



Public Transit Route Performance Reviews
Annual Report for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016

March, 2017

Prepared for VTTrans by:

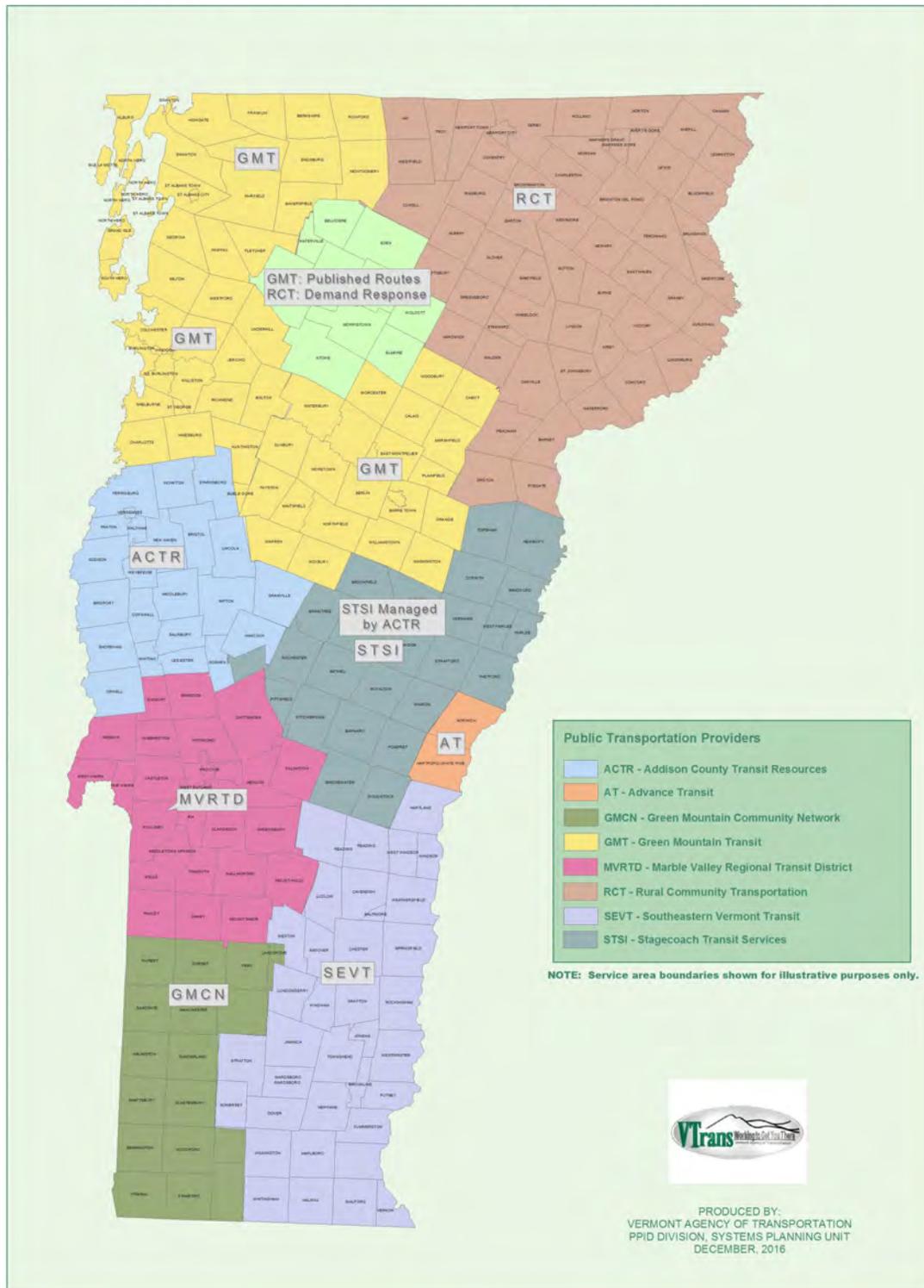


KEY OF VERMONT TRANSIT SYSTEMS AND DIVISIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| ACTR | Addison County Transit Resources |
| AT | Advance Transit |
| GMCN | Green Mountain Community Network, Inc. |
| GMT-Rural | Green Mountain Transit-Rural (previously GMTA) |
| GMT-Urban | Green Mountain Transit-Urban (previously CCTA) |
| MVRTD | Marble Valley Regional Transit District |
| RCT | Rural Community Transportation, Inc. |
| SEVT-The Current | Southeast Vermont Transit-The Current (previously CRT) |
| SEVT-The MOOver | Southeast Vermont Transit-The MOOver (previously DVTA) |
| STSI | Stagecoach Transportation Services, Inc. |
| VABVI | Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired |

Figure 1 illustrates the service areas of Vermont’s public transit providers. The areas previously served by CCTA and GMATA are now shown as Green Mountain Transit (GMT).

Figure 1: Service Areas of Vermont’s Public Transportation Providers



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Public Transit Route Performance Report for state fiscal year (SFY) 2016 presents the results of VTrans' annual performance evaluations for public transit services across Vermont. VTrans manages Vermont's public transit program including monitoring transit performance. This report helps to ensure that public investment in transit is well spent by regularly conducting transit performance evaluations.

For this annual evaluation, VTrans grouped public transit routes and services throughout the state in like categories, such as Urban, Small Town, and Demand Response. Peer-based performance measures for each category were applied to assess the productivity of the services in terms of ridership and the cost-effectiveness in terms of cost per ride provided. VTrans also evaluated the Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program and the local share of transit operating budgets.

In SFY 2016 Vermont's public transit systems provided 4.7 million trips. Just over half of those rides were provided in the Chittenden County region, and the other half was spread throughout the rest of the state. Statewide public transit ridership had steadily increased from SFY 2012 through SFY 2015, but this past year saw a 6% decrease, namely due to a poor 2015/2016 winter ski season and a modest decrease in GMT-Urban's ridership following a route redesign.

In SFY 2016 Vermont's public transit systems provided 4.7 million trips. This past year saw a 6% decrease in ridership namely due to a poor ski season.

Tourism routes in the Deerfield Valley and Mad River Valley regions saw significant declines in ridership this past year due to the poor ski season. Most tourism routes experienced double digit percentage decreases in ridership. However, other types of services still showed outstanding performance, in particular some Urban and Express Commuter routes serving Burlington, Small Town and Demand Response services in Rutland, Small Town routes in the Upper Valley region, Rural service in the Northeast Kingdom, and Rural Commuter routes in the Capital District, Franklin/Grand Isle, and Deerfield Valley regions. Only a few routes out of the dozens statewide showed sustained underperformance.

In reviewing five-year data, many regions including Northeast Kingdom, Marble Valley, Bennington County, and Upper Valley have seen double digit ridership growth (11% to 36%). The transit systems/divisions that saw ridership decreases generally had peak ridership numbers in SFY 2013 and saw declines in the subsequent years.

Policy regarding underperforming routes was established in the most recent Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan (2012). Where routes are shown to be underperforming through the analysis in this report, VTrans works proactively with the subject public transit provider to determine what, if any, strategies may result in increased performance for the route. If the

route continues to underperform for a period of six months after modifications are made, VTrans may redirect funding from that route to another more productive existing route, either within the same transit provider's system, or elsewhere in the state. Alternative approaches to providing traditional transit service on underperforming routes may also include targeted outreach through the GoVermont program and possible VTrans sponsorship of a vanpool.

VTrans Public Transit staff is working with providers to address performance issues identified in this report and looks forward to continuing positive relationships with the public transit providers throughout the state, both in addressing these routes and in continuing to grow a robust, efficient statewide public transit network.

INTRODUCTION

This report is developed annually to document the results of performance evaluations for public transit services across Vermont. The results are presented to the Legislature of the State of Vermont as part of VTrans' consolidated transportation system and activities report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation. The Vermont Agency of Transportation's Policy, Planning, and Intermodal Development (PPAID) Division, specifically the Public Transit Section, is responsible for managing the state's Public Transit Program. This report documents the Public Transit Section's monitoring efforts to ensure that public investment in transit is well spent.

Vermont's transit agencies have undergone some organizational changes in the last few years. CCTA and GMTA merged in July 2011, and became known as Green Mountain Transit (GMT) in SFY 2016. The services previously provided by GMTA are shown in this report under GMT-Rural, and the services previously provided by CCTA are now shown under GMT-Urban. During SFY 2014, ACTR took over the administration of STSI, and DVTA took over the administration of CRT. ACTR will continue to manage STSI for the foreseeable future under a management agreement as a separate entity. On July 1, 2015, CRT dissolved and transferred its assets and liabilities to DVTA, which changed its name to Southeast Vermont Transit (SEVT). SEVT operates two divisions, The MOOVer and The Current. The services previously provided by CRT are shown under SEVT-The Current in this report, and the services previously provided by DVTA are shown under SEVT-The MOOVer.

For the purposes of this annual performance evaluation, the divisions for GMT and SEVT are analyzed separately. ACTR and STSI are also evaluated separately though both are managed by ACTR. Therefore, while the public recognizes eight transit systems in Vermont, this performance evaluation covers ten transit systems and divisions, plus the Volunteer Driver services provided by VABVI and the Intercity bus services provided by Greyhound and Vermont Translines. Only the Intercity routes that receive financial assistance from VTrans are reviewed in this report. Other Intercity services (e.g., Megabus and Greyhound's Montreal to Boston route) operate in Vermont and cover their costs through fare revenue, arguably making them the most productive transit routes in the state. However, the private carriers do not provide data on these routes to VTrans.

The SFY 2016 performance evaluation methodology did not include any significant revisions. This report continues to assess Vermont's transit services among nine service categories: Urban, Small Town, Demand Response, Rural, Rural Commuter, Express Commuter, Tourism, Volunteer Driver, and Intercity. It identifies performance trends over the past five years at the state, transit agency, and route levels. The report continues to provide information on fare recovery and local share and an overview of the Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program. Trips provided with E&D funds are examined as part of the Demand

Response and Volunteer Driver categories, but the overall effectiveness of the program is reviewed under a separate heading.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

VTrans conducts monitoring of transit services by evaluating statewide trends as well as route-level performance. Several data sources are used to develop this annual report:

- The transit systems provide route-level performance data to VTrans in §5311 – Rural Transit Program Monthly Service Indicator Reports (SIRs).
- VTrans collects data on volunteer driver trips from the transit providers annually.
- VTrans monitors operating budget data by funding source (federal, state, and local) in its Grant Tracking spreadsheets to analyze local share. A few transit systems provide their profit and loss statements to help identify local funding amounts.
- GMT-Urban’s route statistics and budget data were provided directly by GMT.

VTrans groups public transit routes and services throughout the state in like categories. Peer-based performance measures for each category are applied to assess the productivity of the services in terms of ridership and the cost-effectiveness in terms of cost per ride provided. VTrans also evaluates the E&D Transportation Program and the local share of transit operating budgets.

Transit Service Categories

Vermont’s public transit services are classified into the service categories below for this performance evaluation. The service category descriptions serve as guidelines; some routes or services may not meet every criterion. VTrans may also consider ridership and cost data to group similar services together.

- 1) **Urban:** Routes operating primarily in an urbanized area with all-day, year-round service. The city served by the route has a population of at least 17,500 people and high-density development.
- 2) **Small Town:** Routes operating in towns with 7,500 to 17,500 people with all-day, year-round service. The route typically stays within one town or two adjoining towns, and does not run through long stretches of rural areas.

- 3) **Demand Response**¹: Primarily service that does not operate on a fixed schedule nor on a fixed route; also includes routes that are “rural” in nature but operate less than once a day (i.e., service operates only once a week or a few times a month).
- 4) **Rural**: Routes operating in towns with fewer than 7,500 people or connecting two small towns running through undeveloped areas. These routes operate year-round with all-day service, but the frequency may be low (more than one hour between trips).
- 5) **Rural Commuter**: Routes that are similar to the Rural category above, but operate primarily during peak commute periods. These routes usually connect several small towns or villages with intermediate stops and operate primarily on state routes in rural areas. Some routes connect outlying areas to the nearby city, with a significant portion of the mileage in rural areas.
- 6) **Express Commuter**: Routes that operate primarily during peak commute periods and often include express segments. These routes are characterized by one-directional ridership, longer route lengths, and serve larger cities or towns with more than 7,500 people. These routes primarily travel on interstates and provide limited stops, often serving park and ride lots and major employers (rather than other local destinations).
- 7) **Tourism**: Seasonal routes that serve a specific tourist trip generator, such as a ski area.
- 8) **Volunteer Driver**: Services provided by volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles, donate their time to transport riders, and receive reimbursement for mileage at the federal rate.
- 9) **Intercity**: Routes operating regularly scheduled, fixed route, and limited stop service that connects places not in close proximity and makes meaningful connections to the larger intercity network.

¹ Excludes ADA complementary paratransit service, Medicaid transportation, and trips by human service organizations where the transit providers have no control over scheduling or the transportation provided.

STATEWIDE TRENDS

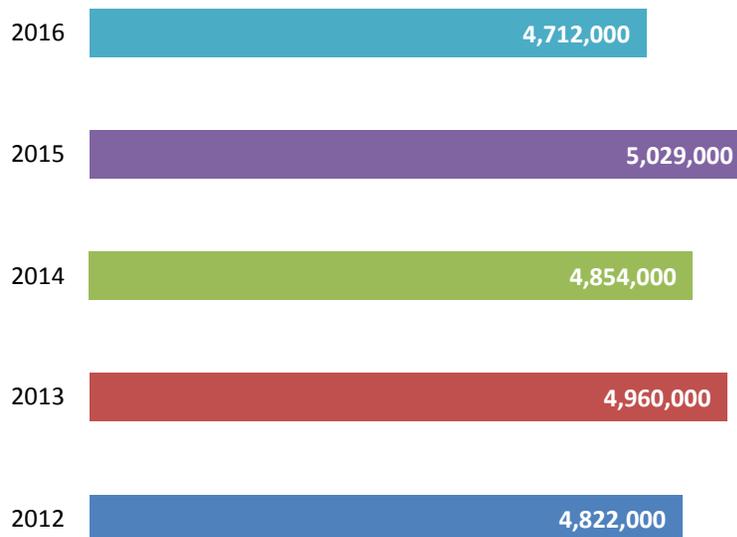
This section describes the trends in Vermont's transit ridership and costs in recent years², before delving into route-level performance in the next section.

Transit Ridership

In SFY 2016 Vermont's public transit systems provided 4.7 million trips. Just over half of those rides were provided in the Chittenden County region, and the other half was spread throughout the rest of the state. Figure 2 presents Vermont's transit ridership over the past five years. Statewide public transit ridership had steadily increased from SFY 2012 through SFY 2015, but this past year saw a 6% decrease, namely due to a poor 2015/2016 winter ski season and a modest decrease in GMT-Urban's ridership following a route redesign.

In SFY 2016 Vermont's public transit systems provided 4.7 million trips. This past year saw a 6% decrease in ridership namely due to a poor ski season.

Figure 2: Total Ridership



Note: The 2012-2015 numbers have been updated from past reports to account for trips provided by ACTR's sub-grantee.

SFY 2016 was a difficult year in ridership for most Vermont transit systems. Seven of ten transit systems/divisions saw ridership decreases, ranging from -4% to -23%. However, AT and RCT experienced ridership increases of 8% and 10%, respectively, while SEVT-The

² In 2015 data for Greyhound's White River Junction-Springfield, MA route was included in the statewide totals for the first time.

