

CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes September 23, 2014

Barre City: Scott Bascom	Northfield: Leslie Matthews - Absent
Barre Town: Jeff Tucker - Absent, Harry Hinrichsen – Absent	Orange: Lee Cattaneo
Berlin: Ed Schmecker - Absent	Plainfield: Bob Atchinsen
Cabot: Kevin Lehoe - Absent	Roxbury: Gerry D'Amico – Absent
Calais: Rick DeWolfe - Absent	Waitsfield: Don LaHaye
Duxbury:	Warren: Craig Klofach – Absent
East Montpelier: Frank Pratt –	Washington: Ray McCormack - Absent
Fayston: Kevin Russell	Waterbury: Steve Lotspeich
Marshfield: Michael Sabourin - Absent	Williamstown: Larry Hebert
Middlesex: Ronald Krauth - Absent	Woodbury:
Montpelier: Eileen Simpson – Absent	Worcester: Bill Arrand – Absent
Moretown: Laura Gans	Staff: Steve Gladczuk, Emily Nosse-Leirer
Others: Eileen Nooney, Capstone Community Action	

The meeting began at 7:05 PM.

1. Capstone Community Action (formerly Central Vermont Community Action Council)

Eileen Nooney attended the meeting as a representative of Capstone Community Action (CCA). CCA has a program where they receive donated cars and give them to Reach Up participants, but the program didn't work well for everyone because not all consumers are ready for car ownership. They are looking for a way to make transportation more accessible to their consumers. Eileen is here to tell us what transportation looks like for these consumers, who have very complicated lives and might not be able to design their schedules to accommodate public transportation schedules or routes. People often cannot afford to live near their work, but their transportation costs skyrocket when they move so far away. There are two main problems: People who have cars but can't afford a needed major repair or people who can't afford cars at all. The CCA helps people who fall through the cracks of the traditional transportation options in the Region. Car ownership is not an option for everyone, especially people who are in poverty. Having a car in Vermont costs an average of \$4500 annually. People with bad credit get higher insurance rates, and that is a further problem for people in poverty, who likely have credit problems. Many customers also need SR22s (insurance on their driver's license) mainly because they were driving a borrowed car that was unregistered. You have to have it for 3 consecutive years in a row, whether you have a car or not. This further adds to their insurance costs.

- Case study: a young mother of two who lives in Montpelier and got a job that she could get a ride to, but not home from. She got a car from the Good News Garage, but is that the best solution for her?
- Case study: Another young mother in Burlington who spends three hours on the bus every day getting to and from work.
- Case study: A woman who has a job doing massage therapy in people's homes. She can't take the bus because she has a massage table to take around.

Question and Answer with Eileen:

- Q: Is CCA's goal to raise the quality of life for your customers, or to change the way people are served?
 - A: For some, the goal is to raise the quality of life. Some successful customers get a first car from the Good News Garage and never need help again. Others have medical, mental or other issues that mean they won't be able to be so successful.
- Q: Is there any help from local car dealerships on this issue?
 - A: Not since car dealerships started to become conglomerates.
- We need to plan better, make sure that people can afford the housing that is near their jobs.
- Q: Is there car sharing in VT?

- A: There are some in Burlington and at Middlebury College, but these car sharing businesses often require credit cards. This can be a problem for consumers with bad credit.
- Q: What percentage of people just doesn't want to work?
 - A: A very small percentage. The average benefit is extremely low, so it's no way to live long term.
 - A: People who enter into the program are also the people who are motivated to take action to solve their problems.
- Q: What action does CCA take to break the cycle of poverty?
 - A: Referrals to other agencies and counseling within the organization for various issues.
- Q: Should there be term limits on welfare so that these people don't continue abusing the system?
 - A: Vermont has a 5-year limit for welfare, and there are various advantages and disadvantages for limits.
- Carpooling:
 - Are there any carpooling efforts in place that work with social media? That may help some people coordinate
 - Carpooling is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Any slight change in your schedule can ruin a carpool schedule.

Suggestions for CCA to better serve their customers:

- One suggestion for CCA to get more cars: the VTC gets 4 cars a year that have been sabotaged so they can investigate. Where are those cars going after they have been examined and repaired? Perhaps VTC could donate those cars to CCA.
- Bicycling: Could it be an option for some of CCAs consumers? This is a possibility for some people, but not for people with a lot of cargo or children. Also, there is often difficulty biking in traffic when there aren't bike paths. What if biking or other transportation alternatives were subsidized via tax breaks to employers? Bike racks on buses would also be extremely helpful.
- Other options: online/social media based ride sharing like Uber or Zim Ride.
- The problem for people in poverty in Central Vermont is not public transportation *routes*, it's the timing of buses. People who work in jobs like food service need to take the bus late at night when the routes have typically stopped.

2. Approve July TAC Minutes

Larry motioned to approve minutes and Frank seconded. The motion passed.

3. Update on the Regional Transportation Plan—Ridesharing/Travel Demand Management/Alternate Vehicles

The TAC discussed the various three sections of the plan section.

Ridesharing: The ridesharing and vanpooling programs have changed significantly, so Steve incorporated that information. Links to various websites have also been added so that people can more easily access interactive information. General comments included:

- There should also be a recommendation to improve the existing lots for Park and Rides. Shelters along bus routes may also be helpful.
- The update includes all the official park and rides around the region, including current use, sites recommended for expansion, and a map of both current and proposed sites.
- The park and rides near the exits are the ones with the highest usage. Some lots also share space with customers from other businesses. These are municipal lots.
- Steve will continue to ask about the 63 park and ride for people going to VTC.

Travel Demand Management: Not much has changed in this section. It is necessary to determine whether these programs will be around for the whole time between now and the next update of the plan.

- Capital Commuters is viewed as a successful new program in Montpelier, but currently only State of Vermont and National Life employees can use it.

- The point was made that Travel Demand Management strategies such as staggered hours are good for congestion but may be bad for public transportation.

Alternative Vehicles: This is a concept similar to Zip Car that operates out of Burlington, but they are considering expanding to Montpelier soon. It is different from ride sharing because you drive the car yourself.

4. Update on the Regional Transportation Plan—Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Section was distributed before the meeting and the TAC was asked to review it. Changes to be made in the update include: the old Census numbers will be updated; the opening description for the section will stay the same; there is more data about the use of bike paths and sidewalks in the area available now and those must be incorporated. General comments about the section included:

- The table of Bike-Ped projects will go out of date during the life of the plan.
- There might not need to be discussion of each section of the Central Vermont Regional Path in the plan. The Cross Vermont bike trail website will provide more accurate information.
- For the sidewalk construction plans, Route 2 in Moretown may present a problem because the speed limit is so high. The intersection study that was done in that area has been in the plan, but it's unclear how to move it along. Because it's a multi-municipality area, there has not been progress made beyond a study that was done. No municipalities want to match funds. Perhaps the school could be an applicant for funds through Safe Routes to School.
- Complete Streets is not mentioned until the Recommendations section, but perhaps it should be mentioned sooner in the section.
- How effective is striping for bike-ped paths? Not very effective because people drive over the stripes anyway.
- The common wisdom on shoulder and road ratios is 11 foot roads and 4 foot shoulders, but in areas with high truck traffic 12 foot lanes and 3 foot shoulders may be appropriate.

5. Set agenda for the October TAC Meeting: Steve will set the agenda later.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.