

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING  
5<sup>th</sup> FLOOR BOARD ROOM  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT  
June 19, 2014**

**ATTENDEES:** Chris Cole (Chairman), VTrans  
Barb Donovan, VTrans  
Dave Pelletier, VTrans  
Scott Bascom, VTrans  
Ross MacDonald, VTrans  
Jackie Cassino, VTrans  
Sarah Linn, WRC  
Katherine Otto, SWCRPC  
Bethany Whitaker, Nelson Nygaard  
Sarah Moser, Nelson Nygaard  
Rita Seto, TRORC  
Steve Gladczuk, CVRPC  
Mollie Burke, Legislature  
Susan Schreibman, RRPC  
Van Chesnut, AT  
Bill Watterson, CCTA  
Robert Young, Premier Coach  
Randy Schoonmaker, DVTA  
Lee Cattaneo, COVE  
John Sharrow, Mountain Transit  
Peter Johnke, VCIL  
Robert Moore, LCPC  
Sommer Bucossi, VTrans  
Mary Grant, RCT  
Darryl Benoit, Addison County Planning

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**1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Chairman Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM. Introductions were made.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*January 9, 2014*

**MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by Lee Cattaneo, to approve the minutes of 1/9/14 as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

**3. VTRANS PROGRAM UPDATES**

Barb Donovan and Dave Pelletier reported the following:

- New Intercity bus service is operating from the Colchester park-and-ride to Albany, New York through Rutland and Bennington, as well as between Rutland and White River Junction. Initial ridership is already at approximately is half of the number of boardings per trip originally projected for the first year of service

year. VTrans will meet with Premier Coach dba Vermont Translines to discuss marketing. The Capital District Transit Authority in Albany is assisting the service with transportation from the bus station to the train station. Vermont Translines is doing mobile ticketing on the bus (the first in the nation) using a system that communicates with Greyhound's ticketing system.

- Two studies with UVM include the personal transportation plan and veterans transportation plan to improve mobility for the target populations.
- The SFY15 budget was approved and includes an increase for E&D funding.
- Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan update is ongoing.

#### **4. HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN**

Bethany Whitaker and Sara Moser with Nelson Nygaard (NN) reported on progress to date in updating the plan to meet state requirements and be MAP 21 compliant. The following was noted:

- Data collection is done. The data revealed of the target populations there is a 40% increase since 2000 of adults over the age of 60 years, over 30% increase of adults with disabilities, and a 60% increase of adults with physical disabilities. Households earning less than \$20,000 annually have increased and households without a vehicle have increased.
- An inventory of services around the state was created. From this, NN conducted an initial analysis of geographic areas needing more service. Opportunities and strategies to address the needs will be identified.
- Demographics analysis focused on older adults, youth, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Older adults often have a need for trips for shopping and medical appointments (many of the latter are covered by Medicaid for those with low income). People with disabilities need transportation for shopping and getting to job training, employment, and programs. Youth need rides to employment after school. People with low incomes need rides to employment (second and third shifts) and to childcare. Other general transportation needs include regional travel and connecting to intercity bus services, acute non-emergency medical appointments, and accessing information on transit services.
- Some of the major funding sources for public transportation include: FTA 5307 and 5311 funding for operation, FTA 5310, Medicaid, DCF, DAIL. Funding generally flows from the Federal level down to the State through an allocation process, then onto subrecipients through a competitive grant process.

Feedback from PTAC is requested.

The charts illustrating the relationships between federal, state, and local funding and service providers are intended to enable the various regions of the state to be compared. The graphics show connections and/or and potential opportunities for agencies to coordinated where connections may not currently exist. Vermont is challenged by being a rural state with an increasing population needing services and a high population of people with disabilities and people with low income. With a population of 600,000 in Vermont there are approximately 200,000 people needing services. Funding of \$34 million equates

to about \$60 per person or two to three funded rides. E&D committees are focused on allocating funding and addressing critical needs and coordinating resources. Funding for human service transportation mostly flows to the public transit providers. The major sources of human service transportation funding are the Medicaid Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) program administered by the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA), and the Elderly & Disabled person's transportation program administered by VTrans. Veterans programs operate separately from the general public transportation network. VTrans and the public transit providers are working toward better coordination and awareness between programs.