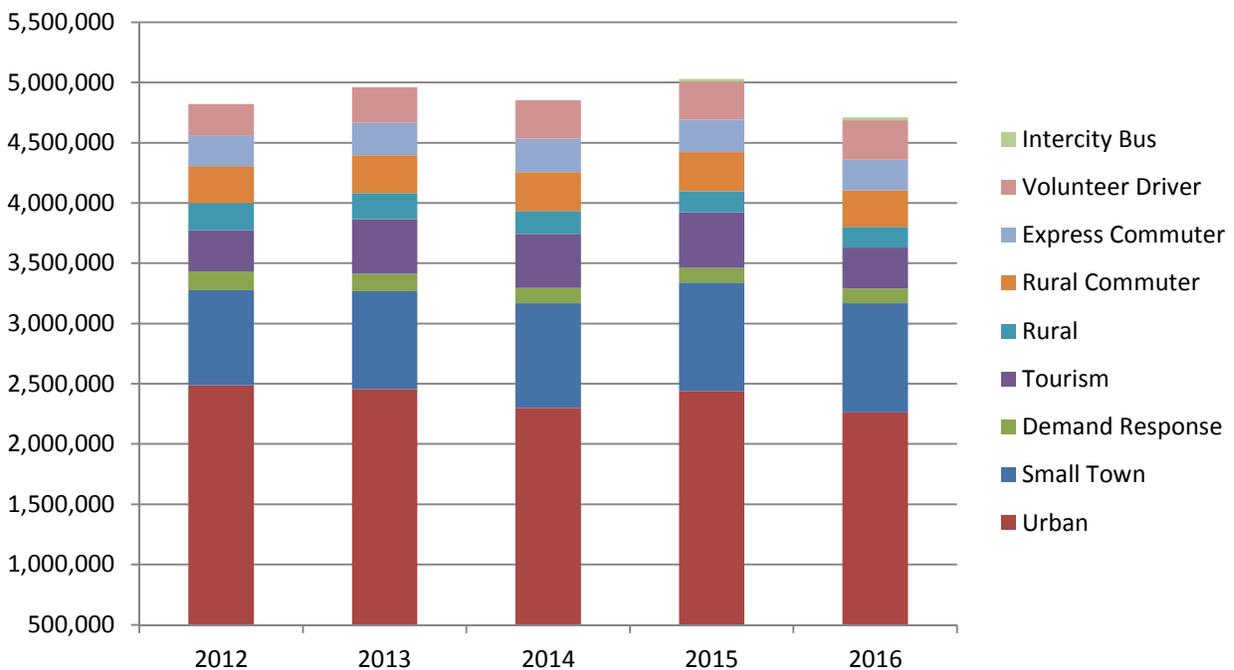
Current had stable ridership. In addition, Vermont Translines saw a 34% ridership increase on its intercity service, which began in SFY 2015.

In reviewing five-year data, ridership trends have been more positive. Half of the transit systems/divisions have experienced ridership growth. Many regions including Northeast Kingdom, Marble Valley, Bennington County, and Upper Valley have seen double digit ridership growth (11% to 36%). The transit systems/divisions that saw ridership decreases generally had peak ridership numbers in SFY 2013 and saw declines in the subsequent years.

In the past five years many regions including Northeast Kingdom, Marble Valley, Bennington County, and Upper Valley have seen double digit percentage ridership growth.

Vermont’s transit systems provide an array of transit services to meet various markets and needs including commuter, demand response, tourism, and volunteer driver services. Figure 3 illustrates recent ridership by service category.

Figure 3: Transit Ridership by Service Category



In SFY 2016 Intercity services saw the largest increase in ridership (by 12%), likely due to greater awareness of the Vermont Translines routes, as the level of service remained comparable. Tourism services experienced a -26% decrease in ridership due to a poor ski season and the subsequent decline in tourists. The Urban, Rural Commuter, and Express Commuter categories also experienced modest ridership decreases of -6% to -7% each. The

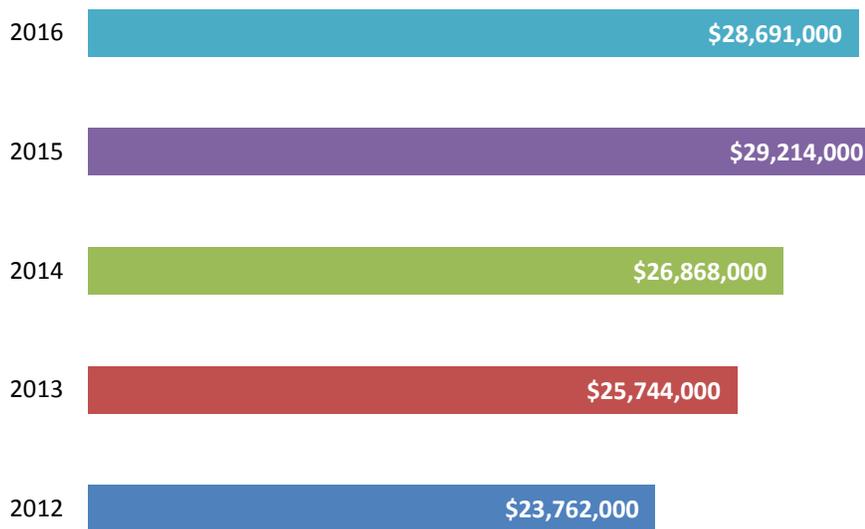
decline on the Urban services occurred in part due to a redesign of the Williston and South Burlington Circulator routes.

In reviewing five-year trends³, ridership has grown considerably on Small Town (by 15%) and Volunteer Driver (by 26%) services. Ridership on Rural and Demand Response services declined the most (by 24% and 22%, respectively), while Urban services saw a modest decrease (by 9%). Ridership in the Rural Commuter, Express Commuter, and Tourism categories has remained stable on the whole.

Transit Costs

In recent years total transit operating costs had been on the rise, but saw a 2% decrease to \$28.7 million in SFY 2016. About 38% of the costs were spent on transit services in the Chittenden County region, and the remainder was spread throughout the rest of the state. Figure 4 presents Vermont's total operating costs from SFY 2012 through SFY 2016. In the past five years transit costs have steadily increased, by 21% on the whole, while ridership has seen annual increases and decreases, remaining steady on the whole.

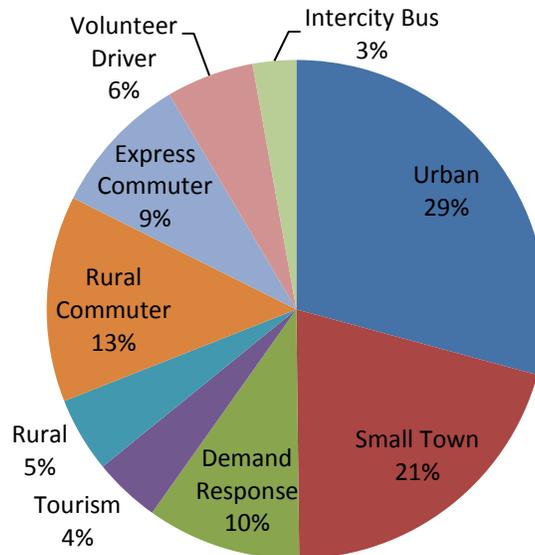
Figure 4: Total Operating Costs



³ Historically some ridership changes by service category were due to the addition of new routes or the reclassification of routes. For example, in SFY 2013 the Tourism category saw a boost in ridership due in part to new routes that SEVT-The MOOver reported for the first time. In SFY 2014 the GMT-Rural's St. Albans Downtown Shuttle moved from the Rural to Small Town category. There were no such service category changes in SFY 2016, so the changes shown above reflect ridership changes on existing services.

Figure 5 shows the operating costs per service category as a percentage of statewide costs in SFY 2016. These percentages have remained steady over the past five years.⁴

Figure 5: Operating Costs by Service Category in SFY 2016



Cost per Trip

In SFY 2016 the average cost for a transit trip in Vermont was \$6.09. The cost per trip has steadily increased in the past five years, rising 5% per year on average for a total increase of 24%. Figure 6 illustrates the average cost per transit trip in the last five years.

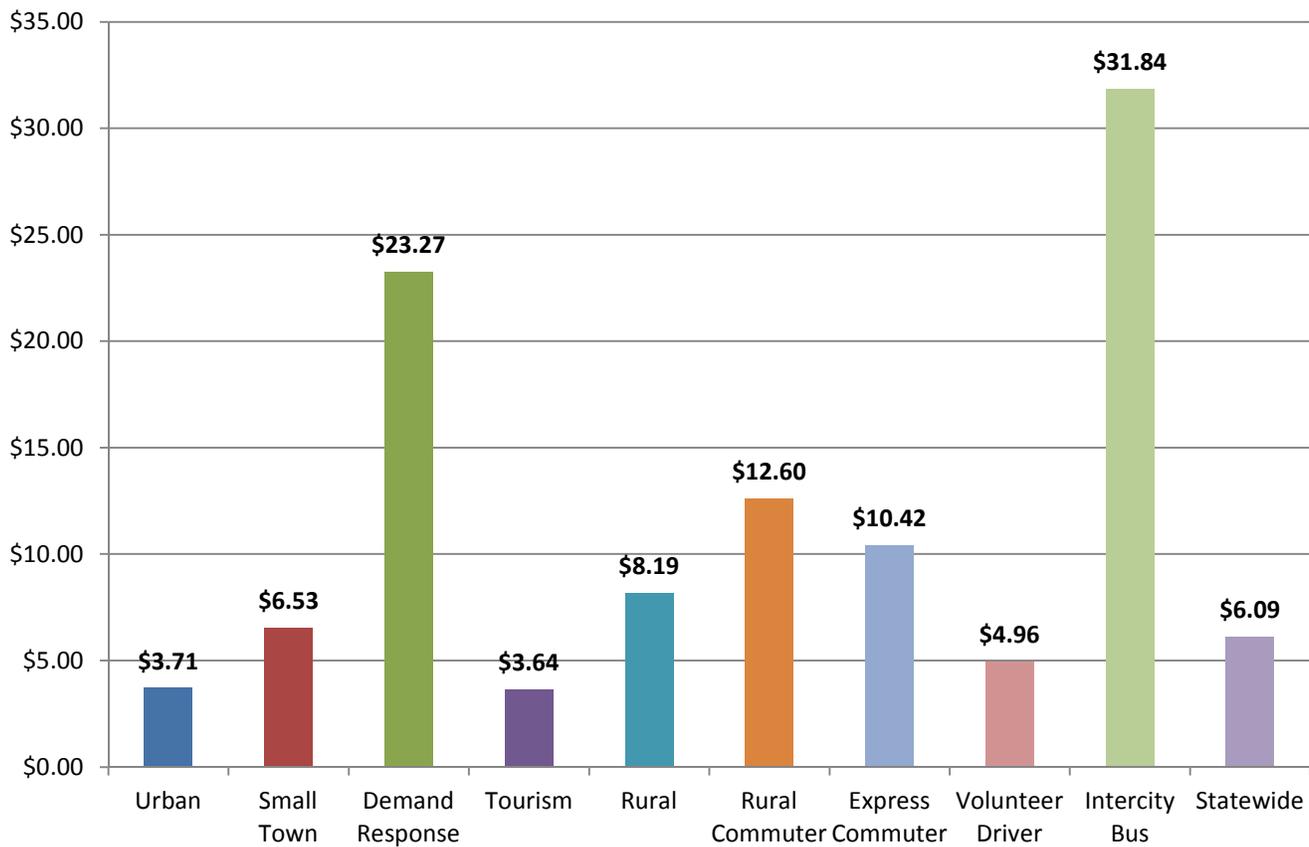
Figure 6: Cost per Trip



⁴ Except for the Intercity Bus service category, which was introduced in SFY 2015.

Figure 7 shows the cost per trip by service category in SFY 2016. The Tourism, Urban, and Volunteer Driver categories were the most cost-effective, all lower than the statewide average. Intercity and Demand Response services still had the highest costs per trip, though both categories improved their cost-effectiveness in SFY 2016 by -7% and -4%, respectively.

Figure 7: Cost per Trip by Service Category in SFY 2016



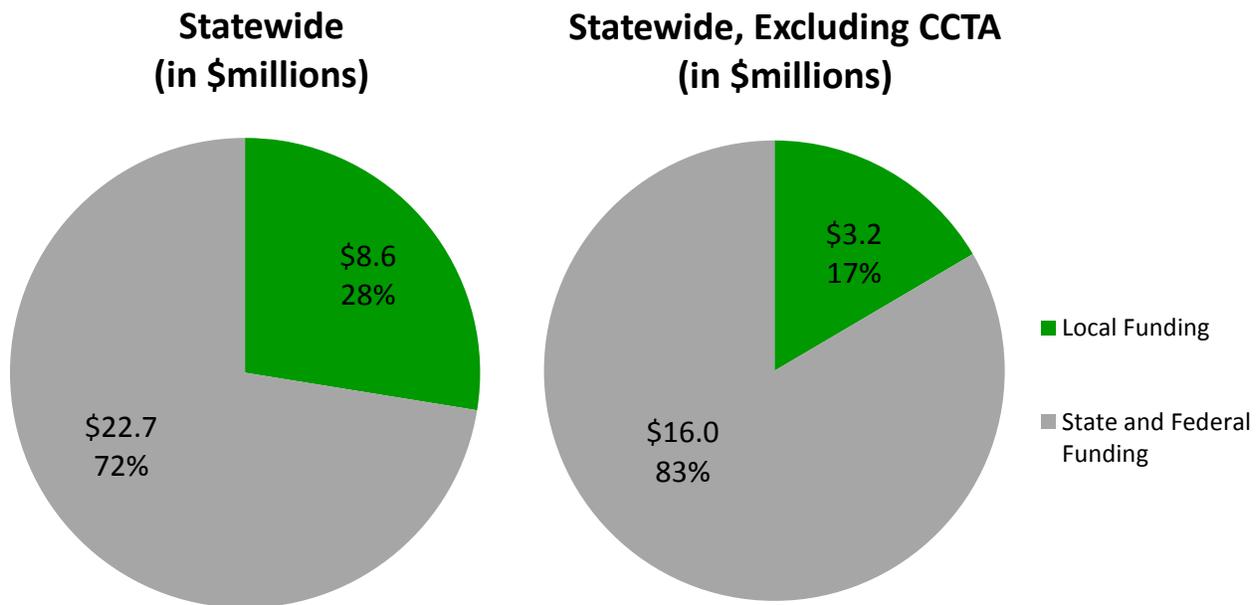
In reviewing five-year trends, every service category saw increases in the cost per trip, except for Volunteer Driver, which remained stable. However, in the past year alone, five of the nine service categories did decrease their costs per trip: the Intercity, Volunteer Driver, Demand Response, Small Town, and Rural categories. Nearly all the improvements were due to increased ridership, though the improvement for Rural services was attributable to a decrease in costs. The other four service categories, Tourism, Express Commuter, Urban, and Rural Commuter, had higher costs per trip in SFY 2016 mainly due to lower ridership (-6% to -26%), though Express Commuter services also saw a modest increase in total costs by 6%.

Local Share

The Public Transit Section also examines the transit providers' performance in generating local revenue. The Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan establishes a statewide goal that 20% of the funds for public transportation should be generated locally. This is a broad interpretation of local funding to include fare revenue, contributions from individuals, contracts with outside agencies, and payments from cities and towns.⁵ In other words, local share refers to the percentage of transit expenses that are *not* covered by the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, or the state (and excludes state funding for capital, Rideshare, RTAP, JARC, and Medicaid).

VTrans has evaluated local share on a statewide basis since SFY 2012. Figure 8 displays the local share of transit operating budgets statewide in SFY 2016, based on actual operating expenses from VTrans' Grant Tracking spreadsheets. The local share analysis found that 28% of transit funding statewide comes from local sources including fares. Excluding GMT-Urban, the largest generator of fare revenue, the local share of transit budgets outside of Chittenden County nearly meets the 20% target.

