

ACTR Stakeholder Meeting  
July 21, 2008

Bill Evans of Milligan & Company opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, stated the purpose of the meeting and reviewed 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 showing the fixed and deviated routes, but not the demand response network. He stated that Vermont flexes funding from Federal Highways into provision of funding for Federal Transit eligible programs. Evans discussed the state and federal funding for public transportation (operating only) which shows an increasing trend, indicating the State's generosity in providing funding for transit.

Evans then provided an overview of ACTR's governance and discussed their board representatives. Evans then discussed ACTR's operations and service area, including the types of services provided. Evans provided an overview of 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 postal mail for inclusion in the plan. He then opened the discussion to the group for comments and suggestions.

Clarification of presentation provided by Jim Moulton, ACTR Executive Director:

- Clarification about the Snow Bowl Shuttle service. It is a year-round service, but service levels are increased in the winter.
- There was a discussion about ridership data provided during the presentation that did not depict the total ridership. There are about 47,000 riders for demand response service annually. Moulton distributed ridership charts that include the demand response and the VTrans performance benchmark results of ACTR services.
- About \$450,000 of the total contract revenue represents pass through funding for mileage reimbursements to volunteer drivers. ACTR's local match is very close to meeting the State's 20 percent recommended standard when this revenue is included.

The following is a list of questions and comments from the public:

- Bridport (west side of state) and Shoreham need transportation for the elderly and teens. Provide service from Port Henry to connect to Amtrak & intercity service to be able to travel to New York and Montreal, Canada.
- One of the members of the public does not want the planning process to restrict issues or ideas.

- Provide service to the Open Door Clinic (located on Main Street in Middlebury) serving residents without health insurance. Their service hours begin at 6:00 p.m. through volunteer doctors. The Clinic serves many Hispanic farm workers. Funding to provide transportation has been depleted. Would like to see a pilot project for once a week or month for coordinated outlying nightly medical trips; suggest to start with Bridport & Addison.
- Need for transportation to and from after school activities in Bridport for teen activities.
- Reduce Tri-Town Service frequency from 2 hours to 1 hour in the mornings and afternoon hours.
- Sustainability in the community for public transportation use to save on greenhouse gases.
- There is a high level of travel between Middlebury and Bristol. Increased transit services would probably do well.
- Increase use of biodiesel and purchase new buses that will operate on it within the next couple of years.
- The company NRG in Hinesburg is encouraging its employees to use public transportation. ACTR service along the 116 corridor from Middlebury to Burlington would serve these employees.
- Country Home Products has over 130 employees and many of them use public transportation. However, the afternoon trip to Bristol can take up to two hours. More employees would ride if the trip times were shortened. ACTR officials noted that they are working on a survey to employers with shift changes.
- Middlebury College has 1200 employees. The existing Bristol-Vergennes Link ride takes too long.
- Employer surveys as part of this study should also go to the public schools. Many of the schools have larger numbers of employees than the businesses.
- Establish a Crown Point Bridge route for commuters from New York State.
- Middlebury College students need service to connect with the trains in Rutland and intercity bus services to Boston. Vermont Transit used to provide this service.

- Coordinate better between the train and bus schedules in Rutland. There are times when the bus leaves just before the train arrives. This can strand a student trying to get back to Middlebury College overnight in Rutland.
- Provide commuter service for the Autumn Harp Company employees (located in Williston and Bristol); Route 116 corridor service between Starksboro/Hinesburg to Williston. Employer NRG would be supportive as well.
- Provide a bus route operating in a large loop around the less dense outlying areas. This route would connect to routes that bring people into the populated areas.
- Explore better resources to undertake needs assessments for various suggested services, such as schools or town clerk's. The state should set up special funds to be used to develop and test pilot projects.
- The development of transit service is based on who has the money rather than where the location of highest need.
- Transportation along Route 125 to Starksboro is needed.
- The provision of transportation services for critical care trips is severely limiting the provision of other quality of life trips for the elderly and disabled. Eventually, it may appear that demand for these trips is down, but in reality, many give up trying to get the service because it has been so severely cut back due to the high expense of critical care transportation.
- Coordinate volunteer trips by providing up to three or four trips at a time.
- Use idle school buses for employment trips for the general public.
- Explore the possibility of transferring the school transportation budgets to ACTR; ACTR can provide general transportation that will include schoolchildren.

The meeting adjourned