

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Present:

- Dan Currier, VTrans Peter Johnke, VCIL Jordan Posner, GMT
 Donna Gallagher, GMT Jeanne Kern, CVCOA Bonnie Waninger, CVRPC

Guests: Elena Juodisius, CVRPC

Introductions

Hellos were shared with introductions for guests.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None.

Minutes

The Committee chose not to approve minutes. Minutes will be posted as taken.

Needs Assessment of Vermonters Age 60+ and Their Family Caregivers

Jeanne presented statewide and CVCOA service area findings. DAIL, working with Area Agencies of Aging (5 in state), completed a survey. 2,600 people responded statewide; CVCOA area had 661 responses. Results were offered as statewide summary, by Agency of Aging area, and by the means by which respondent responded to survey (ex. digital vs paper).

Highlights

- 83% of Vermonters Age 60+ drive own car and don't encounter many challenges.
- 16,000 people in Washington County are over age 60; CVCOA serves 284 of those.
- Of Washington County respondents, 9% rely on transit.
- Respondents expressed they have sufficient access to pharmacy, grocery, medical transportation. They responded it was harder to access transportation for trips involving entertainment, friends, and social events.
- Respondents suggested providing more information about transportation options and schedules.

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- Answers varied by income. Those with incomes of less than 25,000 needed more information on options and expressed needing more transportation access.

Q&A

- Aged 85+ need? Report doesn't break out by age, other than 60+ as lump sum. GMT can break out its report by ages. Question to be resolved: Does transit work for aged 85+? Can/do they still drive?

➔ Dan will contact DAIL for breakout. Bonnie requested he share what he can about needs versus age so REDPAC can verify its assumptions.

Jeanne noted that responses varied by Agency on Aging region and digital versus paper respondents. Digital respondents were often well educated with higher incomes. Paper respondents were often Meals on Wheels participants, who have less education and lower incomes.

Program Review and Updates

VTrans: VTrans has not requested VDH provide vaccinations to volunteers or drivers first. These individuals are essential, but drivers often fall into older age groups. Transit is 1B for vaccination order. Anticipate needing to stage vaccinations to keep driver pool. VTrans has offered its maintenance facility as vaccination site.

\$26 million in funding received through new relief funds. FY22 is 100% funded for E&D. Match can still be budgeted and collected for future years. Use \$ in FY22.

Green Mountain Transit: MyRide discussion active in Montpelier Front Porch Forum. GMT receiving 80 more calls a day; added extra call taker. Callers experiencing longer wait times. If a rider previously timed their life around a fix route bus schedule, MyRide transition proved harder. For riders who haven't, MyRide seems to work smoothly. Jordan noted it might be harder for people with mobility needs; intention was to provide better service for them.

Questions:

- Response time: 15 vs 30 minutes? Peter's experience was longer. Discussion about the app and when rides are full. Peter suggested using "the soonest bus we can get you there is (time)" function as the app asks you to keep trying/checking back.

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Jordan advised a work around is to can keep adding a later time until the apps accepts it. Jordan using “earliest possible bus” feature for bus departure.

- Peter noted riders have to pay attention to side of street for bus pick up location.
- Peter suggested riders be advised to use the predicted time for bus arrival versus “real-time location of bus” on screen as the predicted time is more realistic.
- Texting function has been useful for riders and GMT.
- People can use the GMT call center if they can’t use app. Menu for call center has changed (ex. “press 2 for MyRide). No longer have to speak with dispatch on day of services.
- Curb-to-curb service means individual must come to the curb in front of their home. If bus can’t reach home curb, GMT suggests alternates for pickup or can use a different bus.
- CVMC has alternate pickup locations (front vs south entrance). Peter requested GMT note that CVMC’s front entrance is closed.
- Service is fare free currently. Ticket to Ride is not being charged for rides.
- If hear an address is not serviceable, please let GMT know the address.
- May need to use virtual bus stops in downtown/State Street because bus can’t double park when parking spaces are full.

Ridership is increasing slowly. GMT is recruiting volunteer drivers; it only has 11 volunteers now. Operating at 50-60% from pre-COVID; anticipate challenges once ridership increases.

Jordan reported 15% of the budget has been spent, and he has no concerns about overspending.

VT Center for Independent Living: Transportation advocates delivering food from food shelves where transit is not available and a person is at risk.

Central VT Council on Aging: Meal sites closed to congregate meals. Uptick in people using the transportation for medical appointments. People asking about vaccinations. Are volunteers or transit providers on vaccination list? Transportation to vaccination?

Central VT Regional Planning Commission: Hiring transportation planner; appear to have a good pool of candidates from a paper perspective. Elena will discuss the mobility project. RFP for “studies and special projects” being issues; REDPAC partners will receive a copy.

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Draft Ride Guide

REDPAC members offered comments on the draft Guide:

- Update phone numbers for local numbers.
- Central Vermont does do Age Well meal program
- Do we want to put in number of rides or say there are limited number of rides and the rider chooses?
- Remove Neighbor Rides, which doesn't operation in Washington County
- Town-by-town contact list not applicable in Central Vermont
- Remove "We need your help" text. Call for assistance and donation on page 2/3 is sufficient. Included suggested donation of \$1 but note that there is no charge for service and people are eligible for services without donation. Do not use "service is free" as the service is paid by others. Give address to mail in the donation.
- Appeal – broaden if someone not appealing due to eligibility based on no shows to include concern/complaint for process – encourage them to call GMT about the issue. This assists riders to understand their rights.
- REDPAC service area is the same as CVRPC service area.

➔ Email comments to Bonnie by January 20th.

➔ Jeanne will send Bonnie Tri Valley Transit Ride Guide.

REDPAC Workplan

REDPAC discussed key words to use for its mission and purpose. Draft mission: REDPAC expands transportation choices to help elders and people with disabilities remain connected with their communities. Draft purpose: REDPAC aims to ensure people remain engaged with their communities by meeting their social and physical well-being needs.

Mobility Project

Elena reported she is assessing what others organizations and groups are doing in relation to transportation. She is calling contacts on the list REDPAC developed last month to gather information about transportation services and programs. She asks each entity what other entities provide transportation services and programs.

REDPAC members reviewed a spreadsheet about transportation providers and services borrowed from the Southern Windsor area. Discussion included:

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- What is the purpose of the spreadsheet? To gather information about who is doing what and where so we can identify gaps in service. REDPAC expressed this would be useful for case managers and GMT's call center as a mobility management tool for call center. REDPAC requested contact information be provided for each service/program.
- Peter expressed that the gap in transportation is door-through-door service...people's ability to get from the bus through a door on their own.
- Peter noted the region needs a bus/transit navigator program (like bus buddy) to help people know what's available and how to use it, whether service or app.

Next Steps

The REDPAC scheduled its next meeting for April 14, 2021 at 2 pm. The agenda will include REDPAC member updates and continued discussion of workplan development.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.