

ACTR Public Meeting
July 21, 2008

Bill Evans of Milligan & Company opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, stated the purpose of the meeting and went over the agenda. Evans provided a description of the Short-Range Public Transportation Plan process, emphasizing the role of the public in preparing the plan. He then discussed the State public transportation network that only shows the fixed and deviated routes; not the demand response network. He stated that Vermont flexes funding from Federal Highway into Federal Transit Administration provision of funding for eligible programs. Evans discussed the state and federal funding for public transportation (operating) which shows an increasing trend, indicating the State of Vermont's generosity in providing funding for transit.

Evans then provided an overview of ACTR's governance and discussed board representation. Evans then discussed ACTR's operations and service area, including the types of services provided. He provided an overview of their fares, fleet and facility.

Evans discussed ridership and ACTR's operating budget. He then explained the next steps in the process and the availability of information from the project website. He added that comments can also be sent through the website or by postal mail for inclusion in the plan. He then opened the discussion to the group.

The following are comments and questions expressed during the meeting:

- Ripton resident would like to have ACTR reconfigure the Snow Bowl Shuttle to offer service to them.
- ACTR commuter services actually enter Burlington and Rutland. This is much more convenient than some other services in the state that make passengers transfer from one service to another.
- The regular shuttle routes should be flexible enough to go into neighborhoods to pick up commuters rather than having every trip serve senior housing when the demand is not always there.
- It is amazing to see the ACTR ridership continue to increase. The Bristol route should be split to shorten the trip length; this would increase ridership from Middlebury College.
- The gap between the cost of driving and using transit is getting greater as fuel prices continue to go up.
- There was a question about increasing revenues by charging a fare. Jim Moulton, ACTR Executive Director responded that historically there have been several reasons not to charge a fare. First, fares are not counted as local match. Fare revenue is deducted from the total operating expenses, which results in lower state

and federal aid. Second, a fare would be a hardship on many low-income riders and would reduce their ability to ride. Third, there would be additional costs associated with the handling of collected fares.

- Provide service to Bristol along the Route 116 corridor. Moulton added that ACTR will be applying for special funds to begin this service but the funds are limited. There will be a lot of proposals from all over the state for the limited funds.
- Moulton also noted the need for changing the way the public thinks about transit funding. There are 30,000 cars in Addison County and it costs about \$7,000 per year to operate each car. This is a total cost of \$2.1 million just in Addison County. Transit receives just \$14 million statewide. There should be public education on the cost savings that can be realized from the use of public transit compared to owning and operating a car. In addition, private donations leverage State and Federal funds; when available.
- Lincoln Energy Town Committee is organizing and encouraging carpooling and to contact their local public transportation provider. Lincoln and Starksboro residents would like service along Route 116. Expansion to the Bristol park and ride. Bristol Energy Town Committee is already carpooling from the park and ride lot..
- Use school buses for general public transportation. The transportation funds from each school budget should be transferred to ACTR and have ACTR provide general transportation service that would include schoolchildren.
- What do taxpayers in Vermont want? Enhanced public transportation systems or school (“yellow”) bus transportation?
- The Town of Lincoln may not be able to fund school bus transportation this year. Also looking into the possibility of allowing the general public to ride school buses until ACTR can serve to the Lincoln general store.
- The Town of Lincoln is doing an energy use survey and would like to work with ACTR to develop information connected with energy use in the transportation area.
- Vermont 211 has a database for many transportation requests that may be useful, including information on transportation services that many people may not know about.
- Develop more Park & Ride lots throughout the area. This would provide locations for people from less dense areas to more conveniently connect with transit routes. Vergennes park and ride bus stop is on the wrong side of the lot. VTrans needs to coordinate with all partners/stakeholders when new lots are built.

- A representative from Rehabilitation Vermont stated that one of the largest barriers is inadequate transportation service for their clients.
- There has been a great deal of coordination with Middlebury College both in providing services needed for students and assisting with the funding of transit.

The meeting adjourned.