

RCT Stakeholder Meeting – July 15, 2008

Dan Wagner started the meeting with introductions and welcoming remarks. He then reviewed the agenda for the meeting, followed by an overview the SRPTP process. He explained that public participation is key to this process and that the project website is available for submitting comments. Wagner explained the State public transit network, noting that Greyhound service is now limited to areas along the interstate and Route 4. He then reviewed the trends in state and federal funding for transit. Costa Pappis of VTrans highlighted the Lamoille County transit routes on the presentation maps.

Wagner provided an organizational overview of RCT, discussing its governance and operations. He inquired about the status of the volunteer numbers in light of increasing gas prices. Mary Grant, RCT executive director, explained that volunteer numbers were holding steady and that RCT does all paratransit service for GMTA in Lamoille County. Wagner then showed the two fixed routes and added that future maps will include human service providers. Pappis explained that all map layers are available to providers to update the maps if there are any route changes. Grant explained that there is preliminary funding from VTrans to fund the Riverside route. Grant explained that everything is a shared service. All E&D routes are open to the public and will be on their bus schedule (2 new routes).

Wagner continued to discussed existing service. Grant explained that since July 1, VTrans is managing rideshare coordination (using the Trapeze software). Wagner discussed the fare system, fleet and facilities. According to Grant, their largest vehicle is a 28-passenger bus. Wagner highlighted some potential new federal legislation for transit. Pappis explained that most transit funding is formula-based from the Federal Transit Administration.

Wagner discussed declining ridership in fixed route service. Wagner stated that the ridership for other services is not reflected on this picture. There was a question about availability of FY08 data and whether it shows an increase. Pappis and Wagner indicated that the data was not available yet. There was a discussion about showing ridership by type of service. The decrease in ridership from FY04 to FY05 was due to reductions in some funding.

Wagner discussed the revenue stream, followed by stating the next steps of the process. He then opened the floor for questions and comments.

The following are comments provided by stakeholder committee members:

- Grant reviewed some potential new routes: CMAQ Funding for St Johnsbury to Montpelier (Rte 2); Newport to Montpelier (Route 100), connecting in Morrisville to GMTA; Troy to Newport (Newport to Troy and beyond; Island Pond to Newport; Derby Line to DHMC; St. Johnsbury to Littleton (Grant has asked for JARC funding for this which was eliminated due to lack of funding; Pappis explained that the initial JARC funding was earmark but then turned formula

funding allocated proportional to population). Grant explained some collaboration with New Hampshire services to be able to provide service from St. J to Littleton.

- Grant provided an overview of past rideshare program accomplishments, which provided \$167,000 per year for the organization; however, the program is now state-run.
- There was an inquiry about a Morrisville route. Grant explained that there was service in the past. There are social services and shopping in Morrisville and would make sense as a route.
- A stakeholder noted the need for Newport to Mountain (Jay service) – a new hotel complex that is going to be a year-round resort.
- Grant explained that there was not enough demand for the mountain route. An attendee said there is a new development (500 units for first phase) there which would increase demand for service (Burke Mountain).
- There is also a need for an extension to Hardwick – Wagner asked if it would be preferable for GMTA to do it.
- Grant noted that there is a new service plan and RCT will publish all these routes as they are all open to the general public. Wagner explained that routes can be made available if local funding is made available.
- Grant discussed the new transportation hub that houses the Welcome Center at Palmer Building and will be home for Rural Community Transportation Center (bus stop, with taxi hub and train connection). \$250,000 of RCT earmark was used for construction; the town owns the building. There was only enough funding for conversion of the lower level. RCT needs additional funds for the second floor (4 offices) and the third floor with 2 more offices. The Chamber of Commerce will also be housed there. About \$400,000 is needed to complete the RCT space on the second floor.
- Grant stated the need for extra parking and cold maintenance areas. In Morrisville, Wagner suggested that RCT discuss with GMTA possible cooperation on vehicle storage.
- Wagner suggested development of new marketing plan with the new service plan.
- A stakeholder raised the issue of locator/tracking (GPS) system, especially for coordination with other providers' services. Wagner explained that MVRTD has a system and RCT should follow-up.
- A stakeholder noted the need to resolve the issue of broadening ridership to overcome stigma public transit use. Wagner explained that marketing and promotion of commuter services are important in overcoming that issue.

The meeting was adjourned.