

Third Annual Vermont E&D Summit



3rd Annual Vermont E&D Summit
June 03, 2022



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC

Communities Planning Together

Welcome

Charlie Baker, CCRPC



Ross MacDonald, VTrans



3rd Annual Vermont E&D Summit
June 03, 2022



Introductions to key VTrans E&D Staff



Ross
MacDonald

- Public Transit Manager



Tim
Bradshaw

- Public Transit Coordinator



Dan Currier

- Public Transit Coordinator



Stephanie
Reilly

- Public Transit Coordinator



Katharine
Otto

- Planning Coordinator

← Team approach to E&D. We can do better together! →

The State of Transit in Vermont: Outlook & Funding

Ross MacDonald
Public Transit Manager
Vermont Agency of Transportation



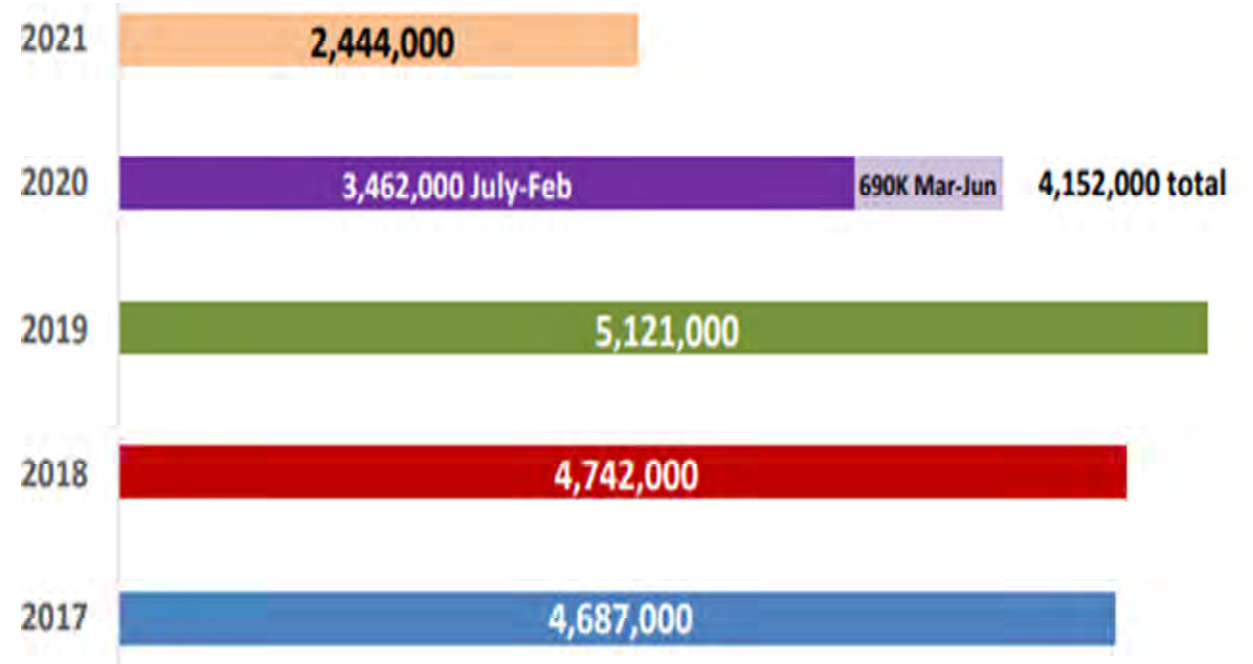
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COVID-19 Operations and Updates



- Transit providers continue to maintain extensive safety protocols including barriers between seated areas and the driver compartments and sanitation of vehicles.
- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) ended the face mask requirement for individuals across all transportation networks throughout the United States, including airports, onboard commercial aircraft, on over-the-road buses, and on commuter bus and rail systems.
- Ridership is inching back up and stands at 60% of pre-Covid level
- Commuter routes continue to lag the other route categories.

2021 Route Performance Report

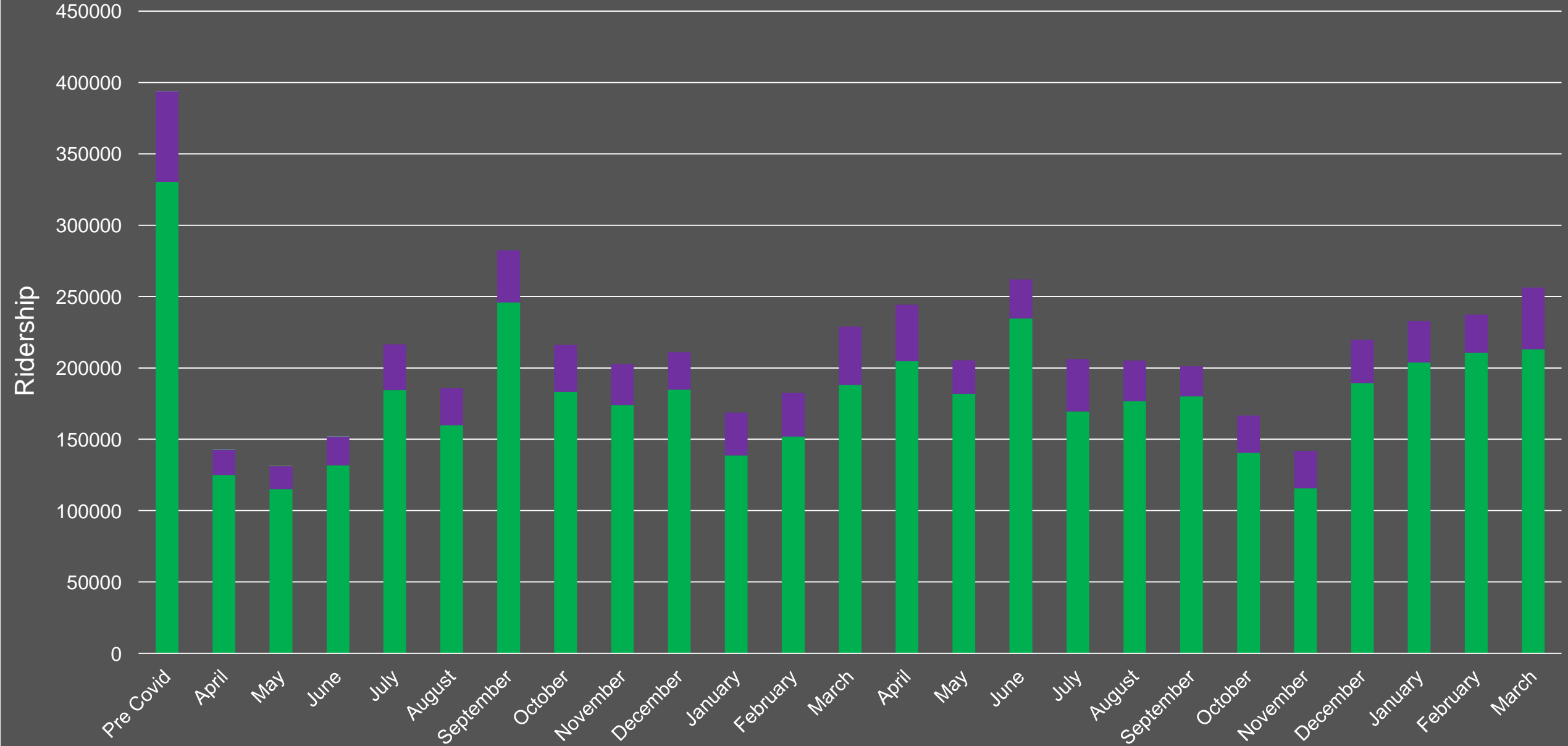


[https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/public transit/documents/Public%20Transit%20Route%20Performance%20Review%202021.pdf](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/public%20transit/documents/Public%20Transit%20Route%20Performance%20Review%202021.pdf)

Public Transit Monthly Ridership

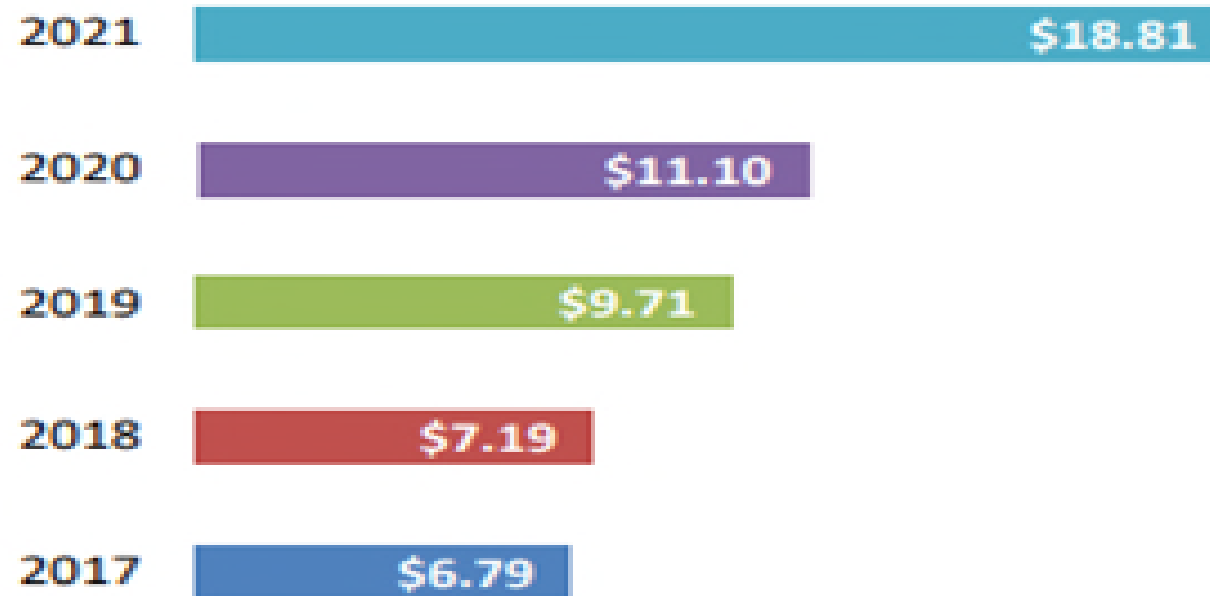
■ Fixed Route Ridership Projected

■ Demand Response Ridership Projected



Cost per Trip

In SFY 2021 the average cost for a transit trip in Vermont was \$18.81, an increase of 69% from the prior year. While annual ridership dropped 41% because of the pandemic, costs only dropped by 0.5%. Most transit service continued to operate in SFY 2021 at close to normal levels, but with far fewer riders aboard. As ridership slowly recovers, the cost per trip would be expected to drop in SFY 22 and beyond.



