

TOMPKINS COUNTY TRANSIT HISTORY PROJECT
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Prepared for TOMTRAN under the supervision of Dwight Mengel
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SURVEY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY TRANSIT HISTORY

PROBLEMS WITH CORNELL SHUTTLE BUS SYSTEM & BEGINNING OF BLUE LIGHT SERVICE

1974-April

A fake transit survey provoked student protests when rumors of a shift to a bus pass system spread through the CU campus. This event served to highlight growing problems in the university shuttle bus system. Originally intended to serve commuters parking in A and B lots, this free system has grown to serve riders who do not use those parking facilities. Lance Haus, director of the CU Office of Transportation Services, predicts that a paid pass system would fail, but that more problems with the current system were inevitable.¹

1974-November

CU Campus bus service is serving larger numbers of riders than ever before, including large numbers of students never intended to be served by this system. Initiated in 1966, the bus service was designed to transport CU employees to new peripheral parking lots (A & B Lots). David W. Brown, CU Director of Transportation, says that students erroneously believe that the purpose of the bus system is to serve their transit needs exclusively. Brown suggests that one solution to the overcrowding is to initiate a bus pass system. Another idea is for the service to change its priorities and officially recognize that it is serving the entire campus community. He recommends improving service by increasing the number of buses in the fleet by six vehicles at a cost of \$14,500 per bus.²

1974-December

An Ithaca Journal editorial piece calls for an overhaul of the entire CU transportation system and asks the university to admit the need for radical improvements to its parking and transit facilities. A short history of the university's long-standing problems with accommodating automobiles is included, summarizing early parking shortages, the creation of peripheral parking lots with shuttle service in the mid 1960s, experiments with a university Traffic Board and the 1970 creation of a ten-year plan to deal with these issues. Set aside for lack of money, the plan would have provided additional peripheral parking lots and improved existing transit services. The establishment of a university Office of Transportation Services helped revive the program and attempted to coordinate campus transportation services, but was limited by the restraints of a fee-generated budget. Frustrated in his reform efforts by a lack of cooperation from the university community, Director Lance Haus resigned his post as director of CU Office of Transportation Services in the spring of 1974. A series of recommendations for the improvement of CU transportation policies is appended, generally calling for increased spending on the part of the university and more comprehensive enforcement of existing regulatory controls.³

1975

The Cornell Campus Bus Service is a way for employees of the university to reach the campus proper when using peripheral parking lots at a distance from the central campus. Free to all university employees, the service operates from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily. The university performs its own maintenance on its bus fleet from a garage constructed on the campus about four years ago.⁴

Gail Kaminsky, "Fake Survey Upsets Student Bus Riders", Cornell Daily Sun, 23 April 1974.

Edward Gunts, "No Relief Seen for Crowded Campus Buses", Cornell Daily Sun, 16 November 1974.

Paul Rubin, "A Collapse of the University Traffic System is Inevitable", Ithaca Journal, 27 December 1974.

p. 75, Arnim H. Meyburg, Mass Transit Development for Small Urban Areas: A Case Study- Tompkins County.

1976-February

An experimental evening bus serving Cornell University will be given another trial period until March 26, with hours of operation from 7:00-11:40 p.m. A description of the temporary route is included in the article with a schedule of service times. The service was established in December 1975 in response to increased safety concerns following a rape and several assaults on campus.⁵

N. Y. Second-Year Final Report. Washington: U.S. Dept. of Transportation, 1975.

“CU Evening Bus Service to Stay”, Ithaca Journal, 2 February 1976.

CREATION OF NORTHEAST TRANSIT ROUTE

1974-April

A report by CU Professor Arnim H. Meyburg based on a survey of residents in the area between CU and the Triphammer Road-Route 13 concluded that there is sufficient population in the area to make public transportation service financially feasible. The area covered included residents in the Towns of Lansing and Ithaca, and the Village of Cayuga Heights. Lance W. Haus, CU Director of Transportation Services, stated that the study was conducted at the request of CU Dean of Students Elmer Meyer Jr., who is interested in finding a way of alleviating the student housing shortage. Apartment buildings in the area could be opened to students without cars by the provision of some form of public transit. Swarthout & Ferris, current owners of the right to provide services in the area, may begin service as soon as the fall of 1974 if some guarantee could be made that operating deficits would be underwritten. Concerns about the legality of the university providing direct financing to a private company may prevent any financial backing, but local landlords could help fund the project.⁶

1974-May

Owners of the Lansing Communities and Winston Court Apartment complexes are in the process of contractual negotiations which could lead to the establishment of a transit system serving their residents as well as the general public. University officials are attempting to stir further financial backing for the project. A CU transit committee is offering to coordinate the underwriting of the proposed transit system. Swarthout & Ferris Bus Service will provide the buses for the landlords' proposed system, and would be willing to provide an enlarged service area if the company received a guarantee that it would not lose money in the operation of the larger route.⁷

1974-August

Residents in South Lansing apartment complexes and neighboring areas will have access to a bus service to CU campus beginning September 2, 1974. This transit service will cost \$.30 per trip, and is funded jointly by local landlords Rocco Lucente and Gerald Talandis, in conjunction with Cornell University. Although the City of Ithaca was interested in participating in the new transit venture, their late involvement in the project precluded city participation in the group plan. Citing time strictures and unresolved financial negotiations with the city, CU Dean of Students Elmer Meyer arranged bus rentals from local bus company Swarthout & Ferris, Inc. rather than delay the service until arrangements could be made to use city-backed buses.⁸

1975

Established in September 1974, Northeast Transit currently connects the residential areas northeast of Ithaca with Cornell University. Fares are \$.30 or 20 rides for \$5.00. Service is provided during peak commuter hours only- from 7:30 to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 5:30 Monday through Friday. It is possible to use the service to ride to the Cornell campus and then transfer to Community Transit Service to ride downtown, but the lack of mid-day service probably discourages regular use of this route as a way to access downtown Ithaca.⁹

Curt Travers, "Prof's Study Details Possibilities for Lansing-Cornell Bus Service", Cornell Daily Sun, 16 April 1974.

Curt Travers, "Mass Transit Proposals Studied as Landlords Start Bus System", Cornell Daily Sun, 9 May 1974.

Richard Keller, "Shuttle Bus to Serve Cornell-Lansing Area", Ithaca Journal, 28 August 1974.

p. 73, Meyburg.

COUNTYWIDE CAR-POOLING PLANS

1979-June

The Ithaca-Tompkins County Planning Commission reviewed emergency transportation contingency plans to be used in the event of a gasoline shortage. Car-pooling, park-and-ride lots and use of school buses are ideas that the members are considering recommending in their preliminary report to the Transportation Commission. The commission believes that long-range plans involving car-pooling and van-pooling will probably best be handled by the county's major employers, but a basic plan would be provided to them by the county.¹⁰

1979-June

Car-pooling and park-and-ride systems are the two options being seriously considered by the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Commission in the event of a critical gasoline shortage. Members will be working throughout the summer to come up with viable options to present to local legislators for approval. Spot gas shortages in Pennsylvania reported by commission members are accelerating the planning process. Under the park-and-ride system, residents in higher density areas would leave their cars at newly designated lots, then take school buses or pool with other commuters to work. It is unclear how this system would affect school starting times or whether fares would be required. Employer-backed car-pooling is also under consideration, ideally with a separate system instituted for employees of small firms.¹¹

1979-July

Newfield-Enfield representative Jim Ray announced that the County Planning Department is investigating the possibility of regional car-pooling. Possible sites in Newfield include the local town hall and school parking lots, with a combined capacity of about 80 cars. The local school principal suggested taking advantage of existing school bus routes to transport commuters. Ray thinks that the county's plan could be ready by September. Problems with vehicle liability in the commuter lots would need to be resolved before that time.¹²

1979-August

A countywide car-pooling plan presented to the Planning Committee of the Tompkins County Transportation commission could be in operation by November. The "ride-sharing program", backed by large local employers like Cornell University and NYSEG, has two components. Representatives at local firms would coordinate ride-matching among employees of each firm. The second part of the plan would designate about 18 lots around the county where commuters could leave their cars, and then car-pool into town. The county would provide signs to mark the lots, while a local radio station has volunteered to coordinate additional publicity. The Transportation Commission will consider the plan for approval in September. Concerns about how the proposed "ride-sharing program" will affect city bus service are being addressed by careful consideration of the commuter lots' locations.¹³

1979-September

The county's new car-pooling program may save resident 250,000 gallons of gasoline per month according to local authorities. Manuals describing the combined car-pooling and park-and-ride program will soon be distributed to local

Deborah Schoch, "Car Pool Plans Eyed By County", Ithaca Journal, 14 June 1979.

Deborah Schoch, "Commission Urges Plans for Gas Crisis", Ithaca Journal, 21 June 1979.

Roberta Sperling, "Car Pools Could Cool Off Summer Gas Crisis", Newfield News, 11-27 July 1979.

Deborah Schoch, "County Scans Car-Pooling", Ithaca Journal, 23 August 1979.

employers. Senior county planner David Arbeit hopes to increase the average number of riders in commuter cars from its current 1.4 per car to 2 per car. Several large local employers have expressed their interest in the plan. While the county has suggested “strategic locations” for the park-and-ride lots, participating municipalities will ultimately designate official local sites. There are no cost estimates on the program as yet, but the county plans to provide signs and signposts for municipalities to install in their lots. In addition, liability coverage for each site must be resolved either by indemnification agreements with lot owners or a shared countywide liability policy. A comprehensive publicity campaign is also being planned.¹⁴

1980-February

The village board of Trumansburg voted to approve local participation in the countywide car-pooling plan and designated ten parking spaces on Corey Street for the program. The county expects initial costs of \$3000 for signs to identify the lots and intends to help municipalities pay for increases in liability insurance resulting from participation in the program. No starting date has been set for implementation of the program, but Trumansburg residents can begin using the spaces as soon as the signs have been installed.¹⁵

Carol Eisenberg, “Plan Seen Saving 250,000 Gallons”, Ithaca Journal, 20 September 1979.

