

2014 - 2015 Route Performance Report

Introduction

This is CDTA's annual report on route performance for fixed route services during Fiscal Year 2015 (April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015). The report includes information on our route network (specifically ridership and productivity), a description of major service changes, and recommendations for the coming year. It will guide planning activities through fiscal year 2016 and help the organization use its resources in the most effective manner possible.

State of Affairs

In Fiscal Year 2014-15, CDTA system ridership continued to increase, filling much of the additional capacity provided by targeted service improvements. This year, CDTA performed vital planning functions to pursue funding for the major capital recommendations of the 2014 Transit Development Plan, while continuing to make service adjustments to lay the groundwork for their implementation and enhance capacity on overcrowded routes where possible.

After four consecutive years of substantial ridership increases, CDTA expects the rate of increase to slow, as our ability to meet demand by increasing the level of service is limited at our current level of funding. However, CDTA is continuing to pursue ridership growth opportunities in other areas, such as new Universal Access partners and the New Fare Collection System, or *CDTA Navigator*.

Existing Route Evaluation

This evaluation focuses on CDTA's regular route service, which is evaluated on two criteria:

- **Total Rides:** The best way to evaluate transit service is to look at ridership. CDTA's Route Classification system establishes thresholds and ranges of ridership by route category. Acceptable ridership thresholds vary by the type of service:
 - Trunk/BusPlus – 250,000 annual rides
 - Neighborhood – 100,000 annual rides
 - Express – 30,000 annual rides
 - Commuter – 15,000 annual rides

- **Ridership Productivity:** Rides per revenue hour measures route productivity, and indicates whether resources are used efficiently. A route may have high ridership, but due to over-allocation of resources, still be unproductive. Productivity thresholds vary, depending on the type of service:
 - Trunk/BusPlus – 25 rides/hour
 - Express – 20 rides/hour
 - Neighborhood – 15 rides/hour
 - Commuter – 12 rides/hour

- **On-Time Performance (OTP):** On-time performance is measured by the percentage of time points that depart on time (between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late) on a given route. To bring CDTA on-time performance in line with industry standards, at least 85% of trips should arrive on time.

Routes that fall below acceptable thresholds are considered for corrective actions and assessments of promotional opportunities to increase usage. Routes that exceed the range for a category, or perform well above average, are examined to determine if a change in category is warranted, or if a route restructuring is advisable.

It is possible that a route may perform well in one criterion but not in another. If a route is underperforming in total ridership but over-performing in riders per hour, this could indicate the route warrants increased resources. If the opposite is true, a reduction in service may be warranted. Although total riders and riders per hour are clear quantitative measures, routes are also evaluated on the following:

- **Productivity Change:** Changes over time are used to judge the effectiveness of route changes and other factors. CDTA provides new and restructured services with a trial, or growth period to obtain productivity targets.
- **Community Service Needs:** We consider community services, such as medical facilities, convalescent centers, and locations that serve seniors, disabled, and other special needs populations. This may also include geographic and social equity considerations.

The tables in this report show fiscal year 2015 performance data by route classification.

*FY 2014-2015
CDTA ROUTE PERFORMANCE*

Route	Description	Total Rides	Revenue Hours	Rides per Rev. Hour	1-Year Ridership Trend	2-Year Ridership Trend	On-Time Performance
1	Central Ave./Wolf Rd.	1,340,746	33,109	40.5	-1%	0%	67.0%
12	Washington Avenue	1,630,047	43,516	37.5	10%	25%	70.0%
11	UAlbany Shuttle	372,749	10,482	35.6	-16%	-12%	64.6%
905	BusPlus Red Line Albany - Schenectady	1,823,150	53,023	34.4	8%	14%	78.0%
22	Albany-Troy-Watervliet	1,133,049	33,313	34.0	0%	-2%	72.1%
100	Mid-City Belt	777,180	24,534	31.7	7%	18%	72.2%
10	Western Avenue	817,205	29,551	27.7	0%	-7%	71.8%
85	Troy-Waterford	615,981	22,382	27.5	-1%	-1%	71.7%
6	Second Avenue	539,306	19,834	27.2	12%	26%	74.3%
114	Madison/Washington	367,624	14,151	26.0	11%	37%	75.4%
87	Beman Park Sycaway	431,664	16,631	26.0	5%	9%	63.7%
355	Schenectady/Wolf Rd.	597,210	23,103	25.9	-8%	-7%	66.1%
* 80	Albia-Fifth Avenue	304,323	12,245	24.9	6%	2%	76.9%
353	Mont Pleasant/Scotia	291,176	11,863	24.5	8%	16%	70.7%
531	St. Luke's Express	56,532	2,312	24.5	-9%	-9%	N/A
* 7	Glenmont	345,830	14,276	24.2	-6%	8%	72.5%
224	Albany-Troy via I-90	347,286	14,594	23.8	21%	48%	75.4%
522	Hudson River Express	53,659	2,261	23.7	5%	8%	N/A
289	Griswold Heights - St. Mary's Hospital	117,182	4,977	23.5	-3%	16%	72.7%
351	Broadway/Van Vranken	224,291	9,587	23.4	10%	20%	64.1%
* 18	Delaware Avenue	488,813	20,911	23.4	5%	13%	64.4%
370	Troy/Schenectady	491,066	21,644	22.7	-1%	9%	72.9%
540	Northway Xpress	194,074	8,948	21.7	-2%	14%	N/A
138	Allen/Livingston	239,395	11,170	21.4	17%	29%	69.8%

