

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
CHITTENDEN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
September 17, 2015**

ATTENDEES: Michele Boomhower, VTrans
Barb Donovan, VTrans
Dave Pelletier, VTrans
Ross MacDonald, VTrans
Mary Grant, RCT
Sandy Thorp, RCT
Van Chesnut, AT
Lee Cattaneo, COVE
John Sharrow, Mountain Transit
Jim Moulton, ACTR/STSI
Aaron Little, STSI
Randy Schoonmaker, DVTA
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Susan Schreibman, RRPC
Robert Moore, LCPC
Karen Walton, CCTA/GMTA
Mark Sousa, CCTA
Tim Bradshaw, GMTA
Bethany Whitaker, VEIC
Jamie Feehan, VPTA
Maggie Roddy, UCAPT
Chuck Norris-Brown, UCAPT
Diane Carminati, United Way

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

Michele Boomhower called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM and briefly reviewed her professional background in transportation planning. Introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 18, 2015

MOTION by Jim Moulton, SECOND by John Sharrow, to approve the minutes of 6/18/15 with the change of “FHWA” to “FTA” and “Public Transit Plan” to “State Management Plan”. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. KAREN WALTON, CCTA GENERAL MANAGER

Karen Walton briefed the assemblage on the reorganization and rebranding at CCTA/GMTA (one organization) before the transit station opens. Mark Sousa reviewed CCTA initiatives including ITS (AVL/GPS in vehicles), feasibility study with VT Gas on upgrade of vehicles to CNG, and the DNT (downtown transit center).

4. 2015 LEGISLATIVE STUDIES

Dave Pelletier reported all legislative studies are due to the legislature by mid-January 2016 except the commuter rail study which is due in 2017. Mr. Pelletier reviewed the following:

- ~~Elderly~~ and ~~Persons with Disabilities~~~~ed Persons~~ Transportation Program Review will look at current and projected program demands and budget, on a regional and statewide level, as well as investigate a handful of specific issues. ~~needs, projected needs, budget and budget needs.~~ A stakeholder meeting is ~~Public meetings are scheduled at the end of for the afternoon of~~ October 29, 2015 at VTrans. KFH is the consultant working on the study.
- Local Public Transit Funding Study will compile data and identify ways to raise local transit funding other than reliance on local property taxes. This match is important to draw down for ~~for~~ federal ~~match~~ funds and to ease demand on state funding. Steadman Hill is the consultant working on the study. A stakeholder meeting is scheduled for the morning October 23, 2015 at VTrans.
- Bennington Thruway Bus Service Study will compile data on ways to make the connection from southwest Vermont to Albany, NY (including to the Amtrak train station). A draft report is anticipated by late October.
- Commuter Rail Study for service from Montpelier to St. Albans with a connection to Burlington will look at cost, ridership needed to make the service economically feasible, and institutional issues including (labor laws ~~with transit service,~~ track access rights, and alternatives for funding sources, among many others). The report is due January 2017.

John Sharrow asked about bus service from Rutland to Fort Ann. Dave Pelletier said there is the Route 7 corridor service through Rutland to southern Vermont and to Albany, NY (not necessarily tied to the train service). The study (Bennington Thruway Bus Service) will look at additional service to existing inter-city service and possible tweaks to work with Amtrak service.

Michele Boomhower noted commuter rail service from Montpelier to St. Albans is more complex than simply getting ~~b~~"Budd" cars for service. The study will document the facts to identify what is needed for the service. Agreements are needed with the railroad to use the rail line for the commuter service. Amtrak has federal exemption to use any rail line. Some federal funding resources will be diverted into the commuter rail service. The Link Express bus service would need to be reexamined if there is commuter rail service. At this time there are no plans to study commuter rail service Rutland to Burlington, only the northwest Vermont corridor. Bethany Whitaker suggested communicating to communities what they can do in their planning to support commuter rail service.

5. UVM RESEARCH REPORTS

Barb Donovan announced the presentation on the UVM research reports is postponed until the next meeting. The draft report will be forwarded to the Council. UVM did two studies, one involving veterans statewide and transportation to needed services and the other involved establishing a baseline of how elderly and disabled people in Chittenden County get to where they need to go and what changes may be needed.

6. PILOT PROJECTS/OTHER INITIATIVES

Ross MacDonald, VTrans, reported on the following pilot projects:

- BRIDGEJ rides which use private and public infrastructure for route cutting. With BRIDGEJ people needing rides may have to walk a short distance to the pickup location where other passengers are gathering. The bus looks like a limousine and offers Wi-Fi and captain chairs. In Boston the cost of a BRIDGEJ ride ranges from \$2 to \$5 per trip which is half the amount of an Uber ride and a little bit more than public transit. Matt George, Middlebury College student, did the business model and started the BRIDGEJ project. VTrans is looking at proposals and will share the information with providers.

Karen Walton noted the new CCTA rural planner is a former BRIDGEJ employee driver.

- GTFS Project Extension with an overlay of transit routes and Google maps to provide routes, times, schedule, providers. GTFS real time and flex will be included so people can share trips where appropriate. The state is looking at Trillium investigating options to employ and AVL (Automatic Vehicle Locator) technology throughout the state.
- Route Performance Report that provides cost per hour per trip information will be used to see if any changes are needed or to assist providers. Services that are not performing well will be reviewed.
- RFP to look at how to incentivize improved performance across the state and reward improved performance. Any suggested performance metrics that should be included in the RFP should be submitted to VTrans.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Consolidation of Connecticut River Transit and Deerfield Valley Transit

Randy Schoonmaker reported the consolidated company is called “Southeast Vermont Transit” and is one company with two distinct operating divisions. Connecticut River Transit serves 31 towns and Deerfield Valley serves six towns.

Middlebury Bridge

Jim Moulton reported VTrans and Federal Highway are replacing two bridges in downtown Middlebury. The rail line goes under the bridges. The transit transfer hub is located downtown. Plans are being formed for a temporary then a permanent transit hub. VTrans is helping to ensure all infrastructure is in place.

PTAC Meeting Schedule

- December 17, 2015 in Bennington at 1 PM (following the VPTA meeting)

8. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION by Karen Walton, SECOND by Jim Moulton, to adjourn the meeting.
VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2 PM.

RScty: MRiordan