“T-Burg Will Be in Car-Pooling Plan”, Ithaca Journal, 12 February 1980.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY BUS SYSTEM

1980-January

Student initiative on the part of dorm residents has led university officials to approve morning bus service from West Campus to Central Campus after a two-year service hiatus. Funding for the route had been discontinued by the Department of Transportation when the line did not cover its operating costs. While fare-box revenues are expected to pay for the service, a student-negotiated agreement with the university guarantees that the Campus Council will cover any shortfall. in the restored bus line.¹⁶

1980-January

New bus routes are proposed to make the campus bus system more efficient, including a route from A Lot to Collegetown and the central campus, and another route from B Lot to central campus and West Campus, with the routes crossing somewhere in central campus. Officials anticipate more use of public transit and carpools as a result of high fuel prices and limited parking areas. Some changes in the traffic flow on campus are also discussed.¹⁷

1980-April

Anticipated improvements to the campus transportation system include improving parking facilities, adding to existing campus bus schedules and expanding bus routes. Bus fares will rise from \$.10 to \$.20, but Collegetown will be added to routes and service to West Campus will be increased. New Plexiglas shelters will be installed at bus traffic nodes, and service to peripheral lots will also be expanded to encourage car pools. New regulations on parking permits are also designed to further this goal.¹⁸

Jonathan Rosenblum, "West Campus Morning Bus Will Begin Service Today", Cornell Daily Sun, 21 January 1980.

Jeffrey Kahn, "Transportation: Planning New Bus Routes", Cornell Daily Sun, 30 January 1980.

Jerry Lazar, "University to Expand Bus Service, Parking", Cornell Daily Sun, 4 April 1980.

COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM BEGINS WITH ARC APPLICATION

1979-November

In a study prepared by the Tompkins County Department of Planning, an "Industrial Satisfaction Survey" of businesses from the Tompkins County region was used to determine what existing companies thought about local conditions relative to good service of industrial interests. In addition to programmed responses, the surveyors tabulated voluntary comments from the surveyed businesses. By far the most common response from the businesses was a request for improvements to county transportation services, including several direct comments about the need for a countywide transit system.¹⁹

1980-March

The Tompkins County Planning Department's annual list of planning issues features several transportation-related issues this year. A project is being prepared which will extend mass transportation to rural areas of the county. Also, under consideration is the planning of new highways, airport improvements, bikeways, and car-pooling facilities. Improvements to service accessibility for handicapped persons is another concern, as are projects geared towards stimulating local economic growth.²⁰

1980-June

County planners have finalized a public-transit plan which would be among the first comprehensive rural transit packages in the state. Integrated within the TOMTRAN package are services like conventional buses, vans, car-pools, short "jitney" vehicles and school buses. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is being asked to approve the county's preliminary application for \$535,635 towards the total first year budget of \$766,133. The second-year budget is estimated at \$838,515 and the third year at \$914,500, two-thirds of which would be granted by the ARC. The remaining funds would come from local sources. County planners are optimistic about the likelihood of receiving funding since they believe the county is among the first to apply for ARC monies. About 40% of the program's budget would finance the direct purchase of six buses over the next three years, while the rest of the budget would be directed towards an innovative "transportation brokerage" program where the county would test several different forms of transit service. While the program is intended to extend traditional service along existing routes, new routes to Dryden and Tompkins Cortland Community College from Cornell are being planned. Less conventional transport methods would include the recruitment of private transit operators to run "jitney" services on a flexible schedule for commuter runs, van-pooling and the implementation of the county's park-and-ride plan. The county would also like to use existing school bus routes to serve college and work commuters, but may face difficulties in overcoming state regulations prohibiting this practice as well as other aspects of the TOMTRAN proposal.²¹

1981-September

The Cortland County Legislature's Planning Committee was reluctant to offer support to a proposed Tompkins County-Cortland County transit plan. Conceived as an extension of the TOMTRAN proposal currently under consideration for funding by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the route would link Cortland and Ithaca by way of Dryden and the Route 13 traffic corridor. A separate proposal by Cortland County to provide local bus service was denied an ARC grant. Legislators did not want

Tompkins County Department of Planning , Tompkins County Industrial Site Development Strategy-Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan Studies, Report Prepared for the Tompkins County Economic Advisory Board, Ithaca, New York, 1979.

John Maines, "County Planners to Look at Transportation", Ithaca Journal, 13 March 1980.

Deborah Schoch, "County Completes Plans for Rural Transportation", Ithaca Journal, 19 June 1980.

to commit the \$15,000 of county funding that the plan would require, but as yet have made no final decision on the proposal.²²

1981-September

A model TOMTRAN run using a demonstration bus provided by a hopeful bus manufacturer allowed county officials to test the proposed TOMTRAN route from Ithaca to Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). Dryden mayor Michael Lane joined Tompkins County legislators as the bus passed through Dryden. The group was greeted at TC3 by college president Hushang Bahar, who delivered an optimistic greeting stressing the importance of the proposed transit route to the economy and the college. The campus is currently served by several daily Greyhound bus runs, but needs more frequent service. Legislators are hopeful that the route could support regular service.²³

1981-October

Tioga County commuters may be able to take advantage of new Tompkins County transportation programs when the new Tomtran program begins this fall. This \$858,000 program is funded by grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, federal rural transit money, state transportation money and local funding. The program will provide startup money for a plan allowing Tompkins Cortland Community College students to commute using Candor Central School District public school buses if state legislators grant approval. A van-pooling project for employees of large Tompkins County firms is also planned, along with a proposal for assisting private operators who want to start transit service to Tompkins County.²⁴

1982-September

The Appalachian Regional Commission awarded an additional \$156,800 in funding to Tompkins County for its rural transportation system. During the first two years of Tomtran's operation, the county should receive a total of \$436,800 in ARC money, \$190,060 in federal Section 18 money and \$177,737 in state aid in addition to the county's own contribution. The new grant money will go towards the purchase of two new buses and new shelters, which will give the system a total of five buses altogether.²⁵

1984-April

In a presentation to Cortland County planning officials, Tomtran director Dwight Mengel urged them to take advantage of local resources to initiate a public transit system. The success of the Tomtran program in serving the Ithaca area has generated both general income for the community and an atmosphere conducive to economic development. Fares from the 120,000 annual riders this year are expected to exceed \$200,000. Mengel offered to work with Cortland County planners to develop cooperative public transit options.²⁶

Mark James, "Tompkins-Cortland Bus Plan Questioned By Legislators", Cortland Standard, 17 September 1981.

Patricia Braus, "TOMTRAN Takes County Legislators For a Ride", Ithaca Journal, 17 September 1981.

Nick Fox, "3 New Transit Services Eyed For County", Sun-Bulletin, 2 October 1981.

"Tomtran Gets ARC Grant of \$156,800." Ithaca Journal, 28 September 1982.

Garry Vangorder, "Tomtran Official Says Public Transit Possible Here", Cortland Standard, 19 April 1984.

EAST ITHACA TRANSIT BEGINS

1981-February

Cornell University has begun a new bus service called East Ithaca Transit as a result of cooperative planning efforts with Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca. A practical determination was made that a resident population sufficient to support the new route exists, since 90% of the Eastern Heights area's working residents are employed by Cornell. East Ithaca Transit represents the "first route of the TomTran proposal", which is the county's rural transportation plan. Under a joint sponsorship agreement, Ithaca and Tompkins County will pay 1/3 of the costs of the system, while Cornell will pay the rest. While Cornell has no plans for additional routes, TomTran is considering establishing new routes to Dryden, Tompkins Cortland Community College and Dryden. The new East Ithaca Transit line includes a shuttle between East Hill Plaza and central campus, and a commuter bus from Skyvue Road/Eastern Heights Drive to the Vet School.²⁷

1982-January

The East Ithaca Transit route has proven to be considerably more successful than originally expected after one year of service. The original passenger estimate of 48,000 for 1981 was surpassed with 54,182 total riders, the resulting extra fares reducing the estimated \$55,800 cost of the project by about \$4000 as well as lowering operation contributions for CU, Tompkins County and the Town of Ithaca. The costs for the service are shared among several sources, including state, federal, and local sources. Fares in 1982 should total \$21,060, or about 32.4% of total revenue. Improvements to the service are planned, including changes in scheduling and stops. Another bus will be purchased through federal funding. The fare for the route will also be increased from \$.35 to \$.40.²⁸

1982-December

County legislators are considering raising fares on the East Ithaca Transit system from 40 cents per ride to 50 cents. Planners will be evaluating how this would affect the number of riders and the amount of state aid that TOMTRAN receives. Since ridership has increased more quickly than anticipated, the amount of state aid received by the system has been large enough so that local financial contributions have been less than budgeted.²⁹

1983-January

A preliminary vote by the Tompkins County Planning and Public Works Committee split on the issue of financial support for county transit systems when two members protested continuing a subsidy to East Ithaca Transit routes that may not offer service to low-income residents. While support for Northeast Transit received unanimous approval, the support of East Ithaca Transit received dissenting votes. Representative Jim Ray stated that the county should contribute start-up costs to assist new bus systems, but should phase out financial assistance as the systems become established. The committee requested that a county planning department report on all transit systems be prepared. County contributions to both transit systems have been less than anticipated because of increased state aid as a result of increased ridership.³⁰

1983-January

East Ithaca Transit has reduced its fare from 40 cents to 35 cents as of January 23, 1983. This change is a result of CU

John Hoeffel, "Cornell Adds East Hill Buses, Extends Blue Light Special", Cornell Daily Sun, 4 February 1981.

Patricia Braus, "East Ithaca Bus Surprises Officials With Its Success", Ithaca Journal, 21 January 1982.

Payne Peterson, "Reps Consider East Ithaca Bus Fare Hike", Ithaca Journal, 29 December 1982.

Payne Peterson, "Committee OKs Subsidy for Buses", Ithaca Journal, 12 January 1983.