BusPlus	Trunk	Neighborhood	Express	Commuter	Seasonal
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**Routes with an asterisk are below productivity thresholds.*

*FY 2014-2015
CDTA ROUTE PERFORMANCE (Continued)*

Route	Description	Total Rides	Revenue Hours	Rides per Rev. Hour	1-Year Ridership Trend	2-Year Ridership Trend	On-Time Performance
354	Nott Street/Rotterdam Sq. Mall	115,697	5,621	20.6	-7%	-11%	76.0%
* 13	New Scotland Avenue	434,379	21,169	20.5	2%	-5%	70.7%
182	Troy-Latham-Cohoes	492,710	24,668	20.0	19%	19%	69.8%
763	Albany/Schenectady via Route 20	79,577	4,101	19.4	2%	16%	54.4%
712	Harriman/Patroon Creek	132,142	7,126	18.5	22%	56%	64.0%
190	Fuller/Wolf	181,070	9,925	18.2	-1%	5%	77.6%
214	Rensselaer 3rd Street	200,088	11,015	18.2	8%	8%	77.4%
233	Albany/Schodack	75,979	4,732	16.1	1%	15%	72.0%
125	Clinton/Sand Creek	202,833	12,968	15.6	-5%	-10%	67.7%
50	Route 50	302,920	20,007	15.1	-5%	-7%	61.0%
* 116	Albany/Menands	52,532	3,638	14.4	-15%	-22%	74.9%
* 280	Troy-Albia	59,794	4,253	14.1	-9%	4%	78.9%
* 520	Nassau Express	21,635	1,551	13.9	-14%	-31%	N/A
734	Hackett/Buckingham Pond	29,527	2,143	13.8	26%	-5%	65.6%
* 352	Altamont Ave/McClellan	59,133	4,596	12.9	-10%	-6%	66.2%
737	Corporate Woods/Airport	78,065	6,217	12.6	22%	51%	60.8%
* 117	Guilderland/Colonie Crosstown	103,912	8,604	12.1	12%	27%	68.7%
* 530	Exit 26 - Rotterdam Square Express	19,378	1,849	10.5	-20%	12%	N/A
* 155	Suburban Circulator	98,538	10,105	9.8	-12%	-9%	69.8%
* 473	Jefferson Street	92,742	11,746	7.9	-13%	-10%	74.5%
* 719	Altamont/Voorheesville	23,565	3,084	7.6	-13%	2%	64.5%
* 472	Lake Avenue	30,256	5,224	5.8	-9%	-13%	71.6%
* 286	RPI Shuttle	25,163	4,512	5.6	2%	38%	N/A
* 875	Saratoga Trolley	3,861	1,486	2.6	-22%	-19%	28.0%
* 96	Grafton Summer Service	323	180	1.8	-12%	53%	53.6%

BusPlus	Trunk	Neighborhood	Express	Commuter	Seasonal
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**Routes with an asterisk are below productivity thresholds.*

FY 2014-2015
CDTA ROUTE PERFORMANCE (Continued)

Notes:

- Generally, the routes that have experienced the highest increases have been trunk routes, in which CDTA has invested additional resources to deal with overcrowding. For example, Routes #12, #905, #100, and #224, which all had service enhancements over the past two years, have experienced a ridership increase of 400,000. This equates to a 2.4% increase system-wide.
- Routes #13 and #18 have continued to produce below the productivity threshold for trunk routes. This is because these routes were extended to the ShopRite on Vista Boulevard, resulting in a reduction in frequency and a corresponding loss of ridership. This can be justified, as it has resulted in the contract with ShopRite that led to 200,000 riders last year.
- Routes #520, #530, #531, #540, and #719 all saw a decrease in ridership this year. These routes serve outlying communities with low transit propensity, in the interest of providing geographic equity. They are primarily used by choice riders, whose travel patterns are much more sensitive to economic factors such as the declining price of gasoline.
- Because the development and travel patterns in Saratoga County are more rural than the rest of our service area, attracting ridership to Saratoga routes remains a challenge. To better align the level of service to corridors with high transit propensity, CDTA will implement the second Saratoga County Route Restructuring in the fall of 2015.

