



Regional Coordination Council (RCC7)



APPROVED Meeting Minutes 3/23/2023

Attendees:

Mike Apfelberg, United Way of Greater Nashua	Teri Palmer, Statewide Mobility Manager
Jake Bortz, Via Transportation, East Coast	Don Pare, Gate City Bike Coop, Nashua
Sara Ceaser, United Way of Greater Nashua	Sarah Nich, Stepping Stones, Nashua
Ashley Derr, Gateways Community Services	Margaret Loret, Cultural Connections
Yvonne Goodwin, Greater Nashua NAACP	Brian Moynahan
Janet Langdell, SVTC	Nonny Egbuonu, Nashua
Camille Correa, NTS	Louise Woodworth, NTS
Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack	Shawna Sousa
Janice Pack, Town of Wilton	

NRPC Staff:

Donna Marceau, Mobility Manager
 Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
 Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator
 Vince Noga, Transportation/Planning Analyst

1. Call to Order

Donna Marceau opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

2. Introductions

Introductions were done with in-person and remote participants.

3. 'Ride With Via' – Micro Transit Presentation from Jake Bortz

- Via offers Microtransit services and related technology.
- Microtransit is not a fixed route service, but fills gaps in networks, compliments fixed route services, reduces need for single occupant vehicles, and serves elderly and disabled.
- Via is a transportation and tech company that utilizes SaaS (software-as-a-service) and Turnkey (software + operations) solutions.

Questions from attendees answered by Mr. Bortz:

- Q. Egbuonu:** What does Via do to help those with medical and/or mobility issues that may have difficulty getting to, or waiting at stops?
- A.** In this situation Via would have multiple rider groups: able bodied and corner-to-corner riders for those with mobility challenges. Via will accommodate as best as possible with either door-pickup or walking directions to nearest pickup. Door-to-destination services offered to those with mobility challenges. There are wheelchair accessible vehicles available as well.
- Q. Minkarah:** How do Via partnerships work with MPOs, transit agencies, etc.?
- A.** Contractual agreements with hourly rates, set pricing, etc. Then transition to launch team to make sure services are catered to partner and training is scheduled.
- Q. Minkarah:** How do you manage subsidized rides?

A. Subsidize with partner. Fare-free systems. Multi-level fares. Senior-reduced or free fare, poverty/low income reduced or no fare, for example. Try to coincide with existing transit system fares.

Q. Langdell: Can you help with some ballpark, general budget numbers for this service?

A. Variable. Depends on if software or turnkey service. 3-4 vehicle turnkey service, 7 days/week, 10-12 hours/day = \$700k-\$900k/year, fully run by Via. Software alone, \$20-\$25k implementation fee, and with same services given in first example but supplied and run by client, \$30-\$40k/year, possibly less. Difficult to give exact numbers without a service design.

Q. Palmer: How do you go about hiring drivers and acquiring drivers?

A. Via has a driver acquisition and growth team which is dedicated to finding drivers for turnkey service. Would leave adequate launch time to hire drivers. Marketing, free training, signup bonuses, etc. Currently meet 94% of shifts.

Q. Palmer: How do you provide the vehicles?

A. Vehicles are typically sourced through a vehicle partner. Large contracts with companies with vehicles ready for service such as Avis, Buggy, VGM, etc. which provide different types of vehicles such as cutaways, sedans, buses, EV/hybrid vehicles, and wheelchair accessible vehicles. This is all coordinated pre-launch.

Q. Minkarah: Are drivers Via employees? How do you structure wage rates and how competitive are your benefits packages?

A. Drivers are independent contractors. They are paid by shift, not by ride, with a flat rate, hourly pay. On average, 2.2x state minimum wage.

Q. Goodwin: How does Via address liability?

A. Via is fully insured which is included in the agreement. All liability lies with Via for Turnkey service. For software service, liability lies with the client.

4. Review February 23, 2023, meeting minutes

Marceau asked for any corrections to the February 23, 2023, meeting minutes.

- Langdell made a motion to approve 2/23/23 minutes. Murphy seconded the motion.

The February 23, 2023, minutes were passed by consensus with no changes.

5. Regional Provider Updates

Gate City Bike Co-op

Don Pare gave the update:

- GCBC is in dire need of volunteers.
- Apfelberg recommends using the Volunteer Greater Nashua tool and attending the volunteer fair coming up.
- Palmer suggests working with Project Bike Tech program. Offered to reach out to contacts working with the curriculum to see about partnering with GCBC.
- Langdell suggests reaching out beyond Nashua, such as to applied technology centers such as those in Alvirne and Milford.
- Murphy suggests contacting groups such as NH First Robotics.