Cost per Trip by Service Category



Zero-Emissions Transition Plan

AECOM Imagine It.
Delivered.

Work Order Request (WOR) 01/22/2021


Vermont Agency of Transportation


Vermont Transit Battery-Electric Bus Transition Plan



February 11, 2021

 Purpose and Goals of the Project


 State of the Industry

 Existing Conditions


 Outreach


 Energy

 Route & Block Analysis

 IT, Training, and Maintenance Considerations

 Capital Expenditures

 Funding Programs

 Questions / Next Steps



MTI Focus



Support innovative strategies and projects that improve both mobility and access to services for:

- Transit-dependent Vermonters,
- Reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles, and
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank You



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Public Transit Program

ross.macdonald@vermont.gov

802-522-7120



Guidance for FY23

Katharine Otto
Planning Coordinator
Vermont Agency of Transportation



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Where do I find things?

E&D webpage

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/E-and-D>

- **Full** FY23 Guidance
- E&D Manual (last revised 2020)
- Lots of examples and useful links

Your grant/ contract documents (including TPI guidance and the Transit Provider contracts)

- **Abbreviated** version of the FY23 Guidance

TPI Team > E&D Channel (For TPI planners only)

- Example docs which can't be shared online

Making progress and stepping forward

All Committees

- have their own E&D workplans
- are following transparent and inclusive meeting practices
- are meeting at least 4 times a year

Entering a new era with a new name

- Guidance name shift from “E&D” to “Human Service Transportation Coordination”
- Committee name shifts from “E&D Committee” over next few years to “Regional Mobility Committee”

A vision for the future

FY23

- Expand scope of E&D Committees
- Expand tracking of denials and unmet needs
- Create E&D version of Route Performance Report

FY24

- All E&D Committees complete transition to Regional Mobility Committee
- E&D Survey
- Evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of E&D service delivery

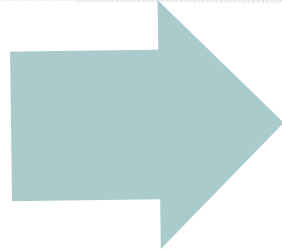
FY25

- Follow up from FY24 E&D Survey
- Public Transit Policy Plan and Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

Looking at FY23

Same

- Meet at least 4 times a year
- Open Meeting Law
- Track denials and other metrics
- Attend E&D Summit
- Keep annual workplans up-to-date



Added

- Expand scope of E&D Committees to include Medicaid, Recovery & Job Access, and other client based transportation services
- Start thinking about evolving into a Regional Mobility Committee concept in FY24
- Follow Central Vermont's pilot process to become a Regional Mobility Committee
- Expand tracking of denials and unmet needs.
- Move towards creating E&D equivalent of Transit Route Performance Report (including trip costs, purpose, denials, etc)

Four roles

VTrans

- Provide guidance
- Participate in E&D meetings
- Share info about pilot Mobility Committee
- Oversee tracking
- Oversee creation of new Performance Report

RPCs

- Organize & facilitate E&D meetings
- Keep annual workplans up-to-date
- Assist with unmet need analysis as needed
- Follow Open Meeting Law

Public Transit Providers

- Provide transportation per 2020 E&D Program Manual
- Track and submit program usage
- Assist with facilitating E&D meetings
- Assist with annual workplan

Others involved in E&D

- Follow 2020 E&D Program Manual
- Participate in E&D meetings
- Represent client perspectives
- Help generate non-federal match
- Help with awareness of related programs

All – Attend E&D Summit, follow pilot Mobility Committee process

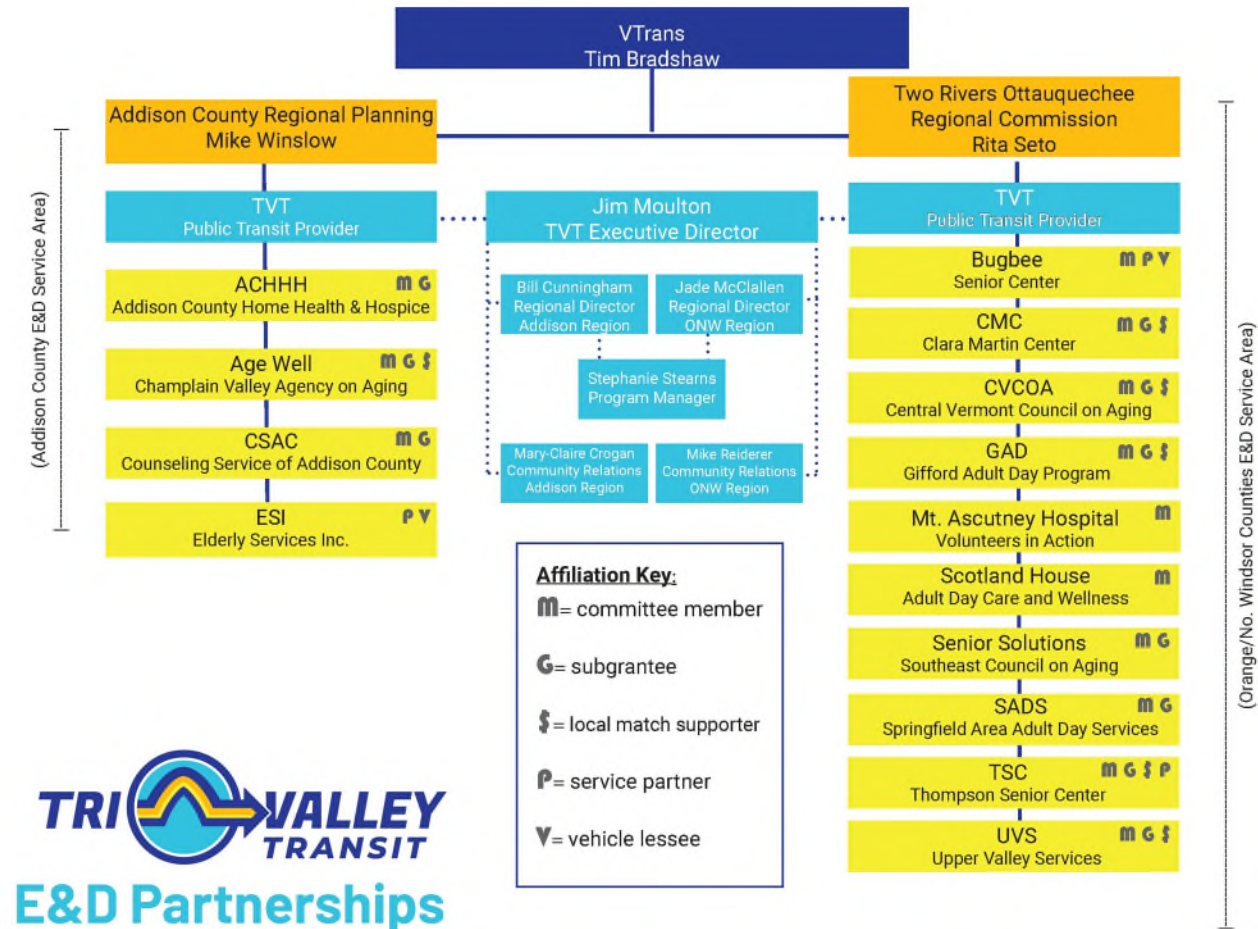
Bringing in partners

*It's not just about the money!
Information sharing is just as important!*

Some ideas

- Someone who uses the service
- Local group who works with target population
- Healthcare/ hospitals
- Can assist with match

Come with ideas and questions to the breakout session!



Questions?



Best Practices for Volunteer Driver Recruiting & Marketing

Mary-Claire Crogan
Community Relations Manager, Addison Region
Tri-Valley Transit



