; Task 4: Alternatives Analysis; Task 5: Draft and Final Service Plan. Twenty-six (26) employment locations were identified as major employers and “cut sheets,” or one page summaries have been completed for each METS location detailing findings including: description, sector, number of employees, key employers, day trips by purpose, and analysis output. The service goals and evaluation criteria are as follows:
 - Provide mobility and access for all residents to the mobility options needed to connect to jobs.
 - Offer a high-quality transportation alternative to driving alone, that is reliable and affordable.
 - Be cost-effective, making the best use of county funding, and leveraging other private and public sector sources.
 - Support economic development by connecting workers to existing and future employers
 - Provide connections to existing transit services
 - Equitable distribution of services by identifying opportunities to improve accessibility for those with the greatest need

Seven (7) METS locations within close proximity to one another have been grouped into service areas for additional analysis and strategy development. Next steps include finalizing planning level service evaluation and developing recommendations, evaluating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on public transportation demand and service delivery, examining social service facilities as employment and transit demand centers, and developing and submitting draft and final report.

New Business

- Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on public transportation in Orange County
 - Transit Orange operators responded well to COVID-19 challenges. Many were able to quickly obtain plexiglass driver barriers and appropriate personal protective equipment. Guidance was also shared with all operators regarding sanitizing and social distancing.
 - Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, many transit operators are providing reduced service. Please contact your transportation provider directly for the most up-to-date schedules.
 - OCTC has added a “Commuting & COVID-19” section to the Commuter resources page.

Adjournment

Next Meeting – Thursday April 15, 2020 at 10:00 am

For agendas or other meeting materials, please visit <https://www.orangecountygov.com/2035/Sub-Committees>