Transit, operator of the service, becoming eligible for New York State Transit Operating Assistance. Ithaca Transit has also initiated a route serving some of the same area. The new Route 5 will serve East Hill Plaza, Cornell University and downtown Ithaca through neighborhoods previously without bus service.³¹

³¹“East Ithaca Transit to Cut Fare From 40 to 35 Cents”, Cornell University Chronicle, 19 January 1983.

C & D TRANSPORTATION BEGINS LOCAL SERVICE WITH TOMTRAN'S ENCOURAGEMENT³²

1982-February

The Ithaca City Charter and Ordinance Committee recommended Common Council approval of an application from private transit carrier C & D Transportation for permission to use city streets for a new transit route from Newark Valley to Ithaca. Officials of the city transit system have expressed concern that the new service may compete with existing city bus service, but TOMTRAN project director Dwight Mengel believes that the new route would complement TOMTRAN's efforts to assist small-scale private transit providers in improving county transportation service. C & D is the first carrier to apply for permission to operate in the City of Ithaca since 1963.³³

1982-March

Town of Caroline officials passed a resolution supporting transit service from their community to Ithaca. Currently, C & D Transportation of Newark Valley is providing that service by using a temporary permit from the City of Ithaca pending permanent approval for their transit route. The cost for commuters is about \$10 per week.³⁴

1982-March

As a part of the Tomtran program to increase the availability of rural transit service, Tompkins County planner Dwight Mengel has been assisting C & D Transportation in efforts to secure state backing for operating costs on runs to Ithaca and IBM in Endicott. Current weekly charges of \$12 for the Ithaca run and \$17 for the Endicott run could be reduced to \$10 and \$12 respectively. The Tioga County Legislature has agreed to sponsor the application in cooperation with Tompkins County. If successful, the carrier would receive state aid contingent on the number of riders and total mileage.³⁵

1982-April

Surveys asking Caroline residents about their interest in a van commuter service will be distributed by Tomtran this week. Tompkins County planners are trying to determine whether a limited transit route could be started by C & D Transportation from Caroline to Ithaca, with stops in Slaterville Springs, Brooktondale, along Route 79 and in Ithaca. Survey responses will help to determine possible schedules and routes.³⁶

1982-July

Beginning July 6, a new transit service called CARO-VAN will bring commuters from the Town of Caroline to Ithaca. The service will be using 14 passenger buses provided by private operator C & D Transportation. This service is part of the Tompkins County TOMTRAN plan to extend the availability of rural transit. The new service will operate during morning and afternoon commuter hours and fares range from \$.75 to \$1.00.³⁷

1983-March

For a complete timeline of the C & D Transportation dispute, see 1986 TOMTRAN Final Report to the ARC.

Joseph Schwartz, "Officials Say Rural Bus Service OK- If It Doesn't Hurt City", Ithaca Journal, 23 February 1982.

"Caroline Town Officials Push Transportation", Ithaca Journal, 10 March 1982.

Nick Fox, "Tioga Backs Van Subsidy From State", Evening Press, 11 March 1982.

Patricia Braus, "County Planners Poll Caroline on Bus Service", Ithaca Journal, 16 April 1982.

"Caroline Bus Starts Tuesday", Ithaca Journal, 5 July 1982.

Tioga County officials are considering ways to use \$53,400 in available federal Transportation aid to fund new public transit ventures. Several private operators are considering applying for the money, including Charles H. Chapman, owner of C & D Transportation. His company currently provides van service from Tioga County into Broome, Tompkins and Cortland counties.

The company began operations in 1981 with one van and has since grown to eight vehicles, with the intention of leasing seven more to expand services. Public officials are still studying the merits of providing public transportation in the county.³⁸

1983-March

The owner of C & D Transportation is considering moving his business from Tioga County to Tompkins County because of what he perceives as a lack of interest on the part of Tioga County in public transportation. Charles Chapman feels that Tompkins County has offered considerably more support to his requests for county sponsorship for federal subsidies. County sponsorship would allow him to apply for currently available transportation funding, which could be granted at no cost to the sponsoring county. Tompkins County planner Dwight Mengel believes that Tioga County needs to reevaluate their position and consider Chapman's operations more closely in order to make their decision on sponsorship. Tioga County could lose their right to federal transportation funds if the available money is not used.³⁹

1983-July

CARO-VAN bus service has been in operation for one year and has plans to expand its service. During the service's first nine months it carried over 15,000 riders. Currently there are three routes- one from Newark Valley to Ithaca by way of Caroline, one from Owego to Ithaca through Danby with several stops at local businesses, and another route from Newark Valley to NYSEG by way of Harford. Service may be expanded to include the City of Cortland and TC3. CARO-VAN will also be participating in Tomtran's expanded schedule for summer school students going to DeWitt Junior High.⁴⁰

1984-January

Tomtran and C & D Transportation announce a new CARO-VAN schedule, with an additional morning express run to downtown Ithaca, and a new route leaving Ithaca in the afternoon. Other C & D Transportation services include runs to IBM in Owego, SCM in Cortland, and from Cortland to Cornell.⁴¹

1984-April

C & D Transportation has been forced to borrow money to continue operations because of delays in receiving state aid subsidies. Owner Charles Chapman says that the state owes him \$91,135 in back payments dating to October 1983. About 65% of C & D is supported by state subsidies, so the delay may force Chapman to reduce or stop service on commuter runs in Cortland, Tioga, Tompkins and Broome counties. State officials admit that there is a backlog in payment of the quarterly subsidies to county sponsors, who then forward the payment to individual operators. Chapman has asked that sponsoring counties consider forwarding the subsidy in advance so that service can be continued.⁴²

1984-November

Tioga County is expected to approve advance payments of delayed state subsidy payments to C & D Transportation in

Cheryll Connolly, "Public Transportation Pushed in Tioga", Sun-Bulletin, 30 March 1983.

Cheryll Connolly, "Van Man Threatens to Move", Binghamton Free Press, 30 March 1983.

Payne Peterson, "Tomtran to Launch New Bus Shuttle for Summer Students", Ithaca Journal, 2 July 1983.

"New Bus Routes Set", Ithaca Journal, 28 January 1984.

Scott Rapp, "Bus Service May Be Cut; Back State Check Late", Post-Standard, 14 April 1984.

order to keep the transit operator in business. The owner of the service has been borrowing money weekly to continue operations until the state could come up with the more than \$50,000 owed in quarterly payments under the Transit Operating Assistance Program. Total ridership for the service in Tioga, Broome, Cortland and Tompkins counties was 4,549 in September. Tompkins County has already advanced \$46,900 to C & D.⁴³

1984-November

The Tioga County Legislature narrowly approved granting advance payments to C & D Transportation so that the company can continue operations until delayed state subsidies become available. Legislators were concerned about setting a precedent for county business bail-outs, but were more concerned about losing the benefits from the commuter van service. Up to \$40,000 of county money is available to assist the business, but the county will lose the benefit of interest on the money as a result of the payments.⁴⁴

1985-October

Charles Chapman, owner of C & D Transportation, says once again that he may be forced to move the headquarters for his transit service out of Tioga County if they are not willing to regularly provide advance payments for overdue state subsidy funds. New York State has been delaying payments of the Transit operations Assistance Program for about a year, causing serious cash-flow problems for many smaller transit operators in the state. Both Tompkins and Cortland counties have already approved advance payments for C & D service in those areas. Last year C & D provided service to 47,000 total passengers.⁴⁵

1985-October

The Tioga County Legislature took no action on a request from C & D Transportation for financial assistance to maintain service until delinquent state subsidy payments are made to the private transit operator. The county will be asked to reconsider the request, but legislators seem reluctant to offer financial assistance. The owner has threatened to move his business out of Tioga County unless he receives some assistance.⁴⁶

1986-January

Tioga County legislators are reconsidering a request for advance county funding from C & D Transportation (now known as Tioga Transport) to cover operating costs until overdue state subsidies are disbursed. The county currently gives the carrier its subsidy on a yearly basis, but has been asked to make monthly payments instead like Tompkins and Cortland counties. The company hopes to open a new depot in Owego soon. Local legislators have called for a public hearing on the funding issue in February.⁴⁷

1986-February

Approval was finally granted by the Tioga County Legislature for advance monthly operating subsidies to be given to Tioga Transport, Inc. The county will be issuing monthly payments of \$4000 to \$5000 to the private carrier. The new agreement will, however, allow the county to cease the payments at any time.⁴⁸

“Tioga May Help Bus Firm”, Binghamton Press, 17 November 1984.

Cindy Hyle Bezek, “Tioga Gives Support to Bus Company”, Sun-Bulletin, 27 November 1984.

Cindy Hyle Bezek, “Bus Pullout is Threatened”, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 8 October 1985.

Cindy Hyle Bezek, “Loan Request Dies”, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 16 October 1985.

Cindy Hyle Bezek, “Tioga Studies Revised Bus Payment”, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 14 January 1986.

Cindy Hyle Bezek, “Tioga Bus OK Draws Heat”, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 11 February 1986.