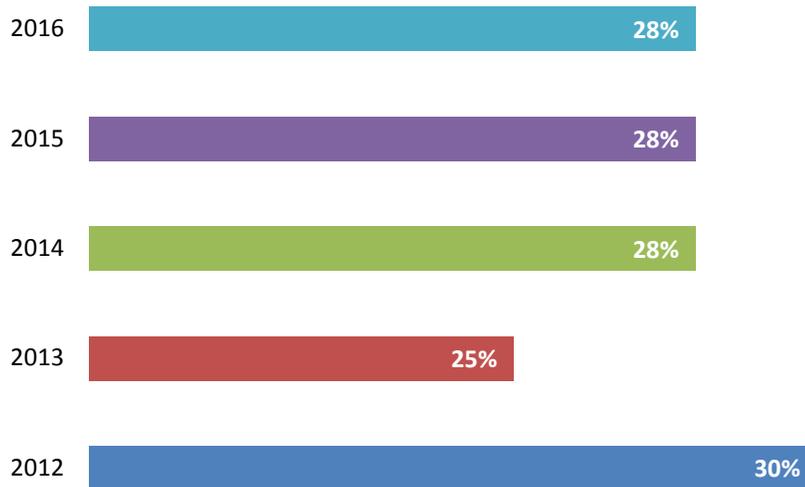
Figure 8: Local Share in SFY 2016



⁵ The federal definition of local match for FTA funds removes fare revenue from the calculation and includes state operating assistance.

The share of public transportation operating funds generated from local sources has remained relatively stable over the past five years, ranging from 25% to 30%. Vermont's transit providers have successfully met the statewide goal of 20% local funding. Figure 9 portrays the statewide local share percentage over the past few years.

Figure 9: Statewide Local Share



Note: The 2012 analysis was based on a different data source than the 2013-2016 analyses, which used VTrans' Grant Tracking spreadsheets.

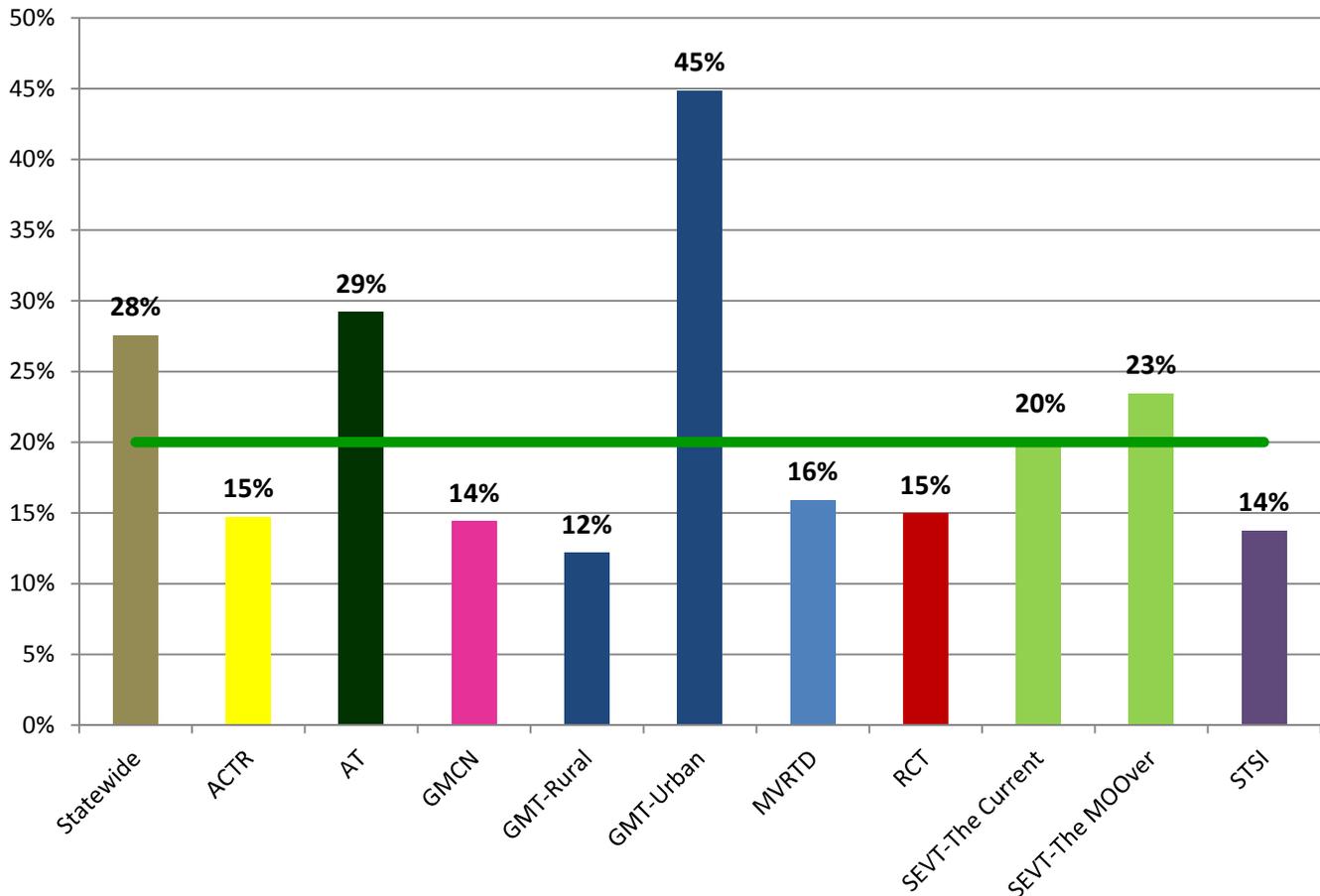
The available resources and partnerships that transit providers rely on for public transportation funding vary widely. VTrans provides flexibility to the transit providers in using various sources of local revenue to match state and federal funding.

For example, a large portion of SEVT-The MOOver's local funding comes from ski resorts, with which the agency has partnered for many years to transport employees, visitors, and local residents. RCT has a strong volunteer driver program, and the volunteer driver hours provided as in-kind match comprise the majority of RCT's local share. ACTR has a true mix of local funding sources including municipal contributions, business sponsors, contributions from institutions and community groups, match from human service agency partners for E&D transportation, donations, and fares.

Sources for local funding for transit vary widely by region and include municipal contributions, business sponsors, contracts with human service agencies, in-kind match from volunteer driver programs, advertising, donations, and fares.

Figure 10 illustrates the local share percentage by transit system/division in SFY 2016, in comparison with the state's 20% goal shown as the green line. Based on actual operating expenses from VTrans' Grant Tracking spreadsheets, local share was calculated as the percentage of total operating costs that local funding and fare revenues comprise. AT, GMT-Urban, SEVT-The Current, and SEVT-The MOOver met or exceeded the 20% local share target. The local share for the other transit systems/divisions ranged from 12% to 16%.

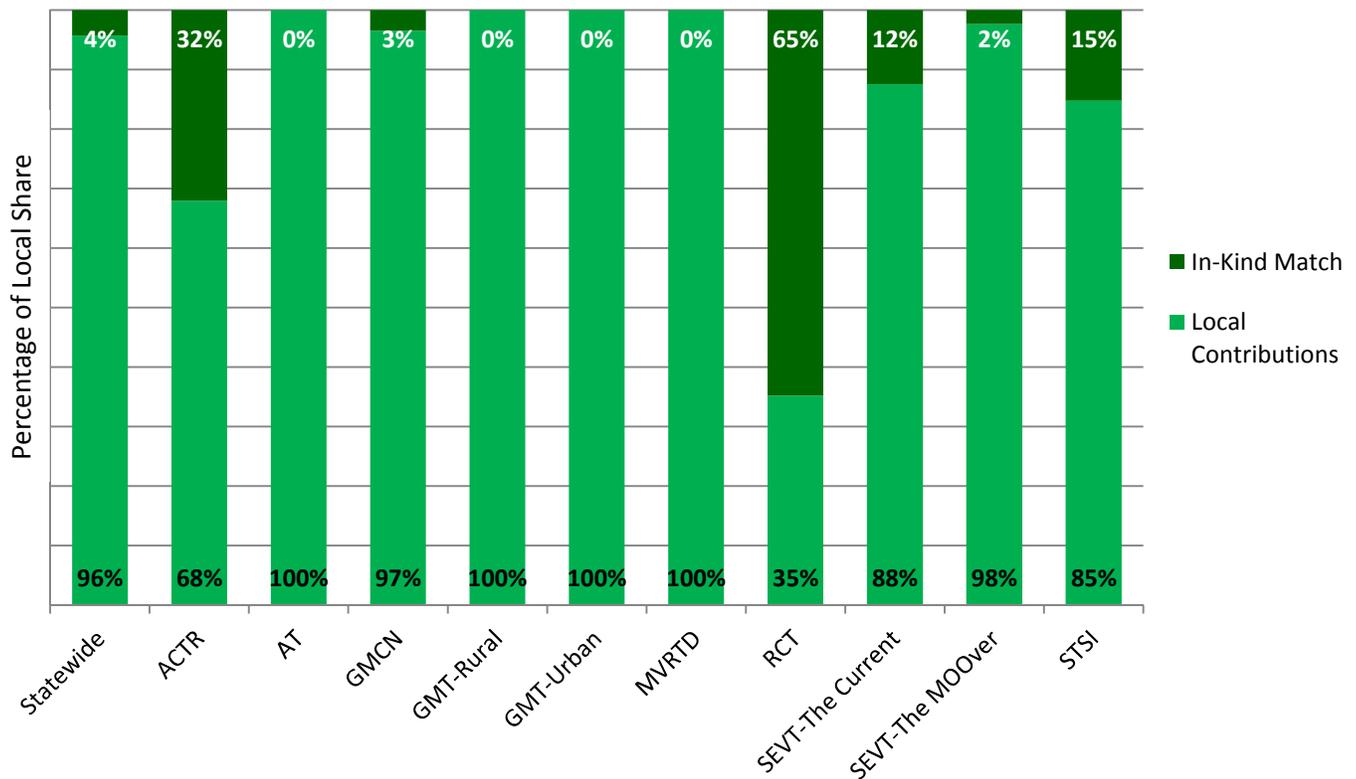
Figure 10: SFY 2016 Local Share by Transit System/Division



Note: SEVT-The MOOver's local share percentage includes some resort routes that are fully funded by local dollars.

Figure 11 portrays the portions of local share provided through local cash contributions and in-kind match. This analysis is an approximation based on the local funding sources and amounts that the transit providers identified in their SFY 2016 §5311 grant applications to VTrans (as opposed to the local share percentages above, based on actual operating expenses from VTrans' Grant Tracking spreadsheets). The statewide local share is primarily comprised of local cash contributions. In SFY 2016 in-kind match accounted for 4% of the total local share, a small decrease from last year (6%).

Figure 11: SFY 2016 In-Kind Match and Local Contributions by Transit System/Division



ACTR, RCT, SEVT-The Current, and STSI provide notable portions of their local share through in-kind match, with RCT providing the majority of its local share (65%) through in-kind match. The other six transit systems/divisions provide local match almost entirely as cash from various sources including fare revenue, advertising, service contracts, donations, and contributions from municipalities, business sponsors, institutions, and tourism destinations.

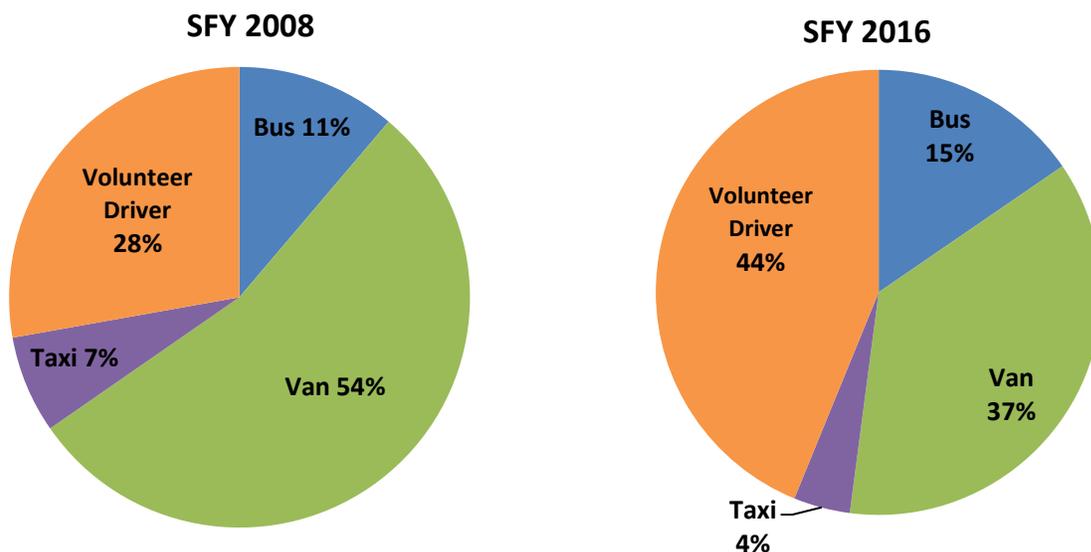
Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program

Of the numerous funding programs administered by the FTA, the §5310 program is targeted toward seniors and people with disabilities. The E&D Program, as it is commonly known, is used in most parts of the country to finance the purchase of accessible vans and buses to transport these segments of the population. In Vermont the scope of the E&D Program has been expanded to include the funding of operations by incorporating funds from the §5311 (non-urban) program. The E&D Program is structured so that the local match (using the strict federal definition – see footnote 4) for the federal §5311 funds is only 20%, as opposed to the normal 50% for §5311 operating assistance.

In SFY 2016 the total amount spent on the E&D Program in Vermont was \$3.59 million, 80% of which (\$2.87 million) was federal money. This funding provided over 174,000 rides, for a cost per passenger trip of about \$20. This cost is reflected in Graph #11 in the following section, as most of the van service represented in the Demand Response category is funded through the E&D Program.

Trips funded through the E&D Program are provided across many modes. In SFY 2016 15% of E&D trips were provided on regular bus routes, 37% in vans, 4% in taxicabs, and most importantly, 44% in private cars operated by volunteer drivers. Figure 12 illustrates the percentages of E&D trips provided by mode in SFY 2016 compared to SFY 2008.⁶

Figure 12: E&D Trips by Mode



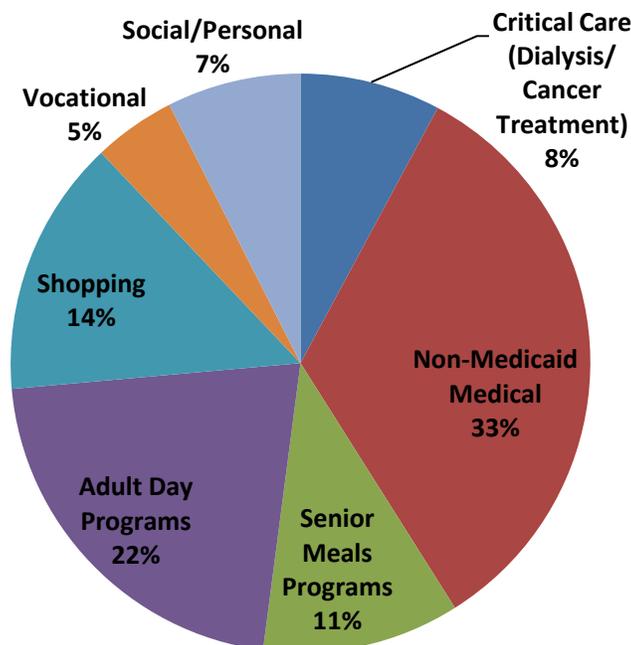
⁶ SFY 2008 was the earliest year for which E&D data by mode was available.

Over the past decade, the transit providers, which also serve as E&D brokers, have increasingly used volunteer drivers to transport riders under the E&D Program. In fact, SFY 2016 was the first year that more E&D trips were provided through volunteer drivers than by vans. Not only are volunteer drivers a more cost-effective mode, but they provide one-on-one service to seniors and persons with disabilities, some of whom are traveling long distances (including to neighboring states) for medical services and other needs. Volunteer drivers are especially important to mobility in large rural areas, where the population is thinly distributed, such as the Northeast Kingdom.

SFY 2016 was the first year that more E&D trips were provided through volunteer drivers than by vans. Volunteer drivers are more cost-effective and provide one-on-one service to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Figure 13 displays the percentages of E&D trips by trip type in SFY 2016.⁷ About 40% of E&D trips transport seniors and persons with disabilities to dialysis and cancer treatments and medical appointments. One-third of E&D trips are used to access senior meals and adult day programs. Shopping, personal, and social trips comprise about 20% of E&D trips, while the remaining 5% are vocational trips. This main changes from last year are an increase in the share of non-Medicaid medical trips and decreases in the percentages of senior meals and social/personal trips.

