



**APPROVED**  
**Regional Coordination Council (RCC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**3/24/2022**

**Attendees:**

Janet Langdell, Interim Reg. Mobility Manager	Matt Waitkins, NRPC
Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack	Emma Rearick, NRPC
Kerry Miller, NTS (Remote)	Fred Roberge, SCC/Easter
Carol Brooks, SVTC	Seals (Remote)
Dennie Townsend, SVTC	

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Langdell opened the meeting at 10:05am asking for a round of introductions. Prior to introductions, Pat Murphy asked about the language in the agenda that says participants in may attend the meeting via Zoom, but a majority of Council members need to be physically present to establish a quorum. She asked why this group needs to have a physical quorum in the room. Langdell said that the RCC is a subcommittee of the SCC, the SCC is a committee that was created by NH legislation, and therefore the RCC is bound by NH RSA 91-A (Right to Know), which requires a physical quorum to be present to vote on action items.

During introduction Fred Roberge said individuals from the Nashua region had reached out to him about community transportation. Janet noted that Fred had looped she and Matt into the email exchange and said that the people who had reached out to Fred are affiliated with the Plus Company (Kim Shottes) and Gateways (Louis Primmer, BOD member), and wanted information about Easter Seals transportation services. Janet said Kim has been on the RCC email contact list for years but Lois P is an unfamiliar name.

Kerry Miller said that NTS provides a special ridership eligibility application for PlusCompany clients but lately PlusCompany applicants have been using the generic NTS application. She isn't sure why, maybe as a result of funding changes. Janet thanked Kerry for the information about funding changes at PlusCo and noted that several of the social services agencies in the region have funding in their budgets for transportation. Janet noted that Opportunity Networks has vans that provide rides to their clients.

**REVIEW JANUARY 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

Janet noted minor edits that she would send to Matt. Pat said that it should be noted that minutes are being approved despite the lack of a quorum. Janet agreed that it should be noted minutes are being approved by consensus. Fred said there is work being done to clarify protocols of virtual meetings. He suggested reviewing RCC bylaws to see what they say about quorum. Janet said that quorum is defined as 50% plus 1. She said that the Nashua RCC has been waiting for the SCC to update its bylaws before updating the Nashua RCC bylaws.

Fred said the SCC did a lot of work last year revising its bylaws but then got sidetracked with the effort to develop the statewide mobility management program. The SCC intends to finalize the bylaws now that the statewide mobility management program is nearing implementation. There was a brief discussion about identifying transportation needs and bringing various stakeholders together to identify solutions.

The January minutes were adopted by consensus with Janet noting that she would send her minor edits to Matt.

## **TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER UPDATES**

### **CAREGIVERS**

Matt gave the update:

- Caregivers had been trying to expand to Plaistow but has tabled that effort because no volunteers have stepped forward.
- They are now trying to expand to New Boston.
- Big push on volunteer driver retention
  - o Concern among drivers over gas prices.
- They currently have 60 drivers serving Manchester/New Boston area.
- Janet asked about whether Caregivers had defined a specific number of volunteer drivers they would need to provide service in Plaistow or New Boston.
- Janet had reached out to CVTC regarding providing trips from Lyndeborough to Peterborough. CVTC would need to know that drivers are available in Lyndeborough before they would commit to providing rides. CVTC has also identified a need for rides in Greenfield.
- Janet said there are no agreements yet with CVTC, just exploring options at this time.
- SVTC has identified rides connecting Merrimack residents to the Milford area as a top priority (rides to Peterborough from western part of RCC 7 region are priority #2).
- Fred gave kudos to Janet for reaching out to neighboring RCC 5 and he noted the statewide effort among SCC and rural RCCs (funded by CDC) to develop additional transportation services. He said there is no restriction on a rural RCC collaborating with an urban RCC. He also acknowledged labor shortages and funding challenges in the public transportation world that limit how much service can be provided.

### **SVTC**

Janet gave the update:

- SVTC recently celebrated their 40,000<sup>th</sup> rider.
- The rider was a woman from Milford who had never ridden public transportation in her life. She has never had a driver's license. Her husband always drove her.
- She loves the SVTC demand response service
- It takes her to appointments in Milford and Nashua.
- She wishes it could also take her to appointments in Merrimack.
- Requests for trips to Merrimack are for dental, pain, specialists.
- Kerry said she gets requests for trips from Nashua to Milford, Merrimack.. NTS only goes from Milford TO Nashua, not from Nashua to the Milford area.

- Janet reported that trip requests are increasing and is approaching pre-covid level.
- NTS/SVTC contract is being adjusted to account for additional ride, but SVTC is within their budget through February.
- SVTC has been coordinating with a young disabled man who needs transportation to work from Mont Vernon to Amherst. SVTC is also working with a young woman who needs employment ride from Amherst to Nashua.
- Adult day care trips have increased. These trips absorb a lot of hours.

## **NTS**

Kerry gave the update:

- Seeing an increase in demand response applications
- It seems like people are thinking it is safe to come back to public transit (post-covid)
- Transit center renovation is progressing and scheduled to be complete by end of May.
- There are public outreach events scheduled for the Spring and Summer.
- Kerry recently did a travel training for a Greater Nashua Mental Health client. This is a free service, the purpose of which is to show individuals how to ride the bus.
- They are accommodating a young disabled person who was not eligible (beyond the ¾ mile fixed-route buffer, and he was too young for senior/disabled program). NTS created a new eligibility category that allows him to ride demand response service.
- There have been increased requests for demand response service from Hudson.
- Merrimack ride requests are stable.