ITHACA-DRYDEN TRANSIT ROUTE BEGINS

1982-July

Cornell University's bid to provide bus service between Ithaca and Dryden was accepted by the Tompkins County Planning and Public Works Committee. The route will begin service to Tompkins Cortland Community College August 23, 1982, and will cost \$14,166 per month to operate. Funding for the service comes from the state of New York (\$60,000), Appalachian Regional Commission (\$29,200), federal government (\$8,500) and Tompkins County (\$20,000). Other operating costs will be paid for by fares. Planners expect 80,000 riders the first year and 130,000 the second year. CU Director of Transportation Services Director William Wendt says the university did not expect large profits, but were hoping that the service would help alleviate housing problems for the university community.⁴⁹

1982-August

The first run of the new Tomtran Ithaca-Dryden bus service is scheduled to begin today, with regular runs due to start on August 25. All rides will be free for the first day. Regular fares will cost from \$.50 to \$1.00, depending on the length of the trip. Thirteen round trips will be made per day, but riders needing an extra early arrival or late departure at TC3 can still use Greyhound's regularly scheduled runs. Until new buses ordered for IDT have arrived, the runs will be made with two of Cornell's red and white school buses. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will occur at Tompkins County Courthouse for a ceremonial run for local officials.⁵⁰

1982-August

The inaugural run of the new Ithaca-Dryden Transit service was only three minutes off its scheduled arrival at Tompkins Cortland Community College. Thirty-five local officials were the first riders of the new route. The line will be funded in part by federal grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, funds from New York State and Tompkins County, Federal Section 18 funding and fares from riders. The buses used are leased from Cornell University for \$28 per hour and driven by university employees. New county buses should be available within the year.⁵¹

1982-August

The first day of service of Tomtran's new Ithaca-Dryden Transit bus drew 123 riders for free trials of the new bus run. CU anticipates operating the service for the county at least through 1983. The bus seats 38 people and makes 13 round-trip per day from TC3 to Cornell and Ithaca at a cost of about \$550 per day.⁵²

1982-September

Regular bus service connecting the Cornell campus to Dryden and points in between began on August 25. Cornell University submitted the sole bid to operate the line and was interested in the opportunity to increase the accessibility of lower cost residential area to persons affiliated with the university. University officials estimate that about 1000 persons from Cornell currently live along the route and that those people will make up about 60% of the riders for the new bus service. This service will be the first rural transportation service provided by TOMTRAN, which is a county program intended to promote practical

Kathleen Mahoney, "Cornell Offer to Run Bus Gets OK", Ithaca Journal, 13 July 1982.

Payne Peterson, "Tomtran Offers Free Ride on Its First Day", Ithaca Journal, 24 August 1982.

Katie Simpson, "First Bus From Ithaca On Time, Almost", Post-Standard, 25 August 1982.

Helen Mundell, "123 Take Tomtran's Offer of A Free Ride the First Day", Ithaca Journal, 28 August 1982.

methods of providing rural transit service.⁵³

1982-October

The new Ithaca-Dryden Transit schedule has been revised to provide more convenient arrival and departure times at Cornell University and Tompkins Cortland Community College. Two new stops have also been added on Hanshaw Road and in Dryden.⁵⁴

1983-February

Ithaca-Dryden Transit will add two new experimental routes with changes in service times to the early morning runs. Express service from downtown Ithaca to Tompkins Cortland Community College in the morning has also been added to accommodate high numbers of morning commuters. These services will be provided on a trial basis until May, when ridership figures will be reevaluated.⁵⁵

1983-August

Ithaca-Dryden Transit will be expanded for the fall 1983 schedule, with service to Groton Village and the Town of Groton, night service to TC3 evening classes and new buses to replace the current red school-type buses. Scheduling will also be improved to better serve students attending TC3.⁵⁶

“Newest TOMTRAN Buses Link Ithaca, Dryden”, Cornell University Chronicle, 2 September 1982.

“Ithaca-Dryden Transit Adds Two New Stops”, Cornell University Chronicle, 7 October 1982.

“Ithaca-Dryden Transit Adds 2 Routes”, Cornell University Chronicle, 24 February 1983.

“TOMTRAN Expands Service to Groton”, Community Newspapers, 24 August 1983.

FORMATION OF CU TRANSIT

1983-September

Cornell's involvement with public transportation in Tompkins County, first evident in the university's early sponsorship of Northeast Transit, has culminated in the creation of CU Transit, Inc. on July 6, 1983. The university's successful operation of East Ithaca Transit and Ithaca-Dryden Transit led them to apply for a state license to operate public transit routes as a contract carrier. Evening service and other expansions are possible because of the increases in public funding available locally through the Tomtran program, which has helped to foster the development of a countywide transportation services network. The need for the accessibility of moderately priced housing for university employees and students, as well as the need to reduce the demand for campus parking, has compelled the university to become more actively involved in local transportation planning.⁵⁷

1984-January

CU officially announces the formation of a new company, CU Transit Inc., which will be operated by the university as a separate corporation. This company will allow the county and town subsidies for public transportation to be reduced, as well as allow for expansion of local bus service. CU Transit will replace the current campus bus service, but will essentially duplicate existing routes. Since the company is a public corporation, CU will legally be able to provide service to the general public. Stops for the routes will include Dryden, Varna, Cayuga Heights and the airport. Expansion of the service to include new routes is anticipated. As a result of this move by the university, Tompkins County and City of Ithaca are dropping a \$12,000 annual subsidy of the East Ithaca Transit System. CU will spend more than \$500,000 for the bus line in its first year, including the cost of 15 buses purchased by the university from Exxon at \$51,900 each.⁵⁸

1984-June

CU Transit fares rise to \$.25 from \$.20. Faculty & staff continue to ride free with presentation of an ID card.⁵⁹

"Cornell Helps Sponsor Countywide Bus System", Cornell University Chronicle, 15 September 1983.

James McGrath Morris, "CU Forms Company with 15 Buses", Ithaca Journal, 7 January 1984.

"CU Increases Bus Fare", Ithaca Journal, 30 June 1984.

GREYHOUND CHALLENGES OPERATION OF IDT

1984-February

Greyhound Bus Lines asked state officials to cut aid to Tomtran and CU Transit routes in the eastern part of the county. The company has already been successful in blocking a state appropriation of \$115,000 in Section 18 funds to Tomtran for the purchase of a bus and shelters for the Ithaca-Dryden-Groton Run. Cornell's right to operate that run will be challenged, but their argument is that they provide service that Greyhound does not offer for commuter needs. CU Transit began Dryden runs last month. In its first year of operation, CU Transit plans to receive more than \$500,000 from Cornell and over \$200,000 in state subsidies.⁶⁰

1984-March 8

Greyhound Bus Lines has decided to withdraw their protest about bus service provided between Ithaca and Dryden. The county's application for Section 18 funding for a new bus and shelters was blocked by Greyhound, preventing the award of \$60,500 in federal funds. A second protest sought to prevent the permanent award of operational authority to CU Transit. Greyhound's withdrawal of the protests will not automatically free the desired funding, but it will remove the greatest obstacle to approval of the county's funding application. An additional application was planned by the county Board of Representatives for \$52,600, although a formal application has not been filed as yet.⁶¹

1984-March 10

Greyhound officials issued contradictory statements about the Ithaca-Dryden bus line controversy. While dropping the protest against CU Transit's right to operate that line, Greyhound also stated that they still protested the use of federal Section 18 funds to back a competitive transit service. They later retracted that statement, with a spokesperson admitting that the corporate policy they were attempting to follow was outdated. Senior county planner Dwight Mengel stated that Greyhound's new position on Section 18 funding would prompt the county to reapply for federal funding. Since the purchase of a new bus was ultimately funded through another source, the new application will seek funding for operating expenses and the originally requested bus shelters.⁶²

1984-March 14

The county's bus service to Dryden is no longer threatened by Greyhound Bus Line protests. In light of their reapplication for federal Section 18 funding for this route, local transit officials are encouraging the public to write letters expressing their support for this service. This could help positively influence state officials considering the current application, as well as help future efforts to finance new commuter transit lines to Trumansburg and Newfield. County officials believe that Greyhound's withdrawal of its protest means the company will not challenge applications for federal funding to help establish these new routes.⁶³

1984-March 21

The Tompkins County Board of Representatives approved the application for \$56,700 from the New York State DOT for

Jonathan Rosenblum, "Fight Brews Between Greyhound and Local Buses", Ithaca Journal, 29 February 1984.

J. M. Morris & J. Rosenblum, "Greyhound Pulls Cornell Bus Objection", Ithaca Journal, 8 March 1984.

Jonathan Rosenblum, "Greyhound Reverses Its Stand on Funding", Ithaca Journal, 10 March 1984.

Jonathan Rosenblum, "Dryden Bus Route Out of Jeopardy", Ithaca Journal, 14 March 1984.

the Tomtran Ithaca-Dryden Transit System.⁶⁴

1984-March 24

Letters of support appear on the Ithaca Journal's editorial page urging the New York State DOT to rule in favor of Tomtran in the recent dispute with Greyhound Bus Lines over rights to the Ithaca-Dryden bus route. County Planner Dwight Mengel asks the public write to state officials expressing their support for Tomtran's Ithaca-Dryden Transit service. Letters from three other county residents in support of Tomtran also appear.⁶⁵

1984-May

The dispute between Greyhound Bus Lines and Tomtran, although resolved in principle, still formally blocks the state from acting on the county's application for federal Section 18 funding. A statement from Greyhound withdrawing their protests has not been received by the state DOT.⁶⁶

1984-June

After months of delays, the state DOT has released \$69,900 in funding to Tompkins County for the Ithaca-Dryden transit service. Money for operating costs and three new shelters is now available. Bids will be accepted in August, so that the shelters will probably be in place by November. Greyhound formally notified the state that it was withdrawing its protest on June 6.⁶⁷

1984-November

Greyhound has re-applied to the state Department of Transportation for permission to drop bus service to about thirty-five small communities in Broome, Otsego, Chenango, Delaware and Tioga counties. Greyhound was denied permission at that time, but re-applied after the state dropped the \$700,000 operational subsidy for the routes involved. State officials have 120 days to act on Greyhound's application.⁶⁸

1987-September

Greyhound Bus Lines intends to begin a nationwide effort to revive rural bus service on a trial basis this fall. The company would use vans and contracts with rural transportation agencies to connect with regular bus routes. Officials from Greyhound stated at a trade conference that they believed the future of their business depended on service to rural communities. The company envisions its bus terminals as central hubs connected by spokes of rural transit services.⁶⁹

1988-April

Tompkins County officials are planning to investigate what may have caused a decline in ridership last year on the Tomtran system's routes, in particular a 7% decrease in riders on the Dryden-Groton route. This is the first time the route has

Jane Brown, "Rep Charges 'Lack of Democracy' on Board", Ithaca Journal, 21 March 1984.

William Lasich, "Tomtran is Needed to Attract New Industry", Ithaca Journal, 24 March 1984.

Dwight Mengel, "Tomtran Still Needs Letters of Support to Gain Federal Aid", Ithaca Journal, 24 March 1984.

Janet K. Poludnisk, "Without Tomtran, What Would These Riders Do?", Ithaca Journal, 24 March 1984.