FY 2014-2015
ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

One of the most crucial factors in choosing to ride the bus is the service reliability. People taking trips to work, school, or appointments need to be assured of getting to their destination at the scheduled time. If a route fails to meet this expectation, an individual is much more likely to abandon transit and choose another way to travel.

The work being completed toward improving route reliability focuses on segment times, time point locations, travel times between in-service trips, headway adherence, and recovery time. The goal of these efforts is to provide service that adheres to the route schedule, allows for passengers to spend minimal time waiting for transfers, and reduces service “bunching” on high demand corridors.

This is a challenge due to a number of factors, including traffic conditions, passenger demand, operator ability, weather, and staffing levels. In the last year, reliability has improved system-wide to over 70%. Routes adjusted over the last 12 months have seen a 6% improvement. There is still much work to be completed to attain levels above 85%, as established by our Transit Development Plan.

Over the coming year, CDTA staff will develop a strategy that not only allocates more resources to routes with poor reliability, but provides the necessary manpower and technology to properly manage the service on the street. These include maintaining proper staffing levels for operators and supervisors, as well as the upcoming CAD/AVL upgrade.

Service Changes and Accomplishments

We implemented a number of service changes over the course of the previous fiscal year. The following is a summary of these activities.

Service Enhancements – August 2014 to May 2015

As a result of increasing ridership, many of our routes have continued to exceed capacity and warranted service enhancements. Enhancements to service frequency and span were targeted to routes at specific times of day where ridership exceeded the existing level of capacity.

Route	Period	Service Change
#22	Weekday - Midday	Frequency increased from 20 mins to 15 mins
#100	Weekday – AM/ & PM peaks	Frequency increased from 30 mins to 20 mins
#125	Weekday, PM peak	Frequency increased from 30 mins to 25 mins
#353	Weekday – 9:00am-6:00pm	Frequency increased from 45 mins to 30 mins
#13	Weekday – PM peak	Frequency increased from 30 mins to 20 mins
#22	Saturday – Morning	Extend span by ½ hour starting at 5:30am
	Saturday – Night	Frequency increased from 30 mins to 20 mins
#50	Weekday – AM & PM peaks	Frequency increased from 50 mins to 45 mins
#182	Weekday – 9:00am-2:00pm	Frequency increased from 60 mins to 30 mins
#354	Weekday – 9:00am-5:00pm	Frequency increased from 60 mins to 35 mins
#905	Sunday – 8:00am-6:00pm	Frequency increased from 30 mins to 20 mins
	Weekday – Noon-6:00pm	Frequency increased from 15 mins to 12 mins
#875	All Days, Midday	Extend span by 1 hour, to 11:00am

Service Reductions – August 2014 to May 2015

In order to minimize the impact of service enhancements on CDTA's budget, the least productive services had to be reduced in accordance with their level of demand. All reduced services were on routes below productivity thresholds, or on parts of routes with extremely low ridership.

Route	Period	Service Change
#155	Weekday, From AM to PM peak	Frequency reduced from 30 mins to 45 mins in peaks, from 45 mins to 90 mins for midday
#472	Weekday and Saturday, Night	Reduced span by 2.5 hours, to 8:55pm
	Sunday, Morning	Reduced span by 1 hour, to 9:30am
#352	Weekday, Morning	Reduced span by 1 hour, to 5:55am
#719	Weekday, Midday	Eliminated 1 eastbound and westbound trip

On-Time Performance Adjustments – Ongoing

CDTA is now making regular adjustments down to the minute detail along the length of routes with on-time performance issues. At each pick throughout this fiscal year, schedules on manageable numbers of these routes have been adjusted. In almost every case, these adjustments have necessitated only minor changes to the schedule, at no negative impact to customers.

Bus Rapid Transit - Ongoing

During Fiscal Year 2014-15, the BusPlus Purple Line (Washington/Western BRT) was formally entered into the Project Development phase of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Small Starts funding process, which is a program tailored to BRT projects. The Purple Line also received federal environmental clearance this year, via a D-List NEPA Categorical Exclusion. This step was critical to establishing the viability of the project and justifying its suitability for federal funding.

