

Brattelboro (BeeLine)/CRT Joint Public Meeting
July 24, 2008

Bill Evans of Milligan & Company opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and stated the purpose of the meeting. Evans provided a description of the Short-Range Public Transportation Plan process, emphasizing the role of the public in preparing the plan. Evans discussed the State public transportation network that shows the fixed and deviated routes, but not the demand response network. Evans stated that State flexes Federal Highway to Federal Transit Administration for additional statewide funding. Evans discussed the state and federal funding for public transportation (operating) which shows an increasing trend, indicating the State's generosity in providing funding for transit.

Evans discussed the following about CRT and BeeLine services: governance, operations, service area and types of services provided, fares, fleet and facility, ridership and operating budget, respectively.

Evans explained the next steps in the process and the availability of information from the project website. Evans added that comments can also be sent through the website or postal mail for inclusion into the plan. Evans opened the discussion to the group for comments and suggestions.

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

- Disabled resident noted there are many people with hidden disabilities and special needs. It is important to have a public transit service to take them to needed programs and services. It is also important for transit riders to provide input to local boards making decisions about these issues.
- There was a discussion of a proposed new bridge over the Connecticut River from one Brattleboro resident. VTrans representatives at the meeting will share this information with the proper levels at VTrans.
- Vermont Center for Independent Living noted that persons with disabilities were not aware of available bus service to attend the public meeting; need a more aggressive marketing campaign next time. BeeLine stated information about extended service hours was publicized. VTrans offered to work directly with this individual to assist with the wording for the next round of meetings.
- Provide better training to drivers for the demand response service and Brattelboro taxi regarding access issues for the disabled during inclement weather.
- There was a question about Vermont Transit which was acquired by Greyhound due to declining ridership and revenues, leading to reduction of services. Response: There is no intercity connection in St. Albans.

- Expand Amtrak services statewide. Expand public transit to accommodate the expansion of Amtrak.
- Provide regular service during nights and weekends. Expand service in the outlying areas. The service must maintain its cost effectiveness. Marketing is an important element for success. In Vermont using transit is not part of the population's culture. Need to work together to change that opinion.
- Improve Amtrak service.
- A Guilford resident stated a good transit system will promote higher levels of tourism, but there should be a complete package for moving around once they get here. Don't understand State's relationship to tourism; seems to be disconnected. Current commerce focus is on Montpelier versus Logan Airport and Boston for international tourism opportunity.
- Transit plan should dove-tail with Town development plan and dense population area.
- The limited staff of the BeeLine does not allow for the needed attention to marketing and other infrastructure improvements. BeeLine should become a full service transit agency with marketing and maintenance functions. To do this, expand service to the general public, especially to Hinsdale, NH; Guilford, VT; and along the Route 30 corridor.
- Townsend resident who cannot drive stated the need for transit route on every state road that is red on a road map. Transit should be more identifiable to the general public.
- In Massachusetts, many colleges pay for transit routes that will allow their students to ride for free. Students can be trained to drive the buses at a much lower cost.
- Provide suggestion boxes on all buses.
- Outreach is very important. BeeLine can work with many agencies and get volunteers who will help them with this outreach.
- Include Zipcars as part of the five year plan.
- Also in Massachusetts, the park & ride lot fee of \$5 goes to support public transportation. The consultants should look into this idea for Vermont.
- Work with inter-faith groups as additional park and ride lots to alleviate capacity issues.

- Transit should work cooperatively with companies that are developing biodeisel. Expanded use of this fuel can potentially save money.
- The Beeline should implement a marketing program around the idea of a special day to take the bus and bring a friend.
- Establish Park & Ride lots in the Brattleboro and Guilford areas as well as the Route 30 corridor.
- Establish a maintenance facility in Brattleboro to service the three CRT buses. These buses make a 60 mile trip once per month just for preventive maintenance at the CRT facility.
- Provide more bus stop signs with schedule information.
- All transit systems across the state should adopt a consistent schedule format that is user friendly. Map all transit bus stops through a statewide marketing campaign.
- Develop a statewide universal logo for public transit to be placed on every bus top sign.
- Conduct a thorough investigation of alternate fuels programs to determine their cost effectiveness and application to Vermont's transit systems.
- Pedestrian and bicycle path needs should be identified in the transit plan.
- Putney Road (east side)—bus stop is on the opposite side of highway system. Keeping sidewalks and crosswalks clear of snow and ice is important in making transit accessible; difficult to access transportation for persons with disabilities.
- Install ADA electronic signs inside the bus that indicate the next stop.

The meeting adjourned.