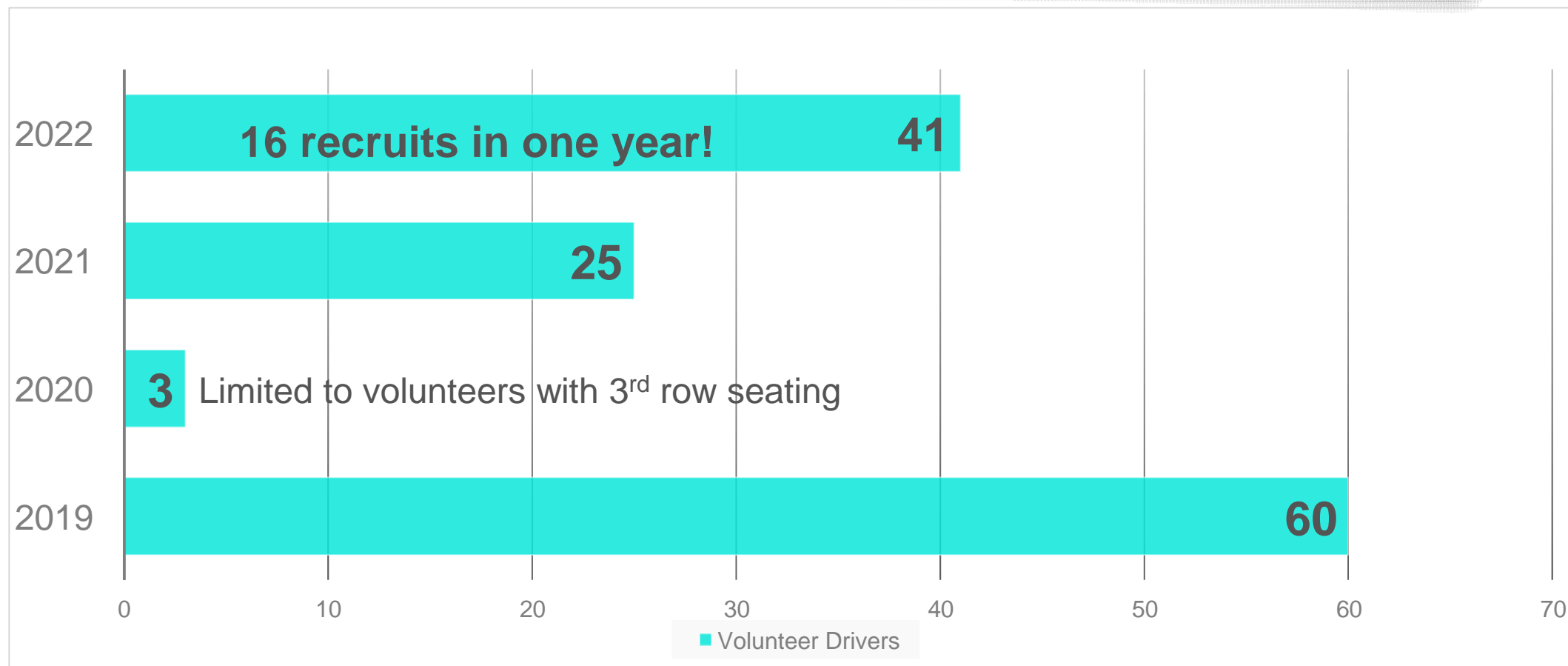
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Tri-Valley Transit's Dial-a-Ride Program



- Nearly all demand response services are provided by Volunteer Drivers.
- 120,000 rides/year (FY19)

Pandemic effects on driver capacity



Where did volunteers go?

- Left due to safety → our average volunteer is in the COVID-vulnerable demographic
- Died
- Moved away
- Advanced age → lifestyle change
- New interests



Designated Volunteer Coordinator(s)



- Applications
- Background checks
- Training
- Quality assurance calls
- Reimbursement questions



Use your marketing staff for outreach tools and strategies

- **SIMPLE** application form
- **EASY** website access
- Posters
- Pamphlets
- Pitches to share with partners
- Media and social media contacts

More examples at break-out session -->

TRI VALLEY TRANSIT VOLUNTEER DRIVER APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Street Address: _____
Town/City: _____ Zip: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____
Have you lived outside Vermont in the past 10 years? (circle one) yes / no
Do you currently have a valid VT Drivers License? (circle one) yes / no
Have you been a licensed driver for at least five years? (circle one) yes / no
Valid Vermont Drivers License Number: _____

Applicant History

Have you been in an automobile accident in the past 3 years? (circle one)
Have you been cited for a traffic violation in the past 3 years? (circle one)
Have you ever been accused of a crime? (circle one) yes / no If yes, please explain: _____
Have you ever been interviewed or investigated by the Department for Child Abuse and Neglect, the Department of Social Services Division or the police for child abuse, senior abuse and/or neglect? (circle one) yes / no If yes, please explain: _____

Driving History

All ride: _____
Are you: _____
Are you: _____
Are you: _____
Are you: _____

Volunteer Drivers

VALLEY TRANSIT

Ride Program provides rides for seniors, disabled, and Medicaid eligible neighbors. Access to doctors, food, social activities, and can pass background checks.

Volunteer Benefits...

- Reimbursement at the Federal rate of \$0.58 per mile in 2022!
- Reimbursements are non-taxable and do not affect social security benefits
- Additional insurance coverage (health, dental, vision) available
- Flexible Schedule - you tell us when you want to drive and we'll take care of the rest!

KEEP CALM AND BE PREPARED

BECOME A VOLUNTEER DRIVER

Make a meaningful New Year's resolution.

"I've enjoyed meeting new people I never would have met." - Volunteer Driver

"The flexibility in volunteering is a great benefit for a retiree. TVT will allow me to drive on the days and times I'm available." - Volunteer Driver

-Volunteer Michael E.

Design an easy entry program



Shopping Buddies Desperately Needed

You grocery shop for yourself every week, right? Turn this mundane chore into an uplifting experience by bringing along a senior neighbor who can't drive herself/himself to access food. Please call Amy Buxton at Tri-Valley Transit, 802-388-2287, for more information. You can relieve desperate need just by sharing a ride. TVT will handle all the logistics and even pay for your gas!



Get PERSONAL

- Staff and volunteers are a huge asset
- Find your local champions
 - Board
 - Stakeholder committees
 - United Way
 - RSVP
 - E&D partners
 - Civic orgs
 - Faith groups



Network!

Go PUBLIC

Network!

- Front Porch Forum & other social media
- Flyers and posters
- Bus exteriors
- Media exposure

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Volunteer drivers get folks where they need to go

April 21, 2022
By John S. McCright

ADDISON COUNTY — Dave Andrews doesn't have a regular workweek, but he still likes to get out and see people.

"I've been retired quite a while and I really enjoy the contact this gives me with people not part of my normal social circle," the 77-year-old Middlebury resident said.

"This" is Dial-A-Ride, a service for which he serves as a volunteer driver.

Dial-A-Ride offers a lift to people who need to get places that either aren't served by typical bus schedules or who need a little more one-on-one care than a bus can provide. Dial-A-Ride depends on volunteer drivers to pick up passengers and give them life-changing access to medical appointments, food shopping and other necessities.

It is managed by Tri-Valley Transit, the bus service that formed from the merger of Middlebury-based Addison County Transit Resources and Randolph-based Stagecoach.

Volunteers use their own cars and get a reimbursement for the miles they drive.

Andrews welcomes the chance to help people get to critical services like dialysis or methadone treatments. But he also just likes to talk with people.



SARA KURTZ, A volunteer for Tri-Valley Transit's Dial-A-Ride program, drops off passenger Elaine McLaren to Project Independence on Friday. Kurtz likes to have riders sit in the front seat with her so it doesn't feel so much like a taxi service. Independent

Show them you CARE!

- Provide good training and support
- Respect their limits
- Provide a welcoming space
- Spoil them a little
 - Gifts
 - Parties
 - Snacks
 - Recognition (newsletters, media features, Annual Report, Volunteer Appreciation Week)



Contact info

Mary-Claire Crogan

Community Relations Manager, Addison Region

mary@trivalleytransit.org



→ 1:30pm Today - Volunteer Roundtable Break-Out Session

Break Time



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Regional Mobility Committees and Innovative Program Updates

Daniel Currier and Tim Bradshaw
Public Transit Coordinators
Vermont Agency of Transportation



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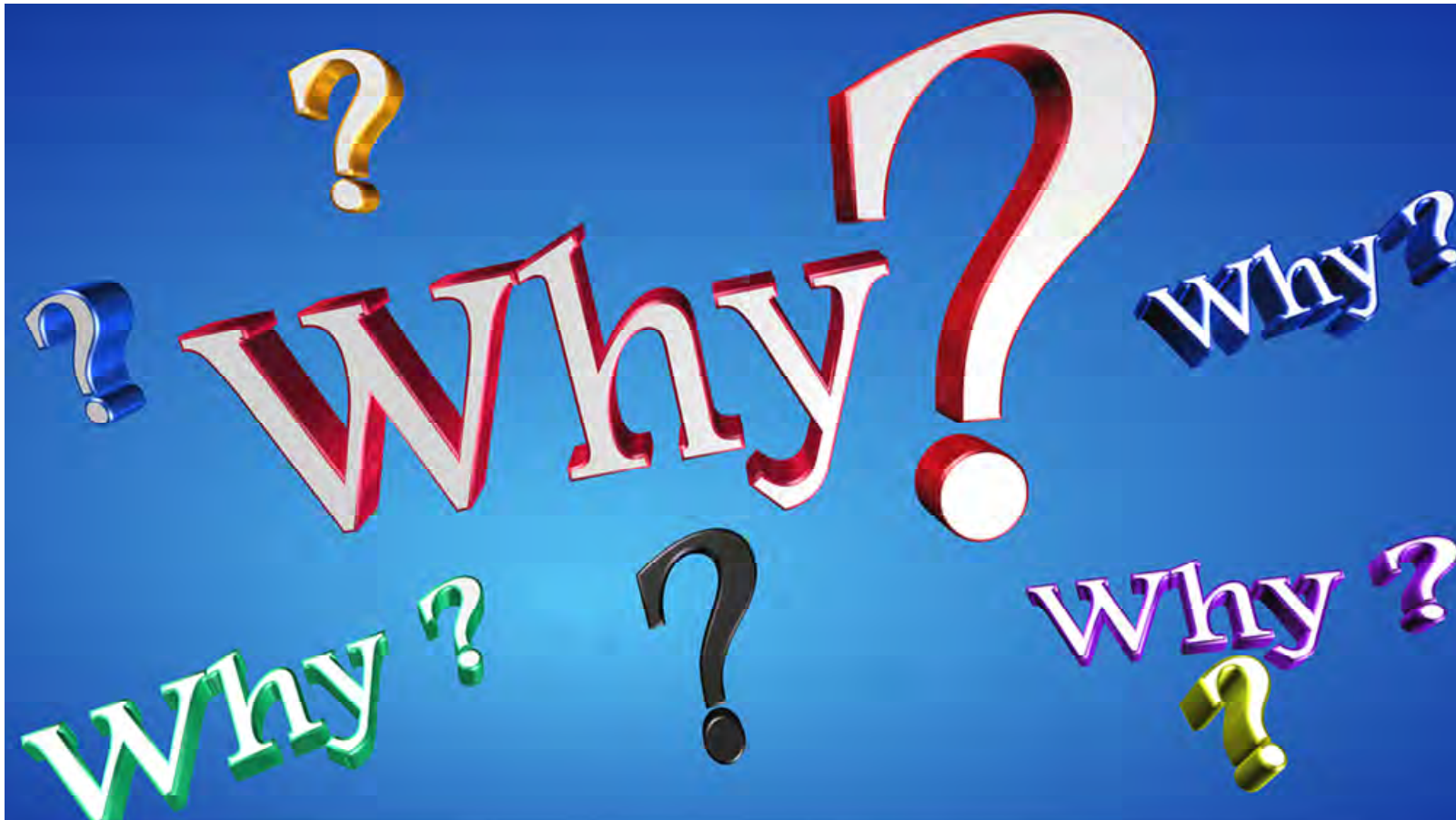
Central Vermont's Pilot

Moving from Regional Elders and
Persons with Disability Advisory
Committed (REDPAC) to Regional
Mobility Advisory Committed
(RMPAC)

Central Vermont's Pilot – The Idea



Central Vermont's Pilot – But Why?



