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## **Windham Region Mobility Study: Coordination of Transportation Services to Improve Mobility for All of the Windham Region's Residents**

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# Windham Region Mobility Study

Coordination of Transportation Services  
to Improve Mobility for All of the  
Windham Region's Residents



November, 2012

Prepared for the Windham Regional Commission by  
**STEADMAN HILL CONSULTING, INC.**  
with the assistance of  
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TranSystems

# Table of Contents

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<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Goals of Project .....	1
Prior Efforts.....	2
Overview of the Report .....	3
<b>Inventory of Transportation Resources</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Public Transit Services .....	4
School Bus Transportation .....	4
Higher Education.....	5
Human Service and Workforce Transportation .....	5
Other.....	6
<b>Summary of Needs</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Youth Needs .....	7
Senior Needs .....	8
Low Income Needs .....	8
Employment Needs .....	8
<b>Stakeholder Outreach</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Meeting #1: Transit Providers and School Districts.....	9
Meeting #2: Higher Education .....	9
Meeting #3: Human Service Agencies, Health Providers and Non-profits.....	10
Meeting #4: Workforce and Economic Development .....	10
<b>Legal Issues</b> .....	<b>11</b>
School Bus Transportation .....	11
Use of School Buses for Other Transportation .....	12
Use of Non-School-Bus Vehicles for Transporting School Children .....	12
<b>Coordination Concepts</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Increased Public Transit</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Route 30 .....	14
Route 5 .....	16
<b>Use of School Bus Deadhead Trips</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Battleboro .....	17
Bellows Falls.....	19
<b>Information Clearinghouse</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Volunteer Drivers</b> .....	<b>21</b>
Parent Volunteer Networks .....	21
CARES Groups/BMH .....	22
<b>Friday Evenings in Brattleboro</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Use of Nursing Home and Other Vans</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Pilot Projects and Implementation Timeline</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Project Teams .....	23
Timelines .....	24
Potential Impacts .....	25
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>26</b>

<b>Appendix A: List of Stakeholders .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix B: Public Transit Provider Detailed Information .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix C: Summary of Needs .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix D: Stakeholder Meeting Minutes .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix E: Case Studies .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Ames, Iowa.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Key Peninsula, WA .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Other Examples.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix F: Alignments of School Bus Deadhead Trips.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## Introduction

The Windham Region consists of the twenty three towns of Windham County, Readsboro, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. The region has a total population of about 46,700 people. Its two largest towns, Brattleboro and Rockingham (Bellows Falls), have populations of approximately 12,000 and 5,200 respectively. The other towns in the region tend to have a population of between 600 and 2,000. The total youth population of the region (ages 13-18) is approximately 3,400, based on 2010 Census data. There are more than twice as many residents over age 65—some 7,200. Those ages 13-18 and those over age 65 are considered to be the most mobility challenged.

One of the main challenges faced by youth and older adult populations, as well as low income families that cannot afford an automobile, is mobility. While people can make do with rides from friends or family, limitations on independent mobility are a severe constraint on job opportunities and overall quality of life.

Youth Services in Windham County, and many other agencies, have worked for years to identify and address mobility problems. In cooperation with the Windham Regional Commission, much work has already been done to bring stakeholders to the table to discuss the sharing and coordination of resources more effectively. This work laid the foundation for this study.

Funded by a grant from the James M. Jeffords Center for Policy Research at the University of Vermont, and facilitated by the Windham Regional Commission, this study seeks to develop a program of specific recommendations for coordinated service in the Windham Region. The desired outcome is greater mobility for the region's residents through the coordination and integration of current and future transportation services. As with any coordination study, realizing this outcome depends upon the commitment of the local partners to maintain lines of communication and to follow through on the proposed services and cooperative use of resources.

## Goals of Project

The primary goal of this study was to identify opportunities to better coordinate, and integrate, transportation resources to improve efficiency and mobility, and to identify possible new transportation resources. In terms of vehicles used, these resources include buses and vans owned by the transit providers, as well as school buses, vans and buses owned by human service agencies, municipalities, private institutions, churches, nursing homes, and others. Existing resources also include miles traveled by these vehicles that could be more productive than they currently are (to be described in more detail later in this report). New resources include more funding from the federal or state government, from private foundations, or through in-kind donations from local partners.

Much work had already been done to identify mobility needs in the Windham region prior to this study, but this project sought to update and expand upon this

information. For this reason, another goal of the study was to identify unmet mobility needs. While it is not possible to meet all of the needs with the existing level of resources, or even a moderately expanded level, it is important to recognize the needs and engage all of the stakeholders in a collaborative effort to understand and address the most urgent needs.

The final goal was to develop a program of coordination projects that could use the existing and potential new resources to meet the identified needs. Part of this effort was to examine any legal barriers that stood in the way of increased coordination. Through a literature search, discussions with stakeholders, and analysis of data gathered during the project, the consultant team drafted a list of potential coordination concepts that were circulated to the stakeholders for comment.

In the last phase of the project, the goal was to choose the most promising coordination concepts for implementation and to convene teams of local partners to make them happen. This report is a summation of this process and is intended to act as a guide for the local agency representatives to work together toward improving mobility in the Windham Region.

## Prior Efforts

As mentioned above, prior work demonstrated the need and laid the foundation for this study. This included work that identified mobility needs, among youth in Windham County, and which brought stakeholders to the table to begin discussing how these needs could be met.

In 2007 Windham County Youth Services embarked on a Youth Opportunity Planning process in 2007, which resulted in *The Listening Project: Giving Voice to Adolescent Youth Living in Difficult Circumstances*. The focus of this project was a survey of twenty youth from around Windham County ages 13-19 living in particularly “difficult circumstances.” What emerged were three areas of concern: building positive everyday relationships between youth and adults, making places for youth to gather, and providing life (especially vocational) planning and social support for youth. A Youth Opportunity Planning process built upon the project and engaged community groups in strategic planning to build prevention capacity.

In December 2009, Windham County school superintendents who had been involved throughout the community planning process met with Youth Services to prepare a Youth Opportunity Planning Rural Field Demonstration Project proposal to submit to Senator Patrick Leahy. Though the proposal was not funded, improved transportation services emerged as one of the important priorities that should be addressed in order to better support youth in the County.

Partnering with the Windham Regional Commission, Youth Services began to develop a project that would improve the coordination of services among existing transportation services and identify what is needed for an improved transit infrastructure. In 2011, Youth Services and the Windham Regional Commission convened a string of planning meetings in three of the four

supervisory unions with superintendents, administrators and school board members, school bus service providers, and the region's transit providers to discuss immediate and long-term opportunities to better coordinate services. All fourteen legislators representing the region were aware of the initiative, and signed on to a letter in full support of the effort.<sup>1</sup>

## Overview of the Report

This report is a compilation and summary of all of the work undertaken in this project. The report is divided into six sections representing each stage of the analysis:

- Inventory of transportation resources
- Summary of mobility needs
- Outreach to and engagement of stakeholders
- Analysis of legal issues
- Development of coordination concepts
- Implementation plan

## Study Team

This report represents the work of the prime consultant, Steadman Hill Consulting, Inc., based in Montpelier, VT, assisted by TranSystems (Park City, UT office), Collaboration and Planning Consultant, Diana Wahle based in East Dummerston, VT, and the Windham Regional Commission, which was the project manager and overall facilitator.

## Inventory of Transportation Resources

At the beginning of the study, Diana Wahle assembled a list of stakeholders to be contacted as part of the inventory of transportation resources and needs. This list was updated periodically throughout the study as new individuals and organizations were discovered. This list, included as Appendix A, is grouped into ten categories:

- a) Public transit providers
- b) School superintendents and school district representatives
- c) School bus operators
- d) Workforce investment board and economic development representatives
- e) Non-profit service providers and health providers
- f) Institutions of higher education
- g) State government agencies
- h) Municipal officials
- i) Citizens and volunteers
- j) State legislators

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<sup>1</sup> <http://financing-community-change.blogspot.com/2011/06/gathering-resident-input-to-improve.html>

A set of inventory questions was prepared for each of these groups of stakeholders, tailored to the scope of their involvement in transportation. Only categories a through f were contacted directly during the inventory. The results of the inventory are summarized below. More detailed information about the public transit providers is supplied in Appendix B.

### Public Transit Services

#### The Current (Connecticut River Transit)

- Eight bus services (commuters, in-town, seasonal)
- Dial-a-ride service for VT 30 corridor and northern Windham/southern Windsor counties
- Medicaid and Elderly and Disabled (E&D) coverage for whole service area
- 32 vehicles in fleet

#### The MOOver (Deerfield Valley Transit Association)

- Four year-round bus services, eight more in winter
- Demand response service in Readsboro, Wardsboro, Dover, Wilmington, Whitingham, and Halifax
- Connections to Marlboro and Brattleboro
- 23 vehicles in fleet, all used in winter; 8 buses used in summer

### School Bus Transportation

#### Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (SU)

- All service operated by First Student, except for Guilford
- Drivers are union members and have a 2.5 hour minimum shift
- Middle school and Windham Regional Career Center both have their own buses, driven by school employees

#### Windham Central SU

- All service operated by West River Transportation, except for Marlboro, Windham, Winhall (serves Stratton), Dover (K-8)
- Career Center runs funded at about \$25,000 annually
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant for after school programs includes about \$20,000 for transportation

#### Windham Northeast SU

- WNESU owns buses, operated by school district employees
- Most buses based at Bellows Falls Union High School

#### Windham Southwest SU

- Halifax and Searsburg operated by Gerdes Transportation
- Readsboro operated by Tietgens Transportation
- Stamford operated by Sullivan Bus Lines
- Whitingham/Wilmington operated by Twin Valley School District



## Higher Education

### Marlboro College

- Owns three 15-passenger vans and two 18-passenger vans
- Operates trips to Brattleboro Transportation Center
  - Three daily round trips with College van
  - Three additional weekday westbound trips and two weekday eastbound trips provided by MOOver

### Landmark College

- Owns five vans, drivers are Landmark staff
- Operates daily trips (except Mondays) to Brattleboro and Walmart in Hinsdale
  - Two round trips on Tuesday-Thursday
  - Three round trips on Friday
  - Five round trips on Saturday
  - Two round trips on Sunday
- Operates weekly trips to Keene on Saturdays and to Holyoke Mall (Massachusetts) on Sundays

### World Learning – SIT Graduate Institute

- Owns two 15-passenger vans
- Weekday afternoon service to downtown Brattleboro plus weekday evening on-call service by request
- Friday evening trips at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.
- Saturday afternoon trips at 12:30 and 3:00 p.m. plus on-call service from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Sunday morning church runs and evening service from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

### Community College of Vermont

- No transportation resources available

## Human Service and Workforce Transportation

### Agencies contracting for service

- Gathering Place (\$18,000 of its own funds plus portion of regional Elders and Persons with Disabilities funding—federal funds passed through VTrans)
- Senior Solutions (about \$90,000 annually in state and federal funds—over 25,000 trips provided)
- Vocational Rehab
- Reach Up and Economic Services (Dept. for Children and Families)
- Department of Labor

### Entities with transportation resources

- Meeting Waters YMCA (15-passenger bus)
  - Funded at \$60,000 per year by Vermont Child Development Division
  - Transports Brattleboro residents to child care within the Town
  - For families in Protective Services, Family Support or Reach Up
  - Provides about 100 rides per week; capacity nearly maxed out

- Betty Boop Bus (24-passenger bus)
  - Owned by West Wardsboro Church; operated by Bette Parsons
  - Works with Council on Aging and WCSU on contract basis
  - Day trips and shopping trips for seniors on occasional basis
- Boys & Girls Club
  - Two vans are based in Brattleboro: a mini-van is located at Westgate Housing, a 15 passenger van is based at the Club on Flat Street
  - One mini-van is located in Bellows Falls
- Senior centers and nursing homes (vans for excursions)
- Department of Corrections
- Good News Garage – Ready to Go program

## Other

Brattleboro Taxi provides service through vouchers. It has eight vehicles available: 2 taxis, 2 small buses (8-10 pass.), 2 wheelchair-accessible vehicles, 1 van, and 1 minivan. Current clients include:

- The Current (funded by Medicare and Medicaid)
- Senior grocery shopping at Price Chopper and Hannaford
- The Women’s Freedom Center
- Vermont Mental Health
- The Brattleboro Retreat
- Windham Regional Career Center
- Pine Heights
- Grace Cottage Hospital

The Town of Vernon owns a van that is mainly used to transport seniors for shopping trips and coordinated medical appointments. The Town Board of Selectmen can approve the use of the van for other purposes, but there must be a sponsor within the town, such as the Recreation Department.

## Summary of Needs

During the course of the inventory and subsequent stakeholder outreach, the consultant team asked the stakeholders about the transportation needs of their clients and any barriers they faced in achieving the mobility they need for their everyday activities. Responses were provided via telephone interview, e-mail, and completed questionnaire forms.

