

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
VTrans Davis Building
Montpelier, Vermont
September 22, 2016**

ATTENDEES: Michelle Boomhower, VTrans
Barb Donovan, VTrans
Scott Bascom, VTrans
Dave Pelletier, VTrans
Amy Rast, VTrans
Susan Bartlett, AHS
John Sharrow, Mt. Transit
Bob Young, Premier Coach
Jamie Feehan, VPTA
Mary Grant, RCT
Jim Moulton, ACTR/STSI
Randy Schoonmaker, DVTA
Karen Walton, GMT
Peter Johnke, VCIL
Lee Cattaneo, COVE
Katharine Otto, SWCRPC
Rachel Seelig, VT Legal Aid
Murray Benner, SSTA
Jesse Baker, City of Montpelier
Jane Kitchell, legislature
Mollie Burke, legislature
Jill Stober, KFH Group
Fred Fravel, KFH Group

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 16, 2016

MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by Lee Cattaneo, to approve the minutes of 6/16/16 as written. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. PRESENTATION: Performance Measures Improvement Incentive Program

Jill Stober, KFH Group, gave a presentation on the project to develop an incentive program to decrease cost per trip and increase ridership and mobility. Ridership data from 2011 to 2015 show statewide trends of ridership increase by 10% and cost increase by 23%. Cost per trip increase is 12%. The incentive program guidelines must have clear criteria that support the mission and goals. Performance goals must be attainable and evaluation criteria to define success must be clear. Also, the program must be manageable for transit providers. Next steps include drafting options and

recommendation for the framework of the incentive program and producing the final report by December 2016.

4. PRESENTATION: Montpelier Downtown Transit Center

Jesse Baker, Assistant City Manager for Montpelier, reviewed the redevelopment plans for downtown Montpelier that include the area at 1 Taylor Street for a transit center, rental housing and a shared use path from Granite Street to the Civic Center. An FTA grant of \$2.4 million will be used for the transit center. The downtown redevelopment is covered by a FHWA grant of \$6.3 million, a block grant of \$850,000 for the needed retaining wall, and a \$250,000 ecosystem grant. The 40 units of market rate rental housing will be privately developed by Redstone. Ms. Baker reviewed schematics of the ADA compliant transit center highlighting the 24 hour heated waiting room, office space, restrooms, and the bus circulation pattern for the anticipated 90 buses per day. The three upper floors of the building will be housing. Next steps are to secure rights-of-way (Fall 2016), finalize the design and complete the permitting, go out to bid for construction and build in 2017-2018.

Lee Cattaneo asked about connection to the train. Ms. Baker said the tracks are not upgraded to passenger class at this time. It may be possible to build a platform in the future. Karen Walton said GMT will be looking to connect bus service to other modes of transportation. Scott Bascom mentioned the current commuter rail study underway on the potential for commuter train service from St. Albans to Burlington and possibly to Montpelier. Barb Donovan noted the rail main line does not go into Montpelier so the passenger platform for the train would be on a spur.

Michelle Boomhower asked if there is outdoor seating to wait for the bus. Jesse Baker said the front porch area as well as the steps are available for seating as part of the design element. There are benches and overlooks on the shared use path.

John Sharrow asked about designated areas for buses. Jesse Baker said the lanes are passable and arrivals/departures are staggered. There is one entrance in and one exit out to help with traffic flow. Taylor Street will remain two-way traffic. A turn lane will be added. The street will be rebuilt first and the streetscape improved.

Molly Burke asked about parking. Jesse Baker said there is no longer term parking associated with transit use in Montpelier and more parking is not being added with the project. The city is exploring other parking options. The parking on the site is for the tenants of the housing units (42 spaces onsite and access to 30 more off site). There are five spaces dedicated to GMT for drivers, managers, and handicap accessible spaces. There is public parking on Taylor Street or off hours in the parking lot.

Barb Donovan mentioned the impact of the project on trespass on railroad property. Jesse Baker said the rail bridge has no floor and is very dangerous. A pedestrian bridge will be built parallel to the rail bridge as part of the redevelopment project. The area by the railroad tracks will be fenced so people will no longer drive over the tracks to access the building.

5. DTC Burlington, Rockingham Park & Ride

Karen Walton reported the Downtown Transit Center project in Burlington began May 2015 and is on time and on budget despite having issues with unidentified buried lines and “dirty” dirt. Opening ceremony is 10/13/16 at 1 PM. The transit center replaces the Cherry Street terminal.