Central Vermont's Pilot - Partners

Existing Partners



New Partners



Central Vermont's Pilot - Trips

- Trips
 - Non-Medicaid Critical Care
 - Non-Medicaid Medical
 - Meals & Meal Programs
 - Adult Day Services
 - Shopping
 - **Vocational***
 - Social
 - Wellness
 - **Recovery***

Central Vermont's Pilot - Expansion

Expand Access and Eligibility

- RMPAC services not just for people over 60 or those who have a disability.
 - **Vocational***
 - **Recovery***

Central Vermont's Pilot – Next Steps

Next Steps

- GMT to coordinate all eligible trips
- RMPAC to work on adding new partners
- Community Rides Vermont pilot launch
- Monitor the demand, utilizations, and denied trips
- New funding for VTrans to cover expanded trip types

New Go!Vermont Travel Options Tool

Trip Assist

Welcome to our new Travel Options Tool! This tool allows customers to enter their origin (or destination) address to see what services and/or partners serve their area, or what travel options might best suit your needs. Whether you are new to Go Vermont or an existing customer looking for more information about relevant services this is an easy way to find out your best options. At Go Vermont, we always strive for mobility independence, so we've also included information that will show you how many bus stops are within a ¼ mile walk.

Are you an older adult or have a disability? 

Yes No

Enter your specific starting location (25 Ridgewood Rd, Springfield |

GET PROGRAMS

Call to get started **800-685-RIDE (7433)**

DEMO

- [Trip Assist - Go! Vermont](#)
 - 100 Bank Street, Burlington, VT, USA
 - Bennington, VT, USA
 - 29 Main St Montpelier, VT
- [Vermont Trip Planner - Go! Vermont \(connectingcommuters.org\)](#)
 - St Albans City to Highgate



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Are you an older adult or have a disability? ⓘ

Yes No

100 Bank Street, Burlington, VT, USA

GET PROGRAMS

There are eligible programs in your area:

Door-to-Door

Green Mountain Transit provides ADA paratransit services for persons

There are eligible programs in your area:

[GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT ADA PARATRANSIT](#)

[802-540-0874](#)

Door-to-Door

Green Mountain Transit provides ADA paratransit services for persons unable to use the fixed route bus system because of a disability. To request a ride, call (802) 540-0874 at least 24 hours before your trip. Riders must apply for eligibility in advance.

[SPECIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION AGENCY DIAL-A-RIDE \(CHITTENDEN COUNTY\)](#)

[802-878-1527](#)

Door-to-Door

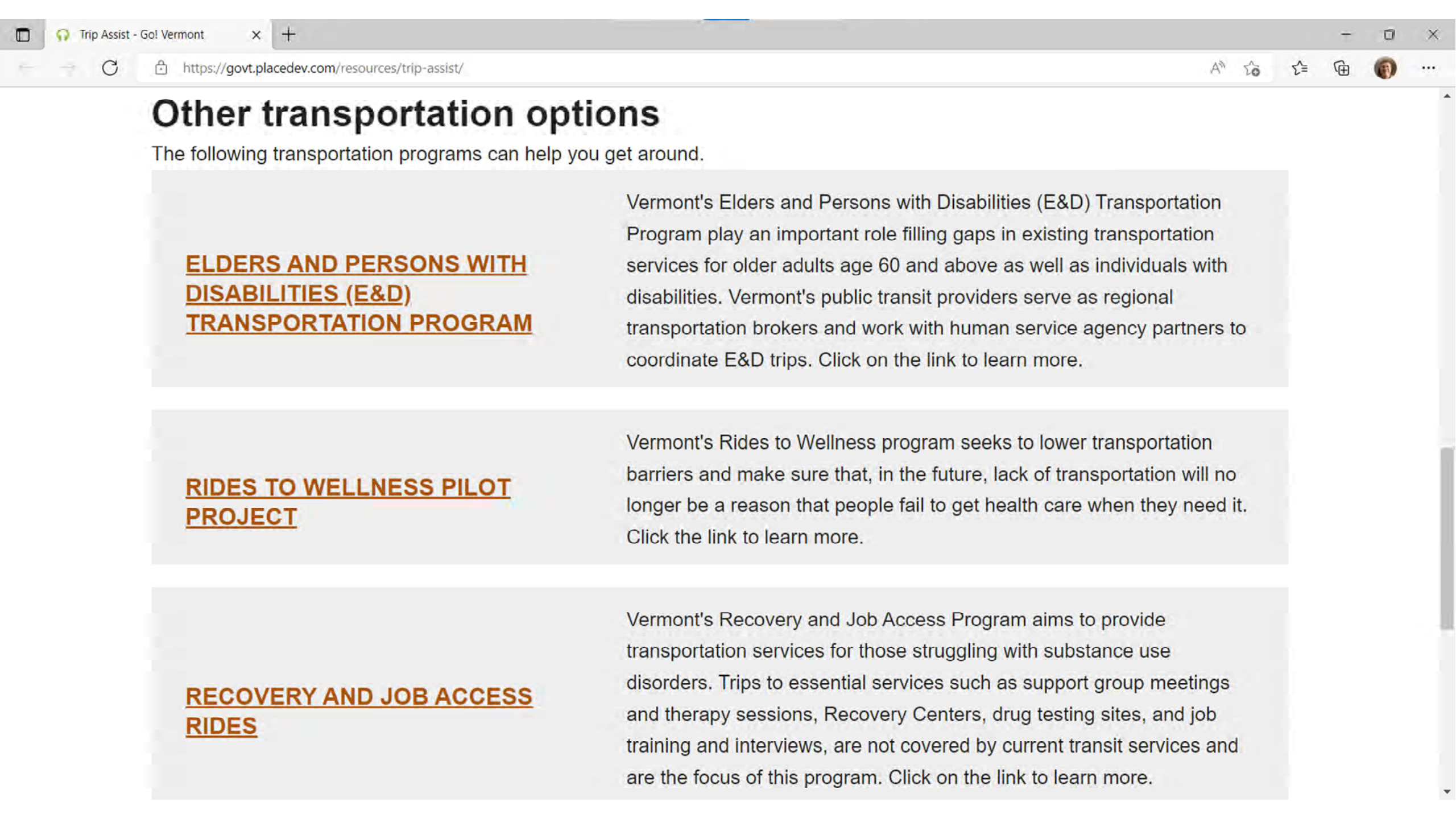
Special Services Transportation Agency Dial-A-Ride provides on-demand transportation throughout Chittenden County. The service prioritizes seniors and persons with disabilities but the general public is allowed. To request a ride, call (802) 878-1527 at least 48 hours before your trip.

[GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT BUS BUDDY PROGRAM](#)

[802-540-0874](#)

Training

Green Mountain Transit facilitates a Bus Buddy Program to help riders build confidence and bus riding skills. Bus buddy volunteers accompany riders and help them explore GMT's transit system together. If you are interested in volunteering as a bus buddy or working with a bus buddy, call (802) 540-0874.



Other transportation options

The following transportation programs can help you get around.

ELDERS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (E&D) TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Vermont's Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program play an important role filling gaps in existing transportation services for older adults age 60 and above as well as individuals with disabilities. Vermont's public transit providers serve as regional transportation brokers and work with human service agency partners to coordinate E&D trips. Click on the link to learn more.

RIDES TO WELLNESS PILOT PROJECT

Vermont's Rides to Wellness program seeks to lower transportation barriers and make sure that, in the future, lack of transportation will no longer be a reason that people fail to get health care when they need it. Click the link to learn more.

RECOVERY AND JOB ACCESS RIDES

Vermont's Recovery and Job Access Program aims to provide transportation services for those struggling with substance use disorders. Trips to essential services such as support group meetings and therapy sessions, Recovery Centers, drug testing sites, and job training and interviews, are not covered by current transit services and are the focus of this program. Click on the link to learn more.