Figure 13: E&D Trip by Type in SFY 2016



⁷ SFY 2016 E&D data by trip type was not available for GMT.

ROUTE-LEVEL PERFORMANCE

The Public Transit Section evaluates Vermont's transit services by their productivity and cost-effectiveness. All transit services in the state are grouped by service category and evaluated against peer-based performance measures.

The following route changes occurred in SFY 2016:

- GMT-Rural discontinued the Mad River Glen route.
- GMT-Urban redesigned the Williston and South Burlington Circulator routes. The routes are now Williston, Williston/Essex, and Umall/Airport.
- STSI redesigned and expanded service on the River Route, including additional late morning and mid-day trips and reverse commute trips.

Methodology for Developing Performance Standards

The approach for developing performance standards to evaluate Vermont's transit services was similar to the last few years' reports. The most recent National Transit Database (NTD) data (Report Year 2015) was used to develop performance benchmarks for all categories except for Intercity and Volunteer Driver. The standard for the Volunteer Driver category was still based on Vermont averages. The performance standards for Intercity service were based on the performance metrics included in VTrans' intercity bus program solicitation document. The performance thresholds for Vermont's Tourism services incorporated both NTD data and data collected directly from select Tourism peers.

The "Successful" standard for most service categories was the peer average. For the Volunteer Driver category, 80% of the Vermont average was considered the Successful standard, per guidelines in the Vermont Public Transit Policy Plan. The standards identified for VTrans' intercity bus program were used to set the Successful standard for Intercity services. For all the service categories, the "Acceptable" standard was set at half the Successful threshold in measuring productivity, and twice the Successful threshold in measuring cost-effectiveness.

Table 1 summarizes the SFY 2016 performance standards compared to the SFY 2015 benchmarks.

Table 1: Comparison of SFY 2016 and SFY 2015 Performance Standards

| Service Category | "Successful" Productivity Standard | | "Successful" Cost-Effectiveness Standard (cost/passenger) ¹ | | "Successful" Local Share Standard |
|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | |
| Urban | 2.02 boardings/mile | 1.95 boardings/mile | \$4.15 | \$4.37 | 20% (evaluated on a statewide basis) |
| Small Town | 8.89 boardings/hour | 9.71 boardings/hour | \$7.94 | \$8.13 | |
| Demand Response | 3.72 boardings/hour | 3.74 boardings/hour | \$16.43 | \$15.79 | |
| Tourism | 15.75 boardings/hour | 14.55 boardings/hour | \$5.55 | \$5.82 | |
| Rural | 7.13 boardings/hour | 7.23 boardings/hour | \$12.73 | \$14.67 | |
| Rural Commuter | 7.06 boardings/hour | 5.93 boardings/hour | \$14.20 | \$18.06 | |
| Express Commuter | 17.41 boardings/trip | 17.35 boardings/trip | \$8.92 | \$10.59 | |
| Volunteer Driver | n/a | n/a | \$3.58 | \$3.78 | |
| Intercity | 3.28 boardings/trip | 3.28 boardings/trip | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | |

¹ Except Intercity standard is subsidy per passenger-trip

Based on updated peer data, the SFY 2016 performance standards were comparable to last year's, with a few notable changes:

- A higher productivity standard (by 9%) in the Small Town category.
- A lower productivity standard (by 8%) in the Tourism category.
- Lower cost-effectiveness standards for the Rural (by 15%) and Express Commuter (by 19%) categories.
- Lower standards in the Rural Commuter category for both productivity (by 16%) and cost-effectiveness (by 27%).

Route Evaluation Results

Overall, in SFY 2016 Vermont's transit services met the performance standards set by peer systems. The majority (86%) of the 116 transit services evaluated across the state met the Acceptable standards for both productivity and cost-effectiveness. Nearly 40% of the state's transit routes were considered Successful in both measures compared to their peers. The Urban and Tourism categories had the highest rates of success, with half the services meeting both Successful standards. The Small Town, Rural, and Rural Commuter categories also

performed relatively well, with about 40% of services meeting the Successful standards for both productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Improved Transit Routes

Six routes demonstrated improvements in productivity and/or cost-effectiveness since SFY 2015:

- In the Urban category, the Sunday Service route improved to meet the Acceptable standard in productivity by “rightsizing” service to meet demand.
- In the Small Town category, SEVT-The Current’s Brattleboro White Line improved to meet the Acceptable standard in productivity, also by “rightsizing” service to meet demand.
- In the Rural Commuter Category,
 - SEVT-The MOOver’s Wilmington-Bennington route improved in both productivity and cost-effectiveness. The Wilmington-Bennington route experienced a 9% increase in ridership (even with a 27% decrease in revenue hours) and a 9% decrease in cost.
 - MVRTD’s Middlebury Connector Expansion, in its third year of CMAQ funding, improved in both productivity and cost-effectiveness, namely due to a 48% increase in ridership.
 - MVRTD’s Bellows Falls-Rutland (Ludlow) route met the Acceptable threshold for cost-effectiveness, given a lower standard this year based on new peer data. The Bellows Falls-Rutland route saw a 3% decrease in cost (accompanied by a 9% decrease in ridership).
- In the Intercity Bus category, the Vermont Translines Route 4 met the Acceptable threshold for cost-effectiveness. Ridership on Route 4 increased by 34% in the past year, while costs remained the same.

Note that ACTR’s Demand Response service appeared to improve in cost-effectiveness this year; however this was due to a change in data. Starting in SFY 2016, the annual passenger trips and revenue service hours provided by its sub-grantee, Elderly Services, Inc., were included in calculating ACTR’s performance measures. Elderly Services, Inc. provides E&D eligible trips for free with vehicles leased from ACTR. The historical performance data for ACTR’s Demand Response service has been updated to include the trips provided by Elderly Services, Inc. (about 14,000 E&D trips and 7,800 revenue service hours annually).

Underperforming Transit Services

Statewide, 16 transit services did not meet the Acceptable thresholds for productivity, cost-effectiveness, or both measures. Five of these services were underperforming for the first time:

- ACTR: Snow Bowl
- GMT-Urban: Williston/Essex
- SEVT-The Current: Demand Response
- SEVT-The MOOVer: Demand Response
- SEVT-The MOOVer: Greenspring (fully funded by private funds, no state or federal funds)

Many of the routes that underperformed for the first time in SFY 2016 experienced ridership decreases and/or cost increases. GMT-Urban restructured their routes formerly called Williston and South Burlington Circulator. The low performance of the Williston/Essex route was likely due to passengers adjusting to new services and schedules following the restructuring. SEVT's total costs increased following the merger of CRT and DVTA, and the costs for Demand Response (E&D) services also increased by cost allocation. SEVT-The MOOVer's Greenspring route saw a significant ridership decline this past year due to a poor 2015/2016 ski season, as did several Tourism routes.

Table 2 outlines the services that have been underperforming for at least two consecutive years. Five of the routes have underperformed for three or more consecutive years. Three of the services were within 10% of the Acceptable standards for productivity and/or cost-effectiveness. Nearly all these services experienced double digit percentage decreases in ridership, accompanied by reduced service hours, in SFY 2016. Several ridership declines were at least partly attributable to the poor ski season and the subsequent impact on tourism.

Table 2: Underperforming Services

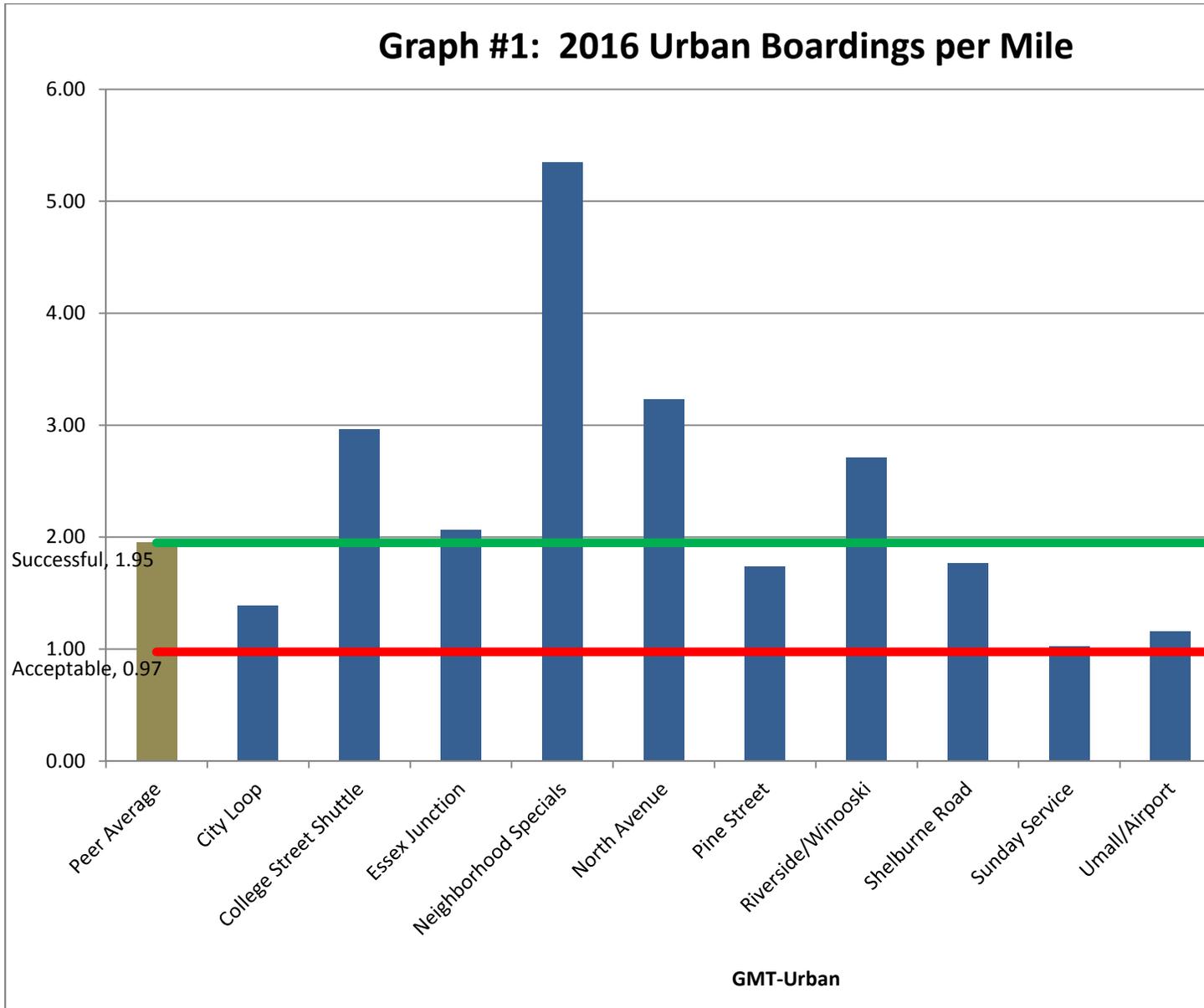
| Service Category | Route | Years Underperformed in: | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Productivity | Cost-Effectiveness |
| Small Town | SEVT-The Current: Springfield In-Town | 2 | |
| Rural | SEVT-The Current: Bellows Falls In-Town | 2 | |
| Rural | SEVT-The Current: Bellows Falls-Springfield | 2 | |
| Tourism | GMT-Rural: SnowCap Commuter | 3 | 5 |
| Tourism | GMT-Rural: Valley Floor | 2 | 3 |
| Rural Commuter | SEVT-The Current: Okemo Seasonal | 5 | 1 |
| Rural Commuter | STSI: 89er North | 5 | 5 |
| Rural Commuter | SEVT-The Current: Bellows Falls-Rutland | 2 | |
| Rural Commuter | MVRTD: Bellows Falls-Rutland (Ludlow Rt.) | 2 | |
| Express Commuter | STSI: 89er | 1 | 3 |
| Express Commuter | STSI: River Route | | 2 |
| Demand Response | STSI | | 2 |

Performance Graphs

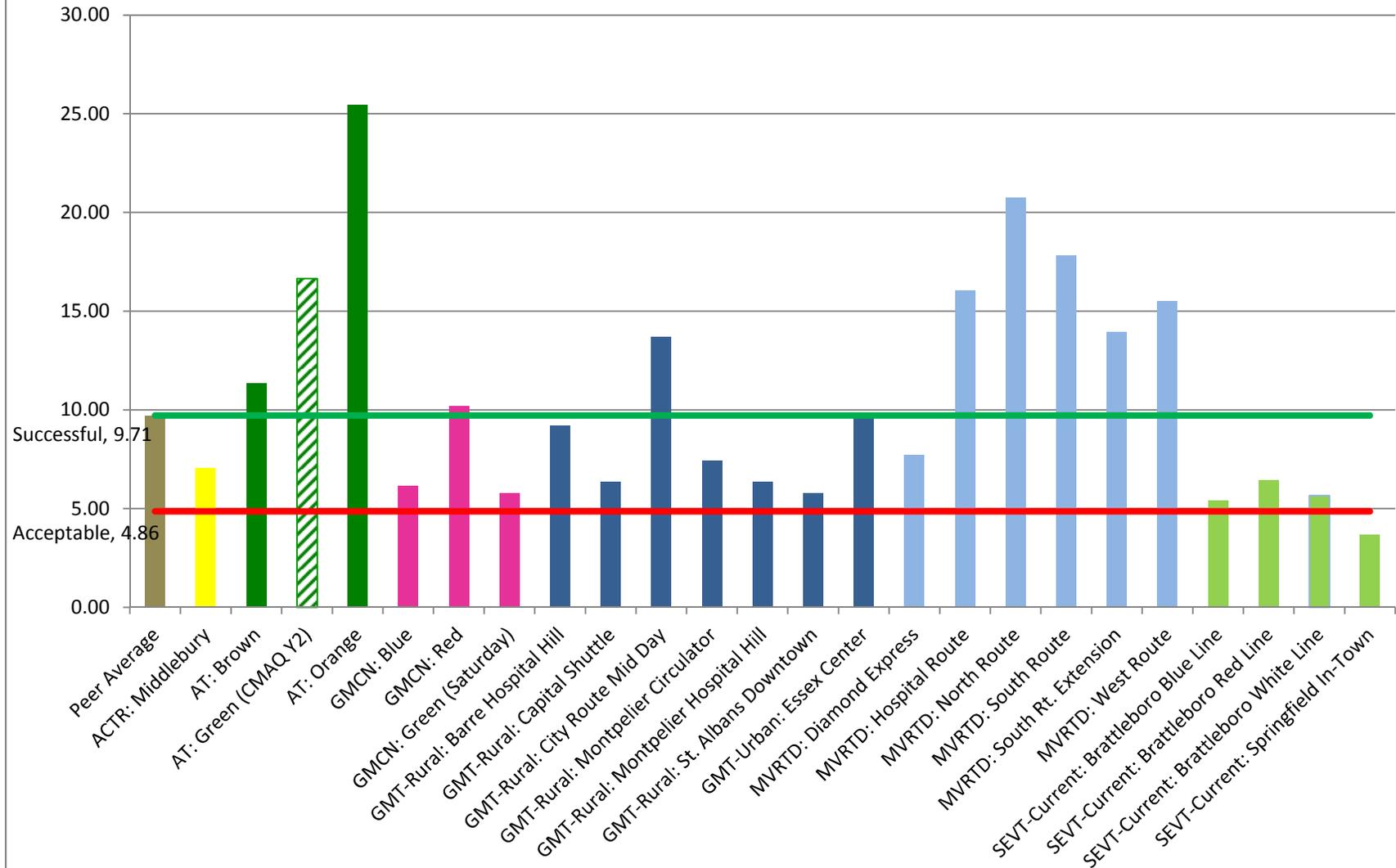
The next section of the report includes graphs depicting the performance data for all transit services in Vermont. Graphs 1 - 8 depict the SFY 2016 productivity data per service category, and Graphs 9 - 17 display the SFY 2016 cost-effectiveness data per service category. The standard for Successful services, equal to the peer average, is shown on each graph as a green line, while the standard for Acceptable services is shown as a red line. New transit services, which are funded through the CMAQ Program, are distinguished by a diagonal line fill in the graphs. Each provider has a specific and consistent color used throughout all of the graphs. Appendix A includes the same performance data, for each route by service category, in a tabular format for easy reference.