## **REGIONAL MOBILITY MANAGER**

Janet gave the update:

- She has received requests for rides from a Nashua resident who needs to go to medical appointments in Manchester because the particular service is not provided in Nashua. Hospital mergers will result in more of this.
- This person needs a ride 5 days per week.
- Caregivers can only provide 1 ride per week.
- Roberge said that gas prices will continue to impact volunteer driver participation.
- Regional Mobility Manager position is moving forward.
- Matt mentioned that FTA funding apportionments have been released for FY 2022.
- Janet mentioned that the annual contract between NTS/SVTC is currently being negotiated.
- Carol Brooks said SVTC is going to return to attending public events to promote the service. Janet said they provide information about SVTC, RDD, and other available transportation services.
- Matt explained that Urbanized Areas (UZAs) boundaries may change as a result of the 2020 census information that will be released this summer. This could have a significant (or little impact) impact on transit funding in the Nashua region. Matt will keep the group informed about this.
- Janet said that the recently adopted federal surface transportation legislation (BIL/IJA) has a large variety of funding avenues, the specifics of which are slowly filtering out. The RCC will be kept informed of the funding possibilities as Federal guidance gets released.

### **SCC UPDATE**

Janet gave the update:

- The statewide mobility manager position has been advertised by the consultant (RLS. Associates). 2 responses have been received.
- CDC rural service funding program:
  - o Keene:
    - provide after school rides to youth to activities.
    - Expand access to meals on wheels.
    - Expand access to shopping.
  - o Concord:
    - Expand fixed route service
    - Improve communications/website.
    - Various other pilot projects.
- 5310 urban program contracts have been approved:
  - o NRPC mobility management hiring process can therefore move forward.
- SCC strategic planning initiative is getting started.
- Janet mentioned the New Hampshire Transit Association (NHTA) document that describes the status of public transportation in NH. It is a good educational document with talking points for promoting public transportation. A link was provided.
- The next NHTA meeting is April 7.
- Fred R. mentioned that the CDC/SCC project is nationally recognized.

### **REGIONAL MOBILITY MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION**

Matt gave the update:

- G & C contract revision:
  - o As noted earlier, revised contracts have been approved.
- Mobility Manager hiring process:
  - o He reminded the group that the Nashua RCC regional mobility manager position will be a full-time employee of NRPC. This had been previously discussed and approved by this RCC group.
  - o The job description was developed by Janet and NRPC using guidance from the SCC MM Blueprint.
  - o NRPC will post the job position in the coming weeks, now that the funding has been approved.
  - o The position will be posted through social media and various professional associations.
  - o Janet emphasized that this position could be a hybrid of transportation planning and public health planning and therefore she encouraged NRPC to reach out to public health-related employment websites.
- RCC project priorities:
  - o A prioritized list of projects was developed at the conclusion of the LCTP update process in 2020.

- Seven respondents representing 3 organizations had participated in the prioritization process.
- Janet suggested that the RCC revisit the list and discuss at the April meeting.
- Matt will send the list in the agenda meeting packet.

**VOLUNTEER DRIVER STUDY**

Waitkins provided this update:

- Summarized public outreach that has happened to date.
- Waitkins said that he has attempted outreach to the following entities, and he gave a brief summary of the information that has resulted:
- Surveyed regional & statewide VDPs:
  - There are several vdp's that have been providing rides successfully for years (26,000 trips provided statewide in 2021).
  - Approximately 1,600 trips have been provided int the Nashua region.
  - The characteristics of these programs could be repeated in the NRPC region.
- General public outreach:
  - Municipal welfare & health officer phone interviews
  - Youth advocates
  - Transitional housing
  - Umbrella Groups
  - Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Greater Nashua and Milford Region (LCTP) – 2020 – 2024.
  - Takeaways from public outreach and review of previous planning efforts:
    - NTS provides robust fixed route and demand response service
    - SVTC demand response service provides thousands of trips per year in the region
    - VDPs providing trips in the region on a limited basis
    - Gaps in the transportation network continue to exist
    - Is there the capacity for more robust VDP service?
  - The group suggested that Matt reach out to United Way to see what their latest Community Assessment says about transportation.
  - A pilot program for providing bus passes for homeless youth was discussed. Kerry said that Mike Appleberg from United Way reached out for bus passes to give to homeless people. NTS can't do this for free but would be interested in partnering with a civic group that would help with funding. \$1,000 per month could provide approximately 25 monthly unlimited ride bus passes. Janet suggested civic groups such as the Rotary club. Would be interested in this type of thing.
- Waitkins said the next steps in the study are to:
  - Finalize public outreach and summarize in a what we learned report for the end of June.
  - Evaluate operations, funding models & best practices of successful VDPs
  - Coordinate with stakeholders to develop recommendations for an operational plan.
  - The goal is a final report by December 2022.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURN:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

**NEXT MEETING:**

THURSDAY APRIL 28 AT 10AM