



Regional Coordination Council (RCC7)

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 12/28/2023

Attendees:

In Person:

Janet Langdell, SVTC Mobility & Planning Manager
Teri Palmer, Statewide Mobility Manager
Shane Adkinson, Student, NCC
Sherry Dutzy, State Representative, Nashua, NH
Don Paré, Gate City Bike Co-op
Dawn Schneider, Servicelink
Marina Vaz, Conservation Law Foundation

Remote:

Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack Welfare Dept.
Camille Correa, Nashua Transit System
Mike Apfelberg, United Way of Greater Nashua
Janice Pack, Town of Wilton
Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System
Maggie Hinkle, The Plus Company
Heleene Agrella, Meals on Wheels

NRPC Staff:

Donna Marceau, Mobility Manager
Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator
Kathy Kirby, Administrative/Communications Assistant

1. Call to Order

Marceau opened the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

2. Introductions and Community Updates

Introductions were done with in-person and remote participants.

On behalf of the United Way of Greater Nashua, Donna Marceau arranged for a donation collection box for items for the elderly at 30 Temple Street, Nashua.

Camille Correa updated everyone that the Nashua Transit Authority is currently in the process of conducting the December passenger surveys. Correa asked if they know any regular NTS users, to please ask them to fill out a survey. There will be surveys coming up for demand response. Thank you to everyone who helped us with the October Event. We look forward to doing it again in the future.

3. Review October 26, 2023 meeting minutes

Marceau asked for any corrections to the October 26, 2023, meeting minutes.

The header on page 2 – needs an updated date.

First bullet on page 2 – for two days not the entire week; substitute “days were not preannounced”.

At the section called *SCC Update*, the 4th line down – delete “with discussion,” stopping at “regarding what people thought about the bylaws and...” and add *to solicit input*. Delete the rest of the sentence. Further on, at the sentence starting with “Originally...” delete the rest of the sentence and insert: *we were instructed to start with regional bylaws*.

Page 5 – delete”10.” Change the name of the discussion to *Volunteer Driver Subcommittee Discussion*. A motion on these minutes has been held for the next meeting.

4. Hillsborough County – State Representative Sherry Dutzy (10:12)

There was supposed to be a meeting with NTS, MTS, the Superintendent of Corrections, and the Director of the Nursing Home, to come up with a plan regarding: how we can provide transportation for workforce development, and more specifically for the nursing home. Correa stated Donna (Marceau) and I spoke with some of the people at the Hillsborough House of Corrections and they are looking for transportation to Nashua for people when they are released so that they can access the Nashua Transit System (NTS). They should receive some NTS bus tickets and a copy of the Community Transportation directory as a head start on finding support. There was a caseworker there that was awesome. We did not meet with David Ross from the Hillsborough County Nursing Home. That (discussion) would be about establishing bus transportation from Manchester out to Goffstown. Most people go to Manchester, Nashua, or Hudson. Bus service to Londonderry is not a good option because there are no services there for job searching. We tried to impress upon them to give some money to NTS to support the Hudson line. Shane Adkinson agreed that it is important to have access to transportation that offers access to services. Lockers would be great to have at the transit center. Correa stated they said they were going to follow up with MTA about the nursing home. They felt it may be an option but they need to understand exactly what is needed. Correa provided feedback to them regarding how to use the service, especially since the NTS has ride guides. But it is important to train people who can train the people being released. There are some areas further out areas where people may be landing (couch surfing) that should be addressed. Joe Costanza, Superintendent of Corrections, is going to follow up with Kerry Miller to discuss the option. Palmer asked if NTS goes to Hudson and Marceau stated that it can be arranged on demand. Riders need to call the dispatch and set it up for the rider. Adkinson stated that many young people are on a waiting list for on-demand rides. Correa stated that she was not aware of a waiting list for people who wanted to go to NCC. NTS can go to NCC and educate the staff on how the system works so that the correct information is imparted. Correa was made aware by her NCC contacts that there were issues for some students – that it was taking too long to transfer from one bus to another. Adkinson stated that if people released from correctional facilities have access to transit to NCC, that would help decrease the recidivism rate. Adkinson stated that he had to fill out a form stating where he lives in Hudson and was told that there was a waiting list to get the bus to NCC. Correa asked that Adkinson speak further about this experience and Correa will review the issue. Miller stated that it is all about getting out there and educating people about what is available. Langdell stated people at the correctional facility know that they can purchase bus passes. The issue is about the coordination – how we fund and have a process for the bulk of the people that need to get places, and another system for the outliers. Dutzy stated there is a nursing program at NCC. The nursing home needs those people. There is a need to get employees to Market Basket, so that brings up a bigger conversation. She stated she would follow up with Kerry, Superintendent Costanza, and Director Ross and see how we might be able to connect. In four or five months the budgeting process starts again so at that point Dutzy stated she needs everyone to think about having her bring forth a proposal for small revenue (a grant) to a special projects subcommittee. Dutzy asked if we should be funding an additional \$100K for workforce transportation or something like that. There might be ARPA funds left over that we can use. Since Nashua chairs Hillsborough County, it might be a good option to get some new ideas pushed through. The three county commissioners are all going to be up for election this year and transportation and housing are key for representatives up for re-election. They are reactive so we need to provide these requests. Waitkins stated the funding should be a combination of specific projects but also the county should budget “X” amount of dollars for community transportation, there needs to be a match at the local level. That is how it works. The state is not good at community transportation. Dutzy stated that you need to present that to the people who make the decisions, specifically what your transportation needs are and the kind of funding you need. Present that to the