A brief summary of these needs is provided in this section. Appendix C is comprised of a handout with more detailed information about the needs and barriers as reported by the stakeholders.

For reference, data from the 2010 Census on the population by age group by town are presented in the table below. Youth percentages are highest in Marlboro and Putney, due in part to the presence of Marlboro College and Landmark College, respectively. Vernon and Brookline also have percentages of youth significantly

above the Windham Region average, as does Searsburg, but this last town has a very small population. The percentages of seniors are highest in Weston, Winhall, Grafton and Townshend, with many other towns slightly above the average.

Town	Total population	10 to 19 years	Youth Percent	65 and over	Senior Percent
Athens	442	47	11%	57	13%
Brattleboro	12,046	1,389	12%	1,954	16%
Brookline	530	79	15%	77	15%
Dover	1,124	104	9%	202	18%
Dummerston	1,864	201	11%	334	18%
Grafton	679	67	10%	164	24%
Guilford	2,121	251	12%	301	14%
Halifax	728	81	11%	121	17%
Jamaica	1,035	146	14%	164	16%
Londonderry	1,769	191	11%	322	18%
Marlboro	1,078	168	16%	159	15%
Newfane	1,726	204	12%	293	17%
Putney	2,702	429	16%	344	13%
Readsboro	763	91	12%	157	21%
Rockingham	5,282	644	12%	816	15%
Searsburg	109	19	17%	17	16%
Somerset	3	-	0%	1	33%
Stratton	216	25	12%	45	21%
Townshend	1,232	146	12%	241	20%
Vernon	2,206	331	15%	393	18%
Wardsboro	900	110	12%	129	14%
Westminster	3,178	441	14%	441	14%
Weston	566	49	9%	189	33%
Whitingham	1,357	157	12%	218	16%
Wilmington	1,876	206	11%	319	17%
Windham	419	46	11%	72	17%
Winhall	769	100	13%	172	22%
<b>Region</b>	<b>46,720</b>	<b>5,722</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7,702</b>	<b>16%</b>

## Youth Needs

In *The Listening Project* and the Youth Opportunity Planning Process, many unmet transportation needs were identified. The lack of transportation hindered young people’s ability to get to after-school jobs, whether in Brattleboro or other towns. Others were unable to get to organized after-school activities such as the Boys and Girls Club. In general, youth wanted to be able to get to town centers, especially downtown Brattleboro, for a variety of activities such as shopping, errands, or just “hanging out” with friends. A second problem, but just as important, was to have the

mobility to get home again in the evening once after-school jobs or activities were completed. For many young people, parents are not available to drive into Brattleboro or other towns to pick them up and take them home.

As would be expected, all of these issues are still present. Youth Services identified several trip purposes that are currently underserved by the public transportation system, including evening classes at the Community College of Vermont, medical appointments, work trips, grocery shopping, and trips to fill prescriptions.

### Senior Needs

Among seniors, there is a desire for more mobility for “quality of life” trips—those beyond the basic needs of medical appointments and shopping. To the extent possible, seniors want to maintain their flexibility and independence even when they can no longer drive. Seniors are affected by limits to non-emergency medical trips funded by Medicaid, and by inadequate public resources for critical care trips such as for kidney dialysis and chemotherapy. In many instances, only two of the three required weekly dialysis trips can be provided by the public transit operator due to a shortage of funds statewide. Elders and Persons with Disabilities funding is also inadequate to meet all of the needs in the community.

### Low Income Needs

The shortage of Medicaid transportation funds also affects low-income people who are not elderly. Many Medicaid clients have disabilities and are unable to use taxi services which have very limited capacity to carry people who are not able-bodied.

A widespread problem for low-income families, who are often not able to afford an automobile, is the inability to deliver children to and pick them up from childcare facilities conveniently. Child care providers are often not on public transit routes, and the hours of day care are often outside of the regular span of service for bus routes. Parents usually need a few minutes at the facility to drop off or pick up their children, but transit buses cannot wait for them. This could mean waiting 30 or 60 minutes for the next bus, resulting in large amounts of wasted time and frustration. In general, the transit system does not operate at a high enough level of service to allow for connecting multiple errands into one trip or convenient transfers.

### Employment Needs

With limited resources available, the transit providers have designed their commuter schedules to be convenient for as many people as possible. Unfortunately, there are still many people who work part-time jobs, unusual schedules, or non-daytime shifts for whom the transit schedule is not workable. The most frequent need cited is for more evening service, as most commuter-oriented routes stop no later than 6:00 p.m. If the transit providers were to operate service later into the evening to accommodate these non-standard work schedules, it is unlikely that those trips would attract enough riders to make them sustainable. This is a significant problem in a rural, low-density area such as the Windham Region, when

only the most favorable conditions can yield enough riders to sustain a regularly-scheduled bus route with acceptable frequency.

## Stakeholder Outreach

In the Spring of 2012, The Windham Regional Mobility Study sponsored four stakeholder meetings to present the project's research findings, and to gather input on needs and potential solutions. Each meeting was targeted to a subset of the stakeholder groups listed above on page 4.

The following is a brief summary of the results of each of the meetings. A full set of meeting minutes is provided in Appendix D.

### Meeting #1: Transit Providers and School Districts

This meeting, held on April 9, brought together the superintendents from WCSU and WSESU, the two main transit providers (CRT and DVTA), and representatives from VTrans and Youth Services. Topics discussed included the following:

- Efforts to gather information on deadhead<sup>2</sup> trips by the current school bus operators to determine if this mileage can be used more productively.
- Potential changes to the BeeLine in Brattleboro and challenges faced by CRT regarding cuts to the Medicaid budget from the State.
- Summary of transportation issues for WCSU, including the new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Program (5-year program), changes in school start and end times, and use of alternative bus operating contractors.
- Update on transportation for WSESU including status of contract with Guilford and First Student.
- Discussion on potential use of federal New Freedom funds for additional mobility, based on the experience in Washington State (see case study in Appendix E).
- Summary of next steps in the project.

### Meeting #2: Higher Education

This meeting, held on April 17, brought together representatives from four of the five institutions of higher education in the Windham Region: Marlboro College, Landmark College, World Learning – SIT Graduate Institute, and Community College of Vermont. Representatives from CRT also attended the meeting. Topics discussed included the following:

- Marlboro College's experience working with the MOOver and its own van service.
- Landmark College's efforts to promote alternatives to driving, including a stop on CRT's Bellows Falls-Brattleboro route and participation in the Way

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<sup>2</sup> A deadhead trip is one where a bus travels from one location to another without carrying any passengers. An example is when a school bus drops off students at a school in the morning and then returns empty to its base.

To Go initiative. Landmark's shuttle program was discussed as well as the need for students to get off of campus and out of Putney for entertainment and shopping.

- SIT's transportation needs including shopping and entertainment trips for on-campus residents and commuting to campus for faculty and off-campus residents. SIT is interested in working with a transit provider to take over shuttle service, but it would continue to own vans for other purposes.
- CCV's need for students to be able to get to evening classes, as many do not have cars and bus service does not run late enough. Lack of transportation is a significant barrier for some potential students.
- Emergency planning, in terms of pooling resources to evacuate a campus in case of an emergency.
- Various barriers to increased ridership, including the lack of a single transportation center for all modes, lack of incentives to ride, and concerns about mixing age groups and trip purposes.

### **Meeting #3: Human Service Agencies, Health Providers and Non-profits**

This meeting, held on May 7, brought together a wide range of representatives from state agencies under the Agency of Human Services, non-profits oriented toward youth, hospitals, agencies oriented toward seniors, and others. Topics discussed included the following:

- Connecting with volunteer networks, including CRT's existing network and CARES groups. Is it possible to draw upon other resources such as parents of school children and commuters participating in the Ride Share program?
- Transporting oncology and mammography patients in the Route 30 corridor and making more effective use of the transportation resources already available in that corridor.
- Increasing walking and biking for trips to school and for improving health in the community.
- Allowing adults to board school buses while they are carrying children on their regular school runs. Is it allowed?
- Use of social media to communicate with young people.
- Centralized clearinghouse for information.

### **Meeting #4: Workforce and Economic Development**

This meeting, held on May 23, brought together Workforce Investment Board and economic development leaders from the State, the southeast Vermont region, the Town of Brattleboro, and the federal government. Topics discussed included the following:

- Upcoming improvements in BeeLine service
- Funding mechanisms for public transportation
- Go Vermont program for ridematching and its applicability
- Working with employers to encourage flex time for employees
- Clearinghouse for information on public transportation options

## Legal Issues

Efforts to increase coordination of transportation resources often face legal barriers. There are specific state and federal laws and regulations governing public transportation and school bus transportation, and some of these prohibit the flexible use of these vehicles which could lead to greater efficiency. In addition, the operators of these services have to maintain adequate insurance, and increasing the scope of their operations may go beyond their current coverage. This section of the report considers the potential legal barriers to greater coordination of service in the Windham Region.

### School Bus Transportation

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration publishes Highway Safety Program Guidelines. Guideline number 17 concerns Pupil Transportation Safety and defines a school bus as follows:

A motor vehicle designed for carrying more than 10 persons (including the driver) that is used for purposes that include carrying students to and from school or related events on a regular basis, but does not include a transit bus or a school-chartered bus.

The effect of this definition and its related regulations is to require that vehicles used to transport 10 or more students between home and school meet specific safety standards.

Most of the laws pertaining to school buses involve physical specifications of the vehicles, such as color and safety equipment, and requirements and restrictions regarding the operators, such as licensing, training, and the prohibition of drugs and alcohol. These laws pertain to when the buses are used to carry school children between their homes and school on regular school bus routes. For reference, pertinent sections of Vermont Title 23 include the following:

- Sec. 1201: Operating vehicle under the influence
- Sec. 1205: Civil suspension; summary procedure
- Sec. 1249: Directional signal lamps
- Sec. 1258: Child restraint systems
- Sec. 1281: Additional equipment
- Sec. 1281a: Optional equipment
- Sec. 1282: Operator, equipment and inspection
- Sec. 1283: Identification and equipment of school buses
- Sec. 1284: Vehicle maintenance
- Sec. 4121: Applicants for school bus endorsements

A question came up during a stakeholder meeting whether adults are permitted to ride on school buses that are in service carrying children to or from school, if they should want to use the vehicle for commuting purposes. There are no statutes that prevent such riding. It would be up to the discretion of the driver whether to allow an adult to board. Most likely, the driver would seek authorization from the bus



company and/or school before allowing adults to board. In the current climate, it is likely that concerns about student safety regarding potential predatory behavior on the part of adults would cause the school to forbid this practice, but it is within their power to allow adults to ride at any time.

There are clear regulations from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regarding the ability of transit providers using FTA-funded vehicles to operate school bus service. CFR Title 49 sec 605.15 states that a grantee of FTA funds (i.e., a public transit operator) “will not engage in school bus operations in competition with private school bus operators.” That noted, students are allowed to ride regular public transit routes if they happen to go between their home and school. Furthermore, transit operators are allowed to provide additional service along a route when school is in session—so-called “school tripper” service—as long as these trips are open to the general public and follow the regular bus route. These school trippers thus function as extra capacity along a regular transit route to handle the student demand, rather than as a dedicated school bus service. The school trippers are not supposed to deviate from the regular route, such as pulling into the school driveway, but in practice, many transit operators do make such route deviations in the interest of passenger safety.

### **Use of School Buses for Other Transportation**

At times when a school bus is not being used for transporting children between home and school, it is permitted to be used for other purposes. Vermont statute does state that “school buses being operated on a public highway and transporting primarily passengers other than school pupils shall have the words, “School Bus,” covered, removed, or otherwise concealed, and the stop arms and equipment permitted by section 1281a of this title shall not be operable through the usual controls.” (23 V.S.A. Sec 1283). School bus companies often use these vehicles for charter service or other purposes as they find these trips to be economically advantageous and thus have made provisions to operate them in compliance with the law. School buses are often used for school field trips or for service such as that between school and the Windham Regional Career Center, but it is not required that a school bus be used for these trips.

Given that there are no legal restrictions for using school buses for other purposes the fact that most school buses are idle when not transporting students reflects the bus owners’ desire not to deplete their assets more quickly than necessary, and the relative unattractiveness of school buses to adult riders compared to transit buses or coach buses because of comfort and noise issues, not to mention accessibility.

### **Use of Non-School-Bus Vehicles for Transporting School Children**

As mentioned above, standard school bus vehicles are only required when students are transported between school and home. For other trips, they can be carried on other types of vehicles. Vermont law, following federal law, explicitly allows for “multifunction school activity buses” to be used to transport children during the school day. Section 1287 of VSA 23 states the following:



(a) A "multifunction school activity bus" is a vehicle which is used to transport students on trips other than on a fixed route between home and school, and which meets the construction and safety standards for a "multifunction school activity bus" adopted by rule by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(b) If a school owns a multifunction school activity bus or leases one other than as provided in subdivision 4(34)(A)(vi) of this title, the driver shall be required to hold a license which includes a school bus driver's endorsement. The endorsement shall be a Type I or Type II endorsement as appropriate to the size of the vehicle.