Randy Schoonmaker said the Rockingham park & ride facility off Exit 6 will provide 45 additional spaces. The building will have a bus wash, more bus storage, two new fuel tanks and more maintenance area. Construction will be in 2017.

Barb Donovan mentioned there is also work on the Berlin facility for GMT bus maintenance.

6. Commuter Rail Study

Scott Bascom briefly described the commuter rail feasibility study that is underway to look at commuter rail as a possible way to address travel demand between St. Albans and Burlington and possibly to Montpelier. A study advisory committee has been formed. The first meeting will be November 16, 2016 at the Rail Council meeting to gather input and feedback from the Rail Council. Public meetings are scheduled for November 5th and 6th in St. Albans, Burlington, and Montpelier to gather input from the public. An update can be provided to PTAC at the December meeting.

7. ROUTEMATCH SOFTWARE

Barb Donovan reported RouteMatch was awarded the grant to replace the dispatch system for bus service in the state. Deployment started in March and there have been problems which are being addressed. Also, it is a big change for some people to share rides more frequently. Medicaid supports sharing rides whenever possible. Karen Walton said the system is working well at GMT mainly because employees are familiar with the software. Randy Schoonmaker said they are getting onsite direction from the manufacturer. Over 300 calls a day are coming in and being handled on a case-by-case basis.

Sen. Kitchell questioned if some of the problem is people adjusting to change. Mary Grant said there is a realm of issues with the software. There was mention of calls being received by people who do not have English as their first language.

Bob Young suggested asking to be assigned a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to address issues. Barb Donovan said VTrans did this.

Peter Johnke requested an update at the December meeting on RouteMatch. Mr. Johnke also mentioned the 48-hour rule for Medicaid rides and some providers not trying to accommodate people who do not call ahead 48 hours. Rachel Seelig, VT Legal Aid, said it is difficult to make the 48-hour rule with a drug test that must be done within 24 hours. Sen. Kitchell asked if there is a fiscal penalty to being flexible with the rule. Barb

Donovan said there is not a penalty, but sometimes the ride may not be eligible for payment.

8. AHS MEDICAID RFP

Barb Donovan announced she is one of the bid reviewers. Whomever is awarded the contract will likely make changes. The information is not public until the contract is awarded.

Sen. Kitchell stressed the importance of understanding the decision making and collateral impacts.

9. GRANTS AWARDED

Barb Donovan reported VTrans applied for three grants and received two: \$3.9 million for GMT buses and \$170,000 for a program to help get people in the Ascutney & Windsor area and the Northeast Kingdom to appointments using public transit with less cancellations. Grant application for \$780,000 was submitted for IT to do a Travelocity type app that lists available transit services.

10. VTRANS UPDATES

Bennington Thruway Bus Service

KFH Group has been managing the process to put in place service to Albany, NY to connect to Amtrak. Regional Planning in Bennington will be holding stakeholder meetings. It's been reported that many professors at Bennington College live in New York City.

Work Plan to Address E&D Service

Barb Donovan said the study that went to the legislature to study E&D services will be used to develop a work plan. There are different E&D parameters in every region of the state. VTrans will be working with COVE and others to improve service.

11. INTERCITY UPDATES

Barb Donovan reported the contract with VT Translines for service from Colchester to Albany has been renewed for two years. Greyhound service from White River Junction to Springfield, Massachusetts has been renewed for two years. Massachusetts awarded a contract to True North for service on Massachusetts Route 2 into Brattleboro using the Brattleboro transportation center. MegaBus is stopping in Brattleboro. Bob Young mentioned the Brattleboro trip originally was designed to go to Rutland.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Updates from Providers/Participants

Mary Grant reported an app is being developed with an USDA grant. The USDA wants to do a demonstration in a rural area like the Northeast Kingdom.

Karen Walton said Burlington has three areas for the Bridj pilot: New North End to UVM, Shelburne to UVM, and Essex to UVM.

PTAC Meeting Schedule

- December 15, 2016 in Burlington at 1 PM
- March 16, 2017 in Montpelier at 1 PM
- June 15, 2017 in Wilmington at 1 PM

12. ADJOURNMENT**MOTION by Bob Young, SECOND by Peter Johnke, to adjourn the meeting.****VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3 PM.

RScty: MRiordan