Bert W. Scott, Jr., "Greyhound Can't Match Tomtran for Service", Ithaca Journal, 24 March 1984.

Jonathan Rosenblum, "Old Greyhound Dispute Ties Up Tomtran Funds", Ithaca Journal, 16 May 1984.

Jonathan Rosenblum, "Greyhound-Tomtran Flap is Put to Rest", Ithaca Journal, 22 June 1984.

Mark Winheld, "Greyhound Proposes Cuts in Regional Bus Service", Binghamton Press, 19 November 1984.

"Greyhound Seeks to Resurrect Rural Bus Service", Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin, 4 September 1987.

experienced a decline since its inception in 1982. City ridership in the county increased 3.4% last year, while suburban ridership decreased 2.4% and overall rural ridership on all lines rose only 0.2%. Planners intend to use public surveys try and determine whether the losses on the Dryden-Groton route were due to external factors or problems with Tomtran service.⁷⁰

1992-August

The Tomtran bus route from Ithaca to Dryden had its eleventh anniversary this week and is still a successful transit venture. As of July 30, 1992, the line had carried more than a million passengers total, with a 22% increase in 1992 ridership over comparable 1991 figures.⁷¹

George Thomas, Jr., "Official Reports Decrease in Number of Dryden and Groton Tomtran Riders", Ithaca Journal, April 1988.

"Dryden Bus Marks 11th Anniversary", Ithaca Journal, 25 August 1992.

NEWFIELD & ULYSSES SERVICE BEGINS

1983-April

Residents along potential bus routes from Ithaca to Ulysses, Enfield and Newfield will be surveyed by Tompkins County planners about their interest in proposed new bus service. This transit service would be part of the Tomtran rural transportation program and would connect by transfers to existing transit lines.⁷²

1985-January

New bus routes to Newfield and Ulysses will be inaugurated with free rides on the first day of service. Regular fare will be \$1.00. The Newfield route will serve Newfield and Ithaca, with stops at the Ithaca Commons, Cornell University and several local businesses. The route through Ulysses will connect Trumansburg with Ulysses and Ithaca. Both routes will operate daily Monday through Friday and riders will have transfer privileges to Pyramid Mall and Tompkins Cortland Community College.⁷³

1985-January

The first day of service for the new Ulysses and Newfield TOMTRAN transit lines on January 14 was marked by a Courthouse ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by legislators and officials from Ulysses, Newfield and Tompkins County. About 90 riders took advantage of free first day fares on both lines. A considerable number of residents along the new routes have expressed interest in the new service. The development of the new routes has taken about two years. Currently, TOMTRAN is serving the communities of Ulysses, Newfield, Groton, Lansing, Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Freeville and Ithaca. Buses can be stopped along the route by signaling the driver.⁷⁴

1985-March

TomTran's Newfield run has been less heavily used than expected, so Tompkins County planners are surveying local residents to find out if adjustments to the schedule would provide more riders. Daily averages of 50-60 riders per day are not enough to maintain current levels of service. The early morning run may be dropped and other times may be changed. Residents are asked to give their preferences as to useful run times and stops. Decisions about the changes will be made by April 1.⁷⁵

1986-January

The one-year anniversary of bus service to Newfield and Ulysses finds the routes with steadily growing ridership and dependable service. As part of the county's rural transportation program, the routes offer conveniently timed runs to stops like Cornell University, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Pyramid Mall and local employers. Flag stops offer access to public transit to residents of less densely populated areas along the routes. Ongoing adjustments to stops and scheduling offer an opportunity for local residents to demonstrate their support for the service by offering their opinions on the importance of maintaining service to this area of the county.⁷⁶

1990-March

"A Bus For Trumansburg?" Ithaca Journal, 5 April 1983.

Joseph Schwartz, "Tomtran Introduces New Services Monday", Ithaca Journal, 12 January 1985.

Robin Andersen and Bill Langbein, "You Can Flag Down A Bus in T-Burg and in Newfield", Newfield News, 16 January 1985.

Robin Andersen, "TomTran Asks: What Does Newfield Want?", Newfield News, 13 March 1985.

"One Year's Service", Newfield News, 26 January 1986.

Tomtran's Route 3 to Newfield has been running for five years, and although the route has not attracted the number of commuters that planners expected, it provides a needed means of transport for county residents. The schedule was reduced three months after the route's inception to a single bus and driver who does six daily roundtrips. Fares from this route and Tomtran's other rural bus routes recover 33% of their operating costs from fare-box revenues and make up the difference from county, state and federal sources. The total budget is currently about \$445,000, with all routes experiencing increases in ridership in 1989.⁷⁷

Candace Galik, "Newfield Bus Success Rides on Passengers", Ithaca Journal, 20 March, 1990.

SPECIAL SUMMER SERVICES

1982-May

As part of Northeast Transit's service, a special summer route to Cass Park will be running this summer for the first time since 1980. Transfers between Ithaca Transit, East Ithaca and Northeast Transit will allow riders to switch from one system to another to get to the park.⁷⁸

1985-July

Tomtran and the Finger Lakes State Parks Commission announces the extension of the Ulysses bus service to Taughannock Falls State Park three days a week this summer. Morning, afternoon and evening round trips to the park will be made on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The fare will be \$1.00 one way for adults, with a special family rate of \$1.75 for two adults and up to three children.⁷⁹

1986-July

Tomtran's Newfield and Ulysses routes will operate on a summer schedule until August 29. Newfield's service will include direct service on six round trips to Robert Treman State Park from Ithaca Commons, Newfield and Cornell. Ulysses Transit will add two round trips to Taughannock Falls State Park to the regular schedule, and change the afternoon return route to Route 89 instead of Route 96. This summer park transit service is supported by the Finger Lakes State Parks Commission.⁸⁰

Patricia Braus, "Bus Route to Cass Park Begins This Week", Ithaca Journal, 27 May 1982.

"Tomtran Offers Rides to Taughannock Park", Ithaca Journal, 15 July 1985.

"TOMTRAN Services Parks; Initiates Summer Schedule", Trumansburg Free Press, 9 July 1986.

WATKINS GLEN-ITHACA SERVICE BEGINS

1985-February

Since the run started on January 2, the Watkins Glen-Ithaca bus service has averaged about 45-50 passengers daily, with some people standing in the aisle. The Chemung County Transit System is operating the route with a 39-passenger bus, but hopes to upgrade to a larger leased vehicle to accommodate the route's popularity. Monthly \$25 passes have already been sold out and are being consistently renewed.⁸¹

1986

The TOMTRAN Final Report to the ARC describes the formation of commuter service from Chemung and Schuyler counties to Tompkins County. Officials from Chemung and Schuyler counties proposed that a commuter bus service be established to the Ithaca area. TOMTRAN staff responded by providing information on local employers and reviewed the proposed service with the other counties' planning staff. They also assisted in the application for federal Section 18 funds for the Chemung service. An intermunicipal agreement was finalized in February 1985 which authorized Chemung Transit as an approved operator on the new route.⁸²

Fred Yahn, "Watkins Glen-Ithaca Bus is Termed 'Great Success'", Ithaca Journal, 25 February 1985.

Section II.21, Tompkins County Department of Planning. TOMTRAN- Final Report to the Appalachian Regional Commission. Appalachian Regional Commission, January 1986.

ITHACA TRANSIT-EARLY HISTORY AND RECENT CHANGES

1935 - 1978

In 1935 the Ithaca Railway Company was purchased by new owners who had experience with bus systems who decided to end the operation of local streetcars but retain the same business name. They purchased five buses designed especially for hill-climbing to begin a new local bus service in the City of Ithaca. This venture was successful, and the Ithaca Railway was able to increase the size of their fleet. The size of the system rose to a maximum size of 14 buses during the post-World War II years, but fleet size has generally averaged about eight vehicles. The company experienced difficulties during the 1950s, when both route mileage and fleet size fell sharply. By 1961, only two buses were left on a single route which used State Street to travel between Cornell University and the Lehigh Valley railroad station. The City of Ithaca was forced to take over the service and formed the Community Transit System. Initially buying used buses, the city began purchasing new vehicles in 1962, and continued with subsequent new vehicle purchases in 1966 and 1968. Since that time, the system has been gradually building in both route size and ridership, with 478,000 passengers in 1977. A major achievement on the part of the transit system was its success in obtaining a \$400,000 federal grant in 1976 to purchase four new buses and construct four new concrete shelters downtown. There are now four main bus routes, consisting generally of figure-eight patterns crossing each other in the downtown area. The system offers hourly service from about 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. six days per week.⁸³

1975

The Community Transit System, owned and operated by the City of Ithaca, currently provides fixed-route service on five routes for a \$.25 fare. The system operates on an hourly schedule six days a week, with service connecting Ithaca College, West Hill and Cornell University, the Route 13 commercial areas, Ithaca High School and the downtown area. Current revenues come from fares (60%), tax revenues (30%) and from a subsidy provided by Cornell University and Ithaca College (10%).⁸⁴

1979

Faced with an annual operating deficit in the late 1960s, the city transit system began planning for higher investment in the bus service only after ridership figures began to rise steadily through the early 1970s. The city applied to the Urban Mass Transportation Authority for a large capital grant to improve their equipment in 1976, with the primary objectives of generally improving the level of service and increasing the system's visibility. Improving the public perception of the system would be in keeping with the recent update to the system's color schemes, an attempt to promote ridership. Historically, the system's vehicles had been painted black and gold rather than the new red, white and blue color scheme. From 1976-77 four new vehicles were added to the system, including vehicles equipped with a kneeling feature to allow for ease in boarding for elderly and disabled riders. These vehicles were also air-conditioned. A new "IT" logo was designed for the system, and the renamed Ithaca Transit began to take on the appearance of a more modern, attractive public transit service provider. The new logo would appear prominently on new glass-and-steel bus shelters around the city. The most ambitious part of the improvement project involves making the public aware of the changes to the system, hopefully impacting ridership in a positive fashion.⁸⁵

1984-January

John P. Hoschek, "Ithaca", Motor Coach Age, (New Rochelle, NY Vol. 30-No.8) August 1984.

p. 69, Meyburg.

