Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) Demonstration Program
Tompkins County, NY: Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) Phase 1 - Multi-Modal Trip Planning, Customer Service & First/Last Mile Public Transit Pilot

TEAM AND BUDGET

Key Partners: Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC), Tompkins Consolidated Area Transport Inc. (TCAT), Gadabout Transportation Services Inc. (Gadabout), Center for Community Transportation, Inc. (CCT), Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCETC), Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County Inc. (2-1-1 Information & Referral), and Ithaca Downtown Alliance (Go Ithaca Transportation Demand Management-TDM).

Other Partners: Urban Mobility, Inc., Schweiger Consulting, LLC, Rural Health Network of South Central NY, Ithaca Dispatch, Inc. (taxi), Cornell University Department of City & Regional Planning and Cornell SC Johnson College of Business.

Budget Summary: The budget from the applicant is summarized below:

IMI Demonstration Federal Amount ($)	Local Cost Share ($)	Total Cost
$ 820,000	$ 205,000	**$ 1,025,000**

INNOVATION: PROJECT APPROACH

Since 1978, Tompkins County has been one of multiple key partners to successfully collaborate to organize and diversify mobility services in the Ithaca small urban area and rural towns, including:

- Organizing a county-wide, non-profit paratransit agency (Gadabout, 1978).
- Developing rural multi-modal transportation services (Tompkins County, 1981-83).
- Implementing a large-employer Transportation Demand Management program (Cornell University, 1988).
- Building a transit facility (City of Ithaca, Cornell University & Tompkins County, 1992).
- Consolidating three transit systems into Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc. (TCAT) 1997 & 2004.
- Establishing a local non-profit carshare company (Ithaca Carshare, Inc., 2006).
- Creating the community mobility education program Way2Go (CCETC), 2009).
- Developing a regional mobility services plan (ITCTC), 2013).
- Starting an online rideshare service (Finger Lakes Rideshare (ITCTC), 2013).
- Creating a regional mobility management program (MoveTogetherNY – CCETC, 2016).
- Consolidating carshare and biking/walking advocacy under an umbrella non-profit (CCT, 2018).
- Organizing the Go Ithaca TDM program for Ithaca, NY (Ithaca Downtown Alliance, 2018).

The above list demonstrates a collective competency for recognizing opportunities and working together to successfully innovate.

Since 2010, the Transportation Planning Unit of Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services has developed concepts for a mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) model for small urban and rural areas. In 2018, the County was selected to participate in the FTA Mobility on Demand On-Ramp Program to work with the Shared Use Mobility Center (Chicago) to refine ideas into a business model. In June 2019, the MaaS model was organized into two phases. FTA selected the County's MaaS Phase 1 proposal for the IMI Program in March 2020.

FTA's IMI Demonstration Program will help address three customer issues:

- Comprehensive, real-time information to plan and complete single and multi-modal trips.
- Customer assistance when a planned trip fails for any number of reasons.
- An inability to access rural transit service or the lack of affordable on-demand service.

Trip Planning and Service Information

Assisting people with trip planning, answering customer questions by telephone, computer, or text message, providing an easy- to-use smartphone app, sending links of how-to videos, resolving problems, accessing language assistance for non-English speakers and providing ADA-accessible information modes are all essential customer services. This project will explore innovative means of making providing information and trip planning more seamless by providing 24/7 access for customer service.

This project will operate a call-center and develop a smartphone app. The project team will guide developing a call-center. In addition, Tompkins County is currently evaluating model call-centers operating in small urban/rural counties in New York State.

The project has specific requirements for the phone app to be much simpler than many of the MaaS-related apps for large metro areas. The app will not have fare payment capability. The primary uses are to call individual mobility operators, the project call-center, for Internet access of mobility operator apps or websites, to access frequently asked questions and answers or to report an emergency. Currently, real-time bus location information is limited to two public transit operators (TCAT and one of three inter-county bus services) and the operation of TCAT's First/Last Mile pilot project. Tompkins County will collaborate with a peer agency to learn more about Open Trip Planner technology.

Customer Service

While the trip planning and service information program helps customers discover travel options and answer questions 24/7, the IMI project will support customers when they experience trip failures. Using the business model for a nationally-recognized member-based road-side assistance program for automobiles, the project will develop a pilot program for customers experiencing trip failures when using community mobility services, ridesharing and bicycling. This pilot will collect data on customers' experiences and resolution of trip failures, to help to create a member-based business plan for a larger program in the future.

First/Last Mile Service

Since 2018, TCAT and Gadabout have worked with Urban Mobility, Inc. to develop a new pilot service in Tompkins County – an integration of paratransit and fixed-route transit services to allow passengers to make first-mile/last-mile (FM/LM) connections. The objective is to transport passengers to/from a main bus stop to their home address; however, origin-to-destination rides would be possible using Urban Mobility's smartphone app (Hypercommute) to handle logistics between TCAT and Gadabout buses and customers. In 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic delayed the start from Spring to Fall 2020 and changed the scope of the pilot. TCAT and Gadabout decided to launch a revised pilot (TConnect) starting with a Sunday-only, mobility-on-demand service connecting a suburban/rural area to a large retail center in the Ithaca urban area. The pilot began on August 30, 2020.

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ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES, BENEFITS, IMPACTS

As a result of the work through the IMI project, travelers in Tompkins County and regional bus commuters will have more and easier ways to access travel information, plan trips, mitigate trip failures and access on-demand mobility services in select suburban and rural communities.

By providing easy access to travel information, expanding real-time mobility service data, and assisting people facing trip failures, it is anticipated that the IMI project will reduce travel stress for all parties, especially the transit-dependent, persons with disabilities, and older individuals.

It is expected that a successful outcome of this pilot will provide the basis for implementing Phase 2 of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) by providing a seamless payment experience.