NTS

Correa gave the update:

- NTS is still on reduced route service. Some routes combined in order to serve Nashua as a whole.
- Nashua is moving forward with solutions for driver shortages and providing competitive wages. Will know within a month if it will have an impact in the number of people applying for CDL or non-CDL in-house training program.
- Approaching busy season and preparing accordingly.
- Regarding Via: NTS tried a demo and was pleased with results. Addressed accessibility issues brought up by Egbuonu earlier and asked her to reach out directly.
- Palmer seconded NTS' sentiment on VIAs services. Addressed some funding issues unique to NH as compared to how VT or MA funds transportation services. Mentions other similar software services that may be worth considering such as: HBSS, QRide, and RideCo.
- Correa commented that Via may be moving into fixed-route market in the near future opposed to just demand-response. Working on fixed-route functionality.
- Nonny Egbuonu asked if there was an app available to use for her transportation concerns. Correa responded that NTS has a website where application can be downloaded and printed or it can be mailed by NTS and offered to walk Egbuonu through the process over the phone.

SVTC

Langdell gave the update:

- SVTC continues to get 5-7 referrals/new applications per month
- Ridership continues to be strong

6. SCC

- Jesse Lory, committee chairperson mentioned group formation and goal hunting.
- Much more funding available than has been spent, concerned they are leaving money on the table. Langdell clarified that this relates to CDC grant for rural funding. Palmer adds that the invoices are not coming in fast enough. Enforcing monthly invoices to help solve the issues of behind-the-scenes financial holdups.
- CDC Project officer will be in NH July 17, 2023.
- Mobility Managers presentations

7. Regional Mobility Manager (RMM) Update

Marceau reviewed her activities from the last month:

- Municipal Outreach: Hollis is almost completed. In March, conducted a presentation to the Hollis-Brookline Rotary; visit to the Town Administrator. Lori Radke, with Janet Langdell and Virginia Mills, and need to do one more outreach to the Hollis Seniors.
- 55+ Community in Sparkling River Association, possibility of doing their own Volunteer Driving Program for their members.
- TV Production with Alejandro Urrutia, major Hispanic leader in the Greater Nashua region. Marceau gave speech about mobility management during production.
- Attended coalitions meeting with Liz.
- Stakeholder meetings: COC – Next month is Youth, Welcoming NH Legislative Luncheon Update, United Way Coalition Community Connections Group, Employment Connect, Library Outreach, micro-outreach to NSKS, lower income clients.

- Gate City Regional Transportation Team: Coach meetings, met Caregivers March 13th – plus 3 day retreat – still need a project.
- 8 requests for help through the RMM since last meeting. Langdell asked where requesters are looking to go and asked to get more information to know basic details about ride requests through the RMM.
- Nich suggested telling potential attendees that there is food/snacks and that alone may attract people to meetings, especially younger populations, which may have a different and valuable perspective and input on transportation issues.
- Attended Flag Raising at City Hall and saw the mayor and passed out mobility literature.
- Leadership Academy for Public Health 2 day Zoom retreat including information about Caregivers. Langdell asked what Caregivers need? Marceau stated they need volunteers and more funding.
- Next month is Milford, which is doing first phase in the update to their Master Plan. Marceau offered to be a moderator in a Zoom info session group.

8. Community Updates - Marceau

- United Way is having a baby shower event for anyone in need. Langdell requesting PDF or JPEG version of event info.
- Apfelberg stated United Way is having their Over the Edge statewide fundraiser June 26th and 27th, which serves non-profits

9. Other transportation issues or concerns

- 5305 Update from Waitkins: Fred Butler stated we were successful in our application for planning project to update locally coordinated transportation plan and NTS strategic plan. Funding becomes available July 1, 2023. Langdell asked about the match, and Waitkins had no update. Langdell further asked about finishing previous 5305 study. Waitkins addressed this and stated that it will be finished for June 30th.
- Murphy mentions an article by NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions about community transportation in Town and Country Magazine (NH Municipal Association).
- Waitkins would like to update regional bylaws and status of updates. Langdell gave an update on the process. Palmer added information about status and waiting for guidance from SCC.

10. Adjourn

Murphy makes a motion to adjourn, Marceau seconds.

The meeting adjourned by consensus.

From Zoom chat:

00:56:55 Bortz shared his email with the group: jacob.bortz@ridewithvia.com

01:46:07 Apfelberg: Sorry. I have another meeting to go to. Thanks for the great work, everyone!

Next Meeting:

April 27, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Vincent Noga, Transportation/Planning Analyst.