

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)

Working to expand affordable and efficient community transportation in southeastern New Hampshire

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025

9 – 10:30AM

CAP OF STRAFFORD COUNTY, 577 CENTRAL AVE, STE 10, DOVER, NH*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86709442681?pwd=FZCIPma7ronP21iSU2aFQp1PFOWx9a.1>

MINUTES

Members In-person:

Rad Nichols (Chair, COAST), Colin Lentz (Strafford Regional Planning Commission), Martha English (Ready Rides), Carolyn Doran (Ready Rides), Helen Kostrzynski (MOWRC), Danielle Holt (Community Action Partnership of Strafford Co.), Angelique Pandolph (Easterseals), Alex Beauchner (Individual Member), Emilia Poehlman (NH Disability and Health Program Manager), Deborah Ritcey (Granite State Independent Living), Kate Sullivan (Community Partners), Scott Bogle (Rockingham Planning Commission) Terri Palmer (State Mobility Manager)

Remote Members: Victoria Lee (Granite State Independent Living), Susanne Peace (Future In Sight)

Remote and In-Person Guests: Katie Phillips (ABLE NH), Ben Herbert (Southern NH Planning Commission), Anne Patterson (CAPHR), Karen Collins (CAPHR), Candy Reed (Southwestern Community Services)

Staff: Jeff Donald (COAST)

Minutes: Colin Lentz and Jeff Donald

1) Welcome & Introductions

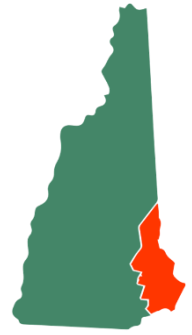
Meeting started at 9:00 AM. Attendees introduced themselves.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes {VOTE}

Jeff noted Emilia's last name was spelled wrong
Angelique + Helen. Vote unanimous in favor with Deborah Ritcey abstaining.

3) Updates & Statistics

Jeff noted increases in applications and ridership. The increase in ridership for Community Rides came mostly from a large number of unduplicated riders taking a few trips each. In addition to the July data, he shared the semi annual report covering January – June 2025. He noted data on what types of trips people use the services for and how frequently (the most frequent riders need



BARRINGTON
BRENTWOOD
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
EAST KINGSTON
EPPING
EXETER
FARMINGTON
FREMONT
GREENLAND
HAMPTON
HAMPTON FALLS
KENSINGTON
KINGSTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON
NEW CASTLE
NEW DURHAM
NEWFIELDS
NEWINGTON
NEWMARKET
NEWTON
NORTH HAMPTON
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
PORTSMOUTH
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
RYE
SEABROOK
SOMERSWORTH
SOUTH HAMPTON
STRAFFORD
STRATHAM
WAKEFIELD

trips for dialysis and employment; the greatest number of people are using services for shopping). Jeff explained new data showing trips by mobility type. Ready Rides has had more new clients recently; one rider signed up three years ago, but was able to rely on family until recently.

4) SFY25 POS Billing Update

Donald said the NHDOT provided additional funds mid-year for the overall ACT budge but that Ready Rides and MOWRC were unable to spend it all down. At the end of the year, \$15k was left unspent. NHDOT generously said leftover funds could be used to pay for unbilled trips from the past. Ready Rides, CAPSC, and MOWRC were all able to bill for previously unbilled trips. There were no concerns about how these funds were divided.

5) SFY25 Draft Year End Financials

Year-end financials will be updated following final billing of the above item. Overall the year-end balance was \$3,796 under budget for Mobility Management and administrative expenses. Transportation revenues were \$11,266 under budget – due in part to unexpectedly larger grant from the Greater Rochester Community Health Foundation mid-year. FTA 5310 funds were all spent down.

6) SFY26 Budget Amendment {VOTE}

Jeff reviewed the draft budget amendment. The proposed budget amendment included the \$15,000 in unspent funds: \$13,674 of it going to Community Rides; \$600 being saved because Ready Rides is changing their ride scheduling software and the new subscription is less expensive. \$6,000 in City of Rochester general funds did not come through so they are zeroed out.

Deborah Ritcey made a motion to approve the budget amendment, seconded by Alex Beachner. Unanimous in favor

7) ACT Service Standards for VDP's

Jeff explained that the new state rescission of required annual vehicle inspections leaves volunteer driver programs in a tricky spot because they need to figure out new policies and procedures for ensuring volunteer vehicles are safe. Additionally, ACT's Service Standards for VDP's require that vehicles are inspected. Either the Service Standards will need to be amended, or a new inspection program will need to be implemented.

8) Partner Update: Community Transportation Needs Assessment

Jeff explained that the State Commission on Aging is conducting a statewide transportation needs assessment and the consultant has provided preliminary results specific to the ACT region. He reviewed the initial results summarized in the meeting packet. There have only been 118 online responses from the region so far, but at least 200 paper surveys need to be entered.

Members discussed how difficult it is to collect important information from people living in the region. It is just as difficult to reach people who need services to inform them about their options and navigate the patchwork of providers and eligibility requirements.

