

## GMATA Public Meeting – July 14, 2008

Krista Chadwick, VTrans opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, explaining the purpose of the meeting. Bill Evans, Milligan & Company introduced other Milligan & Company and VTrans representatives. Evans provided the overview of the meeting. He then went over the SRPTP process. He discussed the state's transit map, explaining that the demand response routes are not indicated on the map.

He continued with the trends in federal and state funding for operations of public transit, which shows continuous increase, commenting that Vermont is on top tiers of providing funding in this area in the nation. He provided an overview of governance, operations, the service area and types of services provided. He then discussed service fares, fleet and facility. He showed the ridership chart, indicating a rise in ridership from SFY'04 through SFY'07. He then discussed GMATA's operating budget, pointing out the various funding sources.

Evans highlighted the next steps of the process and availability of materials on the project website, and comments can also be sent in through the website or through the mail. He then opened the discussion to the public.

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

- What is the deviation level of the routes? Evans clarified it is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on either side of a fixed route.
- What three towns in Orange are in the service area? Cole stated Washington, Williamstown & Orange.
- Until when are written comments accepted? Evans indicated until Labor Day to be incorporated into the second round of public meetings. (Meetings are tentatively scheduled for late September/early October.
- Has ridership increased in 2008? CCTA representative responded it depended on the route. Systemwide, it is up roughly 40 percent.
- With rise in ridership, are scale of buses being changed? CCTA representative state the Montpelier LINK operates a 39-passenger bus with standees a common theme.
- Are there any considerations for increasing service frequency on the Montpelier LINK? Cole indicated the possibility of one additional afternoon trip.
- Are all buses biodiesel? Cole stated yes.
- Is overhead included in operating costs? Evans responded yes.
- Buses need to run later and have weekend services (Worcester, East Montpelier, Plainfield Health Center) and operating 7 days per week. Suggestion for use of Medicaid waiver funding. There should be improved communication and seamless with trip providers.

- There has been an increase in ridership on the Route 100 Commuter; people are lined up to ride the bus. The connections between the Route 100 commuter and Montpelier LINK route at 4:00 pm should be coordinated better.
- Route 100 Commuter believes additional marketing through employers to make them be aware of service and need better promotion to increase ridership.
- Mad River Valley needs more service beyond ski season, ideally focused towards subsidized housing arenas for shopping trips; Mad River to Montpelier commuter service needed.
- Lack of crosswalk on Route 100 to the bus stop creates problems and is very dangerous, especially for the handicapped. Also, there is a need for additional direct service to Williston (have to go to Burlington and then back). Trip time doubles as connections in Burlington are not coordinated (1 ½ hour trip length, including transfer(s) ideally).
- Frequency of service is very important; predictability also. Ridership will go up if frequency goes up.
- Montpelier Hospital Hill rider noted they need to catch the bus going up the hill only; would like to catch it on the way down also. Central Vermont Hospital needs to be served more frequency than hourly. Bus schedules are not posted at the bus stops along the route to inform riders of when the buses will be arriving. Need service from East Montpelier to Plainfield.
- Hospital Hill schedule change no longer connects without a long trip. There potentially could be a new Medicaid contractor to which could affect funding.
- Need system that will cope with increasing gas prices and reduce green house gases.
- Montpelier LINK needs more frequent service & weekend service.
- Northfield Senior Center & Hunger Forum representative noted there is no local taxi service in Northfield and would like to restore services that used to exist.
- Rider appreciates route deviation offered by GMTA.
- Rider stated LINK Express is very good. Need additional return trips on Berlin Hospital Hill route. Multiple/bulk tickets should be considered. Shuttle from Jericho to Mt Mansfield School.
- Global warming makes transit use important. The Route 2 service should extend to Plainfield/Cabot and beyond. Northfield route should be reinstated. Question about whether employment centers will be mapped as part of the plan; Colleges should be included as well.
- Montpelier Hospital Hill - Barre service needs increased frequency; 30-40 minute headway. There should be evening service to Montpelier from Barre. Shelters in Barre

are needed. Put all timetables in shelters and provide better service information in bus stop posts. One day, unlimited use pass should be sold.

- Plainfield to East & North Montpelier & Hardwick route needed. Youth rates needed on LINK buses. Suggest 3:45 pm return trip from Burlington LINK for schoolchildren.
- Connection times need to be better between Barre and Montpelier. A stop in Williston is needed on the Montpelier LINK.
- Additional media coverage and publicity of these public transportation forums is needed.
- There should be additional bike racks on the buses to accommodate up to 3 bikes each. Waterbury commuter needs a noon bus.
- Waterbury Commuter rider noted on-time performance of van is great. Noon van bus is needed.
- Montpelier to Waterbury commuter bus needs more bike spaces and a noon trip. There is a need to connect to the Montpelier park & ride.
- Stressful to take the Montpelier LINK to Burlington for medical trips because the rider needs to be there all day long; midday service is needed.
- Transportation is a top priority for the Barre Town and Montpelier energy forum. Increase short runs with electric buses. Need more consistent funding for public transit than what is used now. Add stops in Barre Town.
- Fares are very low.
- Fares should be increased to \$2.00.
- More of the FHWA funds should be flexed to the public transit program.
- The legislature should be more interested in solving the financial problem. Talk with your Towns and get them to support public transit more than they do now.
- Discussion of transportation funding ( 5311 formula, flexing of FHWA money). FTA money is set, unless Congress increases funding.
- Northfield resident asked a question regarding cost per passenger or mile for Montpelier LINK and a commuter service to Northfield? Cole responded by stating the cost of Northfield service would be \$120,000 for one AM and one PM trip; LINK cost is about \$20/pass. Would like to know performance indicators for old Northfield route. Northfield has one remaining grocery store in between Northfield and Northfield Falls and no medical trips or senior center service. Top priority for GMTA should be reinstating the Northfield route. Suggested increase in fares to help offset the cost.
- Money should go to public transit instead of asphalt.

- The sign-in sheet at this meeting should ask if folks commuted tonight by biking, walking or riding the bus.

The meeting adjourned.