

Public Transit Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 14, 2024

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting and Barre City Place Room 425

Present(alphabetical): Matthew Arancino, Price Armstrong, Stephanie Beck, Michele Boomhower, B. Bream, Adams Carroll, C. Clark, Dan Currier, Faith Dall, Chip Desautels, Marshall Distel, Steve Falbel, Tammy Fay, Caleb Grant, Elaine Haytko, Lucas Herring, Christian Higgins, Peter Johnke, Abe Koffman, Ross MacDonald, Jim Moulton, Devon Neary, Kelly Poor, Ken Putnam, Stephanie Reilly, Randy Schoonmaker, John Sharrow, Angela Smith-Deary, Monica White, Terence White and Jeremy Whiting

Review of Minutes:

Review and approval of December 2023 PTAC minutes/record. Approved without comment.

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements:

Ross MacDonald opens the meeting welcoming everyone. As always, we appreciate the number of virtual attendees and note that we always can have it in person as well. Ross goes over the agenda briefly and moves on to starting the meeting.

Legislative Updates:

Presented SFY '25 budget and legislative reports to both House and Senate transportation committees. The main message is we are working to align the program and budget for sustainable services. We have had the opportunity to update the combined Public Transit Policy and Human Services Coordination Plan, contribute to the Transportation Equity Plan, improve passenger amenities, disseminate impacts of the Medicaid program and to continue to grow the transit network of advocates. Challenges such as cost, aging population, safety, mobility gaps and ridership discussed. Budget funding sources along with state fund comparisons to other states discussed.

Provider Spotlight:

Adams Carroll was introduced to provide the spotlight on Advance Transit. Advance Transit is celebrating its 40th year. Advance Transit is unique in that its headquarters are in Vermont, but they also have a lot of service in New Hampshire. Their goals, increasing access to jobs and housing, connecting people to healthcare, shopping, schools, expanding mobility for people with disabilities, helping seniors, reducing traffic and operating sustainable service, were all discussed. Fixed routes, ADA paratransit, local

shuttles and commuter services make up their services. Expanding service, community outreach, electrification, new bus stop signs, new seats and purification systems, E-bike compatible racks, solar powered lights for shelters are ways of providing a great level of service.

Legislative Reports:

VPTA presented a report and potential revenue sources including vehicle registration fees, utility fees, rental car tax and retail delivery fees. The braided service assessment – VTrans has paid for the study, documented the value of the current approach, and will continue to support and coordinate with AHS and DVHA to demonstrate the value of the shared service arrangement. Service procurement, fed/state splits, oversight and flexibility can all be affected. Recommendations discussed, such as expanding the Public Transit Advisory Council, establishing dedicated forums to address specific issues and to coordinate with HHS providers on transportation options, resources and challenges. The Public Transit Policy Plan's next version is due in December of 2024. It will review the recommendations of the 2019 report, consider scope of work components and review award and initial timeline of June's PTAC. PTPP recommendations are establishing a working committee with the Agency of Human Services, provide a more comprehensive plan for elderly and disabled persons transportation and establish personal mobility accounts. Expansion of transit access will spur growth of volunteer driver programs, expand access to healthcare, employment, local connections, expand access to available seats in transit vehicles, support VPTA to become a statewide broker and expand the funding pool overall. Outreach and raising awareness to include continued investment in Go Vermont, documenting stories of the value of public transportation, encourage all transit provider to establish an "Ambassadors" program, continue and expand partnerships and activities to raise awareness and to create an informational brochure, "How Transit Works in Vermont". The 2024 PTPP scope of work and deliverables contain review and update recommendations from 2019, O&D survey and program recommendations, updating the e-bus replacement schedule, considering "Mobility Plus" expansion, PTAC structure and recommendations, considering combining micro transit and other demand response services, safety and security and intermodal connectivity improvements.

Member Updates:

Senator Harrison has recommended one of our meetings, per year, be in person. This will allow for collaboration and expansion of presentations. At this point, we are getting a lot of participation in these virtual meetings. We always offer in person space, room 425 in Barre City Place, as per statewide policy. If there is any interest, we can have the September meeting in person. In response, time management, carbon reduction and efficiency of virtual meetings were discussed. Meetings like the O&D Summit in June or the Tr-State Conference will continue their in-person schedules. We can stagger the PTAC in person with the other in-person meetings if the group would like. This ideal will be tabled for now

and we will discuss it again after the Summit. Michele Boomhower closed out the meeting stating she sat in with the House Appropriations Committee and presented the final draft of the budget to the committee and it was accepted unanimously. She expects the transportation bill to be on the floor in the House over the next few days for a second and final reading.

Meeting Adjourned: No questions or comments.