Appendix B includes charts that portray historical ridership, total operating cost, and cost per trip by transit system/division from SFY 2012 through SFY 2016. Appendix C presents the historical performance for every route or service in Vermont from SFY 2012 through SFY 2016, showing the trends in productivity and cost-effectiveness. Again, where routes were supported through the CMAQ Program, performance data for those years are distinguished by a diagonal line fill in the graphs.

PRODUCTIVITY PERFORMANCE BY SERVICE CATEGORY

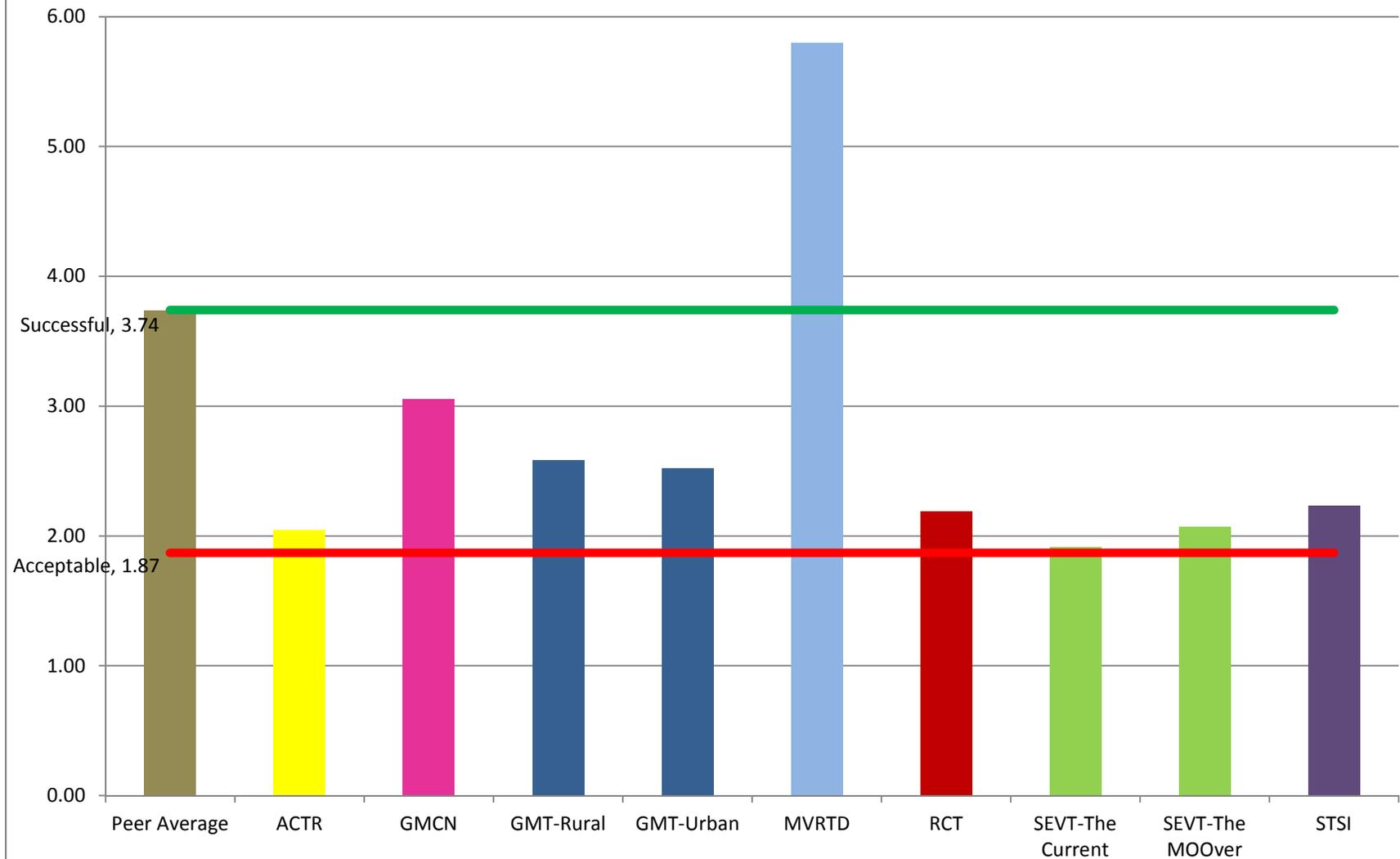


Graph #2: 2016 Small Town Boardings per Hour



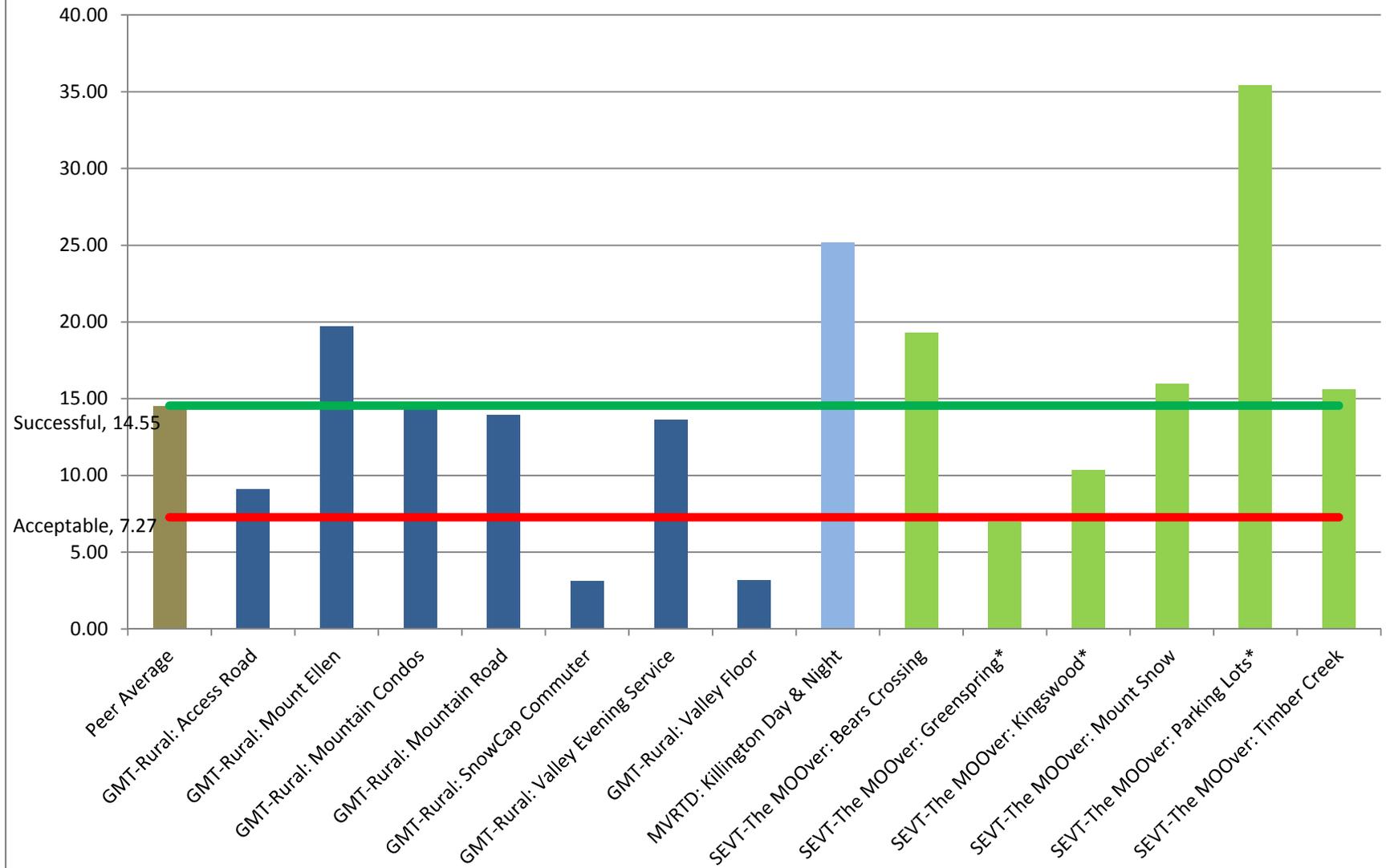
Note: Data for AT routes represent the entire route, even though a portion of the route is in New Hampshire. The second bus on AT's Green Route was funded through CMAQ, starting in FY 2015.

Graph #3: 2016 Demand Response Boardings per Hour



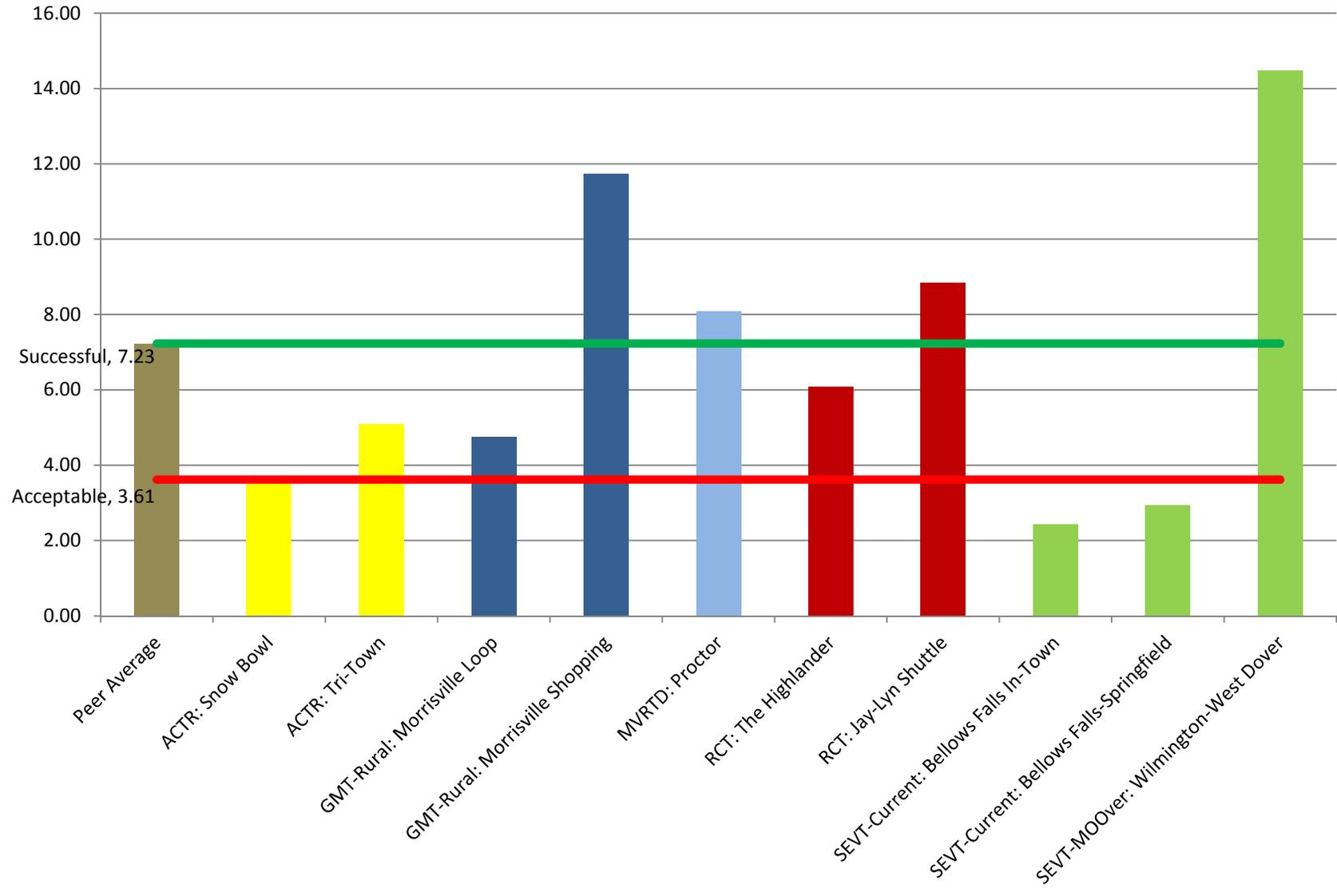
Note: ACTR's demand response data includes 16,000 E&D eligible trips provided by Elderly Services, Inc. for free with vehicles leased from ACTR.

Graph #4: 2016 Tourism Boardings per Hour

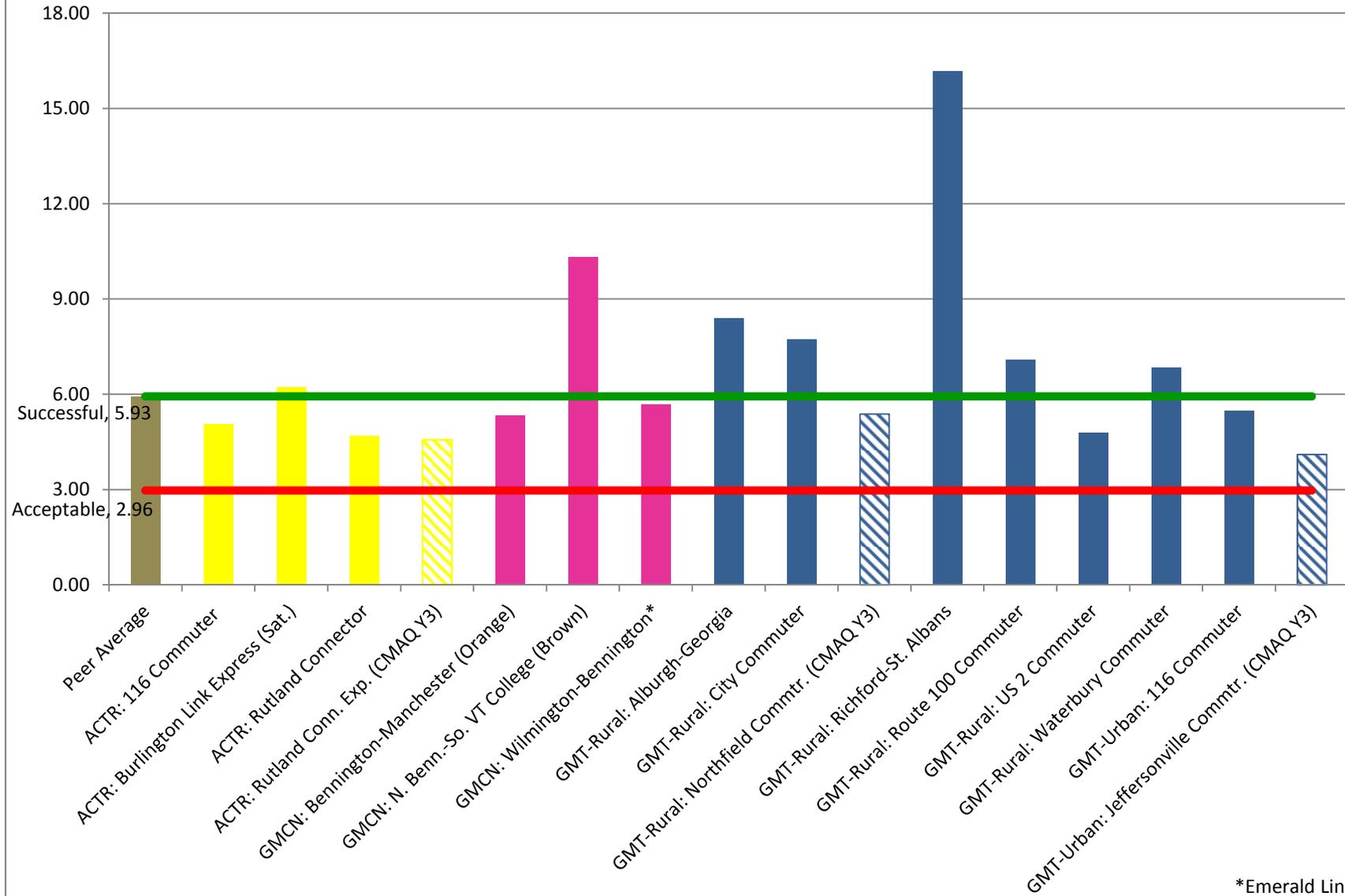


*Privately funded operations; no state or federal funds used.