Christopher Amos, Ithaca Transit: A Case Study of User and NonUser Perceptions of Changes to the Ithaca Bus System, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, MRP Thesis, 1978.

Ithaca Transit began a new route January 16. Route 5 will provide service between CU's central campus, East Hill, and downtown Ithaca.⁸⁶

1986-June

County legislators are hoping to increase the number of bus runs serving the West Hill hospital and office complex after the county transfers some of its social service agencies to the Biggs Center (old hospital building). The existing hourly service would be increased to runs every half hour. Ithaca Transit would continue to operate the run at the normal fare, but legislators intend to provide clients of the social service agencies with reduced or free passes for the ride. Total operating costs of the run without any aid would be about \$24,286. With state and federal aid and added revenue from fares, the cost to the county would be about \$2710. Another option considered by the county was the use of a shuttle van, which would have cost the county more than increasing existing bus service. The additional bus could also be used for runs to Cass Park or Cornell. The service should begin in late August.⁸⁷

"East Ithaca Transit Reduces Fare to 35 Cents", Ithaca Journal, 21 January 1984.

Ann Morse, "County Legislators Plan More Buses Up West Hill", Ithaca Journal, 6 June 1986.

SERVICE TO DISABLED AND ELDERLY COUNTY RESIDENTS

1975-October

A major federal transportation report on the status of local transit conditions focuses on the need for dependable transit by elderly and disabled county residents. The report discusses the local Community Transit System as well as several private and public service providers. The use of reduced fare senior citizen tickets on the Community Transit System has risen from 8,442 when they were introduced in 1971 to 33,673 in 1974. The Senior Citizens Council has been making efforts to increase the distribution of these tickets through advertising. However, service to the elderly and disabled is still limited by a lack of vehicle accessibility and service convenience. In particular, there has been no bus service to Tompkins County Community Hospital since 1971, when a county subsidized bus route failed to generate sufficient riders to support the service. A pilot program attempting to use van transport to serve senior citizens first began in 1968 with the use of a reconditioned vehicle, then switched to a private vehicle from September 1969 to September 1970. Leased vehicles were used subsequently and a 12-passenger bus continued to operate through 1972. This service was funded through several local charitable donations and a limited stipend from the New York State Office for Aging. A lack of dependable funding sources precluded a continuation of the service. Currently, a local volunteer service organization called FISH provides rides to people with no other means of transportation. Volunteers use their own vehicles and gasoline to pickup and deliver passengers. Phone service for the activity is funded by the United Givers Fund and private donations are also accepted. The rides are arranged by a volunteer who attempts to match a request with an available volunteer driver, but requests made less than a full day in advance are generally not well served. Regular daily ride service is not available. The greatest number of requests are for trips to health care providers and other social service locations. Downtown Ithaca is the most frequent destination, with many of the rides originating the transportation corridor connecting Trumansburg to Ithaca. Available records indicate that about 700 trips are requested annually. Local nursing homes and social service providers do offer some transportation to clients, but are limited by a lack of appropriate vehicles since most are forced to use employee cars to pick up clients. The reports conclude with a series of recommendations for demand-responsive and fixed-route transit options which could be integrated into either the existing city transit service or a new regionally based transit authority.⁸⁸

1986

A short history of the Gadabout Transportation Services Program is included in the 1986 TOMTRAN Final Report to the ARC. The initiation of the service was a result of new federal regulations relating to the funding of vehicle purchases for the elderly and disabled. A group of Tompkins County agencies collectively developed the idea for Gadabout which was ultimately sponsored by the American Red Cross. The first two vehicles arrived in 1976-77, with four additional vans and a minibus added in 1980-81. Red Cross sponsorship of the service ended in 1981 and the service was reorganized as a non-profit corporation in July 1981. Tompkins County has been extensively involved in the operation of Gadabout since its inception and remains the single largest contributor to the service's operating costs. Founded in 1979, Gadabout was included as part of the original 1981 TOMTRAN proposal and serves to meet the county's legal responsibility to provide accessible transportation services. Ridership of Gadabout has been consistently strong throughout the life of the program, and has generally outpaced the ability of the organization to keep up with the demand for its volunteer services.⁸⁹

pp. 71-80, 112-16, Arnim H. Meyburg, Mass Transit Development for Small Urban Areas: A Case Study-Tompkins County, N. Y. Second-Year Final Report, Washington: U.S. Dept. of Transportation, 1975.

Section III.F, Tompkins County Department of Planning. TOMTRAN- Final Report to the Appalachian Regional Commission. Appalachian Regional Commission, January 1986.

1987-July

Several local residents brought their transit-related concerns before the county Planning and Development Committee, who directed county planners to explore alternatives for providing daily transportation to handicapped county residents. Senior Planner Dwight Mengel stated in a memo that he believed the county was meeting the federal requirements mandated by the county's use of federal public transportation funds. County Planning Commissioner Frank Liguori stated, however, that he did not believe that the county was legally required to provide daily service to disabled residents. The Human Rights Commission estimates from a recent survey that of the 4000 county residents who are disabled, 1500 people use wheelchairs and are affected by the current lack of readily available transit. A limited number of residents use the Gadabout bus service, which is partially funded by the county Tomtran budget, but Gadabout's limited budget does not allow them to offer daily service.⁹⁰

1987-August

The county Planning and Development Committee has recommended that Tompkins County allocate funds for a new fall bus run between Ithaca and Tompkins Cortland Community College for disabled students. Initial service would consist of a single morning and afternoon run at a cost of \$1.50 each way. The county is currently conducting a more comprehensive study of available transportation options for disabled county residents, since there is no daily service currently available to the college. Gadabout, the county's transport service for handicapped and elderly residents, does not have the resources to conduct daily service, so this experimental transit run will be subcontracted to CU Transit. County officials hope that Gadabout will eventually be able to take over the college service.⁹¹

1988-October

A feature article on the Gadabout volunteer transport system includes profiles of typical drivers and clients. The service has about 50 volunteer drivers, each of which works an average of five hours per week at an estimated annual labor value of \$80,000. Any Tompkins county resident who is 60 years or older or handicapped can use the service Monday through Friday or on special weekend runs. Priority is given to trips for medical appointments, but the service can be used for any purpose. Vans have radio contact with a main office for emergencies or scheduling conflicts. Fares from Gadabout riders cover about 11% of the \$150,000 annual operating budget, with an average cost per trip of about \$4.50 per passenger. Current Gadabout director Judy Willis believes that the strength of the service is in its volunteer drivers. In addition to a regular New York State driver's license, volunteers go through a defensive driving course followed by a competence test. The only reward for the drivers other than the appreciation of the passengers is an annual potluck Recognition Dinner.⁹²

1989-December

An Ithaca Journal article describes the volunteer senior bus service to Lansing, the only town-operated transit run in the county. This service began in 1973, and offers seniors rides to stores, doctors and meal programs when they make a 24-hour advance reservation.⁹³

1992

Ann Morse, "Three Lobby County to Do More for Disabled", Ithaca Journal, 25 July 1987.

Ann Morse, "Bus for Disabled to TC3 Eyed", Ithaca Journal, 5 August 1987.

Natalie de Combray, "Get Up and Gadabout", Ithaca Times, October 6-12 1988.

Candace Galik, "Lansing Bus Service Gives Seniors a Ticket to Ride", Ithaca Journal, 12 December 1989.

A Draft Joint Transportation Accessibility Plan is currently being prepared by Tompkins County Transportation Planners in cooperation with City of Ithaca Commission on Accessibility of Public Facilities.⁹⁴

Draft Joint Transportation Accessibility Plan, currently on file with Tompkins County Library but assumed lost.

CHANGES TO CORNELL'S CAMPUS TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

1986-August

New CU parking regulations creating zone-based parking around university buildings begin. This policy replaces the unrestricted U-Permit parking system which had formerly been in use. These regulations are presented as part of a \$9.4 million university transportation, circulation, and parking project which would include a new garage near Schoellkopf Field, new traffic and information booths, and other transportation improvements.⁹⁵

1986-August

The Ithaca Journal reports that CU is in the process of carrying out a 1984 Master Transportation Plan with estimated costs of about \$12 million.⁹⁶

1986-November

A new CU parking facility opens near Schoellkopf Field, providing 700 new parking spaces near central campus. The construction was funded in part by a loan from the New York State Dormitory Authority.⁹⁷

1988-September

Cornell University has begun active enforcement of a new traffic control policy on campus. Designed to minimize automobile traffic through the central campus area, CU Director of Transportation Services William Wendt hopes to reduce high levels of auto-related accidents involving pedestrians and bikers. University officials defend this new policy by stressing the availability of frequent and extensive bus service for commuting employees and students. Daily drop-offs of employees were cited as one cause for excessive campus drive-through traffic.⁹⁸

“University Releases New Traffic Policies”, Cornell Daily Sun, 26 August 1986.

“Campus Briefs”, Ithaca Journal, 26 August, 1986.

“New Parking Garage Opens”, Cornell Daily Sun, 17 November 1986.

“Cornell Begins Enforcement of New Traffic Policy”, Ithaca Journal, 20 September 1988.