Mary Grant briefly described the top down approach in her area that combines different types of rides in one vehicle (E&D and Medicaid rides in one car). The approach has been very successful. Barb Donovan said she was contacted by the recently hired VA mobility manager to help take advantage of available transit services. There is coordination within regions, but coordination between regions can still be improved. Recent years have seen strong inter-regional coordination with the start of many commuter public transit routes, but there may be room to improve human service transportation between regions.

The Council discussed numerous ways to improve coordination of services and general mobility of public transportation customers. The state entered into a contract to do base mapping (GTFS project) as the first step to creating a trip planner for customers. This will enable riders to more easily identify how to make public transit trips between locations and how to link more than one service to facilitate travel.

John Sharrow suggested ride coupons to enable easier / free transfers between services to encourage coordination. Other possible solutions to improve coordination of services include mobility management staff to facilitate coordination of trips and connection to resources, and the "blueprint for health" supported by medical institutions where patients get assistance in solving their transportation needs and trip planning (i.e. personal mobility plan for the individual). The UVM study will be a test of personal mobility plans with people with disabilities in Chittenden County.

Bill Watterson observed the shift appears to be from high cost services to lower cost public transit services, and this will only work with scale and density of population as well as available public transit services. Bethany Whitaker mentioned the program in Brattleboro involving parent volunteers bringing home other students from school and deadhead school bus trips so the approaches can be creative.

Daryl Benoit suggested Hinesburgrides.org should be included in the plan. The organization has volunteer drivers to transport people to transit and para-transit services. Mary Grant suggested working with communities to help establish rides to doctor appointments and shopping. Ms. Grant said she is working with the local rescue squad to help with medical discharge rides after hours. Transportation management associations TMAs can educate, inform, and promote the use of available services, not just provide services. TMAs and transit agencies should work together more effectively to benefit the

community. Go Vermont is working to spread the word to choice riders and other target populations who need rides. Ross MacDonald suggested considering volunteer networks plugged into the rural demand response network, much like the Uber program.

## **5. PARK & RIDE PLANNING PROJECT**

Jackie Cassino and Ross MacDonald reported the statewide park-and-ride facility plan will assess existing conditions, look at approaches by other states, do a gap analysis, look at future facility needs, funding sources, and alternative park-and-ride strategies. The plan will outline capital, maintenance and operational costs. Feedback from transit providers and regional planning commissions will be gathered. Chris Cole added the project was initiated internally by VTrans in an effort to prioritize investments and create better inter-modalism with park-and-rides and transit.

Darryl Benoit suggested leasing parking lot space where there is excess unused parking already in existence. Off-site or intercept lots were also mentioned. Van Chestnut suggested projecting potential future demand so the land can be secured now. Chris Cole said VTrans will review each suggestion. Most of the state's policies are geared toward reducing miles traveled, reducing greenhouse emissions, and mitigating climate change as much as possible.

Peter Johnke said his experience is most park-and-ride facilities are too far off the beaten path which is a problem.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

### *Projects*

- Need within the deaf/blind community has been identified and support service providers are traveling with individuals.
- Capital projects include:
  - Rockingham park-and-ride addition of 90 spaces;
  - CRT expansion of maintenance capacity;
  - DVTA Wilmington new maintenance and admin building;
    - Brown field conversion to community use with creation of a walking path.
- First draft of the FY16 budget being done by Barb Donovan. Forward any known needs to Ms. Donovan.

### *Next Meeting*

To be announced.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3 PM.

*RScty: MRIordan*