9) Outreach

Jeff said he had met with the Seacoast Librarians group and introduced them to ACT services and the statewide assessment. They were very engaged and eager to help. He conducted a travel training in Berwick, ME and the video is posted online.

10) Miscellaneous

Jeff said he was going to be interviewing multiple ACT stakeholders one-on-one to get more insights as to providers' and clients' needs and plan transportation improvements.

Jeff reviewed updates to the ACT website and common application. Paper applications will soon be phased out because they are rarely used and never complete.

Jeff reminded members that it's time to renew their annual conflict of interest forms.

Each year Jeff requests and compiles ridership data for providers and will provide them at the next ACT meeting.

11) Statewide Updates

Rad Nichols noted that the state budget included \$1.5 million \$347,000 for COAST. This is a decrease from the previous biennium budget included \$1.67 million which meant \$382k for COAST.

Rad said October is Community Transportation Month and a time to celebrate the good work done by ACT providers. He noted that the SCC is looking to update goals for the next 2 years and renew its overall mission and vision. Jeff added that future SCC meetings will include updates from RCC staff and chairs.

12) Member Round Robin

Helen Kostrzynski said Meals on Wheels of Rockingham County will need new buses in two years and wasn't sure how to apply now before the vehicles are inoperable. Jeff said the 5310 funds would be announced soon.

Anne Patterson and Karen Collins noted their difficulty with providing transportation for rural residents, especially single mothers.

Danielle Holt said Strafford CAP looking to expand services in communities like Barrington, and increase services for seniors.

Colin Lentz and Scott Bogle explained their recently completed Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress analysis that assessed sidewalks and walkability throughout the seacoast.

Kate Sullivan noted that the state recently rebranded Community Partners' ServiceLink program to an "Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)". There are other ADRC's for each county in the state.

Carolyn Doran noted challenges with getting Ready Rides drivers from member municipalities.

Deborah Ricey said GSIL would be closing its accessible transportation program on September 30th. Their friends and family reimbursement program will continue, but the federal funds for direct transportation assistance are no longer available. GSIL has two vans that were purchased with 5310 funds and wants to donate them to partner agencies.

Deborah said she was told RCC region 3 gets first right of refusal. Jeff noted that an Exeter taxi company is looking for an accessible vehicle.

Susanne Peace noted new drivers in the seacoast and increased requests for transportation to the gym and other social trips.

Ben Herbert noted good increases in ridership Ready Rides in Deerfield.

13) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 AM.

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)

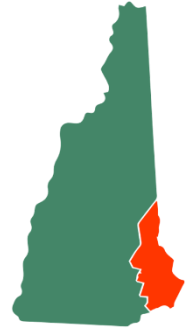
Working to expand affordable and efficient community transportation in southeastern New Hampshire

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025

9 – 10:30AM

CAP OF STRAFFORD COUNTY, 577 CENTRAL AVE, STE 10, DOVER, NH



MINUTES

1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:03am

2) **Welcome & Introductions**

Members in-person: Rad Nichols (COAST), Carolyn Doran (Ready Rides), Martha English (Ready Rides) Emilia Poehlman (NH Disability and Health Program, Tim Diaz (MOWRC), Angelique Pandolph (Easterseals), Kate Sullivan (Community Partners), Danielle Holt (CAPSC), Alex Beauchner (Individual Member),

Staff: Jeff Donald (COAST)

Remote Members:

- Victoria Lee (GSIL), Required to staff GSIL office, no other persons present at her location
- Susanne Peace (Future In Sight), Over 1 hour drive, no other persons present at her location
- Remote and In-Person Guests: Teri Palmer (Statewide Mobility Manager), Candy Reed (Southwest Community Services). Hannah Proulx (ABLE NH), Katie Phillips (ABLE NH)

Staff: Jeff Donald (COAST)

3) **ACT Meeting Procedures for Remote Participation**

Jeff reviewed procedural requirements for public meetings, of which NHDOT is sending reminders to all the RCCs.

- Minutes must include start and end times and the name of the person who produced the minutes
- For remote meetings, anyone connecting remotely must provide the reason that they cannot reasonably be present in the room, and indicate from where they're tuning in and whether they're alone. This needs to be recorded in the minutes.
- The quorum present in the room must agree to allow participation of those who are remote. The Chair can bless the remote participation following introductions.

4) **Approval of Meeting Minutes {VOTE}**

BARRINGTON
BRENTWOOD
BROOKFIELD
DOVER
DURHAM
EAST KINGSTON
EPPING
EXETER
FARMINGTON
FREMONT
GREENLAND
HAMPTON
HAMPTON FALLS
KENSINGTON
KINGSTON
LEE
MADBURY
MIDDLETON
MILTON
NEW CASTLE
NEW DURHAM
NEWFIELDS
NEWINGTON
NEWMARKET
NEWTON
NORTH HAMPTON
NORTHWOOD
NOTTINGHAM
PORTSMOUTH
ROCHESTER
ROLLINSFORD
RYE
SEABROOK
SOMERSWORTH
SOUTH HAMPTON
STRAFFORD
STRATHAM
WAKEFIELD

Motion to accept for purposes of discussion by Kate, seconded by Tim. Several proposed corrections were noted, including addition of start/end times, and clarification that Community Transportation Month is October. Rad conducted a roll call vote. All members voted in favor with the exception of Victoria who abstained. Motion passed.

