

Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC7)

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 24, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Attendees:

In Person:

Janet Langdell, Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative
Sara Ceaser, United Way of Greater Nashua
Sun Puhle, H.E.A.R.T.S.
Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack
James Wilkie, Caregivers
Rocky Morelli, Opportunity Networks
Angelique Pandolph, Easter Seals NH
Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System
John Eriquezzo, Meals on Wheels
Brenda Perrier, Nashua Senior Center

Remote: not available

NRPC Staff:

Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator
Donna Marceau, Regional Mobility Manager - RCC7
Kathy Kirby, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Langdell called the meeting to order at 10:10. Zoom was not available for remote attendance/recording. Introductions were made by the attendees.

2. Approval of September 2024 meeting minutes

The September meeting minutes had one edit: delete "Carrie" and replace it with *Kerry* on page 2 in the NTS update. Angelique Pandolph made a motion to accept the minutes as edited. Pat Murphy seconded.

THAT the September 2024 RCC7 draft meeting minutes be approved as edited.

Approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Update: Informational – NHAHA documents (attached)

VDI Executive Summary document: Page 2 has a typo and a new one with the correct information will be sent out. The edit will be **186** communities.

Discussion ensued about combining the November and December meetings due to holiday conflicts. 12/19/24 was suggested. The rescheduled meeting is a combo meeting and should be after the NH DOT solicitation for the 5310 cycle. It will also give Donna and Matt additional time to get more contacts with community ride services for the Council. It was generally agreed to combine the next two RCC7 Council meetings into one meeting meeting on December 19, 2024.

4. October – NH Community Transportation Month – update

Marceau gave the RCC7 update and highlighted her activities during the October Community Transportation Month:

- The Great American Downtown committee members requested scarecrows from local Nashua businesses. RCC7 and NTS have scarecrows posted on lamplights in downtown Nashua – RCC7’s scarecrow is at the Main Street bridge over the Nashua River.
- Marceau was with NTS at a local café and raffled off NTS bus tickets. That day, Marceau saw the winner at the NTS downtown center.
- Helped a Nashua Soup Kitchen client get a car. Marceau knew of a car for sale and connected the client to make the purchase.
- CommuteSmart – Buses, Bikes, Brooms Challenge – NOTE: there was no update available at the meeting. However, as of October 24, there are 100 Challenge participants.
- Attended the *Walk to School* event in Nashua.
- Marceau made a presentation about community transportation at the TTAC (Transportation Technical Advisory Committee) meeting.
- October 4 was *Free Ride Friday* in Nashua. It was free to take a ride with NTS vehicles. Langdell mentioned that SVTC gave free rides to SVTC for the entire month. Eriquezzo asked if NTS or SVTC knew the costs. SVTC did fundraising to cover the costs; pre-registration was required. Waitkins stated that it would be a good idea to keep track of any “extra” riders during the time to see if there might be more riders if fares are reduced.
- Marceau attended (had a booth) at the Milford Pumpkin Festival. There were a lot of people from other states. She distributed literature related to the *Keep NH Moving* website to NH residents.
- Attended the Nashua Senior Center meeting.
- Attended the Elder Wrap meeting.
- Attended two listening sessions organized by Nashua Public Health. The purpose was to have people come and see what services people need. The focus was mostly on NTS. Attendees expressed being happy with NTS service.
- Next week – Kerry Miller is going to speak on the Nashua Cultural Connection. The focus will be on transportation for non-English-speaking residents and immigrants. NTS currently uses translation services.

Miller provided the NTS update for October’s Community Transportation Month:

- NTS held a travel training session in September at Nashua South High School. Many Nashua South High School students take the NTS bus to the downtown transit center during the school day.
- Another NTS training session was held at Clearway High School, an alternative school in Nashua.
- Correa did a Talking Transit session at the Transit Center. A table is set up to give people information who are at the Transit Center. This has replaced the meetings and is more of an outreach event.
- NTS 40th Anniversary – attended outreach and internal events.
- NTS also has a scarecrow made of old NTS bus stop signs. It is outside Santander Bank.

5. **RCC7 5310 Quarterly Update** – postponed. Data is lacking at this time. The billing is on track with the budget.

