

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
5th FLOOR BOARD ROOM
MONTPELIER, VERMONT
June 18, 2015**

ATTENDEES: Sue Minter, Secretary of Transportation
Barb Donovan, VTrans
Dave Pelletier, VTrans
Scott Bascom, VTrans
Ross MacDonald, VTrans
Amy Rast, VTrans
Kevin Viani, VTrans
Rep. Mollie Burke, Legislature
Sen. Jane Kitchel, Legislature
Mary Grant, RCT
Van Chesnut, AT
Gini Milkey, COVE
John Sharrow, Mountain Transit
Jim Moulton, ACTR/STSI
Randy Schoonmaker, DVTA
Matt Mann, WRPC
Peter Johnke, VCIL
Bob Young, Premier Coach
Steve Gladizuk, CVRPC
Rita Seto, TRORC
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Susan Schreibman, RRPC
Kitt Shaw, RRPC
Josh Donabedian, ACRPC
Jason Rasmussen, SWCRPC
Robert Moore, LCPC
Meredith Birkett, CCTA/GMTA
Mark Sousa, CCTA
Karen Walton, CCTA
Tawnya Kristen, GMTA
Bethany Whitaker, VEIC
Jamie Feehan, VPTA

[Note: Minutes reflect the order of the published agenda.]

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

Sue Minter, Secretary of Transportation, called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM. Introductions were made. New PTAC members, Bethany Whitaker with VEIC and

Karen Walton with CCTA, were recognized. Secretary Minter made the following remarks:

- The public transit system and providers in Vermont have grown and excelled.
- Public Transit operators are thanked for the opportunity they provide to Vermonters and for being advocates of the public transit system.
- Offering more travel options to Vermonters is one of the key goals in the VTrans strategic plan. Transportation has been identified as one of the top barriers to getting out of poverty for transit dependent individuals or people who do not have ride choices so the critical nature of the work by public transit providers is another layer of value.
- The state has been trying to address the transportation barrier by reducing the number of license suspensions and the penalty of license suspension for offenses.
- This year's budget includes \$27 million for public transit.
- Budget pressures relate to capital needs for fleets and the uncertainty of federal earmarks and grants. By the end of July the Transportation Reauthorization Bill will expire and the Transportation Trust Fund will be insolvent so Congress needs to approve the reauthorization and put funds into the Trust. If this does not happen then there will be an immediate freeze on federal funding and the state will only have short term borrowing as a funding source.
- VTrans is committed to the infrastructure and growing the transportation opportunity. With technology and the data being collected new opportunity is being created to share data and provide private sector partnerships like Lyft or Uber or even a rural Uber. Not to disrupt the existing system, but a collective conversation is needed on enticing partners interested in the state's social mission and providing access for transit dependent people in rural areas. Vermont could be a pilot program. VTrans will be working with "Bridj" on this.
- "Way To Go" week was just celebrated. Twinfield High School had two weeks of 100% participation and received the "Way To Go" award.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 19, 2015

MOTION by Jim Moulton, SECOND by Bob Young, to approve the minutes of 3/19/15 as written. VOTING: all ayes except one abstention (Gini Milkey); motion carried.

3. VTRANSPARENCY

Kevin Viani demonstrated the online data program known as "VTransparency" which shows pavement and bridge conditions, construction projects, and maintenance work on roads and bridges in the state. VTransparency is a link on the VTrans homepage and available for use by the public. There are also links to project websites where more details on projects can be found. Sue Minter mentioned the VTransparency program was developed by Kevin Viani and his group in a week's time. Mr. Viani also did the maps used after Tropical Storm Irene.

Sen Kitchel asked where to find information on bridge closures. Mr. Viani said calling “511” will provide information on actual closures. VTransparency provides information on planned bridge closures.

4. STATE FY2016 VTRANS PUBLIC TRANSIT BUDGET

Barbara Donovan reported the FY2016 budget passed and includes federal transit, federal highway, and state transportation funds. Nothing was changed from the Governor’s Recommended Budget.

5. 2015 LEGISLATIVE STUDIES

Barbara Donovan stated consultants will be hired for three of the four legislative studies (Bennington bus service will be done in-house). Results are due by January 2016 for the legislative session except for the Commuter Rail Study. The studies include:

- *Public Transit Funding Study*
The study will identify and evaluate transportation funding sources and alternatives to the T-Fund other than property taxes (local funding). Federal funding is a deficit funded program and state or local funding fills in the difference. There is \$6 million in state funds for local match for capital funding (local 10%, state 10%, federal 80%).
- *Commuter Rail Study*
A consultant will be hired to establish the criteria to support commuter rail service from St. Albans to Montpelier (i.e. number of riders, times of travel, threshold when it is economically feasible to run commuter rail, defining the commuter shed along the route).
- *Bennington Thruway Bus Service Study*
Service for Albany-Bennington-Manchester will be studied in-house.
- *Elderly & Disabled (E&D) Transit Needs Study*
The last E&D study was 10 years ago. The new study will look at where needs are being met (medical trips) and are not being met (personal services such as haircuts, social gatherings), and how many people would use the service.