county commissioners, and I am involved in it, I will work with the County Commissioners and Executive Committee to see what we may be able to do. Teri Palmer requested that she include Correa, Langdell, and anybody else that's in the county who is in the process. Teri Palmer explained that we just got done with the GACIT process so we know what our 10-year plans are. We can determine what amount of match money we need, and ask for it. Langdell stated if you never ask for it, they will never give it.

5. Regional Transportation Provider Updates

NTS: Correa gave the update for NTS. There is nothing new from last month. We are still running the same number of fixed routes. If there are any questions about Hudson or Merrimack transportation, please give Correa a call. NTS is trying to get feedback moving forward on the Long Range Plan, and Local Coordinator's Plan on unmet needs and coordinate those together with Marceau and Waitkins so we don't miss anything. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is going to come to fruition. Please read your section and make sure it is accurate for Matt. Thank you for helping with the NTS Rider surveys. NTS exceeded the number they thought they would receive. NTS is always looking for grant and match funding and looking to expand. Correa read the minutes and saw there was a discussion on gaps and would like to get together and fill those gaps. Correa stated they will be releasing an RFP for the tech enhancement grant which includes new software including micro transit with expansion possibilities throughout the area. Microtransit is an on-demand service, or you could take a fixed route with fewer people riding, and therefore a smaller vehicle is used to pick up people on an existing route. It would depend upon the software we get. If the software includes drop & drag capability, that's not a problem. If there is an area that we are serving that we need to get expand a boundary by three or four streets, then people would be able to know the pick-ups from one area to the next area, similar to a Hudson to Nashua or Merrimack to Hudson, then people would be able to, for example, in Hudson would have a boundary area, and we could get people to Nashua. Unlike Uber, we would define that area in the beginning and then we would expand based on what Hudson would provide. It's a shared ride service. It is not an individualized service that requires additional funding. Correa is aware a balance is needed as not everyone fits into one type of transportation. Miller mentioned that Upper Valley acquired the software. Advanced Transit includes the re-zoning capability. Correa stated they are looking into software that will help riders so they can track the bus and be more interactive with the transit system. We are trying to write the specs so that the software can meet future requirements. Adkinson stated that he already pays an additional \$5 for on-demand rides, and gave some ideas needed to increase transit riders' safety and comfort. Miller stated the local internet provider was recently awarded funding to expand the number of hot spots in many areas where people gather. Waitkins commented if there was an option for a rider to go from Merrimack or Milford to Nashua, as part of our service area that would be good. Langdell stated if we had a plan to grade the funding, then we could integrate the on-demand services we already have in place.

SVTC: it is running fine. Still getting new applications from new individuals every month. There was a nice article in the Telegraph in which she was mentioned, but she was misquoted. Langdell clarified she did not say that SVTC was expanding service to Lyndeborough. Rather, what she said was that we are looking for champions to help us design a volunteer driver program to incorporate Lyndeborough to Peterborough – go west because not everyone wants to go east.