Graph #5: 2016 Rural Boardings per Hour

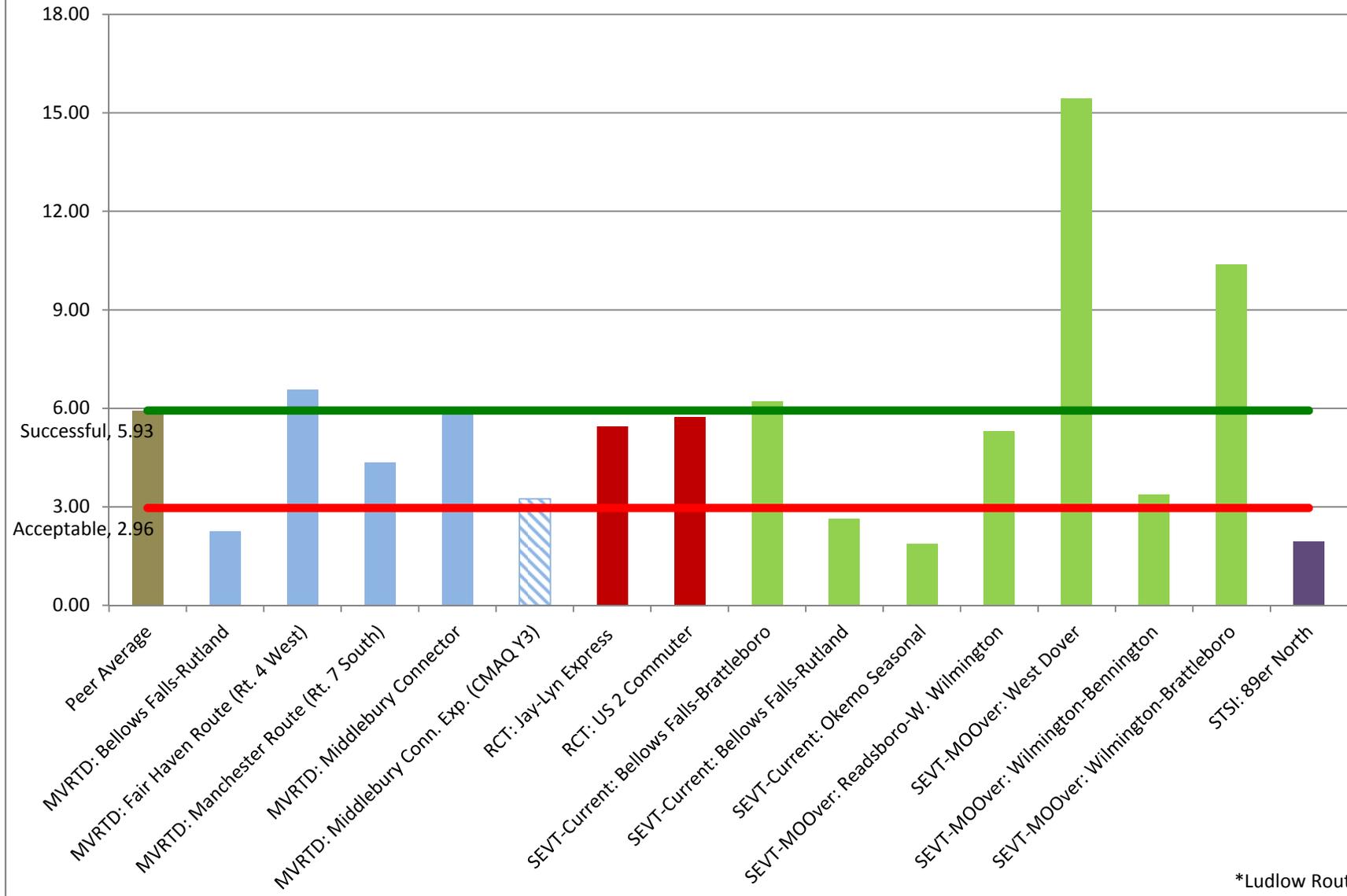


Graph #6: 2016 Rural Commuter Boardings per Hour

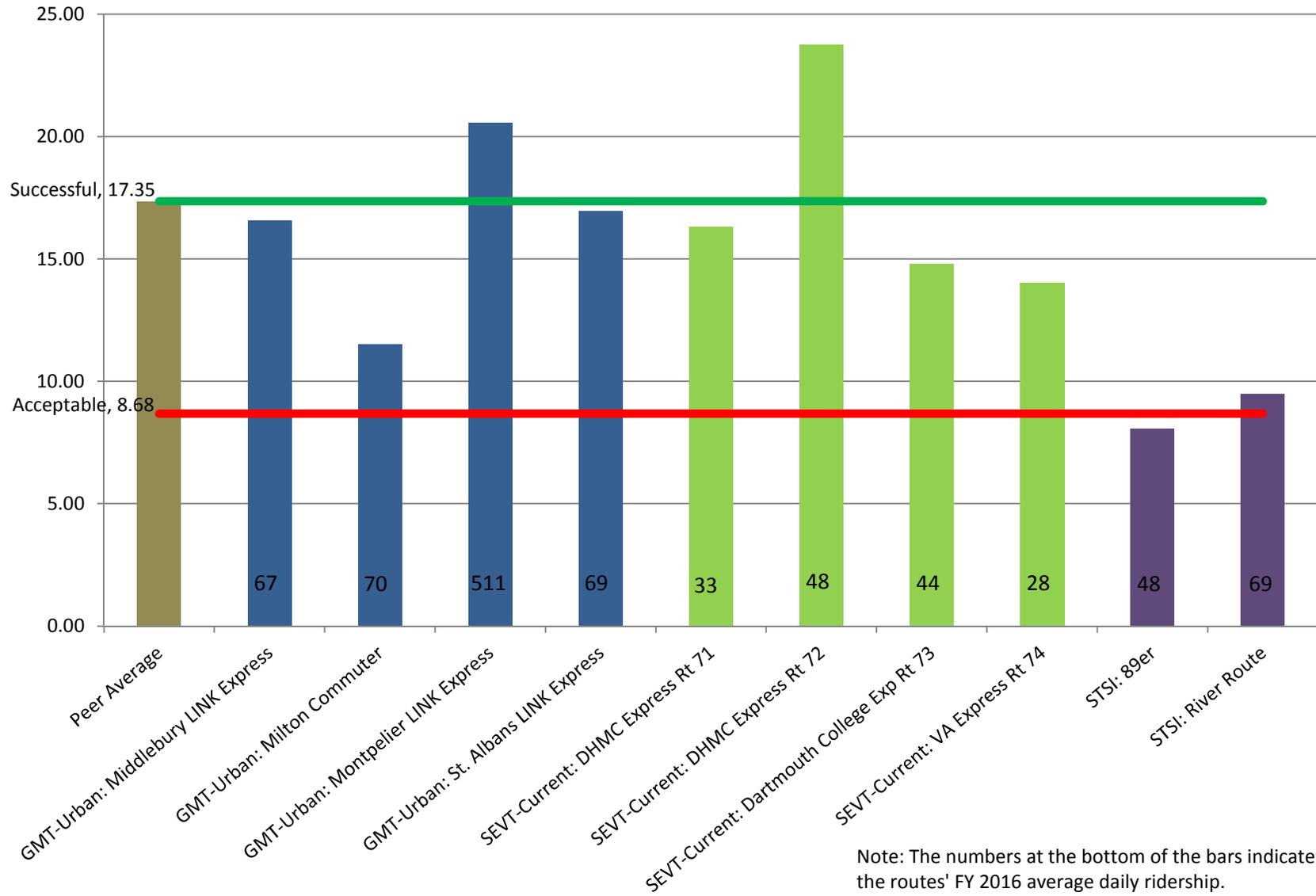


*Emerald Line

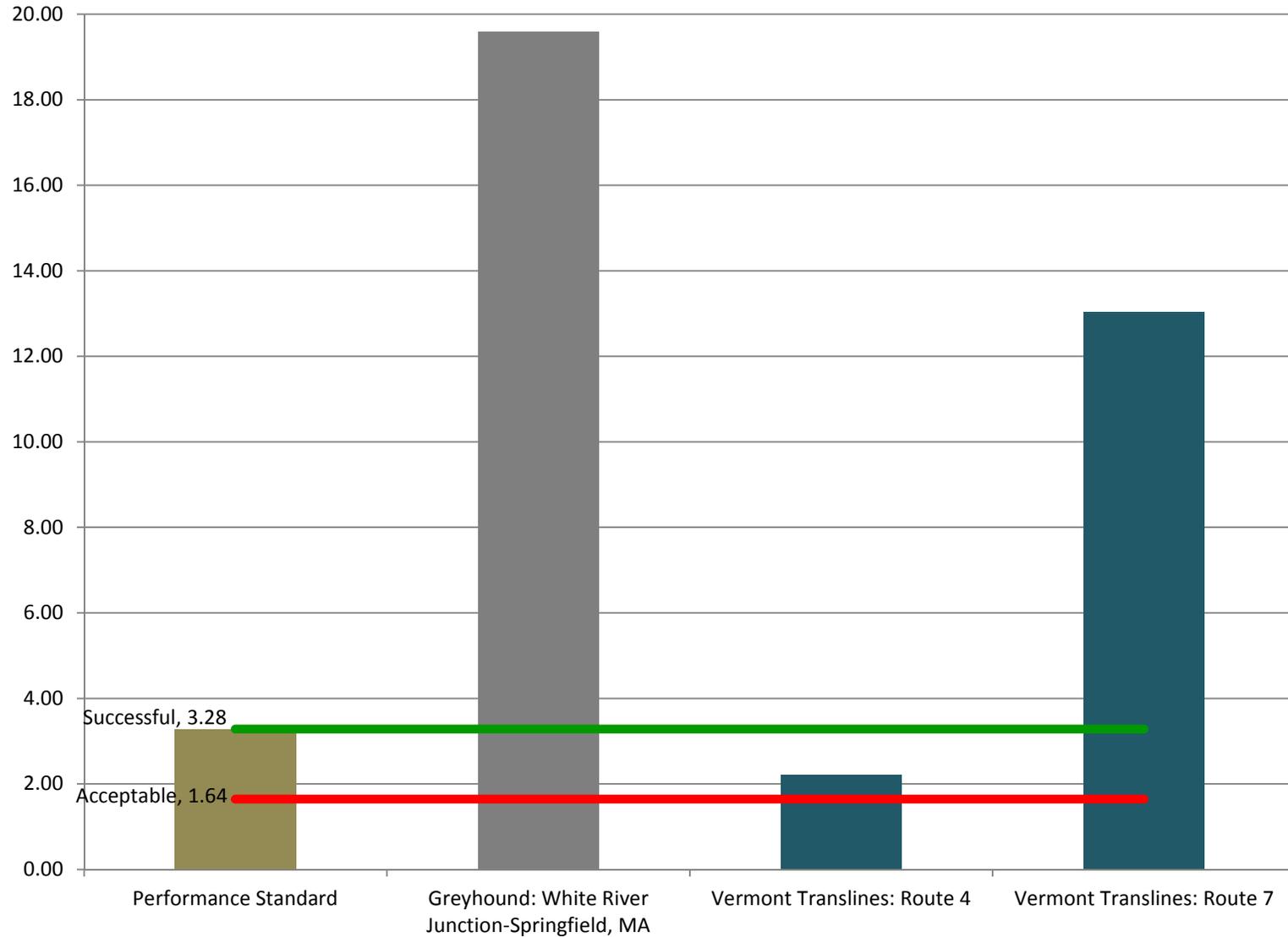
Graph #6: 2016 Rural Commuter Boardings per Hour (continued)