The Locally Preferred Alternative for the Purple Line consists of an alignment along Western Avenue in the City of Albany, connecting to a dedicated busway through the Harriman and UAlbany Campuses and terminating at a new transit center at Crossgates Mall.

During the same period, CDTA completed the Alternatives Analysis report for the BusPlus Blue Line (River Corridor BRT) and obtained endorsement for a Locally Preferred Alternative from the CDTA and CDTC boards. The Blue Line has been submitted for entry into FTA Small Starts Project Development as well.

The locally preferred alternative for the Blue Line follows Routes 32 and 4, from the Port of Albany in the South End to termini in Waterford and Cohoes via Downtown Albany, North Albany, Menands, Watervliet, Downtown Troy, and North Troy.

In the spring of 2015, CDTA hired a team of consultants to assist in Project Development for both lines through a competitive bid process.

Universal Access Contracts

Over the past year, CDTA renewed its Universal Access contracts with the University at Albany, the College of Saint Rose, and Sage Colleges. These contracts include the largest in the system (UAlbany), generating over 2 million rides in the past 12 months and accounting for more than 10 percent of all CDTA ridership. CDTA also established a new contract with the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering at the SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly CNSE), which will be a crucial relationship for the development of our future plans in the area, including the BusPlus Purple Line.



Service Recommendations for 2015 - 2016

August 2015 Service Improvements & Reductions

In keeping with our goal of allocating service resources to our highest-performing routes, and adapting to regional development and demand shifts, CDTA proposes the following adjustments be made to various routes for the August 2015 pick. These changes will increase service hours on the higher-performing routes and reduce service hours on the lower-performing routes. Additionally, schedules on various other routes will undergo minor adjustments (generally not affecting level of service) to improve on-time performance and customer access.

Service Improvements

Route	Service Change
#114	Increase frequency from 35 minutes to 30 minutes for majority of the day
#351	Increase frequency from 45 minutes to 35 minutes from 11:00am – 6:00pm

Service Reductions

Route	Service Change
#18	Eliminating route service to ShopRite Slingerlands
#114	Reduce frequency from 50 minutes to 60 minutes on nights and weekends
#155	Reduce frequency from 90 minutes to 45 minutes after 9:00pm
#712	Eliminating 3 eastbound AM trips and 3 westbound PM trips
Bishop Maginn	Eliminating school tripper due to school location change

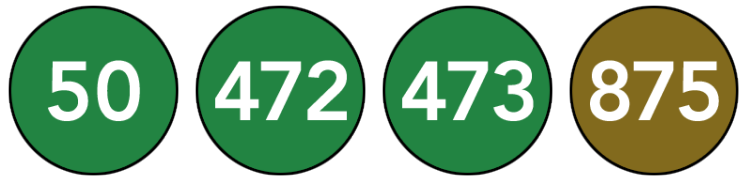
Routings and schedules of Routes #114, #117, #190, and #712 will also be adjusted to provide access to SUNY Polytechnic as part of the Universal Access agreement.

Saratoga Restructuring

In 2007, CDTA restructured all Saratoga County neighborhood routes and increased the total level of service, yet the utilization of transit remains lower than in the rest of our service area. This is due in part to the high auto ownership rate in Saratoga County, and to the extremely compact nature of downtown Saratoga Springs, which generally allows most trips to be made on foot.

However, segments of these routes have generated a significant amount of ridership, and revealed valuable information about transit travel patterns within the City of Saratoga Springs. The strongest-performing segments in the city link Skidmore College with the downtown as well as the downtown to Wilton Mall and the Exit 15 Park & Ride. A new neighborhood route network that focuses service on these activity centers will be more likely to attract high ridership.

CDTA staff has completed initial public outreach and will have an initial draft plan developed by July. After this has been vetted by the public, a finalized plan will be developed with the new services in operation by November.



Bus Rapid Transit

This year, CDTA is beginning the Project Development phase of FTA Small Starts for our two future BRT lines. During Project Development, CDTA will bring engineering to the point where these projects are ready for funding and construction. On the Blue Line, the locations of potential new stations will also be finalized. We will pursue the following schedules and ensure that key milestones are met to get these projects funded as quickly as possible:

Washington-Western BRT (Purple Line)

Complete Preliminary Plans	September 1, 2016
Project Rating Package Submission	October 1, 2016
Project Rating Approval	February 1, 2017
Final Design Plans	May 1, 2017
Begin Construction (funding dependent)	Fall 2017

River Corridor BRT (Blue Line)

Complete Preliminary Plans	January 1, 2017
Final Design Plans	Fall 2017
Project Rating Package Submission	October 1, 2017
Project Rating Approval	February 1, 2018
Begin Construction (funding dependent)	TBD

CDTA intends to advance smaller “sub-projects” within these larger projects on a more aggressive timetable. Speedy implementation of these elements of the Purple and Blue Lines will help build momentum for the larger initiative, but will also confer independent benefits upon riders of our current services in the meantime.