(c) A multifunction school activity bus may be a color other than national school bus yellow. (Added 2005, No. 29, § 2.)

The NHTSA rule (49 CFR Part 571) referred to in paragraph (a) is summarized thus:

This final rule establishes a new class of school buses, multifunction school activity buses, for use in transporting children on trips other than those between home and school. We anticipate that this final rule will also facilitate efforts by the Federal Transit Administration to provide funding to Head Start programs and coordinated transportation providers to purchase the school buses. Currently, that Administration is prohibited from providing financial assistance to purchase regular yellow school buses that exclusively transport students and school personnel in competition with a private school bus operator. We anticipate that the new buses will be used for coordinated transportation purposes by State and local social services agencies, which may, for example, use the new buses to transport children from Head Start facilities to school in the morning, and to transport senior citizens later in the day. Finally, enabling schools and other institutions to choose the new buses instead of a 15-passenger van will provide them with a safer transportation alternative.

This rule allows for an FTA-funded agency, such as Connecticut River Transit or Deerfield Valley Transit, to purchase a multifunction school activity bus with FTA funds and use it to transport school children, as long as it is not for the regular trip between school and home. This vehicle can then be used for other purposes as well. The FTA funds, in theory, could be passed through to a school district to purchase the bus directly, as well. The Vermont statute states clearly that when this vehicle is used to transport school children, the driver must have the proper license endorsement.

There are many trips in the Windham Region that are currently operated with school buses, for which a multifunction school activity bus may be a better alternative. The coordination concepts below will consider some of these opportunities.

## Coordination Concepts

This section of the report presents the full list of coordination concepts during the course of the study. The final section highlights the pilot projects that are recommended to be carried forward into implementation in the short term. Other projects in this section that are not pilot projects should be further evaluated and implemented after the pilot projects have achieved sustainability.

There are five broad categories of coordination concepts presented below:

- Increased public transit service
- Use of school bus deadhead trips
- Establishment of information clearinghouse
- Expansion of volunteer driver networks
- Other

Each of these is discussed in more detail in the following sections. Many of the concepts can be implemented with existing resources, but others will require additional funding. Potential funding sources are identified, where applicable. The potential impacts of the various concepts are discussed in the section following this one.

### Increased Public Transit

Other than Interstate 91, there are three main roadway travel corridors in the Windham Region: US 5 along the Connecticut River, VT 30 from Brattleboro northwest along the West River, and VT 9 from Brattleboro west toward Bennington. All three of these corridors currently have some level of transit service, though VT 30 has no regularly scheduled bus service—only a once-per-day trip to the Gathering Place funded by the Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Program.

The focus of improvements within this concept is on the Route 30 and Route 5 corridors. Route 9 is served by DVTA, and over the past few months, DVTA has worked closely with Marlboro College to maximize service efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, there were no further short-term recommendations to be made for that corridor.

#### Route 30

##### *Current Service*

In the Route 30 corridor, current public transit service consists of one E&D-funded round trip per weekday. The vehicle for this service is based in Brattleboro. It runs outbound on Route 30 in the morning to Townshend on a deadhead trip, picks up seniors along the Route 30 corridor and takes them to The Gathering Place in Brattleboro. In the afternoon, it picks up the seniors at The Gathering Place, delivers them to their homes in the Route 30 corridor and returns to Brattleboro. The bus does carry passengers in the reverse direction from the seniors (outbound in the

morning and inbound in the afternoon) so that those are not truly deadhead trips. Some Leland and Gray High School students use it in the morning to get to school.

WCSU contracts with West River Transportation to run a round trip to the Windham Regional Career Center on school days. This bus runs from Leland and Gray to the Career Center in the morning, deadheading back, and then picks up students in the afternoon. These trips are not open to the public.

The Betty Boop bus runs occasional trips along the Route 30 corridor, carrying seniors to shopping or day trips at various locations. The bus is based in West Wardsboro.

### *Proposed Service*

The recommendation for this corridor is to institute a regular public transit route with commuter service and some midday service. According to data from the US Census (2010 figures from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Database) there are over 300 commuters from towns along the Route 30 corridor into downtown Brattleboro, and nearly 800 to the town as a whole. These figures compare favorably to other commuter corridors in Vermont that have received funding from VTrans for new commuter bus services. In the next round of grants for this funding, CRT could submit an application for four round trips per day. This would likely be a competitive application based on the past record of these grants.

In addition to the commuter runs, CRT would continue to operate the E&D trip, but this would be folded into the regular route and opened to the general public. WCSU could add more funding to this route by contracting with CRT to operate the Career Center runs. Amounting to some \$25,000 per year, this funding could boost service overall beyond the basic commuter service.

CRT can work with Grace Cottage Hospital and Valley Cares to incorporate service to those facilities in Townshend. While those facilities may not have significant additional funding to add, it is possible that other E&D funding may be secured, and service that is now provided by their private vans could be operated by CRT as part of this route.

Service on the Betty Boop bus could be coordinated with this route. While that vehicle will not be used for multiple trips every day, as long as there is some regularity to its schedule, the trips it operates could be incorporated into the timetable for the regular Route 30 bus and opened to the public. With its low operating expenses, it should be possible to dedicate some of the overall corridor transit funding to support those trips.

Finally, trips to and from Brattleboro Memorial Hospital can be accommodated on this corridor service. Some patients may be able to take the bus into an appointment, but then need a ride home from a family member or volunteer driver. The availability of a regular bus route will make the hospital much more accessible to those without private transportation options.

Assuming that CRT is successful in obtaining a grant from VTrans to operate commuter service in this corridor, midday service could be operated using a

combination of other funds, such as E&D, the Career Center money, and potential contributions from other institutions. VTrans has indicated that they may be making federal New Freedom money available for services targeted toward “special needs” populations, as is done in the State of Washington. If that is the case, CRT could apply for those funds as well to help fill out the midday schedule and make service more convenient for non-work trips in the corridor.

## Route 5

### *Current Service*

CRT currently operates four round trips per weekday on the Bellows Falls – Brattleboro Commuter. Arrival times in Brattleboro are at 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and at 3:10 and 5:10 p.m. There is one bus in service for the morning and afternoon runs operating the two-hour cycle. The bus makes several stops along the corridor and takes an hour to complete a one-way trip between Bellows Falls T-bird and the Brattleboro Transit Center.

In addition, WNESU operates school buses between Bellows Falls Union High School (BFUHS) and the Windham Career Center, as well as Brattleboro Retreat. At some times, two separate buses are operated along the corridor to transport students.

### *Proposed Service*

The Bellows Falls – Brattleboro Commuter would be a more attractive commuting option if it had an additional trip during traditional commuting hours. A morning arrival at 8:00 a.m. and an afternoon arrival at 4:10 p.m. would give commuters more options and serve more workplaces. The current route could be adjusted to serve those times (instead of 9:00 a.m. and 3:10 p.m.) if a second bus were brought into service (which would increase the operating cost for the route), or another trip could just be added to the present schedule (which would increase the operating cost even more). Additional funding for enhanced service on this route could come through a VTrans grant from the Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality program.

There have been requests for additional stops along the route, including one at BFUHS and one at Perfect Image Printing. CRT is evaluating whether these stops can be accommodated within the present schedule.

At the present time, it is not possible for CRT to operate the Career Center runs between BFUHS and the Windham Regional Career Center because those vehicles are also carrying special education students to the Brattleboro Retreat. While the Career Center students could ride a regular public transit route and mix with general public riders, the special education students could not.

One possible solution to this issue is for WNESU to purchase a multifunction school activity bus as described above on page 12, and use that vehicle to transport the special education students to Brattleboro Retreat. That vehicle could then be used for other purposes at other times. The operating cost for this type of vehicle could be lower than that for a regular school bus, allowing WNESU to use the remaining budget to contract with CRT for the regular Career Center run. With the extra

funding in hand, CRT may be able to expand the service on the current commuter route.

CRT has already begun some service to the Landmark College campus, though it was poorly patronized in its initial months of service. If more service were offered in the corridor, it may become more attractive to Landmark faculty, staff, and students.

### Use of School Bus Deadhead Trips

Every school day, school buses travel many miles in Windham County empty of students. In the early morning, they travel out from their base garages to distant towns and neighborhoods empty before picking up students on the way to school. After dropping the students off at school, they travel empty back to the base. In the afternoon, the pattern is repeated in reverse.

This coordination concept seeks to find productive uses for as many of these deadhead trips as possible. While there are deadhead school bus trips all over the county, the analysis focused on the area around the two largest economic centers—Brattleboro and Bellows Falls—where there might be sufficient demand for travel to justify the effort in changing current practices of school bus operators. Of these two, Brattleboro is the more promising area for two reasons: the level of activity is much higher with greater population density, more jobs, and more retail development; and the current contract between WSESU and First Student includes a provision that guarantees drivers a minimum shift of two and a half hours. Every current bus run takes less than that minimum, and some substantially less, so that the school district is already paying for driver time that is not being used to carry students. WSESU and the management of First Student were open to exploring whether this time could be used productively to help members of the community with unmet mobility needs.

### Brattleboro

There are six bus routes that serve Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS). The schedule for each of these was examined to determine the amount of slack time in the schedule (the difference between the 2.5-hour minimum and the amount of time it actually takes to complete the run) and the start and end locations. Both in the morning and afternoon, four of the six routes appeared to have more than an hour of slack time available. In the morning, five of the six buses deadhead from BUHS to the First Student base on US 5 across from the Hannaford grocery store, while the other bus deadheads from the Academy School on VT 9 to the base.

The four routes with more than an hour of deadhead in the morning include three from BUHS and the one from Academy School. Three separate alignments were designed for the buses traveling from BUHS to the base, all of which entail fewer miles than the current deadhead trips which are accomplished on I-91. See Appendix F for all proposed route alignments.

- Bus route 3 would return to the base via two senior housing complexes: Fairview Village and 107 Elliot Street. After picking up passengers at these locations and other potential stops in the neighborhoods surrounding them, the bus would serve Main Street through downtown Brattleboro and the

Putney Road corridor as far north as the roundabout at the intersection of VT 9 and US 5. From there it would head south to stop at the Hannaford and then cross the street to return to the garage.

- Bus route 4 would serve the Canal Street corridor between BUHS and downtown, and then continue north through downtown to Putney Road, serving it the same way as route 3.
- Bus route 6 would serve South Main Street between BUHS and downtown and then follow the same path as routes 3 and 4.

Bus route 5, starting from the Academy School, would serve the Western Ave/High Street corridor heading into Brattleboro from the west, and then serve downtown and the Putney Road corridor as the other routes would. It is assumed that all routes would make stops on request by the passengers, as long as the location was judged to be safe by the driver. For all routes, the Hannaford grocery store is served after the bus turns around at the roundabout, so that passengers would not have to cross US 5 on foot to get to the store.

It may be possible to extend one or more of these routes beyond the roundabout to the C&S facility, the largest employer in Brattleboro. Routes 4 and 6 would accrue less mileage than the current deadhead trips (because the path is more direct) and thus could potentially serve C&S without costing more. More research is needed on work start and end times at C&S and whether there are any employees there who live along one of these routes. They would be able to get to work by approximately 9:00 a.m. based on the current schedule.

In the afternoon, routes 1, 2, 4, and 5 have more than an hour of slack time and thus offer opportunities for using the deadhead trips:

- Bus route 1 ends its afternoon run at the Vermont Unique Motel on VT 9. The route would use VT 9 east into Brattleboro, making stops as requested. It would then serve Main Street and Putney Road as the morning routes do and then return to the base.
- Bus route 4 ends its run at Sugar House Road along Route 30 in Dummerston. From there it would return to Brattleboro via Route 30 heading into downtown and thus use Main Street and Putney Road as the other routes do. If CRT begins regular bus service on Route 30 as recommended above, this trip should be listed as part of the schedule in order to maximize awareness.
- The recommendation for bus route 2 is to use the slack time prior to the school run rather than after, so that the bus would leave the garage, say, 30 minutes earlier than normal and run from the Hannaford through downtown Brattleboro to BUHS carrying passengers south from the Putney Road shopping area. It could use any of the three alignments described above in the morning routes (via senior housing, via Canal Street, or via South Main Street) depending on where passengers wanted to go.
- Bus route 5 has more than an hour and a half of slack time in the afternoon. The recommendation for this route would require additional funding since the mileage involved would be substantially higher than the current deadhead trip. It is suggested that this route, which ends at SIT, head north



on US 5 through Dummerston to Putney, ending at Landmark College, thereby providing a connection between the two campuses. From Landmark, the route would head south on US 5 back to the base, dropping off any remaining passengers at Hannaford. The route would be able to make stops along the way in both directions.