Graph #7: 2016 Express Commuter Boardings per Trip

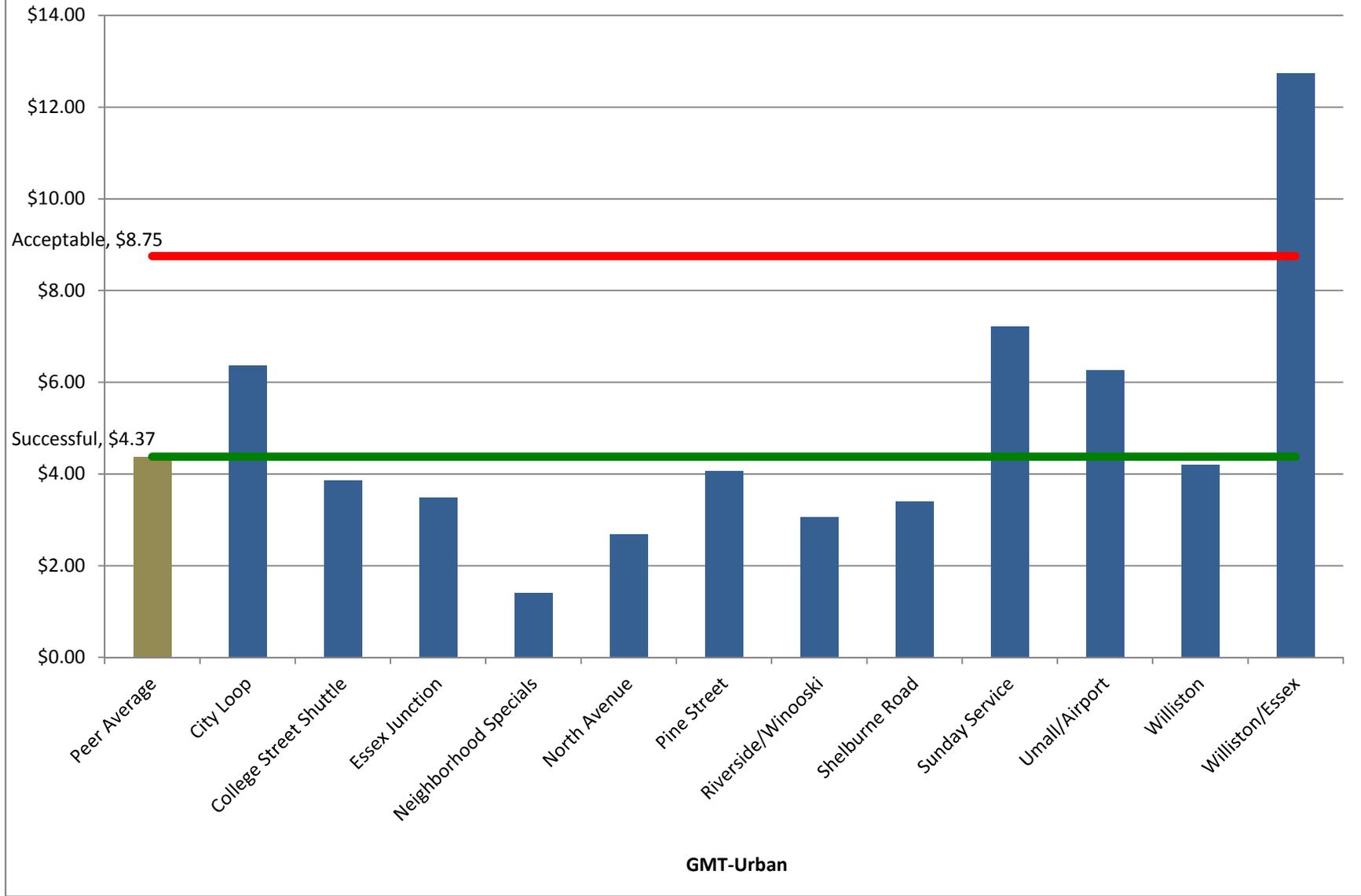


Graph #8: 2016 Intercity Boardings per Trip

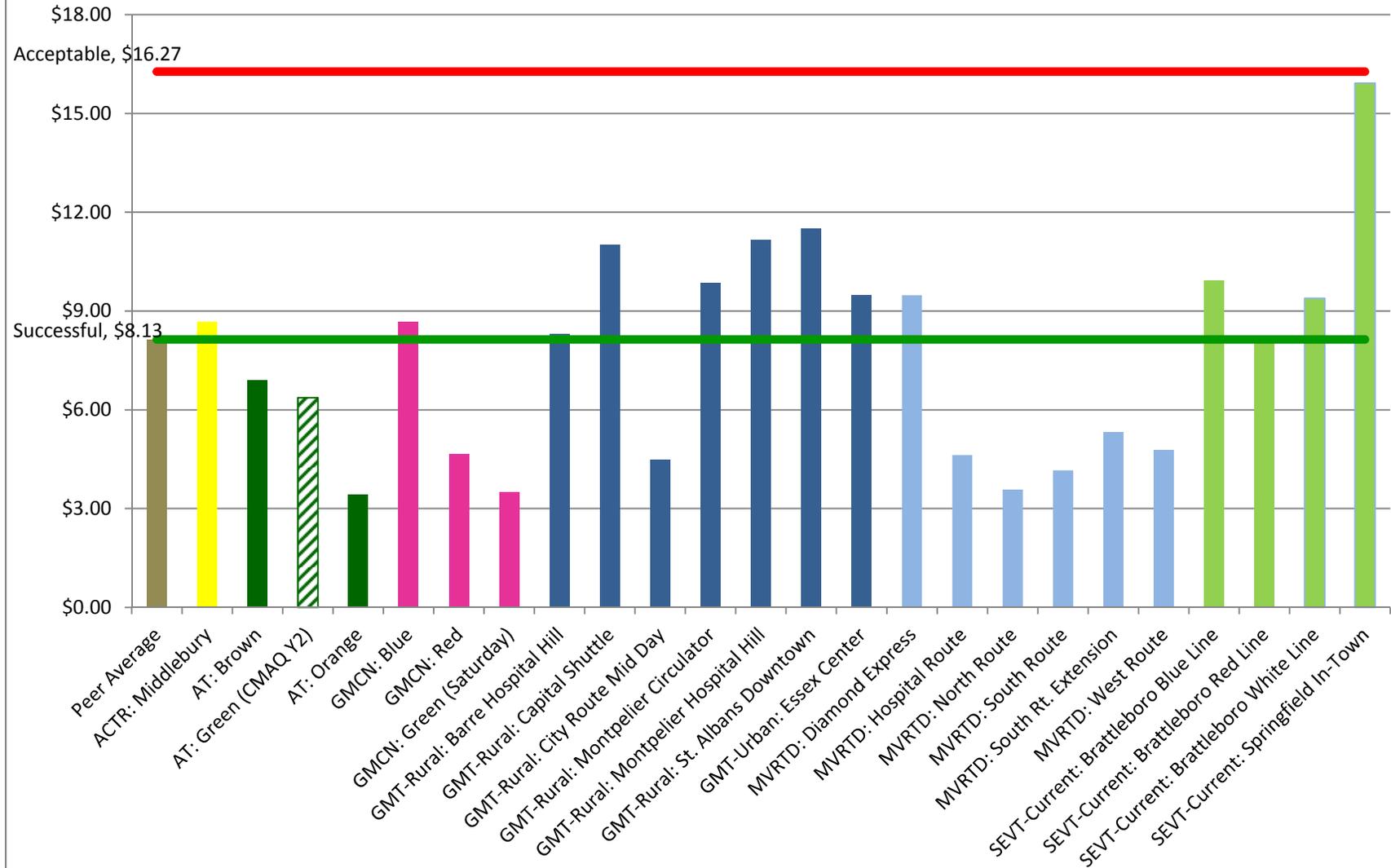


COST-EFFECTIVENESS PERFORMANCE BY SERVICE CATEGORY

Graph #9: 2016 Urban Cost per Passenger

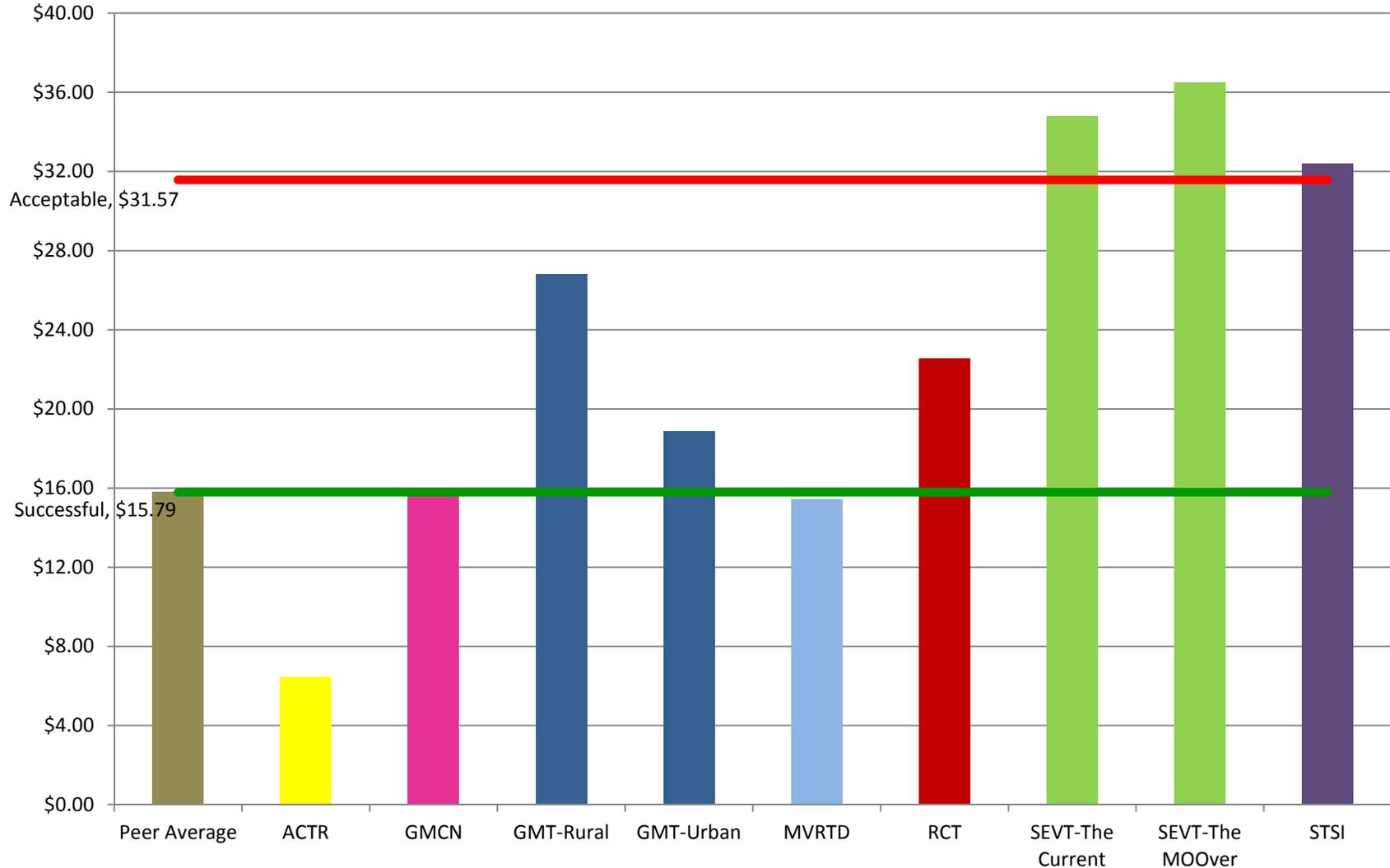


Graph #10: 2016 Small Town Cost per Passenger



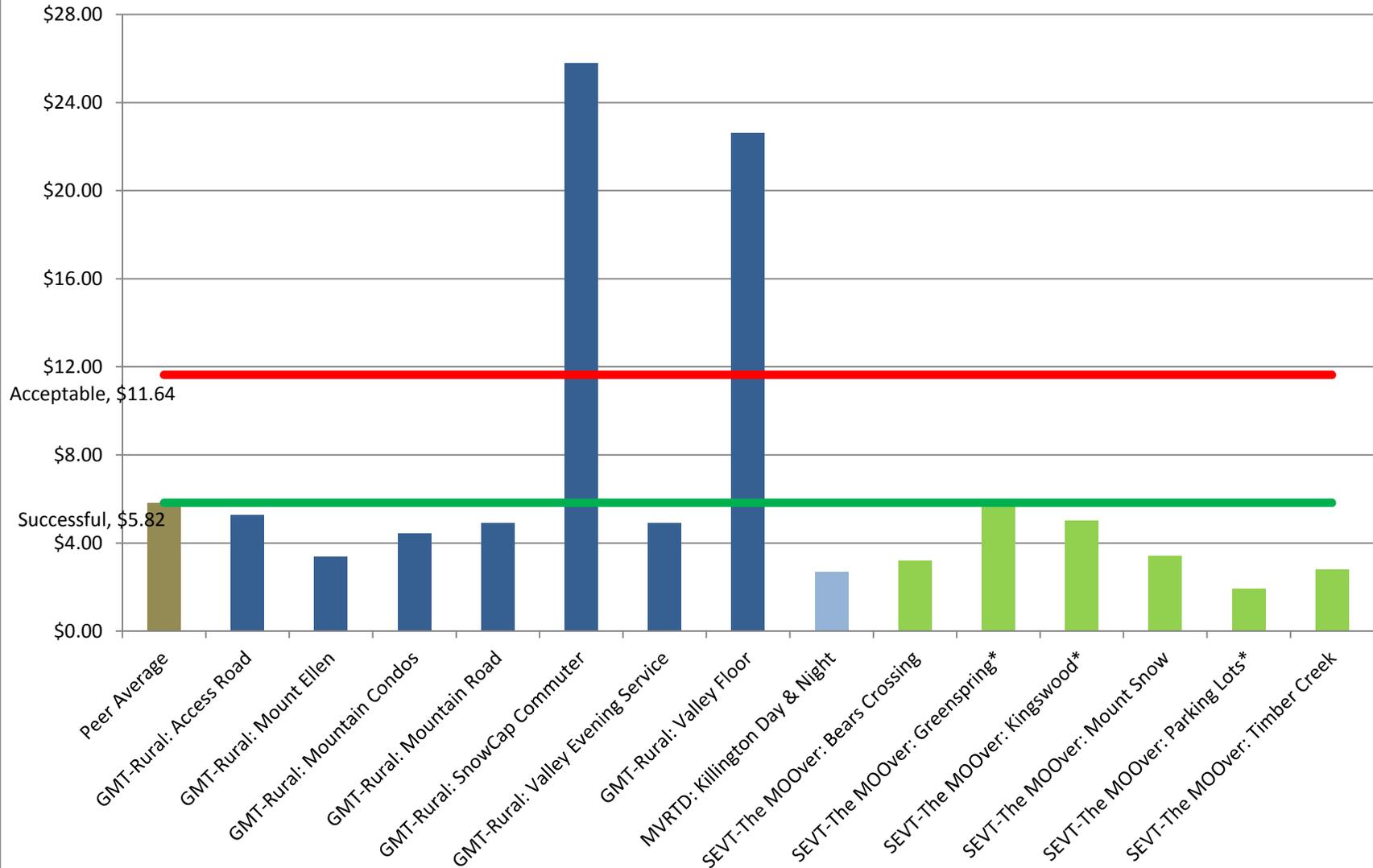
Note: Data for AT routes represent the entire route, even though a portion of the route is in New Hampshire. The second bus on AT's Green Route was funded through CMAQ, starting in FY 2015.

Graph #11: 2016 Demand Response Cost per Passenger



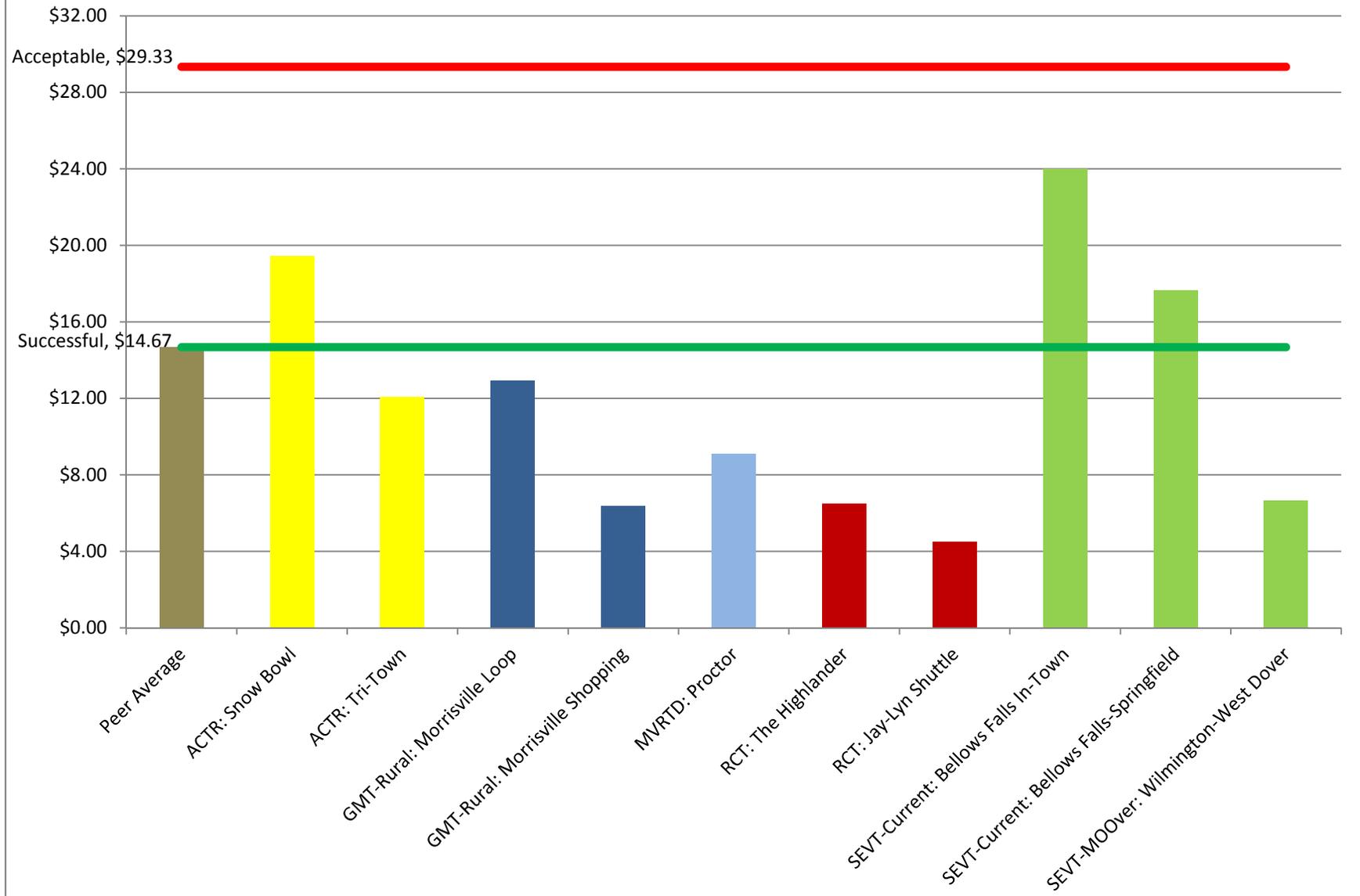
Note: ACTR's demand response data includes 16,000 E&D eligible trips provided by Elderly Services, Inc. for free with vehicles leased from ACTR.

