



Super Transit Zones Development Study

Executive Summary

April 2017

Regional Transit Service (RTS) is interested in developing areas of high frequency public transportation service to meet the demand prompted by popular destinations, job sites and dense residential areas. If it is determined that high frequency service areas can be developed in a financially sustainable manner, the result will be the creation of Super Transit Zones along existing bus routes, where citizens can rely on frequent service connecting them to high-demand destinations.

An additional focus of this project is the potential for increased service frequency during off-peak times when RTS has buses and operators that are currently underutilized. Ideally this will result in more service being available to our customers and increased operational efficiency at little additional cost.

Funding for this project was secured in the form of a UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) grant and all work was completed in-house by RTS staff between September 2016 and April 2017. A Project Steering Committee met five (5) times throughout the course of the project to review progress and provide input and guidance.

A list of possible Super Transit Zones (STZs) was developed, based on stop-level ridership throughout the RTS system in Monroe County. Eleven (11) segments were identified that ran from the RTS Transit Center to the outer boundary of the City of Rochester, along main RTS routes (i.e. East Main Street, Lake Avenue, and Dewey Avenue). Additionally, one segment was identified that covered the Henrietta area along multiple existing bus routes.

These twelve (12) segments were then evaluated and ranked against each other based on ridership, disparity between off peak and peak headways, and operational feasibility. Highest ranking routes overall were: Genesee Avenue, Lake Avenue and Dewey Avenue. These STZ segments were then included in our subsequent financial analysis.

A customer/public survey was conducted between January 9, 2017 and February 9, 2017. The community was invited to complete the survey at myRTS.com, kiosks located at the RTS Transit Center, or by calling RTS Customer Service. A total of 373 survey responses were collected.

The survey showed overwhelmingly that all respondents' high priority is for additional service in the Henrietta area. Responses collected at the RTS Transit Center next favored more service along Lake Avenue and Lyell Avenue, while responses gathered via the web next favored additional service along Monroe Avenue and South Avenue. Survey responses also showed that respondents were more interested in additional service on the weekends than during the STZ time of 9AM – 2PM on weekdays.

As a result of the survey responses, it was determined that moving forward we would include the Henrietta STZ segment in our financial analysis. We also decided to complete costing for additional service times: 6AM – 6PM on weekdays and 6AM – 6PM on weekends.

Operationally, it was determined that a 10-minute headway was required to make the service convenient enough that customers would not feel the need to consult a timetable (paper schedule) when wanting to utilize the service. Sample schedules for each scenario were created resulting in the number of additional Bus Operators that would be required, as well as service hours, miles and impact to the bus fleet.

Utilizing these inputs along with personnel and non-personnel cost factors the range of possible costs was determined. The initial supposition that STZs may be financially feasible due to an existing, underutilized workforce did not come to fruition. An annual service cost of anywhere from \$300,000 to \$2.5 Million per segment on weekdays, 9AM-2PM was determined. Additionally, the initial capital investment ranges from \$1.9 Million to \$5.7 Million. Lastly, since multiple STZs would need to be implemented in order to provide a significant benefit to the community, it does not seem that the service is financially feasible at this time.

Therefore, it has been determined that high frequency service areas, or Super Transit Zones, cannot be developed in a financially sustainable manner as a stand-alone system change at this time.

It is the committee's determination that implementing STZ service on its own brings with it too much additional operating cost. In order to address fiscal constraints, it may be more appropriate to incorporate more frequent service in some STZ areas while at the same time reducing service in other areas. It should also be noted that customers wanted service on weekends, not weekdays.

The service analysis, financial analysis, and customer survey feedback will all provide valuable input as RTS embarks on our System Redesign Project in the Spring of 2017.