While these deadhead trips have the potential to offer new connections to people in the Brattleboro area while requiring no new resources (except for the afternoon recommendation for route 5), it must be recognized that there are limits to the utility provided. These trips would only be offered during the school year; not on weekends or during school vacations. If there are seniors or other people who can use the morning buses to get to the shopping area on Putney Road, arriving at roughly 9:00 a.m., they would need to find another way to get home, via the BeeLine or a ride, unless they wanted to stay there until after 2:00 p.m. when the afternoon deadhead bus (number 2) may be available. Likewise, anyone using the afternoon buses to get to the shopping area would need to find a way back. Thus, this concept needs to be considered as part of an overall coordination effort, rather than a standalone service that can meet mobility needs. Perhaps the project team will develop a set of options to fill the gaps in service.

### **Bellows Falls**

The potential for using deadhead trips of school buses in Bellows Falls is much more limited than in Brattleboro. In the morning, there are two buses that deadhead from Saxtons River to Bellows Falls around 8:00 a.m. In the afternoon, there is one bus that deadheads from Cambridgeport to Bellows Falls at 4:00 p.m. While it is possible that some people might benefit from these trips, it seems unlikely that there would be much interest because it would be more difficult to find ways to get back home, in the absence of a service like the BeeLine. CRT does have some local service in Bellows Falls, but it does not reach to Saxtons River and Cambridgeport. It is also the case that the drivers of school buses do not have built-in slack time for which they are already being paid, so that additional time would likely result in additional expense for the school system. As a result, no use of school bus deadhead trips is recommended for the short term in Bellows Falls.

On page 16, the possibility of transferring the Bellows Falls – Brattleboro Career Center run to CRT was mentioned. If this does not happen, it may be possible to use the deadhead trips operated by these schoolbuses as additional service on US 5. The morning deadhead run operates from Brattleboro to Bellows Falls, leaving at approximately 8:30 a.m. The afternoon deadhead trip runs from Bellows Falls to Brattleboro, arriving at noon. WNESU could work with CRT to incorporate these trips into the regular timetable for the Bellows Falls – Brattleboro Commuter.

### **Information Clearinghouse**

The concepts discussed above focus on providing more transit service on the street, either through new funding or making the best use of available resources and vehicle mileage. An equally important means to improve mobility is to increase awareness and knowledge of the options currently available. A portion of the public

knows about the services offered by CRT and DVTA and makes use of them. Another portion may be aware that CRT and DVTA vehicles are running in the county, but may know little about the routes or how to use them. Yet another portion may be unaware that this service exists at all.

The goal of this concept is to make it easy for people who have mobility needs to find out how they can be met by the region's service providers. The key is to provide a single number to call to reach someone who is knowledgeable about the options available and can either provide the needed information directly or connect the caller with the necessary resource.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is in the process of rolling out an enhanced transportation information line. The number 1-800-685-RIDE has been in place for many years as an information line for commuters, and advertised as such on roadway signs. In November and December 2012, the responsibility for the information line is being passed from VTrans to the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) which is a non-profit organization "that is dedicated to reducing the economic and environmental costs of energy consumption..." VEIC will have trained staff available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every weekday to answer questions from callers on any transportation issue, not just commuting. The VEIC information database is being updated and the staff will be able to answer most mobility questions directly. For more complex questions or requests involving scheduling a demand response trip, the caller will be referred to the relevant transit operator.

VTrans is embarking on a significant marketing campaign to let Vermonters know about the expanded capabilities of the 685-RIDE number. The agency will publish newsletters and spend about \$200,000 over nine months to advertise on television and radio.

In addition to the 800 number, VTrans is working with [zimride.com](http://zimride.com) to enhance the existing ridematching service available through GoVermont ([connectingcommuters.org](http://connectingcommuters.org)). This nationally-known website will make it easier for Vermonters to find rides and set up carpools for regular commuting and occasional trips.

Parallel to the VTrans effort, the United Ways of Vermont will seek to enhance the abilities of Vermont 2-1-1 to provide transportation information. Most of the calls to this existing resource number concern housing needs, but transportation questions are already within its scope of activities. Because the 1-800-685-RIDE number will not be available on weekends or overnight, 2-1-1 can be a secondary resource for callers during those times.

The recommendation for this concept is that VTrans and VEIC establish ongoing communication with local United Way staff and all of the transit service providers in the region as well as coordinators of volunteer driver networks and other organizations that have transportation resources. The local staff would then work with the VEIC staff to make sure that the database is comprehensive and up-to-date



and that the staff members are well-versed in the transportation options in Windham County. This information would also be provided to the 2-1-1 staff.

The transportation partners in the region would participate in this effort to try to focus awareness of 1-800-685-RIDE as the first step in obtaining transportation information. While CRT, DVTA and others would continue to market themselves to increase awareness of their services, these efforts would be conjoined to information about 685-RIDE to maximize the effectiveness of the clearinghouse concept. Likewise, social service agencies oriented toward youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families, would all promote 685-RIDE as the best means to obtain information about transportation.

### **Volunteer Drivers**

In the Windham Region, as in many rural areas in Vermont, a significant portion of public transportation service is provided by volunteer drivers using their own cars. There are two primary networks at present: a group of drivers who respond to trip requests from Connecticut River Transit, and other drivers who volunteer through CARES groups or through churches or community organizations. Members of the former group are reimbursed for mileage driven at the federal reimbursement rate, now 55.5 cents per mile. The latter group are “true volunteers” who drive without any reimbursement. CRT has made efforts in the past to bring the CARES groups under their umbrella, with or without reimbursement, but thus far, the CARES groups have not been interested in forming a closer relationship.

The Windham Region should continue to expand its volunteer networks, as this is the most cost-effective form of transportation available in a rural area. CRT has an ongoing program to recruit volunteer drivers, but the supply rises and falls in relation to gasoline prices and the federal reimbursement rate. As more of the Baby Boom Generation reaches retirement age, the pool of potential drivers should increase, allowing CARES groups and other informal networks to provide more rides.

### **Parent Volunteer Networks**

The main recommendation within this concept is to institute volunteer driver networks at schools in the area. This network would consist of parents who are willing to drive children—with or without their own child—from school to another location in the county (such as Brattleboro) and also be responsible for getting them home later in the day. The simplest example is if a parent is already taking their child into town, the parent would make the other seats in the car available to other students who are also traveling into town on roughly the same schedule. While some parents may already be doing this for their child’s friends, the concept here would be to open up those seats to other students who are not necessarily friends. A secondary layer of volunteer parents could be brought into the program who would be willing to drive groups of students even if their own child is not making the trip. For Brattleboro Union High School students, the main value in this program would be for children who live in outlying towns to be able to have a ride home in the late

afternoon/evening, since they could walk or use school buses to get to the center of town after school.

The logistics associated with this program could be handled by student government at the three main high schools: BUHS, BFULS, and Leland and Gray. There would likely need to be some support from the school office. All parents would be contacted to see who typically makes such trips or would be willing to do so. Those who are interested would let the student government know what their driving schedule is and how many seats are available. The student government would make this information available to the student body either through a web-based electronic bulletin board or a paper bulletin board. Students could then sign up for rides in available seats. There would need to be rules and a code of conduct set up so that all parties understood their responsibilities.

### **CARES Groups/BMH**

In addition to the parent volunteer network, the other concept regarding volunteer drivers is to organize a network through Brattleboro Memorial Hospital to supplement future service in the Route 30 corridor and current service in other corridors. Patients coming in for oncology treatments, for example, are likely to have difficulty riding a bus to get home. CARES groups can be a source for rides for these patients. The recommendation is to formalize this relationship so that BMH staff and the coordinators of rides given by CARES volunteers communicate about the needs for transportation, and that word get out to churches and other sources of drivers so that BMH has as large a pool as possible to draw from for these rides.

### **Friday Evenings in Brattleboro**

The Boys and Girls Club currently hosts a Teen Night every Friday from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. including a free meal. Children from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through 18 years old are welcome. Occasionally, there are larger events in town, such as a street fair or festival which draw significant numbers of people of all ages. On the first Friday of every month, there is a Gallery Walk where dozens of shops and galleries are open between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. to display arts and crafts as well as food and wine.

The coordination concept is to have the sponsors of these various events communicate with each other and with the Town government to reduce conflicts and to enhance Brattleboro as a destination for Friday evening entertainment. To the extent that teens are coming into town, organized events should be provided, perhaps expanding upon the Boys and Girls Club programs, but also offering alternatives for those not interested.

With a coordinated program of activities, the transportation issues can then be addressed. For example, the Town of Vernon has a van available that can transport a group of teens to and from an event in Brattleboro. Seth Deyo of the Vernon Recreation Department has indicated that he would be interested in sponsoring such a use of the van. Similar trips could be arranged from other surrounding towns, perhaps using town vehicles or vans that are owned by nursing homes or schools, which would not otherwise be in use on a Friday evening.

## Use of Nursing Home and Other Vans

Although there are no specific recommendations for the use of nursing home vans and other privately-owned transportation resources in this study, once the initial pilot projects in the next section are implemented, a broadening of the scope of coordination to include these vehicles is a logical next step. The owners of the vehicles will have concerns about the additional wear and tear from extra use, but they may be willing to accept that cost in order to contribute to improved mobility in Windham County.

## Pilot Projects and Implementation Timeline

Of the coordination concepts listed in the prior section, six pilot projects were selected for implementation within the first year. For each project, a team of “champions” was selected. Each team has a “core” of three or four primary coordinators and a number of advisors to provide input and assist with implementation. These teams are listed below, followed by a recommended timeline for each project. The Windham Regional Commission will be part of all teams, acting as a facilitator and providing technical assistance.

### Project Teams

1. Improved public transit on Route 30  
Core members: Windham Regional Commission (convener), Grace Cottage Hospital, Connecticut River Transit, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital  
Advisory members: Valley Cares, Bette Parsons, WCSU
2. Improved public transit on Route 5  
Core members: Windham Regional Commission (convener), Connecticut River Transit, SIT, Landmark  
Advisory members: WNESU, Windham Regional Career Center, North End Business Association
3. Use of school bus deadhead in Brattleboro  
Core members: Windham Regional Commission (convener), WSESU, First Student, CRT  
Advisory members: Senior Solutions, West Brattleboro Business Association, North End Business Association, Hannaford, C&S Wholesalers, New Chapter
4. Information clearinghouse  
Core members: United Way (convener), VTrans, Vermont 2-1-1, Youth Services, Center for Health & Learning  
Advisory members: CRT, DVTA, Boys & Girls Club
5. Parent volunteer drivers  
Core members: Leland & Gray student government and principal, WCSU  
Advisory members: Other school districts and principals

6. Friday nights in Brattleboro

Core members: Youth Services (convener), Boys & Girls Club, Windham County Prevention Coalitions, Town of Brattleboro

Advisory members: Vernon Recreation Dept, Brattleboro Police, Chamber of Commerce, Center for Health and Learning, Gallery Walk

### Timelines

The six pilot projects described above represent a large portion of the coordination concepts developed during the study. So many projects were carried into the implementation recommendations because, other than the first two on the list, they are all quite different from each other and involve different “champions” from the committee. By pursuing all of them, all of the champions will be actively engaged in the process, thereby encouraging each other to increase their efforts toward coordination.

For the two transit corridor improvement projects, the recommended timeline is to develop plans during Fiscal Year 2013 (July 2012-June 2013) and apply for grants from VTrans for Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funding and New Freedom funding as they become available. During this time period, further research into operating the Career Center runs with transit buses and the use of a multifunction school activity bus for special education students at WNESU would be conducted. Implementation would occur in FY2014.

For the use of school bus deadhead trips in Brattleboro, FY2013 would be used to refine the proposed alignments, develop a marketing plan to establish awareness of the future service among the target populations, and negotiate costs and funding. Implementation would occur in September 2013.

Work on the information clearinghouse can begin immediately. United Way of Windham County would establish clear lines of communication with all service providers and gather all service data to be transmitted into the VEIC and 2-1-1 databases. All of the partners would begin working on an information campaign to make 1-800-685-RIDE the obvious first call for Windham Region residents to find out about transportation options.

Student government at Leland and Gray can begin work on the parent volunteer network during Fall of 2012. It can start small and grow. Other high schools would follow suit in Fall of 2013.

Work on Friday nights in Brattleboro can begin in Winter 2012. Communication about and coordination of existing events can begin right away, with planning for new events and discussion of transportation needs to get teens from outlying communities to and from these events taking place during the academic year, with plans for full implementation in the spring of 2013.

## Potential Impacts

The variety of the nature of the pilot projects is also reflected in the variety of their potential impacts on regional mobility. Some of them will have a greater impact because they will be more visible and accessible to the general public, while others can have at most a limited impact because of the small amount of resources involved. Yet others can start small and grow into a program that has a significant impact.