Gate City Bike Co-op (Don Paré): The Co-op has had a few individuals who have just arrived from correctional facilities to get a bike because they cannot get a license to drive a car. There have been half a dozen people in the last two years who are living in rehabilitation homes that need independent transportation. It is very rewarding to see these people get a bike, helmet, etc. The Co-op is trying to make it safe for those people – if they did not get the bike, they would be driving a car without a license. Then if they get caught they would be back in jail in 6 months. The Co-op takes the vouchers from non-profit service providers that state the person who comes for a bike is entitled to a good working bike. Paré explained that they don't label people. The Co-op has bikes they cannibalize and those they fix up that are road-worthy. Adkinson stated in such cases Paré mentioned, the bike is a privilege and needs lights. Those people who have experience working on bikes and

who have come up in the correctional system know that chains, tubes, etc. are necessary. If such individuals could be allowed to learn from the Co-op, that would go a long way. Dutzy thanked Don Paré and the Bike Co-op: "Because of you, we were able to start a bike program." They have 3 individuals who will be graduating soon because there are employers who are willing to hire them afterward. Carroll County is looking to make the program sustainable beyond the next five years. Paré stated that the Co-op has been operating for just over six years and has given out just over 3,000 bikes. The Co-op is beneficial for both clients, workers, and volunteers. Dutzy asked if there was an education program on how to ride a bike and if not, would he consider one. She gave an example of a biker going the wrong way that she almost hit. Paré stated that Rivier University asked the Co-op to do a maintenance/repair program that will be on Zoom. It is for individuals in the RISE program. Waitkins added that the Bike/Walk Alliance of NH and the Safe Routes to School program has hosted safe biking events. Many stated that it would be great to expand the program to adults. Miller said she has a contact she can reach out to that may help to make it happen.

Marceau gave a State Coordinating Council (SCC) update. She had a meeting with them on December 7, and there was an update from the DOT who reported they realize the value of the mobility management network thanks to everyone here. They are going forward with the RLS contract again. It may have to be braided funding. Palmer stated as of June 2024, the Mobility Manager network will fall under the NHDOT umbrella and it will be funding the NH Mobility Management Network, including the eight regional mobility managers and the state mobility manager. Presently, the State Mobility Manager funding comes out of the RTAP (training) funding. So now they are separating the State Mobility Manager (as a standalone from the NHDOT) from the training program funding. Waitkins asked if she knew the funding source. Palmer stated she thinks it is the 5310, but not sure. She stated that Dutzy was asking for toll credits for the match. \$1.2 million will be going toward Mobility Managers' salaries and fringe so she needs to determine what we really need. She will be coming up with a mobility manager salary matrix because the costs differ for managers. The matrix will guide her as to what the funding request should be going forward. She does not know how the urbans are going to be paid. Waitkins stated the current RCC 5310 contract goes through a year from June 2024. Palmer responded that they don't get enough 5310 funding from that source for trips, and they have looked at other sources. Some states use 5311 funds for mobility management. There are options on the table and we have six months to look into additional funding sources.

Marceau reported she discussed Transport NH, the statewide website. It will be standardized and all the RCCs will get their information to Transport NH. Langdell commented there will be three separate websites. Waitkins said RCC will still have its page on the NRPC website. Marceau stated that it did not sound that way. It sounds like it will be moving over. Langdell stated that it is a decision for the region and for us to have a conversation about it.

Marceau stated that the SCC annual report needs to be written; they were looking for volunteers. So she is going to be working on it. It's to be completed by June 30, 2024.

The Sustainable Subcommittee meeting was supposed to be held on December 15, but it was canceled.

There was a proposal for a Healthcare Transportation Task Force meeting. She has more information about it in her report.

6. SCC Update - RCC By-laws Discussion – Janet Langdell

Langdell has been working with the SCC Governance Committee, which has been charged with looking at the SCC and RCC bylaws for updating. They were going to start with the SCC bylaws but were redirected to create a template that is uniform to all RCCs. They have been working on it for a year. They held a listening session and are now on draft version 21. It will be reviewed by the SCC at their January meeting. A copy will be sent to all present after the meeting. She requested everyone review the document. Depending on the outcome, she

along with Waitkins and Marceau will be taking a look at this to see how they can craft the bylaws for Region 7. It is an amalgam of examples from all regions across the state, also taking into consideration the pieces that are in the RSAs, including Right to Know laws which are constraints, because not being a 501c3 non-profit which would not have any of those rules attached to them. Langdell stated that this was an introduction and you will be hearing more about this at the next meeting.

Palmer asked for confirmation regarding the amendment process. From what she understands, the SCC has already adopted the bylaws, and that they can be amended. But if you want to amend bylaws to make it region-specific, those amendments would have to be sent to the Governance Committee which would vote on them, sending them on to the SCC, where they would be accepted or denied. Langdell stated that she anticipates the process will be discussed at the January meeting. The next to the last page of the document explains the process and we need to review the document. Langdell does not think the document is incorrect for the region. She reviewed it with Jay Minkarah, NRPC Executive Director, and he didn't have any pushback. Some pushback came from other RCCs, but that was before version 21. But there has been a change in position on how strongly the current chair at the state level feels about these and now he questions the SCC's ability to enforce the by-laws. Langdell thinks this would be a good template that will help us update our MOU. There are only six organizations that come to the meetings regularly out of the original thirteen that indicated interest in becoming members from back in 2008. So we need to revise and re-invite organizations to come to our meetings. If you have any questions about the document, contact me and Donna Marceau. Marceau thanked Langdell for all her work on it. The RCC bylaws need to be on next month's agenda. Marceau stated all the organizations we work with, i.e. ServiceLink, can be part of the discussion too.