A Saint Albans City, VT, USA B Highgate, VT, USA

- Matches
- 0 carpoolers
 - 2 transit routes
 - 1 bike route
 - 1 walk route
 - 0 trip posts
- compare options
- Park and ride
 - Bike share
 - Car share
 - EV charging
 - Hitching post
 - Traffic
 - Bike paths

Transit

Routes Buddies

Depart at

Wed, May 11 @ 10:30 am

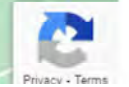
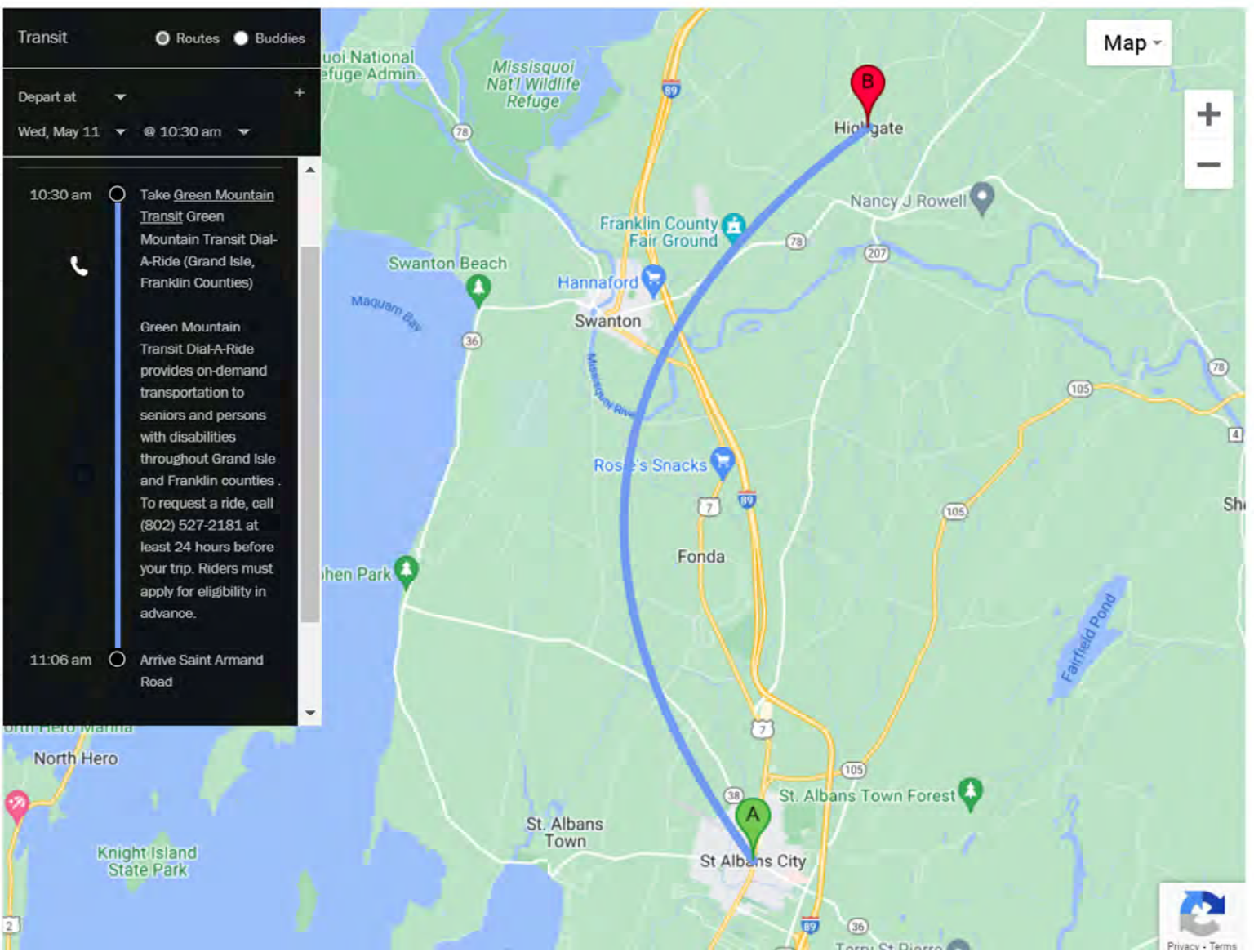
10:30 am

Take [Green Mountain Transit Green Mountain Transit Dial-A-Ride \(Grand Isle, Franklin Counties\)](#)

Green Mountain Transit Dial-A-Ride provides on-demand transportation to seniors and persons with disabilities throughout Grand Isle and Franklin counties. To request a ride, call (802) 527-2181 at least 24 hours before your trip. Riders must apply for eligibility in advance.

11:06 am

Arrive Saint Armand Road

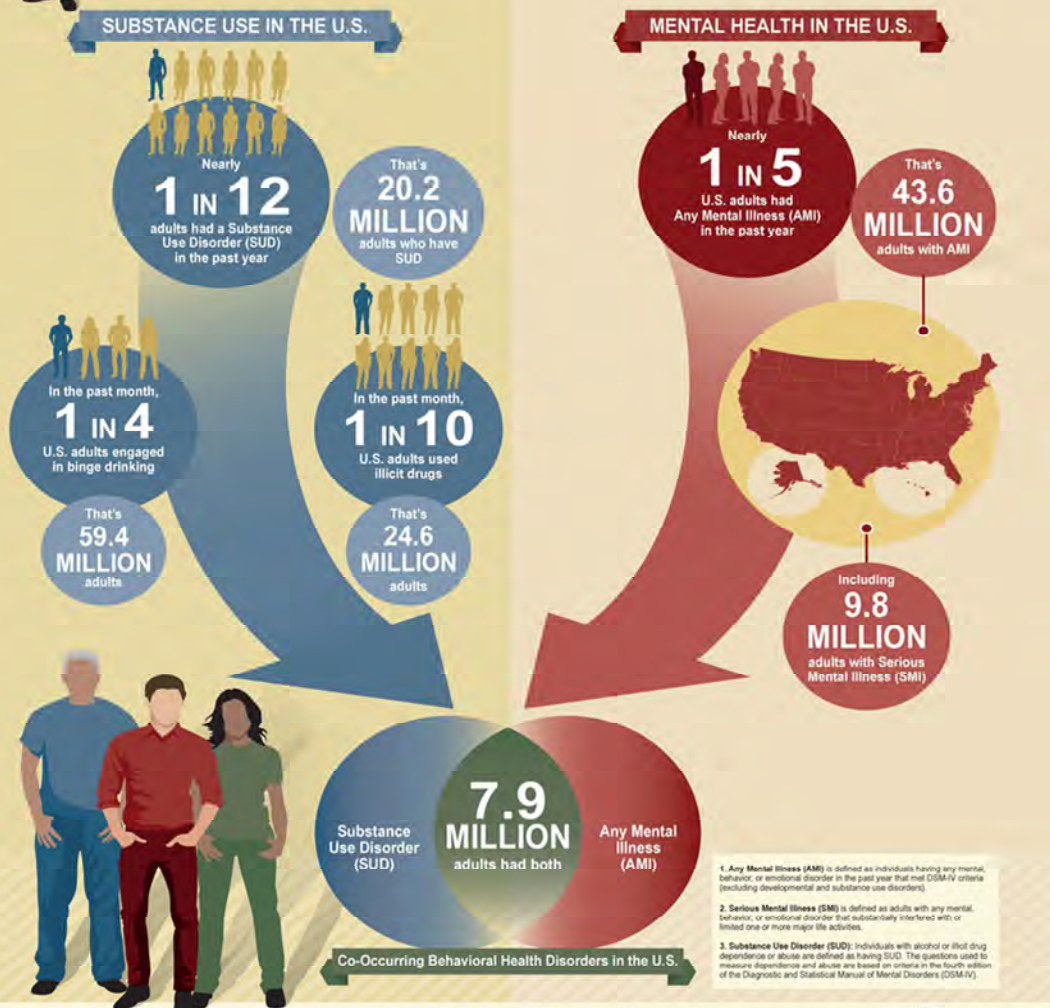




SUBSTANCE USE & MENTAL ILLNESS IN U.S. ADULTS (18+)

FROM THE 2014 NATIONAL SURVEY ON DRUG USE AND HEALTH (NSDUH)

Behavioral health (substance use and mental health) issues affect millions in the United States each year.



SOURCE: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.



SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Recovery and Job Access

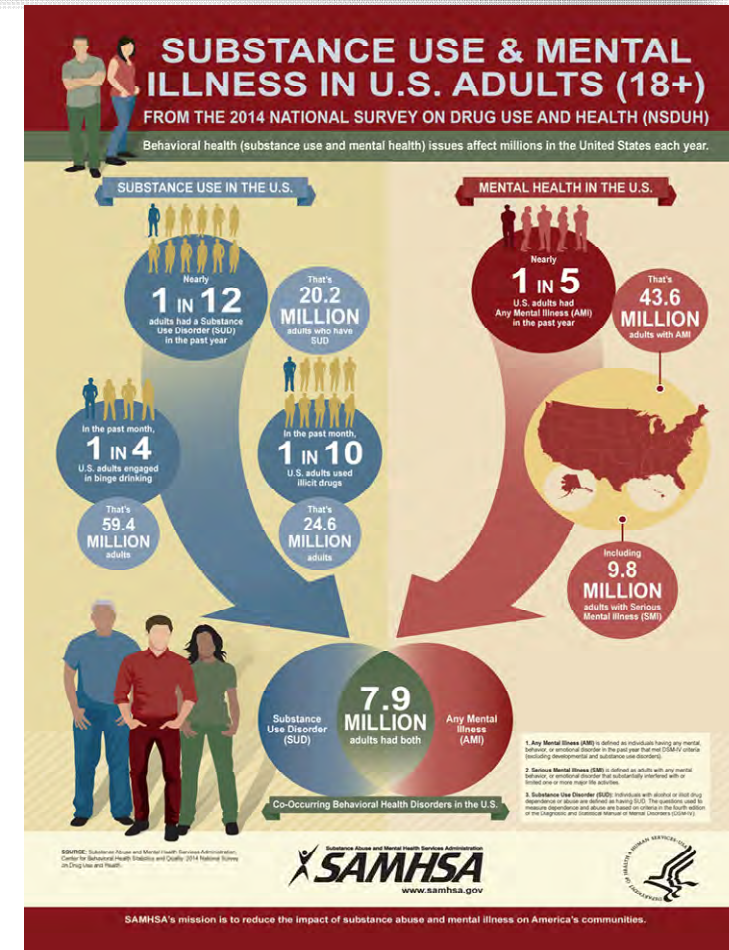


2nd Annual VT E&D Summit June 18, 2021

- 160k Federal, 160k State, 320K total program funds to cover costs for recovery and job access.
- Memorandum of Understanding between AHS and Vtrans to split the 50% State match.
- Service began in September 2019 in partnership with Rural Community Transportation (RCT) and recovery centers in Newport, St. Johnsbury and Morrisville.