Of the six projects, the one with the greatest potential impact is improved public transit on Route 30. As mentioned earlier, there is essentially no public transit in this corridor currently. A new route, serving commuters, students, seniors, and other members of the public, would result in a substantial increase in mobility in that corridor. This project also requires the greatest amount of new resources, but by gathering these resources through new grants and redirection of current expenditures, a significant gap in Windham Region transit coverage would be closed. Although the potential ridership will depend greatly on how much service is offered, commuter plus midday service could attract more than 100 riders per day.

The project with the next greatest potential impact could well be the information clearinghouse. Awareness of transit and ridesharing options is essential to the mobility of Windham region residents. Wide awareness of and access to a clearinghouse with all of the information that people need to find rides would boost ridership on all existing services, thereby promoting expanded service in the future.

Improved public transit in the Route 5 corridor would boost mobility as well, but since there is already service there, the potential impact is not as great as in the Route 30 corridor. With additional resources, service could be further expanded to include midday and evening periods.

Parent volunteer networks at the area's middle and high schools are examples of projects that can start small with very little impact, but grow to offer substantial mobility to the school populations. These programs can grow organically as more parents learn about them and offer seats in their cars to other students, and as more students find out about them and request additional rides.

The impact of school bus deadhead trips is necessarily limited for a number of reasons. By definition, this resource is available only when school is in session, and only for routes that have a sufficient amount of slack time to provide passenger service without incurring new personnel costs. These trips only operate at two specific times of day, and cannot conveniently offer round trip service. The reason for pursuing them is that there is little or no cost involved, even though the new mobility created is very small.

The final pilot project, Friday nights in Brattleboro, comes last on this list because it is not a detailed coordination concept but rather an opportunity for one. It also covers a limited time span and geographic area. To the extent that the team members develop new and expanded community activities for teens on Friday evenings, facilitated by coordinated transportation to get teens from outlying areas

to town, this project could have a significant impact on the lives of these youth and on the vitality of downtown Brattleboro, neither of which should be underestimated.

## Next Steps

The idea of working on the pilot projects in the short term is to lay the groundwork for broader coordination efforts to be phased in over time. It is critical to have successes at the beginning to demonstrate the feasibility of the concepts and to promote buy-in among all parties.

United Way of Windham County and the Windham Regional Commission envision a long term collaboration developing out of this mobility study. Transportation is key to achieving the outcomes set forth in United Way's Community Impact strategic planning and community investment process. The hope is for all people to have the transportation they need to get to work and to meet their basic needs. The two partners will host community forums in different parts of the County in the upcoming months. The recommendations in this report will be featured in the discussions.

As the teams work to implement the pilot projects, further research can be conducted to determine if other states have succeeded in these areas. Research done for this study identified a number of examples (summarized in Appendix E). The teams can also reach out to new stakeholders, to expand involvement in the community and the business sector.

There is no denying that transportation coordination requires ongoing effort by the many local parties. Some projects, like establishing a new bus route, require a great deal of effort at the beginning, but once established, require less effort to maintain. Other projects, like the information clearinghouse or the parent volunteer networks, require constant attention and communication. These projects will wither and vanish if they do not have an ongoing commitment.

It is hoped that these projects will begin to address the many needs in the Windham Region identified through this study. May the study recommendations be a source of inspiration for the project champions, helping them to maintain their efforts and commitment. To be sure, the benefits of these efforts will be a more engaged and vibrant community.

## Appendix A: List of Stakeholders

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Town
<b>a) Public Transit Providers</b>			
Mary	Habig	The Current (CRT)	Rockingham
Brian	Waterman	The Current (CRT)	Rockingham
Randy	Schoonmaker	DVTA	W. Dover
Jan	Terk	DVTA	W. Dover
Bette	Parsons	Betty Boop Bus	Wardsboro
Michael	Gouin	M.P. Gouin Taxi Co.	Brattleboro
		Brattleboro Taxi Limited	Brattleboro
		Valley Cab Service	E. Dover
		Windham Taxi	Brattleboro
<b>b) School Superintendents and school district representatives</b>			
Ron	Stahley	WSESU	Brattleboro
Deb	Gass	Early Education Services	Brattleboro
John	Gagnon	Guilford School	Guilford
Chris	Kibbe	WNESU	Bellows Falls
Sandra	Donaldson	School Board rep	
Stan	Budzik	WNESU Trans Supervisor	Bellows Falls
Steven	John	WCSU	Townshend
John	Doty	Windham School Principal	Windham
Gail	McArthur	Marlboro School bus driver	Marlboro
Jack	Rizzo	WSWSU	Wilmington
Ronda	Lackey	WSWSU	Wilmington
Heather	Dix	Twin Valley Transportation Coor.	Wilmington
Dennis	Richter	TV Sch Bd Trans Officer	Whitingham
Paul	Wheeler	TV Sch Bd Trans Officer	Wilmington
<b>c) School bus providers</b>			
Brian	Davis	First Student	Brattleboro
Carol	Lynch	First Student	Brattleboro
Norman	Lawley	West River Transportation	Brookline
Deanie		West River Transportation	Brookline
Barry	Gerdes	Gerdes Transportation	Jacksonville
Todd	Lally	Gerdes Transportation	Jacksonville
John	Tietgen	Tietgen Bus Service	Stamford
Jane	Sullivan	Sullivan Bus Lines	Stamford



**d) Workforce Investment Board and related economic development representatives**

David	Altstadt	Windham WIB Coordinator	Westminster
Andrea	Livermore	BABB	Brattleboro
Allyson	Villars	Career Counselor	Brattleboro
Andrew	Robinson	VT Department of Labor	Montpelier
Bruce	Gardner	Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation	Brattleboro
Denise	Mason	Southeast Vermont Community Action	Westminster
Jim	Cecere	Creative Workforce Solutions	
Leo	Schiff	VT Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living	
Mary	Ide	Vermont Adult Learning	Brattleboro
Steve	Geller	Southeast Vermont Community Action	Westminster
Julia	Sorenson	Brattleboro Retreat	Brattleboro

**e) Non-profit service providers & health providers**

Dave	Brown	Youth Services	Brattleboro
Julie	Davenson	Youth Services	Brattleboro
Danielle	Southwell	Youth Services	Brattleboro
Elizabeth	Raposa	WCCA	Brattleboro
JoEllen	Tarallo-Falk	Center for Health & Learning	Brattleboro
Cindy	Hayford	Center for Health & Learning	Brattleboro
Lucy	Tell	Brattleboro Housing Authority	Brattleboro
Chris	Hart	Brattleboro Housing Authority	Brattleboro
Michele	Carr	Brattleboro Housing Authority	Brattleboro
Dave	Garrecht	AARP	Guilford
Sue	Fortier	Meeting Waters YMCA	Brattleboro
Joyce	Lemire	Senior Solutions	Springfield
Cheryl	Baxley	Senior Solutions	Springfield
Mary	Fredette	Gathering Place	Brattleboro
Tim	Cavanaugh	Gathering Place	Brattleboro
Steven	Gordon	Brat. Memorial Hospital Exec. Dir.	Brattleboro
Kelly	McCue	Brat. Memorial Hospital	Brattleboro
Pru	MacKinney	Brat. Memorial Hospital	Brattleboro
Wendy	Cornwell	Brat. Memorial Hospital	Brattleboro
Andrea	Seaton	Grace Cottage Hospital	Townshend
Liz	Harrison	Grace Cottage Hospital	Townshend
George	Karabakakis	HCRS	Springfield
Will	Shakespeare	HCRS	Brattleboro
Dylan	Devlin	HCRS	Brattleboro
Gwynn	Yandow	Brattleboro Retreat	Brattleboro
Julia	Sorensen	Brattleboro Retreat	Brattleboro
Sue	Graff	United Way	Brattleboro
Jim	Tonkovich	VT 2-1-1	
Beth	Baldwin	Brattleboro Boys & Girls Club	Brattleboro
Ricky	Davidson	Brattleboro Boys & Girls Club	Brattleboro
Mary	Ide	Vermont Adult Learning	Brattleboro
Joshua	Davis	Morningside Shelter	
Jill	Spiro	Windham Housing Trust	Brattleboro
Pat	Burke	SEVCA	
Carmen	Derby	United Way	Brattleboro
Richard	Davis	Vermont Blueprint/BMH	Brattleboro



**f) Higher education**

Corrado	Paramithiotti	Landmark College	Putney
Peter	Falion	Landmark College	Putney
Stephen	Sweet	SIT Dir. Of Student Life	Brattleboro
Dan	Cotter	Marlboro College	Marlboro
Karen	Clark	CCV Coord. Of Academic Services	Brattleboro

**g) State government services**

Sadie	Fischesser	AHS Field Services Director	Brattleboro
Leo	Schiff	Voc Rehab	Brattleboro
Deb	Carpenter	AHS Economic Services	Brattleboro
Russel	Farrar	AHS Economic Services	Brattleboro
John	Muise	USDA	Brattleboro
Ross	MacDonald	VTrans	Montpelier
Tracy	Shriver	Windham Co State's Attorney	
Kathy	Preston	Voc Rehab	Brattleboro

**h) Municipal Officials**

Barbara	Sondag	Town of Brattleboro	Brattleboro
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**i) Citizens and Volunteers**

## Cares Groups

Deb	Armstrong	Chester/Andover Community Cares Network	Chester
Shirley	Perkins	Dummerston Cares	Dummerston
Dennis	Hunt	Grafton Cares	Athens
Tina	Blust	Guilford Cares	Brattleboro
Jennifer	Mazur	Marlboro Cares	Marlboro
Pam	Cubbage	Putney Cares	Putney
Bob	Crego	Valley Cares	Townshend
Becka	Schaefer	Valley Cares	Townshend
Ronnie	Friedman	Westminster Cares	Westminster
Edith	Serke	Windham Community Organization	Windham
Alice	Charkes	Green Street School	Brattleboro
Terrance	Martin	Christian Home Educators of VT	
Rebecca	Jones	350vt.org	Brattleboro
Richard	Davis	Vermont Blueprint	

**j) Legislators**

Peter	Galbraith	State Senator	Townshend
Jeanette	White	State Senator	Putney
Mollie	Burke	State Representative	Brattleboro
David	Deen	State Representative	Putney
Sarah	Edwards	State Representative	Brattleboro
Michael	Hebert	State Representative	Vernon
Ann	Manwaring	State Representative	Wilmington
Richard	Marek	State Representative	Newfane
John	Moran	State Representative	Wardsboro
Mike	Mrowicki	State Representative	Putney
Oliver K.	Olsen	State Representative	Jamaica
Carolyn	Partridge	State Representative	Windham
Valerie	Stuart	State Representative	Brattleboro
Matthew	Treiber	State Representative	Bellows Falls
Jeff	Munger	Trans. Staff for Bernie Sanders	Burlington
Pat	Menduni	Trans. Staff for Peter Welch	Montpelier
Ted	Brady	Trans. Staff for Patrick Leahy	Burlington

## Appendix B: Public Transit Provider Detailed Information

### Connecticut River Transit (The Current)

- Specific Federal, State and Local programs through which funding is currently being provided
  - FTA 5310, 5311 programs (including flexed E&D money from STP)
  - State operating assistance
  - Contributions from towns (property taxes)
  - Medicaid (federal and state)
  - Contracts with human service agencies and programs
- Program administration and reporting responsibility.
  - VTrans administers FTA and State transit funding
  - AHS administers Medicaid and monitors human service agency contracts
- Program end operation responsibility.
  - CRT owns, maintains and operates its vehicles
  - Some maintenance is contracted out
  - Portion of service operated through volunteer drivers
- Capital expenditures (3 budget years – prior, current, projected)
  - FY11: \$600,750 (Federal 80%, State 10%, Local Match 10%)
  - FY12: \$783,000 “ “ “
  - FY13: \$895,000 “ “ “
- Legislative authority.
  - CRT is governed by 24 VSA Chapter 126
- Regulatory authority.
  - Various federal regulations on FTA money as described in the State Management Plan
  - Federal regulations on Medicaid
- Funding levels (3 budget years –prior, current, projected).
  - FY11: \$2,459,141
  - FY12: \$2,464,959
  - FY13: \$2,563,557
- Last comprehensive route performance review ?
  - Last short range plan was in 2003
  - Various specific plans, such as NH 119 and Brattleboro plan over the last three years
  - Annual performance review for legislature
- Last interim route change between comprehensive route updates?
  - Periodic route adjustments:
- Public participation requirement for route update?
  - Yes
- Primary population served
  - Commuters to Upper Valley
  - Seniors and people with disabilities for local and medical trips

