

MVRTD Stakeholders Meeting  
July 23, 2008

Bill Evans of Milligan & Company opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, explaining the purpose of the meeting. Evans provided the overview of the meeting and the Short-Range Public Transportation Plans process. Evans discussed the state's transit map, explaining that the demand response routes are not indicated on it.

Evans 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. Evans provided an overview of MVRTD's governance, operations, service area and types of services provided. Evans discussed MVRTD's current fares, fleet and facility location. Evans discussed MVRTD's ridership and operating budget, pointing out the various funding (revenue) sources.

Evans highlighted the next steps of the process and availability of materials on the project website; adding comments can also be sent in through the website or postal mail for inclusion of the plan. Evans opened the discussion.

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

- Bicycle racks have become very popular in Rutland. Would like to see all vehicles operated by MVRTD to have this accommodation.
- Service has been working very well in Killington through MVRTD. Many of the employees use the bus to get to jobs in and around the Killington area.
- Many of the employees at Holiday Inn use the bus to get to work. Customers don't like the fact that they have to transfer at the Transit Center to get up to Killington. Interest in connection to Okemo is high.
- A member from the Rural Regional Hospital discussed difficulty of getting from the residence to Rutland Hospital. Provide faster bus service along Route 7 with 15-minute headways during the early morning hours.
- Elderly and disabled people see the bus as their lifeline. It allows them to remain independent and remain in their homes. County needs additional service on weekends and evenings. Provide bus service to Benson and Orwell, which border Addison County; distance is difficult. There is limited transportation to Poultney.
- Critical care transportation is putting pressure on the general transportation budget for elderly and disabled service. The number of elderly and demand for general service will be increasing.

- Dialysis service fluctuates greatly. Last year, there were six individuals and this year it has increased to 14. The result is decreases in general purpose E&D service.
- Provide more commuter transportation service in the mornings and afternoons. The trip time on the bus can be up to one hour and is much greater than the travel time of driving (downtown City routes to Hospital). Would like to see 15-20 headways in the downtown area.
- There will be a public transit element in the Rutland Town Plan update. Improve coordination between the bus schedules and arrivals at the airport and Amtrak station for tourism.
- The railroad grade crossing on Main Street causes substantial delays for buses and also causes increased traffic disruption. Initiate dialog with the rail operator to reduce this situation. The project for an expanded and relocated rail yard is the opportunity for discussion and attempt to reduce this conflict. The draft environmental impact statement is underway and scheduled to be completed by early September.
- It is difficult to manage the E&D program in the County due to the inconsistent level of critical care services.
- The commuter service (Rutland to Middlebury) runs through Brandon has been successful but they need to be expanded to run mid-day service five days per week as well as on Saturdays. The mid-day runs have provided valuable service to off-set E&D shopping trips. The Towns in the State need to be involved in public transportation issues.
- Provide service from Poultney to Rutland. Poultney is primarily a bedroom community and approximately 4,000 residents who work or travel to Rutland.
- There have been several new businesses moving into Poultney. There are commuters coming into Poultney from Castleton and Fair Haven.
- Fair Haven needs a second morning commuter run.
- There was a question about adequate oversight of Medicaid utilization.
- Fuel costs will have a big impact on what will happen in the future.
- Explore use of alternative fuels. Currently, the cost of purchasing vehicles that run on alternative fuels is very high. Natural gas is a very good alternative fuel but is not an option to purchase in Rutland County.

- Improve coordination among planning agencies to address energy issues, economic development, etc..
- There needs to be a change in the welfare laws that allow a recipient to ease into the workforce. Going on public assistance can lead to a downward spiral and is not always a temporary situation. Public transit is a critical resource to reverse this spiral.
- Public transit should play an important role to assist with evacuations of vulnerable disabled people in the event of an emergency. The recent flooding in Rutland is an example. Improve follow-up services for the disabled that are evacuated to assure that they obtain the proper and necessary equipment so that they don't have to remain in their wheelchairs for an extended period of time.
- Transit is very important for vocational rehabilitation clients. The population is aging rapidly and there will be growing transit needs within this population group.
- Provide better connections between rural areas and the cities.
- Using transit instead of yellow school buses for high school students would achieve higher levels of efficiency in the long run.

The meeting adjourned.