6. **Proposed “Community Transportation Pilot Program” including wheelchair and other transportation options – progress report**

Waitkins reviewed the document memorandum titled, *NRPC – Greater Nashua RCC Community Rides Pilot “voucher” Progra*” distributed to the attendees.

Alternate pilot program titles discussion points:

- The program's goal is to provide not only wheelchair rides but also to fill the gaps that exist in providing rides in the region.
- The program will be overseen by RCC and NRPC. The Greater Nashua Community Coordination Council is administrating the pilot program.
- Greater Nashua Community Rides Program – Pilot Phase
- Transportation Expense Assistance

Discussion ensued about using the word “elderly” and if it is appropriate to use it today. Some attendees thought it depends upon the context. At what age should a person be considered “elderly”? Age 65+ is the common age at which senior services are made available. However, some services are available to “seniors” who are 62 years of age. FTA's 5310 uses the descriptor, “older adults.” Langdell suggested the use of the words, “age 62.”

Other discussion points by section:

Rider Eligibility

- second bullet – “...self-declared disabilities.” The source of this language was questioned. Should the question be asked: *what is the extent of the disability?* Some agencies handle it over the phone with the individual requesting the ride while others require a physician's statement of disability on letterhead. It was suggested that “self-” be deleted. The question was asked - what does the FTA require service providers to have on record? NTS and Opportunity Networks have a lengthy application and sometimes interview riders to determine eligibility.
- Third bullet - hospital discharges would not be included in the ride program (page 2). Langdell stated that patients recovering from anesthesia cannot be transported safely. Down the road, there may be considerations for flexibility here. However, for the pilot program, hospital discharges will not be part of the ride service.
- Last bullet – if the number of rides is not limited per eligible person, funding may be exhausted much quicker. Some restrictive language may need to be added, i.e. *We reserve the right to limit the number of rides in periods of high demand.*

Providing the Ride

- List of documented information – the suggestion was made to add *Verifiable disability* to the list.
- Last bullet – monthly reports should be required at first and quarterly thereafter.
- How much of Marceau's time should be spent on dispatching?

Service Agreements and Indemnification

- The question was asked – are there 5310 standards that need to be in place, and/or criteria to be met for transportation providers to receive insurance coverage? It was mentioned that perhaps Correa has provided the vetting criteria.
- Who is making the ride appointment with the service provider and how is the service provider determined to be a “good fit”?
- Three days' notice or one week call ahead may need to be a requirement. There may be a need for last-minute or emergency backup providers here.

Payment for Rides Provided

- Paper vouchers are not part of this pilot program
- First bullet: ...as done now with SVTC.

- Will Uber or Lyft be used and if so, how will those service providers be incorporated into the program, dispatched, and compensated?

General questions and comments: would it be possible to run this program using a database? There would be a fixed fee for each ride requested by eligible riders. How do Cindy Yanski and the Concord Group manage their similar program? Waitkins stated that they have service agreements with providers. Langdell stated that these are areas that should be explored and that we should continue the conversation at our next meeting.

7. Locally Coordinate Transportation Plan (LCTP) and NTS 10-Year Plan Updates

Waitkins will provide a draft of the LCTP at the next RCC7 meeting. RCC7 meeting attendees' input will be incorporated.

8. Regional and State Updates (as needed) – POSTPONED

- a. State Coordinating Council (SCC)**
- b. Statewide Mobility Management Network**
- c. Regional Mobility Management highlights**

9. Community & Member Concerns and News

Perrier from Nashua Senior Center stated several members use NTS services. Nashua Senior Center services are accessible for area residents aged 50+. Miller offered to make a presentation at the Nashua Senior Centers.

Eriuzzo just partnered with Soel Sisters to provide build-your-own breakfasts and lunches. Participants must register with Meals on Wheels; the wait is 6 to 8 weeks.

Murphy stated that they have a Senior Fair coming up - November 20 at the Merrimack Adult Community Center from 9 to 12. Tables are available for service providers. Also, Murphy is retiring at the end of January. Someone will be taking on her role after January in a full-time capacity. Community transportation has become an important part of the role of the position.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Thursday, December 19, 2024, is the next meeting!