

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
5th FLOOR BOARD ROOM
MONTPELIER, VERMONT
December 11, 2014**

ATTENDEES: Barb Donovan, VTrans
Dave Pelletier, VTrans
Scott Bascom, VTrans
Jackie Cassino, VTrans
Mollie Burke, Legislature
Mary Grant, RCT
Van Chesnut, AT
Robert Young, Premier Coach
Lee Cattaneo, COVE
John Sharrow, Mountain Transit
Mary Grant, RCT
Jim Moulton, ACTR/STSIPTA
Matt Mann, WRC

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

Barb Donovan called the meeting to order at 1:09 PM. Introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 25, 2014

MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by Mary Grant, to approve the minutes of 9/25/14 as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. PLANNING INITIATIVES OF VTRANS PLANNING SECTION

Scott Bascom briefed the council on planning updates and initiatives, noting the following:

- A study is being done to look at the cost to maintain park-and-ride facilities, potential other sources of funding, and unmet needs such as bike racks/boxes, expanding existing lots or locations for additional facilities.
- The state is also looking into installing car chargers at new or rehabbed park-and-ride facilities. Level 1 park-and-ride facilities will have a car charger at no charge to the user. Level 2 facilities located closer to downtown areas will charge for use of the charger (the charge is quicker).
- Park-and-rides opening soon or under reconstruction/expansion in the near future include Putney, Springfield, St. Johnsbury, Danville.
- Rutland Airport and Morrisville-Stowe Airport are used as state park-and-ride facilities.
- A quarter of park-and-ride users where a bus service is available are bus riders and the remainder carpool.

- On-Road Bike Facilities Plan is identifying sections of state highway with biking activity or likelihood of biking activity. Strava keeps track of routes heavily used by bicyclists. Wiki tool shows where to ride and where it is dangerous to ride.
- Highway bridge upgrade is part of the Freight Plan update.
- Rail Plan update is done every five years.
- Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative will identify the preferred alternative for intercity passenger rail service.
- Vermont standards to be updated for roadway design, maintenance, deficiencies. Smart Growth America is assisting with the process.
- Impact fees per Act 145 will avoid the last business in paying for improvements to infrastructure. Transportation improvement districts will be formed where growth is expected and improvements needed, and the cost will be shared by all developers via impact fees.
- The public outreach plan will be consistent in getting public participation.

There was discussion of the following with regard to park-and-ride facilities:

- Trash and idling cars;
- Bus shelters;
- Secured bike storage rather than bike racks;
- Need for adequate lighting;
- Having an area for the bus only to avoid having the transit bus drive through the parking lot;
- Corporate sponsors for funding;
- Having a uniform policy for bikes inside buses.

There was brief discussion of sharing the road with bikes and the effectiveness of 'sharrows' (share the road markings) versus bike lanes. John Sharrow mentioned the blind spot with larger industrial sized vehicles that bicyclists need to be aware of and avoid. Mary Grant mentioned Tourism & Marketing promoting bike tours in the state.

There was question of how impact fees are applied to development at the intersection of town roads and state roads or to existing businesses that expand.

4. REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES, REGIONAL PROVIDERS AND PLANNERS

Services to provide information to the public on public transportation include 1-800-865-RIDE, Go VT, and 211. VEIC is tracking information requests. There was discussion of effective approaches to public outreach with public transit information. Matt Mann stressed information needs to be readily accessible to potential riders and people need to be made aware of where to find the information. Contact numbers should be sent to all regional planners. Bus schedules should be posted in shelters.

Matt Mann noted private carriers serving his area have lowered rates dramatically in recognition of demand. Barb Donovan stated research of area bus fares to Boston (Tom's Transportation, Dartmouth Coach, Greyhound) shows there are options. The state website and Go VT have information on Greyhound, Megabus, Yankee Trails, VT Translines,

and regional services. There is a Greyhound route from Boston-Keene-Brattleboro. Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation is doing an RFP for a route from Boston to Rutland through Bellows Falls and Springfield (VT). Matt Mann said his region is looking at creating routes for youth in outlying areas of downtowns in order to have access to bus service for jobs, social events, and other activities. Mary Grant confirmed there is a need for kids in rural areas who must stay after school for activities to have a ride home if the parents cannot do it themselves.

Jim Moulton said his region is looking at routes and services to target weak links. The project is on hold presently due to work on highway bridges as part of the Freight Plan update. In the Stagecoach area efficiencies of service and reconfiguration where necessary are the focus. John Sharrow urged good communication between carriers so riders are not left behind.

5. VTRANS PUBLIC TRANSIT PLANNING UPDATES

Dave Pelletier reported the Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan is updated and the final formatted draft will be done within the next week. Prioritized outcomes/recommendations include:

- Ramping up the statewide volunteer network
- Technology upgrade (GTFA, statewide trip planning)
- Strengthening inter-regional connectivity, communication and marketing

Barb Donovan said the state website will be updated with Google transit information. Mr. Pelletier stated the annual performance draft report for the legislature will be ready 12/15/14. Comparisons are within the state and nationally.

6. INTERCITY UPDATES, VERMONT TRANSLINES, GREYHOUND, MARKETING, NEXT PROJECT

The following was noted:

- Vermont Translines route from Colchester to Albany (NY) on Route 7 has been very successful. Buses were added over the Thanksgiving holiday. The service on Route 4 has not been as successful. Improvement is anticipated with the approaching ski season.
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation is doing an RFP for service from Boston to Rutland.
- There is rumor Greyhound may provide service on Route 9.
- The budget must first be passed and then an RFP can be done for a route from Newport to other connections.
- ACTR is providing management services for Stagecoach. CRT and DVTA will merge as of January 1st under a new name.
- RCT will have a building in St. Johnsbury-Lyndonville Industrial Park.
- Ridership statistics on the White River Jct. to Springfield (MA) route will be forwarded to PTAC.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

PTAC Meeting Schedule

- March 19, 2015
- June 18, 2015
- September 17, 2015

VTrans Staff Change

Chris Cole will be Deputy Secretary of Transportation upon the retirement of Brian Searles.

Bus Rebuild

The state is analyzing the cost to rebuild public transit buses from Vermont on a military base in Maine.

State Loan

The state treasurer indicated there is up to \$10 million to loan at a low interest rate with a 10% match for hybrid cars for volunteer drivers.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by John Sharrow, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 PM.

RScty: MRiordan