



Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC7)

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 25, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Attendees:

In Person:

Janet Langdell, Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC)
Wanda Ruiz, Caregivers
James Wilkie, Caregivers
Moana King, Nashua Public Health
Srijith Rangan, Nashua Public Health
Camille Correa, Nashua Transit System
Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System
Sara Cesar, Greater Nashua United Way
Angelique Pandolph, Easter Seals NH
Don Paré, Gate City Bike Coop
Savannah Williams, Greater Nashua Mental Health
Jessica Blanchette, Bridges
Rocky Morelli, Opportunity Networks
Jon Eriquezzo, Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County
Cindy Yanski, Region 3 Mobility Manager

Remote:

Ben Herbert, Region 8 Mobility Manager

NRPC Staff:

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

1. Call to Order and Introductions.

Langdell opened the meeting at 10:09 a.m. and introduced herself and her organization. The remaining attendees introduced themselves.

Agenda item #6 - *FY24 End of Year Report – 5310 Funding, Purchase of Services, and Regional Mobility Management Programs*, was postponed. The billing for the last quarter was not received in time for review and inclusion in a report for the meeting.

2. Review/Approve/Edit the June 2024 meeting minutes (Action Item).

Eriquezzo motioned; second for discussion/change made by Wilkie. Required edit: p. 1, Item 3. Delete "Portsmouth."

THAT the RCC7 accepts the June 27, 2024, meeting minutes as edited.

All in favor. Motion passed.

**3. Guest Speaker – Cindy Yanski, Central NH/Mid-State Region 3 Mobility Manager.
Topic: “What Can We Learn From Region 3?”**

Langdell introduced Yanski and suggested members could look at “Keep New Hampshire Moving” website for details about Yanski’s background information and more about Region 3. Link: [Mid-State - Keep NH Moving](#). Please take a look at the RCC7 page on the same website: [Greater Nashua - Keep NH Moving](#) It is evolving and any suggestions you have for improvement are appreciated.

Yanski started her current role as Region 3 Mobility Manager in 2019. “The Mid-State Region” – covers all of Belknap County, Merrimack County (except Hooksett), and includes the towns of Hillsborough, Deering, and Windsor.

- Existing Transportation in the Region includes [FTA Sec 5311](#) (it is public transportation funding for rural areas, and includes the Concord Laconia Connector, Concord Area Transit (CAT) fixed route bus service, ADA Paratransit Service, Travel Training), [BEAS & FTA 5310](#) includes Concord Senior Transit, Mid-State Transit, MST VDP, taxi voucher program, mobility manager, and [Other Services](#) from partner organizations, such as Caregivers of Southern Carroll County, COA Chapin Center, Friends Program, Future in Sight, Interlakes Community Caregivers, Henniker & Hopkinton Dial-A-Ride, to name a few.
- [Flagship Program: Concord Public Transit System](#). 3 fixed routes operating Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Ridership has increased 37% between FY22 to FY23. Attributed to increase: rebrand of the service. Buses stand out now. They also went fare-free. Started with ARPA funds and able to sustain the free fares.
- [Additional Complimentary CAT Services](#): ADA Paratransit Service, Concord Senior Transit: eligibility 60+ years in Concord; registration over the phone, different zip codes serviced on different days of the week. Concord Senior Shopping – a second bus on the road just for shoppers on Monday, and CAT & MST Voter Shuttle on election days – a free trip open to anyone at any age on election days.
- [MST – Mid-State Transit](#) – part of the rebrand was to “pull out” this service. Provides rides to a wider geographic area. Origin to destination demand response service for services and persons with disabilities. For local trips within each zone. Same phone registration as CST. Different zones are served on different days. No trip purpose restrictions. The trips are fare-free.
- [Volunteer Driver Program](#) – this program covers the entire region. Through the Community Action Program, strictly medical trips only. Limit of 2 round-trips per week. Trips have to originate within the region but can be an out-of-region destination. Other necessary trips are allowed in areas with no bus service. Volunteer drivers use their vehicles and receive mileage reimbursement. \$.655/mile currently. Driver retention has not been an issue but has become an issue due to the Federal 1099. Over \$600 reimbursed (paid) requires the agency to issue a 1099 to the driver and the driver is then required to report it on their tax return. The federal rate for volunteer mileage reimbursement is .14/mile. Increasing the federal mileage reimbursement rate will help volunteer driver

recruitment and retention. There is an initiative that started in the Midwest to make the mileage reimbursement rate for a volunteer driver the same as an agency employee driver. Langdell stated that more information would be sent to the members about this. Go to NHVDP.org for more information related to this. Discussion ensued among the members about successful, long-running volunteer driver programs and reasons for flexibility in trip destinations.