Graph #12: 2016 Tourism Cost per Passenger

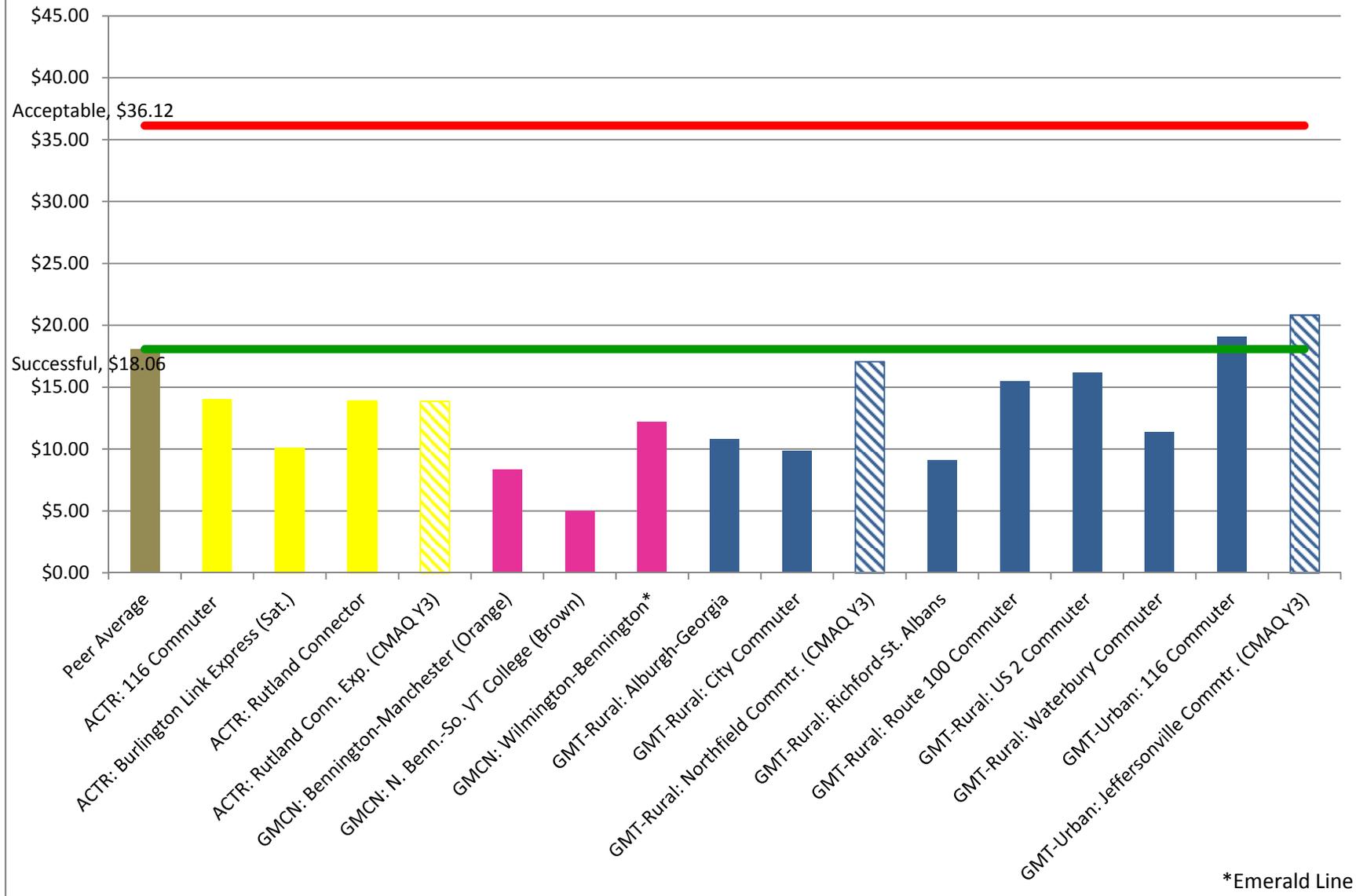


*Privately funded operations; no state or federal funds used.

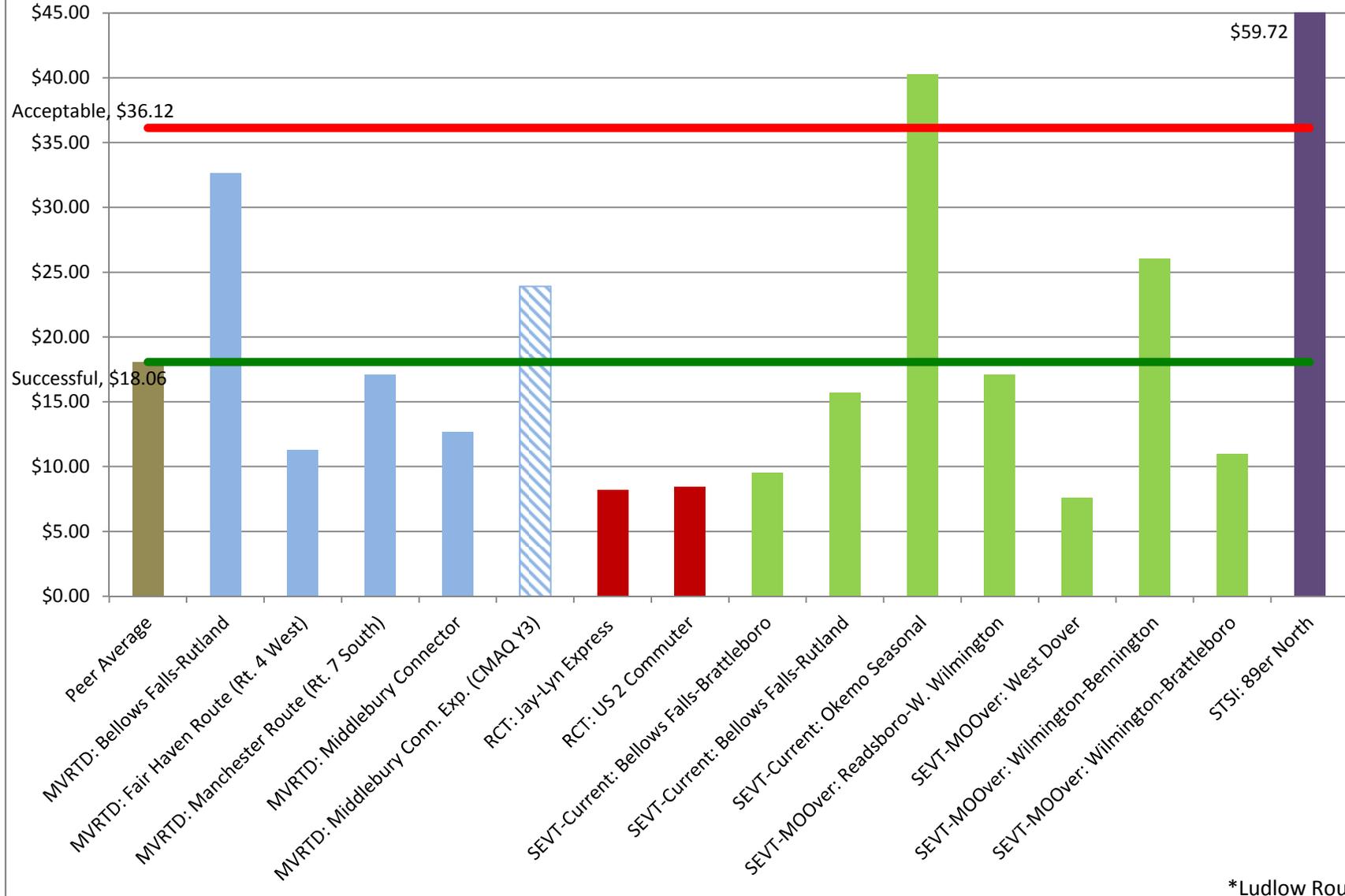
Graph #13: 2016 Rural Cost per Passenger



Graph #14: 2016 Rural Commuter Cost per Passenger

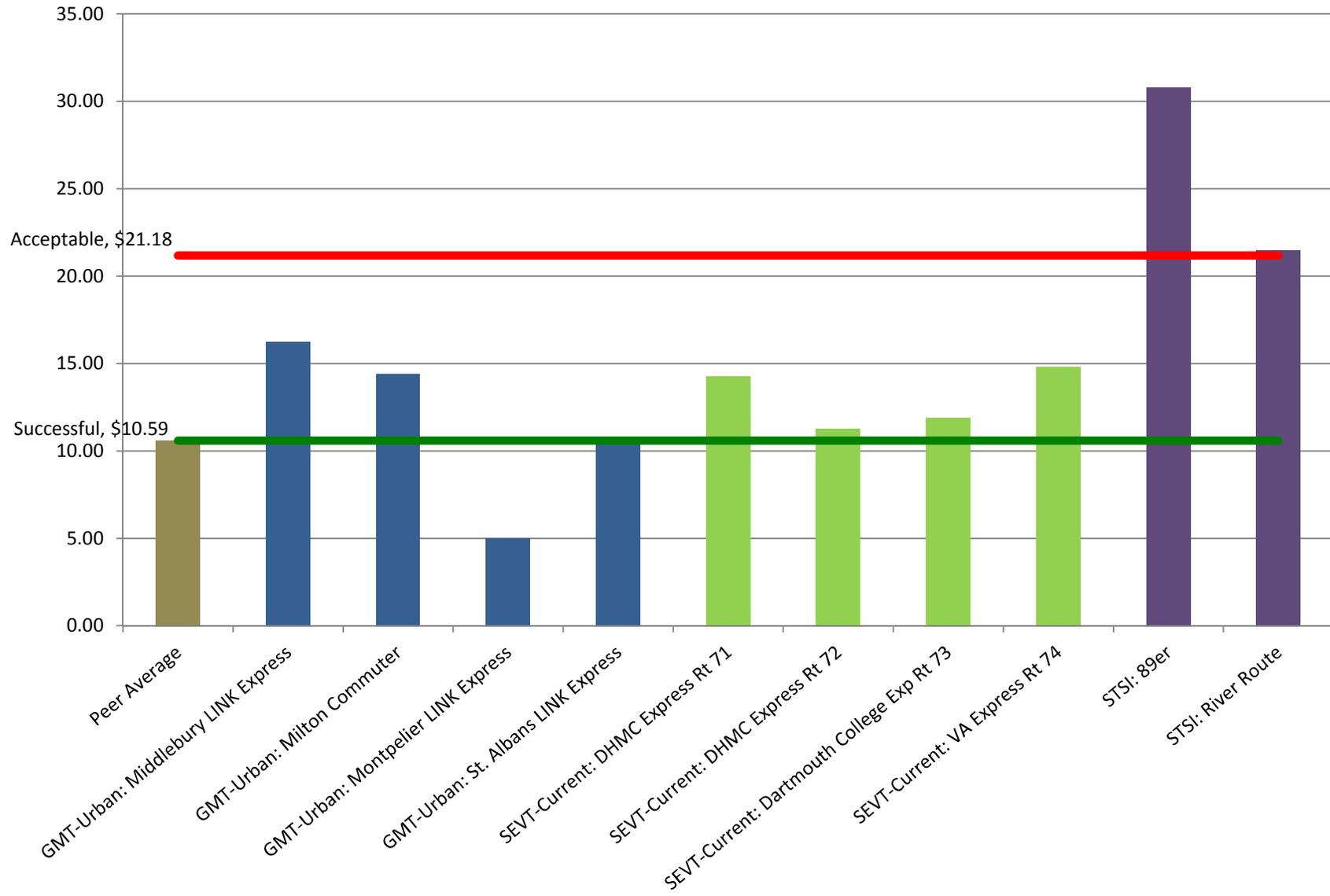


Graph #14: 2016 Rural Commuter Cost per Passenger (continued)

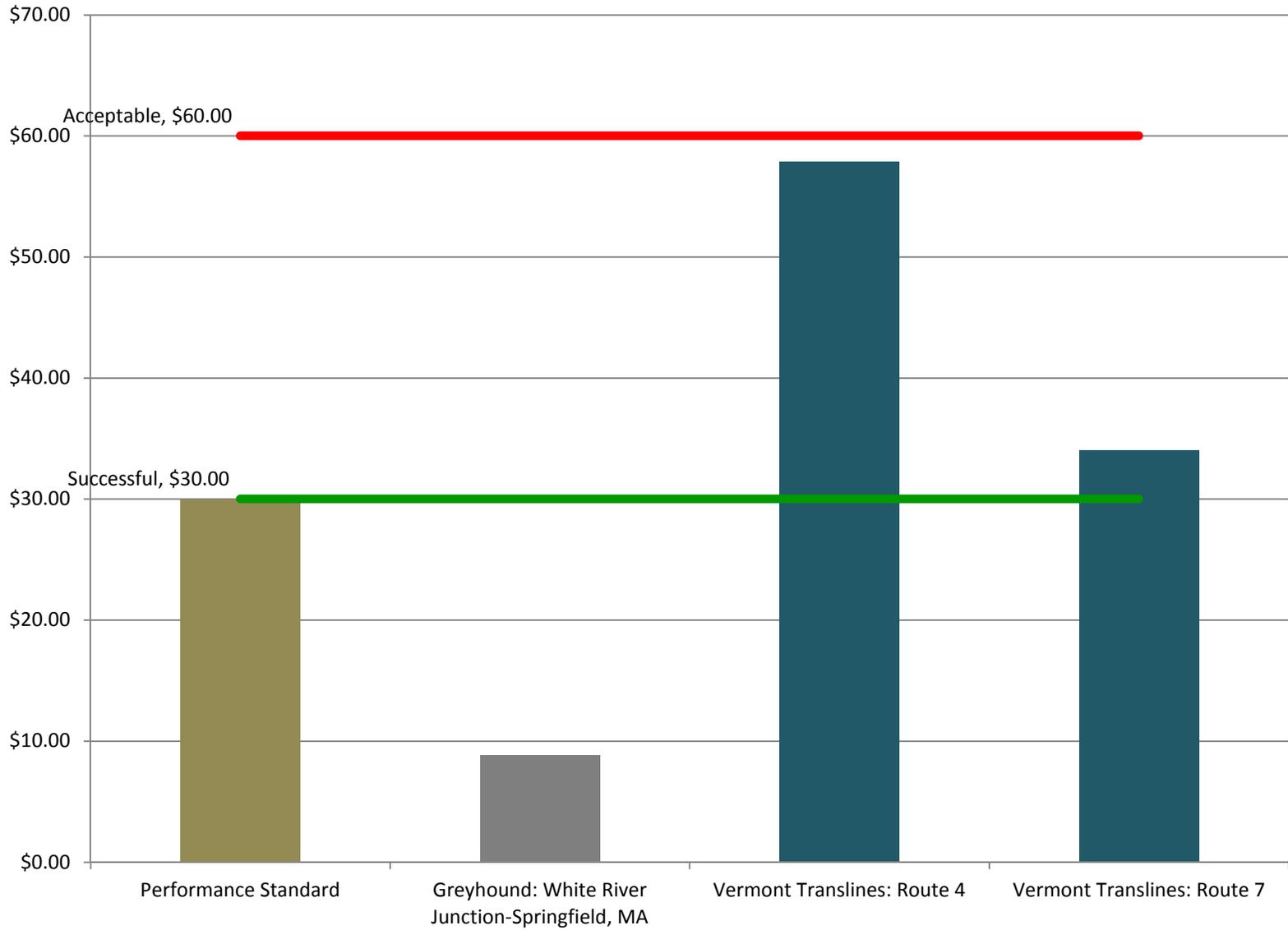


*Ludlow Route

Graph #15: 2016 Express Commuter Cost per Passenger



Graph #16: 2016 Intercity Subsidy per Passenger



Graph #17: 2016 Administrative Cost per Volunteer Trip