- **Crossgates Commons Station** – Relocating the existing bus stop to a reconfigured Springsteen Road with improved pedestrian infrastructure. This will allow current routes and the future Purple Line to travel through the site more quickly. (Fall 2015)
- **Lark-Armory Station** – Relocating the existing shelters and reconfiguring the pedestrian and traffic infrastructure to enhance safety, improve route patterns, and encourage development throughout the station area. (Summer 2016)

- **Uncle Sam Transit Center** – Coordinating with the City of Troy and the landowner (Bryce Properties) to achieve consensus on design and staffing. CDTA is also pursuing funding to engineer, design, and construct the facility through this year’s round of Empire State Development grants. (Fall 2016)
- **Crossgates Mall Transit Center** – Coordinating with the Town of Guilderland, Pyramid Group, and other stakeholders to ready the site and further develop our implementation plan. Engineering and final design to be completed as part of Project Development. (Construction date is funding dependent)

Downtowner Routes

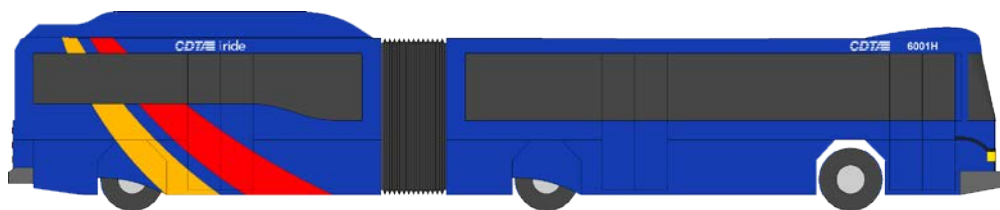
With an increasing amount of development occurring in the downtown cores of the region’s largest cities, the implementation of “Downtowner” service may be justified in certain cases. These routes would provide frequent, circulator-style service between key destinations in downtown business districts. These routes would be expected to be partially funded by the hospitality industry and other stakeholders who would directly benefit from its existence.

The future construction of a large casino resort and hotel on the former ALCO site near Downtown Schenectady presents an opportunity for CDTA to operate a potentially productive Downtowner route that would connect tourists and workers to the site. CDTA is currently coordinating with the developer, the City of Schenectady, and the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority to determine a strategy for implementation and a potential cost-sharing framework.

Garage Expansion Planning

This fall, CDTA will put two articulated buses into revenue service as a pilot program. These buses will be deployed on high-ridership routes, to evaluate their effectiveness in alleviating capacity loads.

CDTA will also evaluate the readiness of its operating divisions to handle a larger fleet of articulated buses in the future. Schedules for the entire transit system will be analyzed to determine what efficiencies can be gained through reallocation of fleet resources. This will help us to understand whether our garages will have to be expanded to house these larger vehicles.



Future CDTA Articulated Bus.

New Universal Access Contracts

With CDTA having now established universal access contracts with nearly all colleges and universities in the region, our focus is shifting to establishing new contracts with large employers and emerging industries. In the coming years, we intend to add more hospitals, residential apartment

complexes, and supermarket chains to our network of universal access contracts, as well as any other businesses that are interested in the benefits that such agreements can provide.

This fall, CDTA will roll out a universal access agreement with the SUNY Polytechnic Institute's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (SUNY Poly CNSE). In addition to providing unlimited free rides to members of the CNSE community, this agreement will bring more fixed-route service to their campus and enhance pedestrian and transit infrastructure at a future BusPlus Purple Line station.

Exit 12 Park & Ride and Malta Development

The trend of rapid development in the Town of Malta warrants a long-term planning strategy for how CDTA will provide transit service in this quickly changing area. This year, CDTA is working to secure a new location for the Exit 12 Park & Ride, which currently produces over roughly 75 rides per day on the NX service, and will be a critical link between the growing area and the region.

CDTA is coordinating with the Town, Saratoga County, area developers, and the area's largest employers to explore strategies for transit service that would connect residents of new apartment complexes to the large employment generators starting to appear throughout the Town. This could provide an opportunity to pursue new Universal Access agreements and create a reliable ridership base.