- Taxi Voucher Program – using 5310 program funding the program was developed to assist those individuals 60+ years of age or with a disability who are being released from their incarceration from the NH Dept. of Corrections and require transportation to complete the SOAR program. The individuals in the SOAR program need transportation to drug testing facilities, and transportation to work, for example. Concord Cab is the contracted service provider that has negotiated a special rate for these program trips. All other transportation options must be utilized with the TVP as a last resort. Merrimack County Human Services may now use this program for eligible clients. CAPBM pays 80%; Merrimack County pays 20% (contracted). If the program were to be expanded beyond the present population served, that would be a non-contracted program under the 5310 program, and it would be run at a 50% match.
- New Concord-Laconia Connector: commuter bus route connecting Concord and Laconia Monday-Friday 5:45 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Runs along Route 3 – Boscowen, Franklin, Tilton, Belmont, and Laconia. Connects to Penacook route for service into Concord – first and last runs of the day go directly into downtown Concord. Destinations: new Market Basket, Merchants Way, access to Memorial Field, Veteran’s Cemetery, County Complex, downtown Franklin Industrial Park, Walmart, Tanger Outlets, Belknap Mall, downtown Laconia. Ridership has exceeded 1,000 trips per month. This bus has been “wrapped” to stand out as a part of the rebrand. The plan is funded through 5311 Merrimack County ARPA funds. It is fare-free, running as part of the Concord Area Transit. The first and last runs of the day start and end in Concord. Started running on January 22, 2024.
Pitfalls: challenges getting stops approved and determining land ownership (it is advantageous to include a potential route plan within the LCTP); trying to add too many stops to please everyone; as stops were changed or added, times changed as well, that required schedule and route being changed a couple of times; lukewarm reception at the Franklin Industrial Park, J. Jill Distribution Center, Walmart/Market Basket. The summer season does not cause an increase as beaches and vacation spots are not typical spots. Discussion ensued about the possible reasons behind the challenges of establishing a pattern of regular ridership (commuting) among employees working for companies in the Franklin Industrial Park and even in other regions at shopping centers.
- 2020/21 NADTC Innovations in Transportation – rebranded to serve the greater population which had historically been mostly senior citizens. Merged CAT with MST into a cohesive transit system. Created a riders guide, and added signage on buses and at bus shelters.

- CDC Health Equities Grant (funding from the CDC) – used the funding received to increase pay permanently to retain drivers; their software “Agile Mile” was connected with CommuteSmart to help riders coordinate trips - Link: [Ride Share – Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council \(midstatercc.org\)](#); redid their brochures, and helped with the elimination of bus fares.
- What’s Next? They applied for the 2024 Transportation Planning Grant – if they received this funding, they will review and reorganize CAT fixed routes, create a connector service to Allenstown and Pembroke, and provide fixed-route service in Laconia.
- Cindy’s contact information: cyanski@capbm.org or 603-225-1989 x1210

Cindy mentioned that she noticed in the Strategic Assessment Plan that there is a plan for RCC7 to expand transportation services east to Salem and west to Milford. A brief discussion ensued about the history of including expansion plans in the Ten-Year Plan and getting through the CMAC process, but having had the expansion plans removed at the last GACIT hearing. So the lesson learned was that it’s important to make sure all of our political partners are on board with our plans as we move forward. Challenges remain in getting to the Salem area from our region via community transportation options at this time. There are limited transit options such as a rider taking the Manchester Transit Authority’s bus from Nashua to Manchester and transferring to the Manchester Transit Authority’s Zipline to be taken to Tuscan Village in Salem. The challenge has been coordinating rider appointment schedules with the limited number of MTA buses assigned to this route. A similar issue exists in trying to get to Concord Hospital from our region. Information about what riders need and what is lacking in our current community transit network should be communicated between members, at meetings, and NRPC’s Donna Marceau and Matt Waitkins and incorporated into future transit plans.

4. Executive Committee Nominations – Rocky Morelli & James Wilkie – Vote Required

At the June meeting, there was a discussion about the Executive Committee nominations. In addition to three officers, two other representatives may sit on the Executive Committee and the term is for one year. Rocky Morelli and James Wilkie graciously volunteered for the two Executive Committee positions. Langdell asked if any additional members would like to volunteer. Seeing none, Langdell asked to move the motion – Eriquezzo moved, second by Miller.

THAT Rocky Morelli and James Wilkie be officially appointed to the RCC7 Executive Committee for a one-year term.

Morelli and Wilkie abstained. All in favor. **Motion approved.**

5. Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP) & Nashua Transit Plan 10-year Progress Report

Link to the LCTP on the NRPC website: <https://nashuarpc.link/yiw>

Matt Waitkins presented an overview of the plan. The LCTP is updated every five years. In updating the plan, service gaps are identified. Any projects that help fill these gaps have to be part of the LCTP. We have a public participation plan and the plan requires that several different stakeholder groups be surveyed for input. At this time, there is a general survey open; 230 have responded to this survey and 7 of 13 welfare directors responded. Next month, we will provide information about what has been learned from the survey responses. Discussion ensued about the need to increase the number of survey responses. Ideas included producing flyers that can be distributed by agencies to their clients – ex: Meals by Meals on Wheels can include a flyer/survey as part of their meal distributions.

Concurrently, Nashua Transit System riders have been surveyed (over 250 have responded). The NTS survey provides input to a separate plan. The goal of the two plans is to have them adopted in March 2025.

In July, NTS is undertaking fixed route surveying, and in August - demand response surveying, will be done by NTS. Surveying will be done in a variety of ways.

ACTION ITEM: NRPC staff will send a flyer, with the link/QR code to the survey, and distribute it to RCC7 members so that can shared among their clients.

At 11:42. Langdell stated that agenda items 7 & 8 are big, and are related to the increased funding that's available through the 5310 program. In FY2025, each region will get an additional 10% funding (that we still have to match) from the NHDOT. Our region will receive approximately \$23,000. We started to think about how we would best use those funds in this region to benefit our residents and their community transportation needs. This requires a simultaneous look at the goals and the future of the RCC7 – short and near-term, so it's one big conversation. ACTION ITEM: all members should take what was heard today and think about the clients they serve, i.e. where they want to go, how often, and the purpose of their trips. The conversation will be continued at the August meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 11:44 a.m. moved by Wilkie; seconded by Waitkins.

All in favor. Motion passed.

The RCC7's next meeting will be Thursday, August 22, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.