Recovery and Job Access Expansion

- Second pilot started January 2020 in partnership with Marble Valley Regional Transit District and the Rutland recovery center.
- Pilot has now been expanded to all rural locations on a statewide level. Not eligible in Chittenden County.



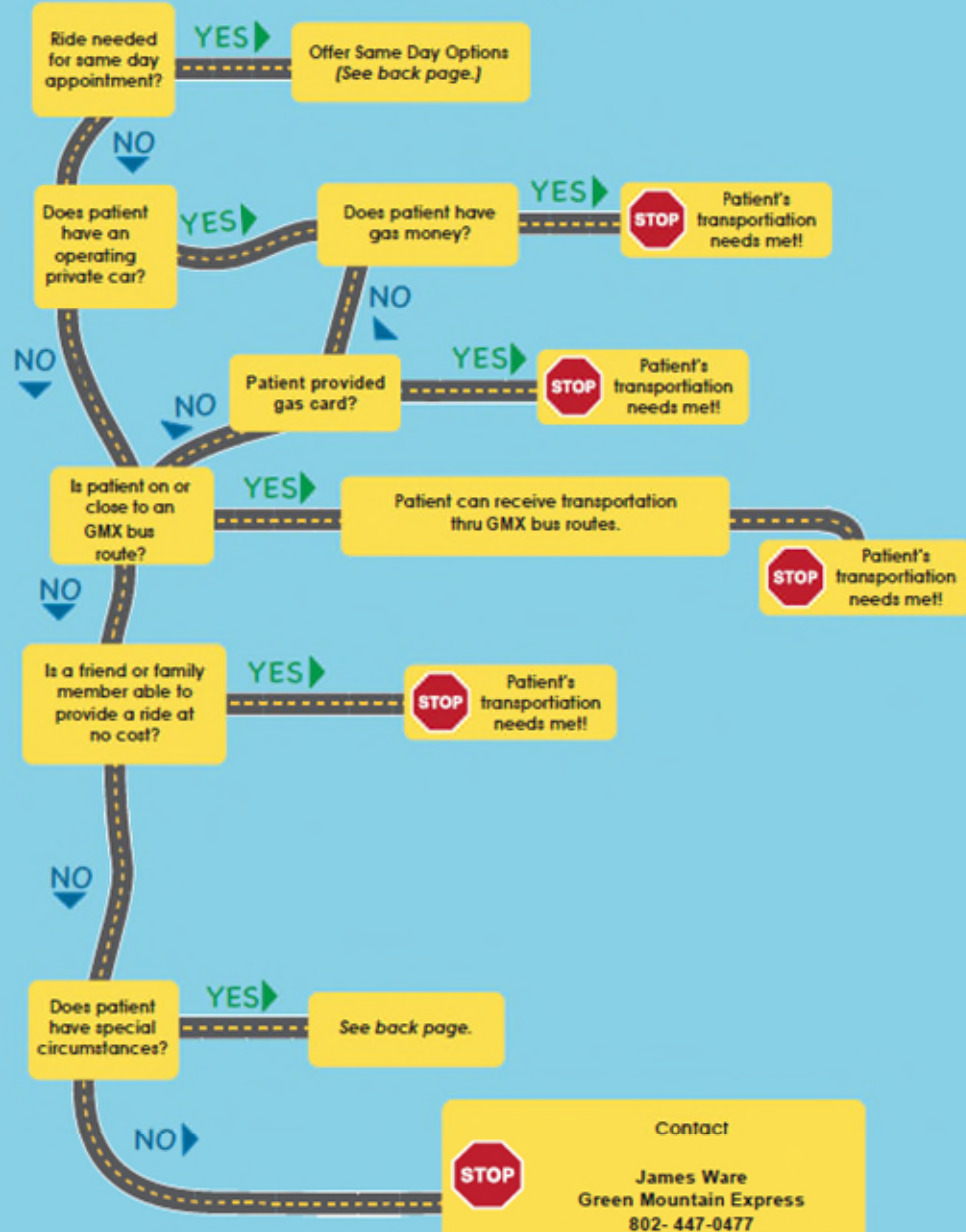
Recovery and Job Access

About the program

- Program intended to cover trips not eligible under Medicaid or Elders and Persons with Disabilities(E&D) demand response (dial-a-ride) programs.
- Pilot not designed to shift costs from Medicaid and E&D eligible trips.
- Intent of pilot is to reduce barriers to transportation for those suffering from substance use or on the fence about entering a recovery program.
- Written standard operating procedures developed for each region including billing/reporting requirements and trip eligibility determinations.
- Standard eligibility decision tree (Roadmap) developed specific to each region.

“Recovery and Job Access” Roadmap

Bennington County



Same Day Appointment Transportation Options:

There are limited resources for transportation needs identified as short notice. The Program Manager(s) at Turning Point will work with GMX to accommodate as many of these trips as possible. These options may include Turning Point or GMX providing the trip or providing a gas card for patients that have a working vehicle and need financial assistance.

Special Circumstances

People having special circumstances may qualify for certain transportation services:

Visual Impairment: The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be able to provide transportation for medical appointments, social services, and shopping. Call them at 802-775-6452.

Over 60 years of age or disabled: Call Green Mountain Express at 802-447-0477.

Reach Up recipients: Call 1-800-479-6151

Churches: Some area churches will help members with transportation needs.

Vermont 2-1-1: Dial 2-1-1 for help with transportation for destinations outside our area.

Ride Allotment: Rides for Treatment and Recovery should be capped to three days while medicaid and other programs are evaluated for rider eligibility. Rides for Job Access should be capped to two weeks (10 days). Additional days can be provided on a case by case bases.

Medicaid Special Circumstances:

People may be eligible for transportation under Medicaid if they have a vehicle, but it is not in working condition. They may need to get a letter from a licensed auto mechanic stating what is wrong with their vehicle and send the letter to Medicaid. If approved, GMX may be able to provide transportation.

People may also be eligible for mileage reimbursement if they cannot afford gas. There are requirements and restrictions that apply.

Other Resources:

Good News Garage has a limited number of vehicles for sale at low cost. They also provide low cost repair service for working adults. Restrictions apply. Visit goodnewsgarage.org or call 802-864-3667 for more information.

Recovery and Job Access

More details

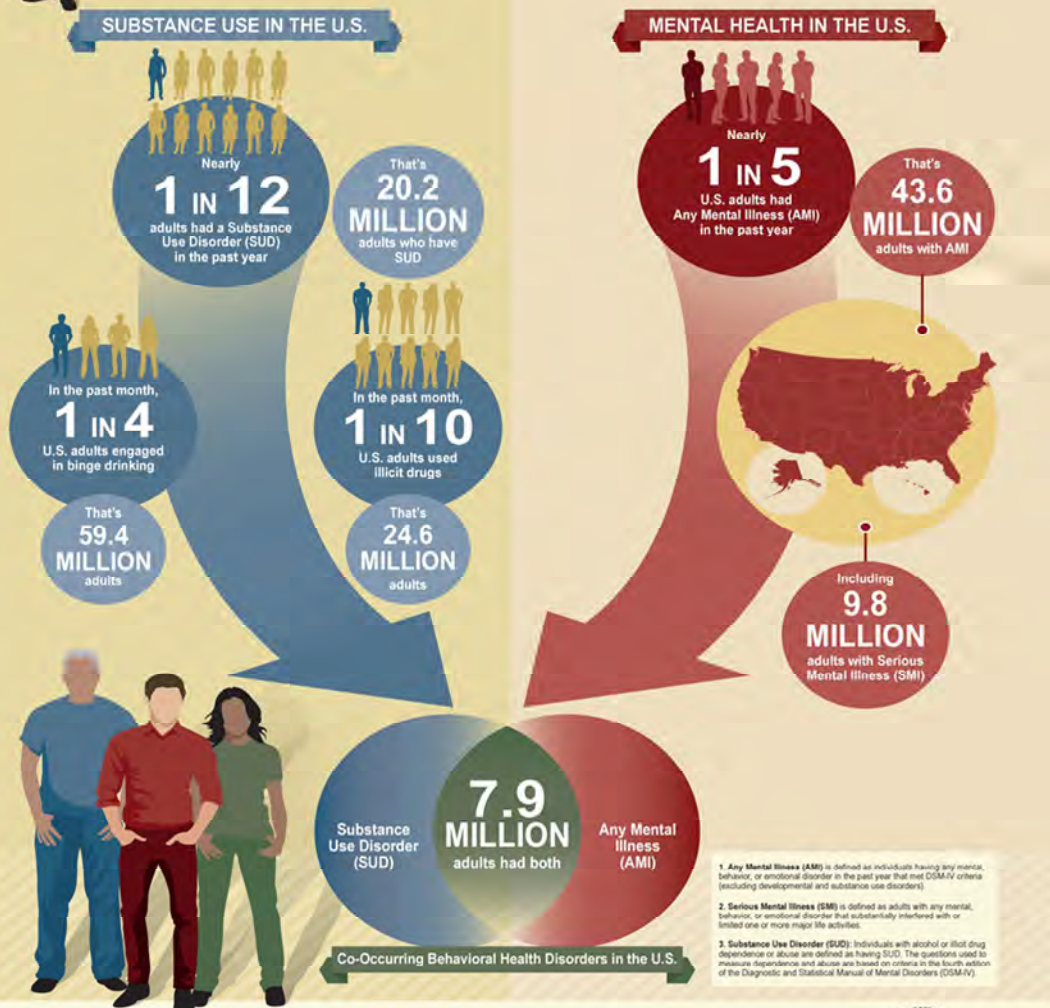
- Program not as stringent as Medicaid NEMT guidelines. No paperwork required from client. Recovery centers work directly with transit providers in determining client eligibility.
- Recovery center personal choice drivers allowed for situations when a client needs a ride on short notice. Recovery centers work directly with the transit providers to complete the necessary requirements.
- Gas cards are an eligible expense, but they must be purely gas cards to avoid misuse. Cards can be purchased by either the transit provider or the recovery centers.
- Client surveys underway in addition to the trip detail reports as this is a research grant and the Federal Transit Administration is collecting data.