Sen. Kitchel asked about the Department of Families and Children RFP for transportation of children in foster care or specialized services to childcare services. Barb Donovan said no responses to the RFP were received. Staff is reviewing the RFP. The September 15th delivery date is still holding. Jim Moulton said transit providers did look at the RFP, but felt the way the RFP was constructed did not allow transit providers to participate. Providers have offered to give their perspective. Mary Grant said making the service uniform would help the providers, the riders, and the environment. Barb Donovan commented that finding rides for clients is not the best use of talented social service professionals time.

Sue Minter mentioned that the Public Transit Funding study should look at a regional approach (i.e. public transit regional authority) though the governance structure to support a regional entity is not in place.

6. PUBLIC TRANSIT INCLUDED IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Rob Moore with Lamoille Regional Planning led a discussion on how to include public transit service in development plans at the conceptual stage of projects. The following comments were made:

- Public transit providers should meet with developers to discuss the project at the conceptual level to address all concerns before Act 250 review and well before the engineering is done and the plans are finalized. Act 250 looks at access and incorporating various modes of transportation including public transit.
- Existing public transit locations should be noted to see if a local operator can provide service. Areas not currently served should be reviewed to see if service is feasible.
- Some states mandate at the municipal permitting level input from public transit, police, and fire so all the issues can be discussed before permits are issued.
- Start discussions at the local level and have the municipality direct the developer to talk to public transit providers. The more that can be done upfront with the developer is beneficial to all.
- All towns must update their town plans to be approved by Regional Planning and parking is always an issue so there is opportunity to have some discussion. Town plans are another nexus.
- State legislation may be needed that puts transportation out in front (i.e. “complete streets” for transportation systems). There could be mandates that both Act 250 and transit providers should be contacted.
- As part of the Act 250 process the developer should have to discuss public transit before design of the project. The Act 250 application under ‘transportation’ asks about impact on schools and the municipality. There should be a requirement to talk to a public transit operator about having transit service and what infrastructure is needed (location, turning radius, curb cut, shelter, overhang height, and such).
- For projects that do not require Act 250 review another mechanism is needed to ensure discussion about public transit for a project.
- Municipalities can help with the review of development proposals and developers can be educated on public transit through workshops and such so most of the discussion is held before the plans are done.
- A checklist from transit providers could be sent to town planning departments for review with each development application. (Van Chesnut will forward a copy of the checklist used in the Upper Valley.)
- An undue burden should not be put on the developer so public transit operators should only be contacted if the development is transit related. The application could have a checkbox for “transit related” to trigger the discussion. The Project Review Sheet from ANR in the Act 250 Office could include public transit in the list of people to contact.
- Regional Planning is working with VTrans and big developers to have public transit as part of TDM (Transportation Demand Management) to mitigate traffic impacts. (Joe Segale can provide an update.)
- Less parking could be required if public transit is provided.
- Service needs could be added to the Transportation Infrastructure Districts section of criterion 5(b).

Next steps on incorporating public transit into the development review process:

- Talk to ANR.
- Ask Joe Segale for an update on TDM.
- Work on design standards.
- Draft a one page best practices.
- Ask VLCT for the best way to start a conversation with municipalities about incorporating public transit.
- Learn from others on how interested parties in the development process can educate developers to that interest group (show cost savings, efficiencies such as less parking, accessibility).
- See if the Transportation Improvement Districts have a component for public transit. The fee could be a local match.

Barb Donovan will categorize the education piece, checklist piece, and regulatory piece of the model for incorporating public transit in the review process for developments. Forward comments to Barb Donovan.

7. WATERBURY PUBLIC TRANSIT TOPICS

Dave Pelletier provided handouts on the Waterbury initiatives covering 1-89 construction and the state office complex which should reopen December 19, 2015. VTrans is partnering with CCTA and Federal Highway to alleviate congestion through the 1-89 construction area. The partnership may be used with other construction work on the interstate. Through the partnership CCTA will offer a Waterbury bus link to the state office complex with two additional roundtrips (dedicated service) from Burlington to the Waterbury state office complex and Green Mountain Coffee. Bus service will begin the day the complex reopens so people do not start driving to work. An additional 100 riders per week are anticipated.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Public Transit Program State Management Plan

The plan has been approved by FTA and now must go out for public comment. Forward comments to Barb Donovan.

VPTA Monthly Meeting

Jim Moulton mentioned the monthly VPTA meeting is scheduled to align with the PTAC meeting. It was suggested at the VPTA meeting that future meetings be held at different public transit facilities across the state and that the PTAC meetings should follow.

MOTION by Jim Moulton, SECOND by Randy Schoonmaker, to hold the PTAC meetings at public transit facilities across the state. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

Barb Donovan stated transportation arrangements can be made for PTAC members. A list of meetings and locations will be sent. Forward any transportation needs to Ms. Donovan.

PTAC Meeting Schedule

- September 17, 2015 at CCTA Facility in Burlington

9. ADJOURNMENT**MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by Jim Moulton, to adjourn the meeting.****VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 PM.

RScty: MRiordan