TOMTRAN CONTINUES AS AN INDEPENDENT TRANSIT AGENT

1986-January

The final report of TOMTRAN to the Appalachian Regional Commission evaluates the success of the various aspects of the original rural transportation program. Programs that predated the starting date of the TOMTRAN ARC program include the Suburban Transit Program, Park-and-Ride and Gadabout. Long term operating contracts negotiated under the oversight of TOMTRAN officials provided the Suburban Transit System with the capability of expansion while reducing the amount of federal and local subsidies going towards service operation. The Park-and-Ride Program had some success, with six lots being officially designated and several other unofficial lots developing along new transit routes. Several small municipalities also created their own lots with county assistance. Rural transit routes were initiated under the TOMTRAN ARC program, including Ithaca-Dryden Transit in 1982 and Ulysses-Newfield Transit in 1985. Privately owned jitney service expanded to serve a regional area including Tompkins, Cortland, Broome and Tioga counties. ARC funding provided operating assistance or incentives for all of these programs. The ridesharing and van-pool portions of the original TOMTRAN proposal have not been fully implemented due to a greater local interest in the public transit portions of the program. All of these programs will continue beyond the nominal demonstration period originally funded by the ARC. TOMTRAN has proven to be a viable means of providing rural transportation services on a regional level through a combination of limited direct system operation and extensive brokerage of necessary transit services on the regional level.⁹⁹

1987-June

TOMTRAN announces that the county has just taken delivery of two new air-conditioned Thomas Built transit buses at a cost of \$109,500 each. These buses will replace two older CU Transit buses that had been used on Tomtran routes. This will reduce the county's annual leasing expenses so that funds can be reallocated to improving service. Tompkins County will now own six buses for TOMTRAN routes.¹⁰⁰

1988-March

The proposed state budget for fiscal year 1988-89 would result in a 15% cut in the operating budgets of Ithaca Transit, CU Transit and Tomtran, a net loss of \$281,000. The state reductions are skewed so that Upstate transportation budgets take a disproportionately large cut compared to a 7% increase for Downstate transit systems. Area transit systems would have to make up the difference in funding from local sources or be forced to raise fares and reduce service. Insufficient revenues from public transit taxes have created the state funding shortage. In Tompkins County this year, public transit ridership set a record with 2.2 million passenger trips.¹⁰¹

1988-March

The reductions in rural transit system operating costs that would occur if the proposed 1988-89 budget is passed are a result of low revenues from a tax on oil companies. This tax is supposed to make up part of the state budget allocation for transit, but has consistently fallen short of expected levels. The state transportation department is looking to local transit systems to make up the difference in their budgets, and has suggested the use of a one-time mortgage recording fee as a means

Project Overview- Section I, Tompkins County Department of Planning, TOMTRAN- Final Report to the Appalachian Regional Commission. Appalachian Regional Commission, January 1986.

“TOMTRAN'S Two New Buses”, Grapevine, June 25- July 1 1987.

Payne Peterson, “Buses Could Lose Under Cuomo Plan”, Ithaca Journal, 2 March 1988.

of generating the additional operating funds. Tompkins County planners are skeptical of the feasibility of such a tax in rural areas where few of these types of transactions occur. Multi-county transit systems in particular would have difficulties with this method since it would be necessary to push authorizing legislation through several county legislatures. The fluctuations in such a fee-based revenue source would make transit budgets subject to broad variations in funding depending on local economic conditions. Tompkins County planner Dwight Mengel hopes that a more stable funding source can be found.¹⁰²

1988-April

The planned \$3 million dollar cut in the state budget which would have resulted in a 15% reduction in Tompkins County transit systems' operating budgets has been restored. The state legislature also plans to form a committee to come up with better ways to fund public transportation systems than those currently in use. The budget cuts would have forced local transit systems to reduce service or raise fares.¹⁰³

1988-December

A decrease in federal funding has prompted Tomtran to enact its first rate increase since the system's inception in 1982. The increases will go into effect January 17, with rates going up as much as 25% for some routes. Federal support for Tomtran has decreased from \$97,769 in 1985 to an expected \$45,000 in 1989. The county now covers about 17% of Tomtran costs, up from 10% in 1982. Operating costs are now \$29 per hour, up from \$27 per hour in 1982. Public opinion over the fare increases varies, but Tomtran director Dwight Mengel hopes that the increase will allow the county to maintain the current levels of service. There has been a decline in short trips overall and in the use of the transit system by senior citizens. Seniors account for about 8% of total riders. A national decline in transit ridership has also been occurring, but an increase in ridership on the Dryden-Groton route leads Mengel to believe that annual losses in ridership may be bottoming out.¹⁰⁴

1989-June

Both Ithaca Transit and Tomtran have experienced significant declines in riders in the first quarter of this year, averaging a 16% decline over the same period last year. Administrators aren't sure why the decline occurred, but intend to survey local riders and non-riders. There has been an overall downward trend in ridership at Tomtran over the past few years, but only at about a 7% decrease annually. There has been a national trend towards a decrease in bus ridership. Locally, the biggest loss has been of riders making shorter rides. Tomtran Director Dwight Mengel has contracted with a local graduate student to assist in the evaluation of rider surveys over the summer, and theorizes that there may be a larger business cycle involved in local transit ridership. Both Mengel and Ithaca Transit Director Bernie Carpenter intend to use improved marketing techniques to make local commuters more aware of the benefits of using local transit service. Recent increases in fares are not thought to be a substantial factor in the ridership losses. Tomtran rates increased from \$1.00 to \$1.25 and Ithaca Transit went from 35¢ to 50¢, significantly lower than rates in larger urban areas. Cuts in service are not being considered, although both systems may adjust their schedules to better serve riders.¹⁰⁵

1989-August

Tompkins County bus service announced a new schedule for the Dryden-Groton bus route. A noon shuttle will be

George Thomas, Jr., "State, County at Odds on Transportation Money", Ithaca Journal, 17 March 1988.

George Thomas, Jr., "Kindest Cut for Tomtran is No Cut at All", Ithaca Journal, 30 April 1988.

Rachel Thomas, "Riders Complain as Tomtran Increases Rates", Ithaca Journal, 22 December 1988.

Kathy Hovis, "Public Bus Systems Hit by Drop in Riders Here", Ithaca Journal, 15 June 1989.

added to the morning and evening schedule to allow people to return home from work at noon and to accommodate afternoon classes at TC3. Night service to Pyramid Mall, CU, Ithaca Commons, Tops and Wegmans will also be introduced on Tuesday and Thursday nights.¹⁰⁶

“Tomtran Plans Faster TC3 Bus.” Ithaca Journal, 9 August 1989.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PLAN BY CORNELL UNIVERSITY

1990-April

CU students in the School of Human Ecology conducted a study hoping to find solutions to campus parking shortages and ridership losses of local bus companies. The students offered a free two-month bus pass to university staff members living along Ithaca Transit Route 3 and Tomtran's Freeville/Dryden route, with the condition that they turn in their parking permits for that period. After conducting interviews both with riders and those people who refused the passes, the class concluded that the use of public transit was not practical for parents who needed to use daycare or those who felt the bus schedules to be too limited in relation to their workday.¹⁰⁷

1990-April

Results of a recent student transit survey led students to recommend that the University should work with Tomtran and Ithaca Transit in coordinating employee schedules to increase bus ridership and alleviate parking shortages. They also recommended shuttles between the University and daycare facilities, since many participants in the study mentioned the need for accessible child care. Other recommendations included an increase in CU subsidies for bus passes, expanding park-and-ride systems, and starting an express route from CU to the Town of Dryden. Dwight Mengel, coordinator of the Tomtran bus system, agreed with many of the findings, and hopes to use the survey "as a basis to apply for funding for more buses".¹⁰⁸

1990-November

Cornell University's Department of Transportation Services has developed a program providing free public bus service to university employees. Omniride allows employees who turn in their campus parking permits free access to all Tompkins County transportation services, including CU Transit, Ithaca Transit, Northeast Transit, Tomtran and Car-O-Van. Officials cited traffic congestion, parking shortages and environmental concerns as reasons for the enactment of this program. The costs to the university of subsidizing bus use is expected to be considerably less than the cost of providing new parking lots and traffic improvements. The numbers of university employees who live in outlying areas in county has grown enough so that a park & ride system for people living off bus lines is also part of this new plan. Omniride users are guaranteed a set of ten single-day parking permits every six months, and can also call on the Office of Transportation Services for a ride home in an emergency.¹⁰⁹

1990-November

Rumors of new parking fees for A & B Lots at CU and drastic increases in fees for central campus permits have preceded the actual release of CU's new Transportation Master Plan. University officials claim that the fees will simply encourage the participation of university employees in ride sharing and the new Omniride program, maintaining that all employees will have some opportunity to use low-cost commuting. People who do carpool receive free parking permits depending on the number of people in the car. The new plan will be formally released to the Employee, Student and University Assemblies in a week.¹¹⁰

1990-November

The CU Transportation Demand Management plan was officially released on November 9, and is scheduled to go into

Melissa Jacobs, "Transportation Study Focuses on Bus Use", Cornell Daily Sun, 11 April 1990.

Melissa Jacobs, "Students Complete Study of Campus Bus Needs", Cornell Daily Sun, 27 April 1990.

Paul Epstein, "C. U. Offers Bus Rides As Parking Solution", Cornell Daily Sun, 6 November 1990.

Marci Yaremko, "Parking Fee Changes to Promote Bus Use", Cornell Daily Sun, 7 November 1990.

effect in July 1991. It requires all commuting employees to form carpools or rely on public transportation in order to avoid paying parking fees. Figures on parking space increases from 6,261 spaces in 1980 to 11,277 in 1990 are cited to demonstrate previous university efforts to mitigate campus transportation problems. University officials stressed the environmental benefits which would accrue from the new program. Union officials challenge the plan, charging that the new parking fees are a financial burden and that the plan penalizes lower-paid employees unfairly, particularly those with non-professional working hours who cannot use public transportation. No students would be allowed to participate in the program. The Omniride program has already been implemented on a limited basis with 400 volunteer riders in previous months.¹¹¹

1991-March

Over 90% of 2284 employees responding an opinion poll on the new university transportation plan consider the proposed plan to be unacceptable. The plan provides for free transit passes in exchange for university parking permits through the Omniride program, as well as the enactment of new parking permit fees designed to encourage carpooling. The results of this survey were presented by CUE (Concerned University Employees) to the Employee Assembly, and will also be given to the University Assembly and the Commission on Transportation Services. Common problems which employees cited with the plan include an incompatibility with irregular working hours in addition to job-related transportation needs which require daytime access to a car.¹¹²

1991-March

After considerable debate and protest from employees, CU has relaxed provisions of the new Transportation Demand Management Plan to allow for the continuation of free A Lot parking for university employees. The plan must be passed by the University Assembly and then approved by CU President Frank H. T. Rhodes. Once the final fee structure for parking permits has been established, officials have agreed not to revise conditions of the plan for five years. Problems with funding the plan are anticipated in light of changes to the plan's original provisions, including the expansion of the transit plan's provisions to students. Specific lots have been redesignated as central campus lots for the purposes of the plan's fee structure.¹¹³

1992-Fall

CU's Transportation Demand-Management Program has had success in reducing the number of vehicles traveling to Cornell every day, already exceeding administrative goals of 10% employee participation. As a result of the program, there has been less traffic congestion on campus as well as on nearby city streets. The university estimates that 2000 fewer vehicles come to campus each day, with concomitant reductions in fuel use and exhaust emissions. The program is described in some detail, with descriptions of the OmniRide pass program, RideShare, Occasional Parker, Emergency Ride Service, parking lot shuttle services, park & ride lots, FamilyCare support service, and the new Parking Hardship Review Board. The university urges supervisors to set more flexible employee working hours to accommodate their transportation needs. William Wendt, director of CU transportation services, also states that local transit operators as a result of the program are receiving increased grant assistance due to fuller use of their transit capacity. The university hopes not only to act as a model for other campuses across the country, but to act in concert with the city in the development of new local transit initiatives.¹¹⁴

Marci Yaremko, "Cornell Releases New Traffic Plan", Cornell Daily Sun, 12 November 1990.