- Opportunities or barriers (programmatic restrictions, perceived risk) to integrating primary service population with other riders?
  - CRT coordinates trips whenever possible; barriers include limited flexibility for client trip times, specific needs of clients (inability to share ride), vehicle capacity
- Ridership (3 budget years-prior, current, projected).
  - FY11: 254,174
  - FY12: 279,905
  - FY13: 293,900
- Ridership trend last 5 years (Total, including Medicaid and volunteer trips).
  - FY07: 167,477
  - FY08: 187,767
  - FY09: 193,993
  - FY10: 197,656
  - FY11: 254,174
- Current route map.
  - Available on the web and via GIS files (already have)
- Geographic area served.
  - Windham (except for DVTA towns) and southern Windsor counties
- Route restrictions (i.e., geography; road classification).
  - With combination of vans and volunteer drivers, CRT is able to serve all of its region
- Driver qualifications (i.e., licensure, background checks).
  - Staff drivers must have CDL and undergo full battery of background checks and periodic drug and alcohol testing
  - Volunteer drivers undergo federal and state criminal background checks
- Driver training (required? Standardized?) This would include training in managing riders, handling discipline problems, etc.
  - Drivers have standard training to handle human service agency clients
  - Policy and procedures manual is available
- Vehicle safety standards.
  - CRT meets FTA rules for vehicle inspections and safety standards
- Exposure to liability.
  - CRT maintains required liability insurance and provides umbrella coverage to volunteer drivers
- Option to lease vehicles available?
  - CRT is able to lease vehicles when appropriate
- Vehicle replacement requirements.
  - CRT follows FTA guidelines on vehicle life cycles
- Union restrictions?
  - NA
- Use of non-standard vehicles (i.e. rolling stock of taxi companies)
  - CRT maintains varied fleet from cutaway vans through full-size buses

## Deerfield Valley Transit Association (The MOOver)

- Specific Federal, State and Local programs through which funding is currently being provided
  - FTA 5310, 5311 programs (including flexed E&D money from STP)
  - State operating assistance
  - Contributions from schools and colleges
  - Medicaid (federal and state)
  - Contracts with human service agencies and programs
  - Mt. Snow and other resorts, inns
  - Sale of advertising
  - Bus stop sponsorships
  - Sale of used equipment
- Program administration and reporting responsibility.
  - VTrans administers FTA and State transit funding
  - AHS administers Medicaid and monitors human service agency contracts
- Program end operation responsibility.
  - DVTA owns, maintains and operates its vehicles
  - No maintenance is contracted out
  - Portion of service operated through volunteer drivers
- Capital expenditures (3 budget years – prior, current, projected)
  - FY11 \$773,896
  - FY12: \$512,000
  - FY13: \$4,500,000
- Legislative authority.
  - DVTA is governed by 24 VSA Chapter 126 we are a private non-profit corporation
- Regulatory authority.
  - Various federal regulations on FTA money as described in the State Management Plan
  - Federal regulations on Medicaid
  - FMCSA
  - Vt Department of Motor Vehicles
- Funding levels (3 budget years –prior, current, projected).
  - FY11: \$1,621,398
  - FY12: \$1,611,760
  - FY13: \$1,641,966
- Last comprehensive route performance review ?
  - Last short range plan was in 2003
  - Annual performance review for legislature
  - VTrans review 2009
- Last interim route change between comprehensive route updates?
  - Periodic route adjustments:
- Public participation requirement for route update?
  - Yes

- Primary population served
  - Employees and visitors to Mt. Snow
  - Seniors and people with disabilities for local and medical trips
  - General public
  - Middle school, high school and college students and staff
  - Commuters
  - Throughbound/intercity travelers
  - Local employees
  - Carless residents
- Opportunities or barriers (programmatic restrictions, perceived risk) to integrating primary service population with other riders?
  - DVTA coordinates trips whenever possible; barriers include limited flexibility for client trip times, specific needs of clients (inability to share ride), vehicle capacity
- Ridership (3 budget years-prior, current, projected).
  - FY11: 290,867
  - FY12: 244,077
  - FY13: 296,400
- Ridership trend last 5 years (Total, including Medicaid and volunteer trips).
  - FY07: 182,286
  - FY08: 207,835
  - FY09: 232,210
  - FY10: 232,210
  - FY11: 290,867
- Current route map.
  - Available on the web and via GIS files (already have)
- Geographic area served.
  - Readsboro, Wardsboro, Dover, Wilmington, Whitingham, and Halifax
  - Connections to Marlboro and Brattleboro
- Route restrictions (i.e., geography; road classification).
  - With combination of vans and volunteer drivers, DVTA is able to serve all of its region
- Driver qualifications (i.e., licensure, background checks).
  - Most drivers have CDL and all must undergo full battery of background checks and periodic drug and alcohol testing
  - Volunteer drivers undergo federal and state criminal background checks
- Driver training (required? Standardized?) This would include training in managing riders, handling discipline problems, etc.
  - Drivers have standard training to handle human service agency clients
  - Policy and procedures manual is available
- Vehicle safety standards.
  - DVTA meets FTA rules for vehicle inspections and safety standards
- Exposure to liability.

- DVTA maintains required liability insurance and provides umbrella coverage to volunteer drivers
- Option to lease vehicles available?
  - DVTA is able to lease vehicles when appropriate
- Vehicle replacement requirements.
  - DVTA follows FTA guidelines on vehicle life cycles
- Union restrictions?
  - None
- Use of non-standard vehicles (i.e. rolling stock of taxi companies)
  - DVTA maintains varied fleet from 14 to 34-seat cutaway buses



## Appendix C: Summary of Needs

### Needs Identified through Interviews

#### **Windham Child Care Association (WCCA)**

Many child care providers and homes are not on the public bus route, and there is no access to childcare. Current public transit hours don't coincide with the full range of employment hours, particularly half-days and shift work.

#### **Center for Health & Learning**

Transportation is integrally related to virtually every positive protective factor for youth and families. This is especially true in a rural community and state. It is critical for taking care of one's health, whether it means attending to one's physical needs through the purchase of healthy foods and exercise (walking and biking) or participating in sports activities, or one's mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs through connection to services, supports, activities and events.

Transportation is critical for safety, to create a stable environment to get from one place to another, whether it be home, school, or community connections. To actively participate in one's self-care, the care of others, or to take advantage of community resources, one needs to have a sense of control over your ability to get from one place to another.

One needs transportation that is safe and reliable in order to make commitments to work and to meet responsibilities such as taking care of animals or others. Meeting responsibilities builds one's sense of purpose and sense of competence and motivates one to set goals and look to the future. It builds decision-making, problem-solving, and lends itself to all aspects of family and self-care. It creates a sense of autonomy and empowerment.

Reliable transportation is a positive resource or condition that contributes to the well being of people and the community at large.

#### **Brattleboro Housing Authority**

Feedback has indicated that people would use public transportation but that it 1) is not there when they need it, 2) is not always on time, and 3) doesn't go where people need to go.

There are no evening services allowing access to CCV classes or evening employment.

Day care hours and drop off is a problem.

There are many employment opportunities (housekeeping, shift work) on Putney Rd., but residents can't get there.

### **Gathering Place**

Monthly cap on Medicaid-funded transportation services; not enough so organization absorbs the costs. Some clients use taxis for medical appointments, but most have a disability and there is limited taxi accessibility. Lack of information: clients have no idea what type of transportation services are available to them

### **Grace Cottage Hospital**

Hospital does not provide or contract for transportation in any way. Its primary mission is health care and the available resources are already spread too thin.

### **Boys & Girls Club**

The youth population needs to get to appointments, work and activities. There is a need for transportation between the high schools and these locations. Kids need to get from school to the BGC (from Brattleboro, Putney, Vernon and Guilford) and then back home. When school is in session, the BGC operates from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. including Saturdays. During the summer and school vacations, the club is active all day and into the evening.

### **United Way**

Transportation is a consistent theme that is challenge for clients trying to access services, especially for those people that live in the outlying areas of the county.

At a systematic level, the public system does not support how people work and live. Young people cannot access employment opportunities and others cannot access services.

Public system also does not provide service for episodic events, such as a trip to a public gathering, etc.

### **Senior Solutions**

With advancing age, many of our seniors must give up their cars and rely upon family or friends for medical appointments, shopping, church-going and other social activities. In many cases, this network is either not available or is greatly diminished as time passes. For others, financial constraints disallow owning a vehicle. In both instances, seniors are at risk for isolation, food insecurity, medical deterioration and depression. Affordable/accessible transportation is critical to keeping seniors independent and can help avoid early nursing home placement.

Some of the barriers include the rural nature of the geographic area served; an increasing need for door-to-door services as well as door-through-door which will become increasingly evident as people live to very old age and need more assistance with activities of daily life such as shopping.

## **Vermont Adult Learning**

Most of our clients have financial challenges and right now with the price of gas we know for a fact that they are limited in how many classes they can take with us or how many times they can come to our Center in any given week.

## **Youth Services**

We are concerned with the population from age 14 to 22. Many need transportation to and from work, particularly after school. General trip purposes of youth include transportation to CCV especially for night classes, medical appointments, work, grocery shopping, and prescription refills. Specific trips that need service, or more service, are Bellows Falls and Putney to Brattleboro and Bellows Falls to Walpole. Also need return trips in the late afternoon and evening. Pick up points include Allen Brothers and the Shell in Bellows Falls and the Putney Co-op or General Store. Destinations in Brattleboro include Hannaford at exit 3, CCV, the Main Street area, and the Canal Street area. During the winter, service is needed from Brattleboro and the West River Valley to Mt. Snow and Stratton for work trips. Need more frequent service on weekdays so that people can arrive at work close to the desired time rather than really early or late, evening service (especially for classes at CCV) and weekend service. Other examples of trips needed include those living in Brattleboro but needing to get to UVM Extension Center, Putney Road, or Exit 1 for jobs; needing to go shopping at Price Chopper, Hannaford or Discount Food Store in West Brattleboro; needing to go to a medical appointment in Putney.

## Appendix D: Stakeholder Meeting Minutes

### Windham Regional Commission

### Coordinated Transportation Initiative

### Meeting Summary - April 9 10:30-12:30 WRC Conference Room

**Present:** Randy Schoonmaker (DVTA), Brian Waterman (CRT), Ron Stahley (WSESU), Steven John (WCSU), Dave Brown (Youth Services), Ross MacDonald (VTrans), Matt Mann (WRC), Stephen Falbel (Steadman Hill Consulting), Diana Wahle (Coordinator of Initiative and recorder)

**Meeting Purpose:** There is a need to revive and renew the work begun in 2010 on creating a “case for change” supporting an improved integrated transportation system providing access and mobility for Windham region residents. This meeting brings together the school and transit representatives who initially contributed to the “case for change”. Using the research prepared by transportation consultant, Stephen Falbel, the group affirmed the direction to take with upcoming stakeholder meetings. These community partners contributed their perspective on the feasibility of selected strategies that will be the basis of discussion in the stakeholder meetings.

### Inventory and Strategies:

Please refer to attached Power Point presentation and map. Presentation includes:

#### **Progress summary** on the inventory of services and resources

- posted map of transit routes – general review of routes/schedules
- discussion of identified needs

#### **Two potential strategies** for transportation integration which build on existing coordination

- listing potential barriers and opportunities for each
- identifying potential pilot projects

#### **Two Case studies**

- one in Ames, Iowa, involving CyRide Transit and the school bus company
- one in Pierce County, Washington, utilizing New Freedom Federal grant funds

**Deadhead Time:** Steadman Hill Consulting is continuing to research “deadhead” time – unused running time on the road. Phone outreach being completed with school bus providers. DVTA and CRT will send Stephen Falbel their deadhead times. Concern about reaching out effectively to school bus companies: Steadman Hill Consulting is experiencing difficulties in reaching out to the various school bus

providers to gain information re: “deadhead” time. It was suggested that they contact the principal in each school served who could assist.

**CRT Additional Routes & Medicaid Concern:** CRT completed a Feasibility Study for the BeeLine in Brattleboro. The study identified existing service, and analyzed how to reduce the headway and expand routes. Brian alerted us to the proposed cuts in the State’s Medicaid budget, which could affect transportation for Medicaid patients.

#### **WCSU Updates:**

**a) WCSU 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Program** now in the first of five years. Includes funding for transportation. After school activities will be provided in every school in the district (1<sup>st</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade), ending at 4:30PM when students need transportation home. It is possible that regular school bus service in the afternoon will be curtailed depending on participation in the after school programs. The program is offered in 6-week sessions not every day of the week. Parents sign a transportation permission form, which allows WCSU to provide any type of public transportation (does not have to be a school bus). Are the school bus schedules also arranged every 6 weeks? The Betty Boop bus is one transportation option being used at present. It will be important to keep in mind how to maintain sustainability for transportation services for these programs once the five-year grant is up. In general, can the supervisory unions dedicate the staff to deal with their detailed routing and scheduling needs? Can CRT and DVTA be utilized for this after-school service?

**b) WCSU Contracts with Private Bus Companies:** Gerdes Bus Company is going out of business at the end of this school year. Tod Lally is taking it over.

