

NVPTN Public Meeting
July 16, 2008

Bill Evans of Milligan & Company opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Evans went over the Short-Range Public Transportation Plan 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 in the top tier of states providing funding in this area in the nation. He provided an overview of NVPTN's governance, operations, service area and types of services provided. Evans discussed NVPTN fares, fleet and facility. Evans showed the ridership chart with NVPTN's deviated fixed route service and operating budget, pointing out the various funding sources.

Evans highlighted the next steps of the process and availability of materials on the project website. He added that comments can also be sent in through the website and postal mail to be incorporated into the plan. He then opened the discussion.

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

- One member of the public indicated disappointment with the NVPTN only having five volunteer drivers.
- A 48-unit elderly housing complex was recently constructed in Fairfax, but there is no public transit service available. They have been told by the local Agency on Aging that quality-of-life trips will be a low priority and service will be limited. Lack of service has limited their ability to rent the units. Residents of the complex want one or two trips per month for stimulation.
- NVPTN's fleet needs should be reviewed by the consultant.
- It is important for the regulations to be flexible. Problems of the past should not be impacting the NVPTN's ability to move forward. This area has the fastest growing counties in the state.
- Requests should be made again to Richford to place an item on the next ballot to approve local funding to increase service.
- The short-range plan must be visionary and not just reflect current situations. An effective transportation system can shape the future of this community.
- This area is very innovative and can lead the way. Adequate public transit will help expansion of the economy. NVPTN should be using the resources of the UVM Transportation Center to assist with innovative ideas to improve transportation. In addition, promote bicycle use and shared auto programs.
- There is a very large population of people with disabilities without access to needed services.
- Public transit options for employers should include vanpool along side public transit routes.

- Housing projects need to dovetail with public transportation routes; projects need to be accessible to everyone for one universal system; accessibility to everyone.
- A need to pool regional resources together to stretch state and federal funding.
- Transportation for special needs school children (Project Sore; alternative school). Further review of coordinating school bus and public transportation needs.
- Review VHAP disability classification. Classification means clients are not eligible for Medicaid transportation yet clients are need of the services.
- Franklin County needs to remove the stigma associated with using public transportation.
- Would like to have the commuter train reinstated in Vermont. Feeder routes from buses should be an option when you depart the train.
- Amtrak service between St. Albans and Burlington.
- Essex service reaches the Amtrak station 15 minutes beforehand. You can travel from Richford to St. Albans LINK; however, there is no return trip from St. Albans to Richford.
- There are numerous programs to provide work and other program opportunities for youth groups. Many of these programs have been eliminated due to lack of transportation services. Integrate use of idle school buses to provide for these and other transpiration needs.

The meeting adjourned.