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Behavioral health (substance use and mental health) issues affect millions in the United States each year.



SOURCE: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health



SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Recovery and Job Access – Questions?



2nd Annual VT E&D Summit June 18, 2021

More information available at: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/recovery-job-access>

Questions?

Rides to Wellness Program



- In September 2016 VTrans was awarded \$170,000 Federal to develop a program to train staff at Community Health Services to act as mobility managers. The scope of the application and award was specific to two pilot projects in the Mt. Ascutney and St. Johnsbury regions of Vermont.

Rides to Wellness (R2W) Program Goals and Measures

The ultimate goals of the program are the following:

- A. To improve health outcomes for the vulnerable populations that use community health centers
- B. To reduce the use of emergency services, thereby saving additional resources.
- C. To improve financial performance for health centers, hospitals and funding programs (such as Medicaid) by reducing missed appointments

An unmet transportation need

A real life example

- An elderly patient with a chronic health condition called stating his condition had worsened. The health provider offered several appointments for same day or next-day service. The patient did not feel well enough to drive his car or to navigate his way to an appointment. He was unable to use dial-a-ride transportation service because it required 2-day advance scheduling.
- With no other options, the patient was delayed in seeing his doctor for required antibiotics, which was discovered after he called an ambulance the following weekend to be taken to the Emergency Department (ED), which then had to arrange for his transportation home. The cost of the ambulance transport and ED visit exceeded \$1,500. A taxi ride, office visit, antibiotics and follow-up phone call by his primary care office 2 days before would have cost less than \$300.

Rides to Wellness (R2W) Program Five Vermont Pilots

The Rides to Wellness pilot project has now been implemented in partnership with Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Lamoille Health Care Partners, Gifford Health Care, Porter Medical Center and the most active and successful pilot with Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center in Windsor Vermont.

While Rides to Wellness pilot is winding down, VTrans has committed additional conventional funding to the Mt. Ascutney pilot for SFY23

Rides to Wellness (R2W) Program

More info and questions?

More information available at:

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/rides-to-wellness>

Questions?

Lunch



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Microtransit Initiatives & Pilot Projects



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Stephen Falbel
Founder and President
Steadman Hill Consulting

Jamie Smith
Director of Marketing and Planning
Green Mountain Transit

Overview

- MyRide by GMT pilot project in Montpelier and Berlin
 - Project launch
 - Performance statistics
 - Results of one-year evaluation
 - Near-term actions
- Feasibility studies and future implementations
- Impacts on the E&D program

MyRide by GMT

- Initiated in January 2021
- Replaced three deviated fixed routes
 - Montpelier Hospital Hill (hourly service Mon-Sat 6A-6P)
 - Montpelier Circulator (hourly service Mon-Fri 7A-6P)
 - Capital Shuttle (20-minute service 7:20A-5:20P when legislature in session)
- Three buses in service from 6A-6P
- Operated with 12-passenger cutaways and GMT drivers
- Out of 11 proposals for the software contract, Via Mobility was the winner

Service Launch

- Significant outreach to existing riders on Hospital Hill and Circulator
 - Passenger survey
 - One-to-one contact with GMT staff and Sustainable Montpelier Coalition
 - Priority was to avoid harm to these passengers
- Treated as a “soft launch”
 - No major outreach to the broader community
 - COVID restrictions with passenger limits were in place
- Bumps along the learning curve
 - Many “trip unavailable” errors
 - Driver breaks were tripping up the system
- Early ridership figures similar to those on prior fixed routes

Statistical Overview

41k+

Rides Completed since the launch of the service

1,309

Active Riders have taken a ride with service since launch

3.0

Average Utilization measured as trips per vehicle per hour

91%

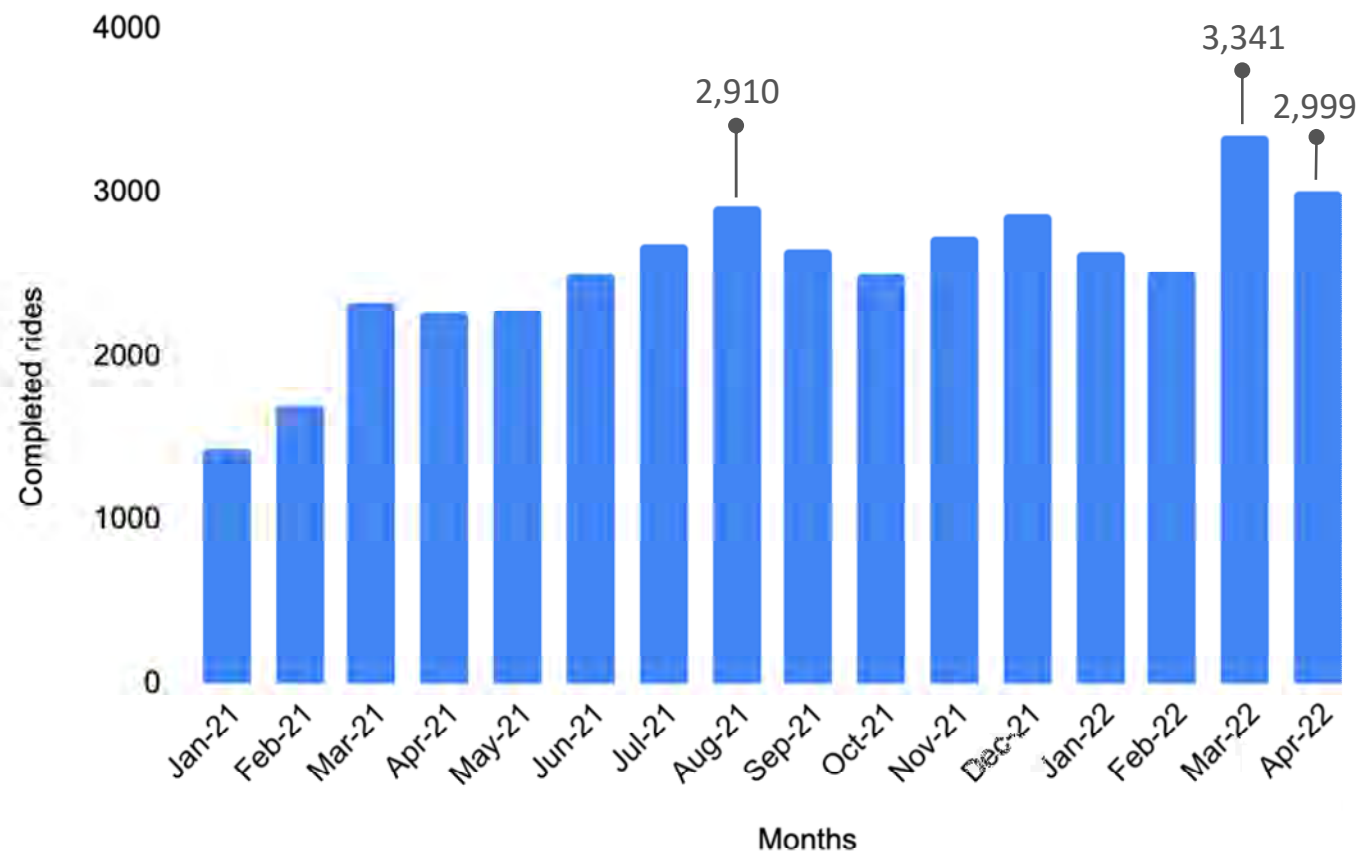
On-time performance with riders being picked up within 5 minutes of the communicated pick up time

97%

Met demand, with most unfulfilled requests occurring at the end of service between 5-6pm