Dawn Schneider, the ServiceLink representative, gave an overview of her organization. They are an aging and disability resource center. They provide education and information to navigate available services. They provide people with long-term care options and counseling for people that are needed to place a loved one in a nursing facility. They have contracts with the State of NH to be the official "ship" office, and because of this, they have the State health insurance program. They help a lot of people with their Medicare and the state Medicaid program.

7. Regional Mobility Manager Update

Marceau gave the monthly update. At the last statewide meeting, they focused on performance measurements, number of rides, referrals, number of trips, missed trips – they are tracking what is being missed out there. After COVID, it is difficult to recruit volunteer drivers. It has been difficult getting transportation outside cities so that brings up how housing and transportation are intertwined. Marceau went to the Hillsborough County Nursing Home and Department of Correction with Correa. Her focus was on senior events. There has been a lot of senior fraud – it's happening a lot in NH. She went to the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging meeting. They are going through a 10-year plan which includes transportation. She also went to the listening sessions conducted by the Cambridge-based Human Services Research Institute which wants to know what is going on with the seniors in the state. She had a good conversation with a woman there and they are planning to do something about the increased need for senior services due to the expanding senior population.

Marceau went to libraries including Hudson, Pelham, and Merrimack, as well as Amherst for a veterans event. Nashua stated they were too busy. She will do more in the western part of the region. The point is to connect with younger seniors who don't feel old. Since the last RCC meeting, there have been 25 requests for help including medical and adult day care. She spent time on the Merrimack/Hudson situation. The funding is not there. She stated Adkinson mentioned a waiting list and she has taken phone calls about the situation in Hudson. What is happening is that they do not get enough funding to cover everything so they have set up a waiting list. There seems there is a gap in funding - \$9,909, according to Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack. Murphy stated that NTS hadn't informed them that they were going to be running out of money (\$24,904) to operate through June 30, 2024. She stated they need \$9,909, to get through our fiscal year on June 30. They sat down with NTS to go over why the shortfall. Camille gave them the statistics. Merrimack's town manager went

back to try to find more money and gave them an additional \$15,000, but Murphy stated she was not sure it would be enough. She stated they need \$50,000 - \$60,000 to finish off the welfare program's fiscal year. They created a waitlist for riders with non-medical reasons for rides. They are prioritizing people who need medical rides. Marceau stated she called Hudson many times but her contact has not called her back. She senses that NTS has a waiting list for Hudson. Langdell stated there has been an increase in NTS rates which was not budgeted for by towns and that is why there is a shortfall in towns. NTS is challenged by trying to figure out what the budget should be nine months in advance due to a difference in the budget cycles/fiscal year. Langdell stated that we all have to deal with our revenue on a month-to-month basis and budget accordingly. Post-pandemic, NTS costs have gone up and they have to pass it on because their funding is in part from the federal government. The latest census numbers have shown growth in our region and throughout the state. Marceau presented at the Federal Transportation Administration site visit last month. They seemed happy. She made some quick calls for the Gate City Bike Co-op and compiled the annual report draft. Please read it and get back to Marceau with comments. Marceau distributed the Annual Report.

Palmer stated on January 17 from 1 -3 p.m. a NHDOT required agency training session for agencies that provide performance measurement numbers to Marceau. There will be an email coming. Documents will be sent out next Tuesday before the January 17 meeting. There will be a virtual Mobility Manager meeting after that training to work on a mobility manager blueprint update.

Langdell stated we did have a meeting of our Mobility Gap subcommittee at the end of this RCC7 monthly meeting (December). It was not on the December meeting agenda, but it should be recognized so we do not lose sight of it in 2024.

Correa asked Palmer to help with the coordination of the next step for the transportation meeting so that we can discuss funding – how we will apply (as a group or separately) and our goals. Palmer agreed and stated Mike should be part of the discussion as it is countywide.

8. Other Transportation Issues or Concerns

Marceau asked the attendees if they had any and there were none.

9. Holiday Raffles

Vaz pulled names. Attendees picked out what they wanted from the collection of prizes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m. Next meeting: January 25, 2024

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Kirby, Administrative Assistant/Communication

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