**c) School Start/End Times:** WCSU is in the midst of exploring later school start and end times for older students. They are investigating the impact these changes will have on the student transit budget. DVTA and CRT request the supervisory unions notify them early if there is a change in school start times, since they need to go through an approval process to adjust their schedules. For example, if WCSU changes its start and end times, DVTA will need to adjust as well, since it transports Leland and Gray students from the East Dover Firehouse to other stops.

#### **WSESU Updates:**

**a) Guilford School Bus Contract:** Next year, Guilford will phase out running its own bus service and will join the remainder of WSESU in contracting with First Student.

**b) First Student Contracts** Ron Stahley recommends that, when the contract is prepared, he can negotiate what types of after school transportation services can be added. Could he investigate what specificity is needed. In general, can the supervisory unions dedicate the staff to deal with their detailed routing and scheduling needs?

**WNESU Recommendation:**

a) The group asks Chris Kibbe to consider partnering with public transit in transporting students to both Career Centers (Springfield and Brattleboro). When DVTA began providing this service between Wilmington and Brattleboro, bringing TVHS students to the Windham Regional Career Center, the school district realized significant cost savings.

b) WNESU is transitioning to consolidated ownership of the school buses that serve the supervisory union schools. Will WNESU have a garage and have staff to maintain their buses, or will they sub-contract?

**New Freedom Funds:**

The Washington State case study alerted Stephen Falbel to the possibility that VTrans could distribute New Freedom funding to a broader range of projects. While this funding is geared towards people with disabilities, a broader definition of the special needs population is applied which includes youth, elders and low income people. Barbara Donovan (Administrators of Public Transit as part of VTrans) and Ross MacDonald are interested in pursuing this opportunity.

**State's Attorney Concern about People Driving with Suspended Licenses**

Dave Brown reported on the increasing frequency of Windham County residents driving with suspended licenses. Can better outreach re: public transit schedules as well as carpooling reduce this practice? We will invite the SA to participate in our upcoming meetings.

**Recommendations for Upcoming Meeting Agendas:**

Include description of local participation in the Go Vermont Program, which is significant. To date, there are 4600 Vermonters participating statewide. There are high school options we could learn about as part of their matching process.

**Windham Regional Commission  
Coordinated Transportation Initiative  
Higher Education Meeting Summary**

April 17, 2012 10:30-12:30 WRC Conference Room

Present:

Brian Waterman (CRT), Mary Habig (CRT), Dan Cotter (Director of Facilities, Marlboro College/Marlboro Tech Center), Karen Clark (Coordinator of Academic Services, CCV), Corrado Paramithiotti (Director of Facilities Planning & Operations, Landmark College), Stephen Sweet (Interim Director of Campus Life, SIT) Matt Mann (Senior Planner, WRC), Stephen Falbel (Steadman Hill Consulting, Montpelier), Diana Wahle (Coordinator of Transportation Initiative)

1. **Review study background, purpose and goals** – Diana gave an overview, accompanied by the Vermont Transportation Energy Report handout.
2. **Transportation services/needs/resources of higher education**

**Marlboro College/Marlboro Tech Center – Dan Cotter**

The Moover began service to the Marlboro campus in 2005. It's more dependable in bad weather than the college van service; mostly staff members utilize it. Eighty-five staff/faculty live in the Brattleboro area and Marlboro adjusted its work schedule to accommodate the Moover schedule. Marlboro has 300 students; 10% live off campus. Marlboro promotes numerous goals to impact their carbon footprint. Ideally, a long term goal is for all students to be transported locally by DVTa. The college's van fleet includes 5 vehicles: 3 15-passenger vans and 2 18-passenger vans. None are accessible. One run goes to and from Marlboro Tech Center each weekday. The exact van and Moover schedule is available on the Marlboro website ([www.marlboro.edu/resources/info/van\\_schedule/](http://www.marlboro.edu/resources/info/van_schedule/)). Individual student trips are also made with vans to Brattleboro, Greenfield, Keene and for community meetings like AA and church. Van drivers are students who have taken a van driving courses. All Marlboro vans will allow the general public to ride. Available resources: Dan could not report on the transportation budget at Marlboro because the college maintains a fleet of vehicles used for multiple purposes (including long trips as part of the outdoor program); tapping financial resources that would be available to pool would be part of a discussion with Marlboro College administrators.

**Landmark College - Corrado Paramithiotti**

CRT initiated a new route two times a day to the Landmark campus in March. Ridership has been low, which is frustrating. Matt commented that it can take 2-3 years to get people to take advantage of new services. 8-30 students (out of a total of 450) live off campus. The students living on campus are often from urban areas and feel isolated in Putney. They want to get out at night. While Landmark periodically offers bus trips to Boston and New York City, more local transit is needed for students when they are not in classes.



Ideally Corrado envisions CRT buses coming to the Landmark campus three times each morning and evening. The college's van fleet includes five vehicles: 3 14-passenger vans, 1 8-passenger van and 1 9-passenger van(handicapped accessible). Van drivers are Landmark staff. The college provides students daily service to Brattleboro. Shuttle rides also go to Walmart and to Keene. See the present Landmark van schedule attached. Due to a concern about liability, the general public is not allowed on the Landmark vans.

Available resources: Corrado could not report on the Landmark transportation budget. Financial decisions related to transportation are not part of his job. It is very unlikely that Landmark would give up their van fleet and redirect all of their transportation money to an outside provider, because they use the fleet for many purposes.

Landmark is an enthusiastic partner in the Vermont Way To Go initiative (Corrado is the college's point person for Way To Go). As part of a campus-wide green campaign, Corrado has promoted carpooling through the college website and through a major media blitz.

#### **School for International Training (SIT) – Steve Sweet**

SIT has 100 residential beds. 85 are occupied now. In addition, 75 students live off campus. The off-campus students usually rent apartments in Brattleboro. The biggest demand for transportation comes from students without cars who have shopping needs or who rely on the transportation service to get to and from classes. Evening classes are over by 8:15PM. It was very unlikely that they would be able to give up their van fleets and redirect all of their transportation money to an outside provider, because they use their fleet for many purposes.

The other focus needs to be on faculty who would regularly commute. Funding supporting student transportation comes out of student fees, yet only part of the student population utilizes transportation offered. See the SIT van/public transit schedule attached. An "on call" service is also available for students on campus who have special appointments or other needs. SIT is presently reviewing what is considered "reasonable" student transportation. Ideally, SIT would like to have public transit take over their daily shuttle, although they would retain their van fleet for special trips. SIT owns 2 15-passenger vans. If classes take a van on a field trip the cost is \$60/day. At times, there are special groups which require transportation arrangements and they receive charter services. Available resources need to be researched with SIT administrators.

#### **Interchanges among SIT/Landmark/Marlboro:**

SIT-Marlboro Interchange: If a Marlboro student is taking a class at SIT, he/she can sign out a college car to commute to the class.

Landmark/Marlboro Interchange: Landmark and Marlboro may share a graduate certificate program in the future which could require a transportation arrangement.



## **CCV – Karen Clark**

CCV classes run until 8:45PM weekday evenings. CCV does not own any vehicles for student transportation. Between 250 and 300 students enroll each semester. The student population is drawn from all corners of Windham County, as well as southwestern New Hampshire. All students commute and many are low income single parents who could gain from improved transportation arrangements. Karen is willing to canvas CCV students regarding their transportation needs. She estimates that 10% students do not register due to transportation barriers. Brian (CRT) wondered if CCV students could gather at a particular location for pick-up each weekday. Available resources: this needs to be researched with CCV administrators.

3. **Case Study:** A case study describing the coordination between school bus service and public transit in Ames Iowa was presented.

4. **Initial strategies** – the participants are open to a better coordinated transportation system serving their students and staff, but are aware that this would be a major cultural shift that requires high level decisionmaking in their institutions. Two separate strategies would be required for meeting student and faculty/staff needs.

- a. Expansion of coordination opportunities for transit agencies – one strategy might be for the college van service to bring students to the edge of the public transit routes and then have them transfer. Like at UVM, students could swipe their student cards when they take public transit and then each respective college could pay for that transportation out of their budget. However since DVTA and CRT do not charge a fare for most of their services, this type of arrangement is not relevant in the present situation.

- b. Use of school bus resources during deadhead trips and slack time within pay shifts (i.e. 2.5-hour minimum) The meeting participants were skeptical that faculty and staff at their institutions would ride school buses to work.

- c. **Emergency Planning:** In an emergency, no single institution has the ability to evacuate its students. Corrado asked if a strategy could be developed whereby educational institutions in the area would offer transportation assistance if one institution experienced the need for an emergency evacuation. This plan would include higher education partners as well as Putney School, Greenwood School, and Kurn Hattin. The transit providers should also be part of this discussion.

## **5. Potential barriers**

- a. **Location of Transportation Center:** It was recommended that local transit services would increase ridership if the different forms of transit were located all in one place. Presently Greyhound stops once

a day at I-91 Exit One on Canal Street. Amtrak is located downtown. When people arrive from out of town, they cannot easily access local bus service.

- b. Creating incentives to ride the bus is a challenge. Perhaps incentives could be created as part of Way To Go?
- c. Funding and regulatory restrictions: pooling transportation resources needs to be explored with the college financial officers.
- d. Concerns about mixing age groups and trip purposes – could be explored in the future in more depth
- e. Payment required? The difference between donations vs. fares

In closing, it was clear that there was value in the four colleges just being at the same table in this meeting discussing their common issues. With more regular bus service, they would be able to sell transit commuting more effectively, but further meetings with college administrators would be necessary to explore if funding would be available to boost the service.

## **6. Next steps**

Two more stakeholder meetings will be held:

- May 7: Non-profits, health providers and AHS government services
- May 23: Workforce Investment Board members, municipal officials, and related economic development representatives

A summary report promoting short and long term actions will be prepared by Steadman Hill Consulting and shared with all stakeholders.

**Windham Regional Commission  
Coordinated Transportation Initiative  
AHS State Government, Health Providers & Non-Profit Meeting Summary  
May 7, 2012 Marlboro Tech Center**

**Present:** Elizabeth Raposa (Windham Child Care Assoc.), Kathy Preston (Voc Rehab.), Russel Farrar (Economic Services – State of Vt.), Deb Carpenter (Economic Services – State of Vt.), Beth Baldwin (Brattleboro Boys & Girls Club), Dianne Champion (Dept. of Health – State of Vt.), Michele Carr (Pathways to Housing/Brattleboro Housing Authority), Gwynn Yandow (Brattleboro Retreat), Joshua Davis (Morningside Shelter), Will Shakespeare (HCRS), Wendy Cornwell (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital), Jill Spiro (Windham Housing Trust), David Brown (Youth Services), Julie Davenson (Youth Services), Beth Shrader (Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition), Dylan Devlin (HCRS – CRT Program), Andrea Seaton (Grace Cottage Hospital), Sue Graff (United Way), Cheryl Baxley (Senior Solutions), Bette Parsons (Bette Boop Bus), Pat Burke (Southeast Vt Community Action), JoEllen Tarallo-Falk (Center for Health & Learning).

**Project Support:** Matt Mann, Senior Planner, Windham Regional Commission  
Stephen Falbel, Steadman Hill Consulting, Montpelier  
Diana Wahle, Meeting Coordinator & Facilitator

**1. Review study background, purpose and goals** Diana gave an overview, accompanied by the Vermont Transportation Energy Report handout. The transportation coordination final report will describe short-term and long-term recommendations, and will encourage stakeholders to organize and support pilot projects. The funding from UVM's Jeffords Center covers the preliminary research and planning, but does not include support for operation or capital improvements.

**2. Progress to Date** Refer to the attached powerpoint for a detailed review of the research prepared to date by Steadman Hill Consulting. Highlights include:

- Transportation Needs
- Available resources
- Initial strategies
- Potential barriers
- Case study – Key Peninsula, WA. – Mustard Seed Project - New Freedom Federal Grant provided funding beyond ADA. In the Washington State Human Services Coordination plan, expanded populations can be served: youth, elders, low income, etc. – not just people with disabilities. New Freedom funds are also a potential source of funding in Vermont.
- Next steps  
Upcoming economic development stakeholder meeting stakeholder meeting - Wed. May 23, 3-5PM Marlboro Tech Center Room 2E

Detailed strategies – a draft report identifying priority needs and potential pilot projects will be distributed in advance to all participants for comment.

## **2. Transportation needs of social and health services in our region**

**Submit a Summary of Your Needs:** A handout summarized the needs identified through interviews to date (see attached). If participants have coordination of transportation needs which should be taken into account, please complete the attached Needs Form.

**Youth Needs:** Youth need to get to the large towns in the County, but also from small town to small town. In keeping with the original intent of this initiative, a recommendation was made to host a focus group with youth in the near future. Youth have solutions to share. The Brattleboro Boys & Girls Club, Youth Services & the Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition will recruit a diverse group of youth to attend. The group would take place at the Marlboro Tech Center from about 4-5:30PM. Participants will fill out the needs form and then participate in a discussion about strategies and creative ideas.