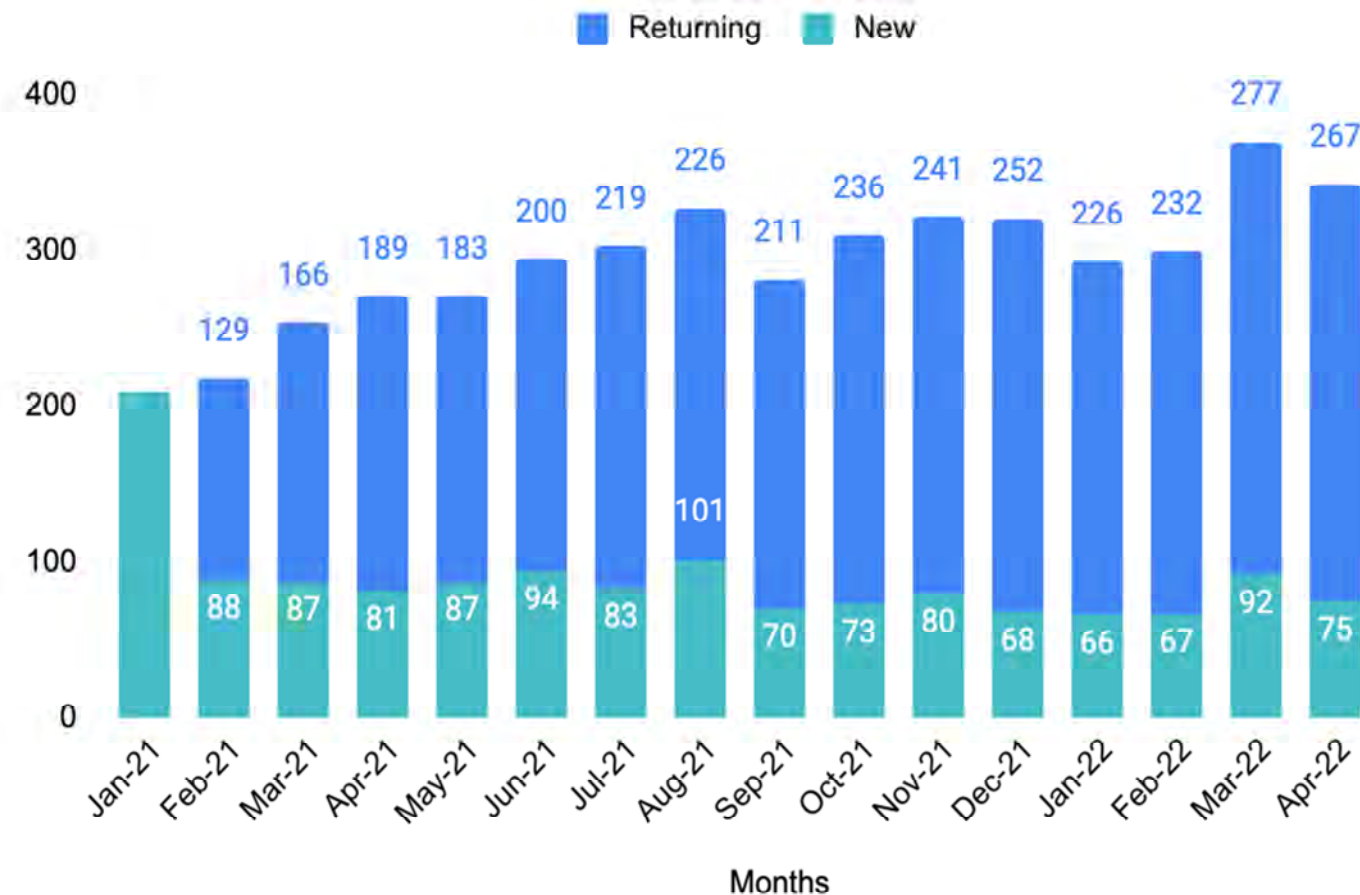
Monthly Completed Rides

- Ongoing period of growth in volume of completed rides
- Peak monthly completed rides in March 2022



Rider Growth

- **Consistent addition** of new riders month over month
- Increasing base of returning riders **indicates growth of regular ridership**



One-Year Evaluation

- Interviews with GMT staff (Planning, Operations, CSRs, Drivers)
- Interviews with external stakeholders
 - Sustainable Montpelier Coalition
 - Vermont Center for Independent Living
 - Washington County Mental Health
 - Via staff
- Operational analysis of travel patterns
- Goals
 - Document lessons learned
 - Identify challenges
 - Recommend improvements

Lessons Learned

- Transition for riders of fixed routes was difficult in spite of outreach
 - Technology a significant barrier for many
 - About half of trips were reserved via call center rather than smartphone app
 - Numerous complaints from residents of Lane Shops (former terminus of MHH)
 - Many riders of prior routes no longer use the system
- New users are very positive about the service
 - Appreciate flexibility of routing and schedule
 - Open to using technology
- Time sensitivity a key factor
 - Service works better for shopping/social trips
 - Commuters and riders making bus connections can be frustrated by time variability

Challenges for MyRide

- Scale
 - Operation with only 3 vehicles (now 4 during peaks) leaves no room for error
- Human element
 - Riders game the system with multiple reservations; no penalty for no-shows or cancellations
 - Drivers don't always follow the guidance on the tablet
 - May choose a different path
 - May try to change the order of pickups and drop-offs
- Meshing pre-booked with on-demand trips leads to inefficiencies
- School trips
 - Students game the system more than others
 - Congestion at Montpelier High School at 3:00

The Vehicle Dilemma

- GMT did not have time or funds to acquire a specialized fleet
- Cutaways are not appropriate vehicles
 - MyRide never carries more than 4 passengers at a time (usually 1 or 2) because of time constraints built into the algorithm and limited demand density
 - 12-passenger vehicles are mostly empty all the time
 - Vehicles are noisy and uncomfortable on rough roads and get poor mileage
 - They are hard to maneuver and have poor visibility for drivers
- If service becomes permanent, GMT will acquire smaller vehicles (accessible vans)

The Algorithm

- Most of the drivers have little faith in the algorithm
 - Experience what feels like inefficient routing every day
 - Often see two vehicles running together
- Via working with GMT to tweak parameters and improve efficiency
- When drivers “disobey” the tablet, it undermines the algorithm and makes efficiency worse
- Trips that used to be grouped together on hourly fixed-route trips may now cause the bus to make several trips within one hour
 - The benefit and the curse of flexibility

Recommended Improvements

- Reinststate the Montpelier Hospital Hill route
 - A linear route that served low-technology population
 - Regroups those trips that result in a lot of "dead" miles for MyRide going up and down the hill
 - Revised alignment to serve trip patterns evident in MyRide data
 - Hilltop Inn to BAART, Walmart and Shaws
 - Avoid many deviations that plagued former MHH route
- Consider a fare for intermunicipal trips, except for ADA passengers
- Avoid MHS at 3:00 p.m. due to congestion
- Seek to incorporate "time sensitivity" parameter into algorithm

Potential Barre MyRide Service

- Feasibility study recommended microtransit for Barre City and portions of Barre Town
- Likely to be funded in FY 2023
- Maintain Barre Hospital Hill service
- Together with reconfigured Montpelier MyRide, could serve as ADA paratransit for City Route corridor, allowing for regular fixed-route operation

Microtransit Expansion in Vermont

- Twelve feasibility studies undertaken in FY 2022 (including Barre)
- Five new pilot projects likely to be funded in FY 2023
 - Barre
 - Windsor
 - Manchester
 - Middlebury
 - Morrisville
- Diverse range of communities intended to test microtransit in a variety of environments
- Further expansion expected in future years

Impacts of Microtransit on E&D

- For MyRide pilot project, E&D program has seen a benefit
 - E&D rides within MyRide zone are handled by MyRide
 - Frees up funding for additional E&D rides outside of zone
- E&D riders have seen additional benefits
 - Most E&D passengers continue to use call center to reserve trips
 - Those open to technology can reap benefit of smartphone app
 - Now possible (by call center or app) to reserve E&D trip on demand
- Any distinction between E&D and other passengers within the microtransit zone is meaningless as long as there is no fare

Considerations for Future Pilot Projects

- Critical to maintain call center capacity and procedure for E&D riders
- Benefit of freeing up E&D funds can happen elsewhere
- Benefit of requesting trips on demand rather than day before accrues to riders within microtransit zones
- Software may face issues in properly attributing rides to various programs (E&D, NEMT, general)
 - Less of an issue in fare-free environment
 - Vendors promise there will be a solution

Breakout Sessions



3rd Annual Vermont E&D Summit
June 03, 2022

Transit Finance Briefing

Stephen Falbel
Founder and President
Steadman Hill Consulting



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Overview of Study

- Goal
 - Find sustainable source of revenue to maintain current service levels and leverage new federal funds to increase transit access for all Vermonters
- Scope
 - Conduct research on means of funding public transit
 - Consider replacement for, or supplement to existing revenue sources
 - Local funding based on property taxes (already overburdened and constrained)
 - State funding from T-fund
 - Fare revenue (suspended since March 2020)
 - Consider public-private partnerships
 - Statewide reach

Statewide Transit Access

- Currently only a third of Vermont towns are served by a bus route
- All Vermont towns have access to E&D and NEMT, but general public access is limited
- Non-riders already pay for transit service through property taxes and T-fund
- More explicit statewide funding implies an expansion of rural service
 - VTrans developing “Community Rides” concept to cover work trips, as well as other purposes
 - Likely will make extensive use of volunteer drivers, assisted by technology, perhaps with vehicles supplied through a public-private partnership

Potential Funding Replacement

- Total local funding in Vermont (mainly property taxes)
 - About \$6 million per year
- Total state funding (from the T-fund)
 - About \$7 million per year
- Total fare revenue (based on FY 2019)
 - About \$2.7 million per year
 - \$2.2 million in Chittenden County
 - \$522,000 for the rest of Vermont
- Include an extra \$5 million for service expansion in rural areas
- Total target: \$21 million annually

Alternatives

- Sales tax – common means of funding transit nationally
- Payroll tax on employers – recognition of transit’s role in job access
- Business revenue assessment – transit supports the economy
- County property tax – spread burden among all landowners, not just those in “served” towns
- Income tax – progressive option, but very challenging politically
- Utility fee – \$3 per month average fee on residential users; \$14 per month average fee on commercial/industrial users
- Property transfer tax – progressive but spread widely only in the long run
- Mortgage recording tax – used in NY; progressive but may miss very wealthy

Evaluation of Alternatives

Potential Funding Source	Rate/ Rate Increase	Stability of Revenue	Ease of Implementation	Political Feasibility	Equity	Total Score
Sales Tax	0.25%	-1	+2	-1	-2	-2
Payroll Tax on Employers	0.20%	+1	-1	0	+1	+1
Business Revenue Assessment	TBD <0.20%	0	-2	-1	+1	-2
County Property Tax	\$0.23 per \$1,000	+2	+1	-2	+1	+2
Income Tax	0.05%	0	+2	-2	+2	+2
Utility Fee	\$0.0053 per kWh	+2	+1	0	+1	+4
Property Transfer Tax	0.55%	0	+2	-1	+1	+2
Mortgage Recording Fee	\$0.75 per \$100	0	-1	-1	0	-2

Closing Remarks



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- Looking for more information? See here for today's PowerPoint: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/public-transit/E-and-D>. A summary of the discussion groups will also be posted within the next 2 weeks.
- Please answer the evaluation survey – either on paper today, or via online next week!