Risa Cherry, "2000 Cornell Employees Reject University Transportation Plan", Cornell Daily Sun, 7 March 1991.

Marci Yaremko, "C. U. Officials Accept New Parking Policy", Cornell Daily Sun, 14 March 1991.

"University's Transportation Program Rides on Success", Community Report, Fall 1992.

1992-November

CU won a Department of Energy award for the successful implementation of its Transportation Demand Management Plan. The reviewers commended the reduction in the number of automobiles used by university commuters as a result of the plan's implementation. The Omniride and Rideshare programs require employees to turn in their individual parking permits in order to obtain free bus passes, parking discounts, rebates and one-day campus parking permits. The Omniride pass allows employees to use transit systems countywide, with access to Ithaca Transit, Tomtran and CU Transit.¹¹⁵

"CU Receives Energy Award", Cornell Daily Sun, 13 November 1992.

ITHACA TOMPKINS TRANSIT CENTER

1989-November

Local efforts to build a joint transit facility may soon be realized. State and federal agencies are being responsive to requests from local officials for assistance, with state officials actively seeking major federal funding for the project. Local and state governments would only have to come up with 25% of project costs. Senior Planner Dwight Mengel listed the advantages of the facility for the press. There will be common training grounds for drivers, a single county transit information source and a consolidation of service planning and bus maintenance. The \$4 million facility would include space for repairs, maintenance and administrative functions for local transit systems.¹¹⁶

1990-August

The plans by Ithaca's three major bus lines to build a cooperative maintenance facility are designed to anticipate future expansions of local transit systems in the 1990s. Present facilities are not capable of supporting more extensive use by local transit systems. Current activities conducted separately by the systems, including the training of personnel, purchase of new equipment and the planning of bus routes will be done in concert at the new facility. The new facility will be built on land owned by the city of Ithaca and sold to a legal partnership of the three lines after state approval has been granted. However, the state comptroller's office recently declared the project unconstitutional since it involves the use of combined public and private ownership of the facility. Since the federal government has been encouraging creative uses of public-private partnerships in recent years, county officials are hopeful that the award of a \$4.7 million federal grant to build the facility will encourage the state to grant special approval to the project. Currently, a committee of representatives from the three lines is reviewing architectural proposals for the facility. University officials hope that this project will be a practical way to share the resources of the university with the community.¹¹⁷

1991-January

Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, Cornell University and Gadabout have agreed to collectively design a new bus garage which would meet their joint maintenance, service and storage needs. The proposed site on Willow Avenue at Pier Road should provide a particularly economical building site since the site has no environmental problems. Senior county planner Dwight Mengel explains that a design review committee is expected to choose an architect for the new facility from several different designs that have been submitted.¹¹⁸

1991-November

Officials from the City of Ithaca, CU, Tompkins County and New York State conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new joint transit facility. Senator Alfonse D'Amato presented the county with a \$3.15 million check from the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration as part of the project's financing. The facility will serve the public systems of Ithaca Transit and Tomtran, the not-for-profit Gadabout system and the privately owned buses of CU Transit. Kaeyer, Parker & Garment Architects designed the 50,000 square foot facility, which will provide storage and maintenance space for up to 54 buses and office space for the administrators of the bus lines. Additional funding comes from CU (\$1.2 million), the City of Ithaca (\$594,000), Tompkins County (\$594,000) and the state DOT (\$448,000). This cooperative effort is hoped to provide inspiration

"Common Bus Garage Eyed", Ithaca Journal, 29 November 1989.

Stephanie Hoo, "Ithaca Bus Lines to Build New Maintenance Facility", Cornell Daily Sun, 30 August 1990.

Melissa Reichley, "Public Transportation Under One Roof", Grapevine, January 9-15 1991.

for more joint transportation planning and service efforts.¹¹⁹

1992-August

Construction is almost completed on the new joint transit facility, which will serve the storage and maintenance needs of four local transit systems. The cost of the project was just under \$5 million, and took a year to complete. Funding for the project came from both local (20%) and government (80%) sources. CU Transit anticipates improvements in service and routes as a result of the relocation of their terminal, as well as reductions in maintenance costs for all of the systems because of the improvement in storage practices. The companies will also jointly hire dispatchers and open an information hotline.¹²⁰

1992-October

The new Ithaca Tompkins Transit Center had its ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 27, and will immediately begin providing services to the county's 2.2 million transit riders. Included in this article are details about the facility with budget information and physical details. CU Transit also issues an assurance that changes and improvements in their services will not interfere with Ithaca Transit service to the same areas, but will supplement existing lines. New CU routes will go into effect in November.

1992, October 19-20 DS

New routes for CU Transit routes 81,82,83 and 84 begin. A total of 21 vehicles are in service.¹²¹

Dineen Pashoukos, "Officials Break Ground for New Transit Effort", Cornell Daily Sun, 10 November 1991.

Adam Gartenberg, "Transit Facility Nears Completion", Cornell Daily Sun, 28 August 1992.

Sara Acharya, "University, County, Ithaca Open New Transit Facility", Cornell Daily Sun, 28 October 1992.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF COUNTY TRANSIT

1990-September

An editorial piece by Ithaca mayor Ben Nichols discusses several aspects of the Downtown Visions Task Force, including two specific committees dealing with issues of parking and traffic. One committee is supposed to come up ways to improve the public transit system, develop new park-and-ride lots outside the City of Ithaca and increase the use of more environmentally conscious means of local transport. Mayor Nichols relates local problems of high commuter traffic to widespread use of inefficient vehicles which produce high carbon dioxide emissions. The creation of the new joint transit facility is touted as providing major improvements in local transit, including integrated operation, routing and scheduling of buses. Another suggestion for the improvement of local transit is the establishment of park-and-ride lots with shuttle buses subsidized in part by local employers. These lots could also be used for the storage of student cars, alleviating parking shortages on city streets. Frequent shuttle service between Collegetown and downtown Ithaca is another recommendation by the mayor.¹²²

1990-September

An article in the Ithaca Times provides a status report for public transportation in Tompkins County, using a radical proposal for Motorized-Vehicle-Free Zones as the starting point for a critical examination of the strengths and weaknesses of local transit policies. Changes in policy at all levels of government and at Cornell University suggest that a rational, comprehensive regional transportation policy has been slowly evolving. The historic growth in the number of commuters to Cornell, with accompanying increases in parking spaces and resource commitment, is cited as one of the major factors involved in the confusing commuter transit market. Cornell is planning several changes aimed at improving commuter transit services, including the production of a comprehensive local transit system map, an expanded car-pooling program and the development of a pilot county bus-pass program for employees willing to give up their campus parking privileges. A joint facility for the vehicles of all local transit systems is being planned for a Willow Avenue site. These cooperative efforts are significant as being the first steps towards a consolidation of local transit systems under one authority, although the creation of such an authority will probably not happen in the near future or may not happen at all. The inconvenience of multiple transit schedules, lack of Sunday and off-hour service, and ongoing problems with good service and maintenance are problems which a comprehensive transit planning effort could alleviate. However, commuter reluctance to give up the freedom of single-occupancy automobile use may preclude the adaptation of more resource-conservative transit policies which could be perceived as intruding onto personal freedom of choice.¹²³

1993-June

A critical article in the Ithaca Times about the consolidation of local service delivery and governmental services uses the recent construction of the Ithaca Tompkins Transit Center as an example of a successful consolidation project. Modifications are currently being made to state regulations which had formerly made the use of public and private resources in collective projects difficult. The informal cooperative arrangements which had existed between the various local bus systems in Tompkins County led officials to take advantage of available federal and state funding to construct the joint facility. A tentative agreement allowed them to begin the application process for funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation. The discovery that the state constitution did not allow public and private money to be combined in a project made the project a challenge. Cornell solved the problem by agreeing to a twenty-year lease with a full advance rent

Ben Nichols, "Ithaca in Transit", Grapevine, September 5-11 1990.

Maria Korolov, "Going the Route- Countywide, Officials Mobilize Mass Transit Improvements", Ithaca Times, September 13-19 1990.

payment. The facility can accommodate up to 54 buses, and has a self-contained six-bay maintenance garage. A bus washer owned by Cornell was reused in the new facility. The front of the building contains the shared administrative area of Ithaca Transit, CU Transit, Tomtran and Gadabout along with a public conference room. Although operations of the bus systems are expected to change as a result of the cooperative project, it is unclear exactly how extensive these changes will be or when they will occur. Ithaca Mayor Ben Nichols has suggested that a regional or county transit authority could be formed. The integration of vehicles into a common color scheme and fare schedule, despite actual ownership, may be the first change made. Advantages of this project go beyond simple financial savings, offering the added benefits of improved efficiency in public service delivery through collective management and concomitant economies of scale.¹²⁴

Wendy Skinner, "Come Together-Local Governments Look to Consolidation to Solve Fiscal Problems", Ithaca Times, June 24-30, 1993.

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