

# Riders have a few ideas for COLTS

TIMES-

## Planned route changes not all so popular

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STAFF WRITER

From Ed Kuchinski's perspective, the real issue with the County of Lackawanna Transit System bus service to Mount Airy Casino Resort is not one of low ridership.

The 70-year-old Taylor resident, a frequent visitor to the Monroe County casino, said he waited in downtown Scranton for the Mount Airy bus twice this week only to learn the runs had been canceled.

"The reason it is not utilized is it's not advertised for one thing, and it's not reliable for another," Mr. Kuchinski said. "When the bus doesn't show, people get disgusted, and they are not going to take it anymore."

Mr. Kuchinski was among COLTS riders who came to the Mall at Steamtown on Thursday to chime in on proposed route changes.

Under recommendations prepared by Pittsburgh-based Clear View Strategies, which spent 18 months analyzing COLTS routes and ridership, the twice-daily bus service to Mount Airy is one of two routes that would be eliminated because of low usage. The other is the Daleville/North Pocono route.

Other routes would be reconfigured, and still others would be extended or expanded to add evening or Saturday hours.

COLTS spokeswoman Gretchen Wintermantel said the recommendations are not set in stone, and the feedback from the public will help shape the changes the agency ultimately adopts. No changes are expected to be implemented before October, she said.

Clear View Senior Vice President  
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LINDA MORGAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dave Tini of Scranton fills out a survey form about COLTS bus service at the Mall at Steamtown on Thursday.

goal is to make COLTS more efficient while getting the most people to the destinations where they most want or need to go.

Her company found that, in general, COLTS routes averaged between 23 and 26 riders per hour. But there were some routes, such as Daleville/North Pocono, where "they get one or two, or three or four," she said.

"What we were seeing on the Daleville (route) is sometimes we were the only people on those trips, and the most we saw was two," she said. "It's difficult to throw service out there when you're only getting one or two riders."

At Thursday's public meetings, riders were asked to review the recommendations and write down their thoughts. Ms. Colosi and COLTS representatives were available to answer questions.

Blakely resident John Thomas, 64, a retiree who uses COLTS two or three times a week, liked the recommendation to restructure service to improve connections with the Route 6 Shuttle. When he takes the bus to the Viewmont Mall, he frequently arrives too late to catch the shuttle to Wegmans or Walmart.

"The timing is not coordinated," he said. "That is one of the things they need to do — make the timing better."

Ann Reap, 56, of North Scranton, said she relies on COLTS to get to and from her job at Holy Rosary Church.

"I take the bus all over the place, and I just wanted to see what the proposals were," she said, adding she particularly liked the idea of expanded evening and Saturday hours.

Mr. Kuchinski submitted comments objecting to the elimination of the casino service. Driving to Mount Airy costs about \$5 for gas each way; because he's a senior citizen, he rides the COLTS bus for free.

COLTS will accept written comments until May 10. Comments may be submitted by mail to COLTS Route Analysis, 800 North South Road, Scranton, 18504, or by email to [info@coltsbus.com](mailto:info@coltsbus.com).

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