**Coordination with the CRT study re: Brattleboro Service:** CRT has been a partner in this effort and the recommendations will take into account the Brattleboro Beeline Feasibility Study.

## **3. Available Resources**

**What about connecting with volunteer networks?** The small volunteer networks offer a lot of versatility and flexibility – getting people door to door. This initiative is a great opportunity to expand volunteer networks. CRT presently has a volunteer network that they use for medical transportation; many volunteers get mileage reimbursement and they hope in the future to expand these services. Cares Groups have their own volunteer networks – they receive small grants from Senior Solutions. Matt addressed the fact that the Cares volunteers have historically not wanted to be under the CRT umbrella. Volunteers are critical. How can they co-exist with CRT and also get the information out about their own services? The Cares Groups' transportation services need to be in the report.

Senior lunches take place in every small community where transportation information could be shared. During Irene, granges came to life and served community members – organizing volunteers to help with transport would be a good follow-up to the response to Irene.

The Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition recommended expanding the present volunteer network to include supporting parents who cannot transport their youth. Ride Share offers a ride home as well as carpooling in. Is there a way to connect with Ride Share and adapt its services to assist youth?

**Transporting Oncology Patients** Three grant proposals were prepared by Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in 2011 (by Nurse Kelly McCue - Oncology Unit) to support women in oncology treatment getting to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. No funding was received. Instead of providing transportation, the hospital offered 95 patients gas cards covering transportation costs to get to treatment. Most of the patients needing transportation lived on Rt 30 up to Townshend. The concern is that women when getting treatment don't feel well and therefore might not be able to utilize bus transport. Some options were discussed:

- The Gathering Place is open to including them on their runs to and from Townshend.
- Betty Boop Bus - Bette does some medical trips – has a 24 passenger bus.
- Expanding the Cares model to services to this population.

Matt spoke to the existing CRT VT30 schedule. Historically it has been exclusive service. Currently this service is open to the public, but the general public does need to call in advance and the schedule of Gathering Place clients dictates the frequency of service. There is some flexibility for making medical appointments that fit the bus schedule. Patients need to ask and advocate for the best time. If needed, office staff could be educated to refer to the bus schedule in making appointments. Reach Up case managers also are willing to schedule appointments to fit the schedule. Matt brought up the VTrans Ride Share Program, in relation to the VT30 corridor. This program matches riders/commuters going to and from similar locations. It guarantees a ride home if something comes up (i.e. a sick child, doctor's appointment).

#### **4. Initial Strategies**

**Coordinate with Safe Routes to School:** This effort connects to safe walking and biking..... and is another way to maintain the focus on youth throughout this initiative. Jo-Ellen Tarallo-Falk (The Center for Health and Learning) noted that currently 12% kids use bikes. A generation ago, it was 80%. The strategy would focus on establishing norms - youth monitoring youth behavior on buses, walking to school, etc. Could youth be paid stipends to take on these roles? Perhaps a sub-committee should form?

**The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funded sustainable and safe transportation** in 14 communities in the US (mainly suburban) **around the strategic alliance for health.** They designed systemic approaches and they all used healthy development measurement tools to establish common outcomes:

- Decrease private motor trips
- Provide affordable options
- Create safe environments for walking and biking

Each community established a healthy community design check-list, which could be used by all populations needing transportation. The constraint is that there is not an initial pot of money to tap.

**Use of Social Media** Can we use Facebook or other social media to let our friends know about carpooling possibilities. Is there a safe way to do it?

**Good News Garage Donations and Program Design** Is there the possibility of expanding the Good News Garage donations? Could the **Smart Car model** be used with Good News Garage cars?

**Have one centralized clearinghouse to have all resources together**

As mentioned earlier, Cares Groups need to get the word out more effectively about their services.

Bette Parsons (Betty Boop Bus) has tried to share information about schedule to senior lunches but her ridership is still low. She senses apprehension, and wants potential riders to know she welcomes riders of all ages – she has seat belts which can accommodate child car seats.

Cheryl Baxley encourages us to view “Ride with Ray” – a film on the Moover taking seniors to the mealsite in Wilmington. Fabulous – can be viewed on the Senior Solutions website and UTube.

**5. Potential Barriers**

The Vermont Department of Mental Health has transportation needs for State Hospital patients – Gwyn Yandow (Brattleboro Retreat) was asked to provide detail through the Needs Form.

## Windham Regional Commission

### Coordination of Transportation Services Stakeholder Meeting Summary

#### Workforce Investment Board and Economic Development Leaders

May 23, 2012

**Present:** Lucy Tell (Brattleboro Housing Authority PH FSS Coordinator), Leo Schiff (Voc Rehab), Andy Robinson (DOL), Denise Mason (SEVCA), Paul Cameron (Town of Brattleboro Climate Protection), Barb Sondag (Town Manager, Town of Brattleboro), Jon Muise (USDA), Dave Alstadt (WIB Coordinator), Bruce Gardner (BDCC), Mary Ide (Vt Adult Learning)

**Project Support:** Matt Mann, Senior Planner, Windham Regional Commission  
Stephen Falbel, Steadman Hill Consulting, Montpelier  
Diana Wahle, Meeting Coordinator & Facilitator

**1. Review study background, purpose and goals** Matt opened with a history of the Windham Regional Commission's sponsorship of the initiative. Diana gave an overview, accompanied by the Vermont Transportation Energy Report handout. The transportation coordination final report will describe short-term and long-term recommendations, and will encourage stakeholders to organize and support pilot projects. The funding from UVM's Jeffords Center covers the preliminary research and planning, but does not include support for operation or capital improvements.

**2. Progress to Date:** Refer to the attached power point for a detailed review of the research prepared to date by Steadman Hill Consulting. Highlights include:

- Transportation Needs
- Available resources
- Initial strategies
- Potential barriers
- Case study – Key Peninsula, WA. – Mustard Seed Project - New Freedom Federal Grant provided funding beyond ADA. In the Washington State Human Services Coordination plan, expanded populations can be served: youth, elders, low income, etc. – not just people with disabilities. New Freedom funds are also a potential source of funding in Vermont.

### **3. Transportation Discussion Highlights:**

CRT operates the Beeline service. It is one of the best utilized bus services in the state and after CRT conducted an extensive assessment of the needs of riders, the existing routes will be expanded and the headway reduced by 30 minutes. The expanded routes and reduction in headway will be funded through Federal and State dollars - the FY 2013 public transit application.



CRT is also well-utilized by commuters on its routes and is making efforts to coordinate better with institutions like Landmark College.

It is important to consider public transit connections where people work across state lines. WRC takes these concerns into account and hopes to engage in a joint planning study with New Hampshire relating to worksites. Overall, New Hampshire provides much less public transit funding than Vermont.

Federal regulations related to the public riding on school buses may present a barrier to coordination. Legislative advocacy may be required.

Bruce Gardner (BDCC) is impressed in the presentation by variety of needs and the community inventory of vehicles. He can see the complexities involved in coordination and understands this is a major undertaking. How will this information be summarized to meet people's needs? There are many existing services, some of which are operating inefficiently. How can we engage them to serve commuters, Gallery Walk, etc.? For example how do you expand the availability of service on Rt. 30? Envision an existing transportation network that developed with a series of "band aids" that were put on over time to respond to a particular need for a subset of the population. Eventually, what could emerge with the short and long term recommendations from this initiative is the opportunity to take off some of those band aids.

Public Perception: Riding the bus is seen as a service for poor people, not for all socio-economic levels – different than in Europe.

Rider fares only cover about 10% (or less) of the cost in rural areas. Each transit company taps a wide variety of resources for funding. Most rural providers charge no fares but request passenger donations. Brattleboro Town dedicates \$50,000 a year towards the Beeline, SIT gave \$6000, and the remainder is from State and Federal funding. CRT has to regularly evaluate their ridership. Receiving income from fares is not necessarily an incentive. Anything CRT takes in as fares would be taken off of their Federal grant.

VTrans offers the Go Vermont program. This offers a free ride-matching service and a vanpooling service. They will also offer a van to a company, where the company only has to pay for gas and insurance. Three park and rides exist in our region. Leo Schiff (Voc Rehab) has never gotten a Go Vermont response when he needs to go to Springfield and Waterbury for meetings.

In rural areas, there are not enough people to support a traditional bus service that will occur frequently enough to attract choice riders. Voc Rehab has offered to partner with Reach Up using Good News Garage, but not very successfully. Overall, Leo did not see much of value to his clients coming out of this presentation.

#### **4. Recommendations for strategies to improve transportation coordination:**

Nursing homes in town have vans that are not used all the time. Could they be tapped?



What about connecting up with the Vermont Foodbank network or related food movements? Could there be a coordinated effort to transport food?

As discussed, funding for transit routes mainly comes from Federal and State dollars. A successful route is one that falls below the State threshold for a per hour rate and above the State threshold for a per passenger per hour rate. A traditional business model is not used to finance a route. It is the proof of ridership that leads to funding. USDA has financed the CRT new building and can help finance cross border transit projects.

What about the train? Can't it help connect people leaving from Park & Rides? The cost per hour for train travel is \$2000/hour vs. bus at \$70/hour.

Barb Sondag (Brattleboro Town Manager) proposes reaching out to employers encouraging them to allow their employees to flex time so they can utilize bus service.

Might it be worthwhile to interview commuters who presently utilize the bus? Are their needs met?

One centralized clearinghouse: How many unmet needs come from people who don't have access to information about present transit options? Is it possible to create a smart phone app to allow people to enter pertinent information – a central clearing house – and learn their options? To also inform travelers if the bus is late or there is a new addition to the schedule? With this option though, one has to make sure low income individuals who need transportation and don't have smart phones or access to a computer are served.

**5. Submit a Summary of Your Needs:** A handout summarized the needs identified through interviews to date (see attached). If participants have coordination of transportation needs which should be taken into account, please complete the attached Needs Form.

## Appendix E: Case Studies

### Ames, Iowa

- Population 58,965
- CyRide is the public transportation provider
  - Annual passenger miles: 8,380,233
  - Annual vehicle revenue miles: 1,155,256
  - Annual vehicle revenue hours: 110,398
  - Dramatic increase in peak pull out vehicles; 45 buses in 2006 up to 60 in 2012
  - Next two years: 8-11 more buses will be added to peak pull-out
- Iowa State University
  - Located near the center of Ames
  - Enrollment of nearly 30,000 students
  - Most CyRide routes serve the campus
  - Highly peaked demand around class times
- School transportation provider (Durham) operates 6-7 trips with yellow school buses during deadhead time
- **CyRide** sign placed in window of yellow school buses to indicate public transit trips
- Alleviates continuously high loads along the ISU corridor routes
- Minimal effort required by CyRide
- Tremendous capital costs savings – Without yellow school bus trips, CyRide would have to purchase at least seven buses in the next two years
- Potential obstacles overcome:
  - Change in school transportation contractor with short notice
  - CyRide's limited annual capital apportionment
  - Challenge of hiring and training new/additional drivers

### Key Peninsula, WA

- Located long Henderson Bay, Pierce County, Washington in Tacoma Metro Area
- 60 square miles/ 250 persons per square mile
- Made up of small, rural commercial centers
- \$80,096 New Freedom federal grant funds Tuesday trips during the school year
- Yellow school buses operated by Peninsula School District drivers
- Fixed route with connections to other public transit
- Five Tuesday trips
  - Two AM
  - Two PM
  - One midday

- Free service
- Local HSA provides feeder van service for seniors
- Success made possible through collaboration
  - The Mustard Seed Project – Guiding HSA, provides feeder van service
  - Puget Sound Educational Service District – WSDOT sub-grantee of federal transit funds
  - Peninsula School District – Provides yellow school buses and trained drivers
  - Pierce Transit – Provides support, cooperation, and planning assistance
- WSDOT has broad interpretation of applicability of New Freedom funds
- Available for any “special needs” population, not just people with disabilities
  - Youth
  - Seniors
  - Low income
- School buses eagerly accepted by seniors
  - No community resistance since school buses were familiar
  - Had been resistance to Pierce Transit hybrid buses
  - Plenty of space for groceries, etc. compared to vans
  - Seniors excited to ride school buses

### Other Examples

- Campbell County School District, Gillette, WY: School district (and state) allows non-profits to “rent” yellow school buses (fleet of 162) when they are not in use for pupil transportation. Cost per mile fee is set by the state based on statewide pupil transportation. Current = \$1.16 per mile. Agencies are required to use school district drivers, but make payment/wage arrangements separate from the school district. 4,600 miles of service provided in 2011.
- Mason County, WA: Shelton School District operates as Mason Transit to provide four deviated Zone Routes serving residents to the North to Hoodspert, to the South to Kamilche, and to the East to Pickering, Timberlakes, Agate, Shorecrest, Lake Limerick, and Mason Lake. This service is available when the school is in session.

## Appendix F: Alignments of School Bus Deadhead Trips

