5) Updates & Statistics

Jeff reviewed the regular set of Dashboard charts comparing August 2025 metrics against prior months in 2025, and against the same month in prior years. Generally speaking on ridership, ADA, PST and Ready Rides are up while other services are largely flat or declined slightly.

He called out a new table looking at costs and ridership by month for the four 5310 funded services (Community Rides, Ready Rides, CAPSC, MOWRC) during SFY24, SFY25 and SFY26. The Common Application Dashboard table included a new column identifying riders taking their first trip during the month – the main table focuses on new registrants rather than new riders.

He reviewed the income statement for 8/31/25; and then a pair of charts produced only annually:

- Trips by town breaking out fixed route, Medicaid, TripLink DR services and other non-TripLink DR services in the region. The table also included DR trip totals divided by population age 65+ as an indicator of system capacity to meet senior trip need. A few towns show up in green as having more than one DR trip per older adult in the year, but this tends to be the larger communities (Portsmouth, Dover, Rochester, Exeter). Most of the more rural communities show up as yellow or red indicating few trips per capita.
- Trips by provider by year going back to SFY15.

There was an extended discussion of problems with the Medicaid transportation system in New Hampshire. Complaints from riders about unreliability of the system are common around the state. Many of not most providers have found that reimbursement rates do not cover their costs, and the prohibition on combining trips means that low rates can't be made up for with efficiency. Among the providers who participate in the RCCs, only Transport Central and Tri-County CAP provide Medicaid trips. Recommendation that these experiences be documented and brought to the SCC, and the SCC should request comprehensive program performance data from NHDHHS.

6) Partner Update

There was no partner update this month

7) Outreach

Jeff set up a TripLink table at the Portsmouth Health and Wellness Expo

8) Miscellaneous

Jeff described features of RideScheduler, the new volunteer software TripLink has begun using. Among other advantages, this allows volunteers to record trip

details (hours, miles) immediately after providing trips, whereas with the old software this couldn't be done until next day, and the delay resulted in some data loss.

- Jeff is conducting a series of frank and in-depth one on one interviews with TripLink partners and other ACT partners to gather feedback on how TripLink and ACT are working. What should we work on next? What if any concerns do they have that haven't been brought up in meetings?
- With most ACT information migrating to the Keep NH Moving website, the ACT website will now largely just host the Common Application.

9) Statewide Updates

Rural Health Transformation Grant Program - Rad described the scramble in the last 2-3 weeks to assemble a menu of transportation projects to be funded under the new Rural Health Transformation Grant program. This is a major initiative of the new administration to send funding to rural communities. New Hampshire will receive a minimum of \$100M per year for five years, and the number could be considerably higher. If states are unable to fully obligate and use their year one funding in the first 18 months, future years apportionments will be reduced. A slate of projects has been developed drawing on both long-recognized needs and preliminary findings from the Community Transportation Needs Assessment (CTNA). Unfortunately the program cannot be used to fund actual transportation operations, or to supplant existing funding. It can only create infrastructure. Examples of projects proposed include:

- Purchase of accessible vehicles for VDPs
- Greater support for regional mobility managers
- Expanding Keep NH Moving website to be a one call/one click portal

Community Transportation Month – October is Community Transportation Month. This is an opportunity to celebrate the critical community transportation services that New Hampshire has, and also highlight unmet needs. There was a meeting and photo shoot with NHDOT Commissioner Bill Cass and Deputy Commissioner Shelley Winters. NHTA and the SCC are promoting the event online. COAST is celebrating with a Fare Free Saturday on October 18th and October 29th is Rider Appreciation Day. The Buses Bikes and Brooms Commuter Challenge is also happening all month.

SCC Strategic Plan – Last week the SCC also approved its new Strategic Plan. This is intended to work on strengthening the partnership between the SCC and the RCCs. Teri, Angelique and Sylvia will be working on implementation steps for the various Plan goals.

10) Round Table

- ESNH – ESNH is holding a staff celebration for Community Transportation Month
- Ready Rides – Implementing new software program along with TripLink. Best wishes for Tahja as she's in the ER
- Community Partners – Asked about access to the photos from the photo shoot done over the summer. Jeff noted that we received them later than expected and that he hasn't finished reviewing them. Intent is to have a portfolio of photos for future use, as ACT only has a small number of older photos that have been used again and again. Some challenges with getting the photos, especially in attempting to take photos as part of regular operations when riders are anxious to get on their way.
- Meals on Wheels of Rockingham County – Keeping an eye on the federal government shutdown. Hopefully in the next month MOW will have new decal graphic on all vehicles with MOW logo plus TripLink number prominently displayed for better visibility

- Community Partners – Medicare open enrollment season is ramping up and will be open 10/15-12/7.. Several Medicare Advantage Plans will be leaving the state. If anyone has clients that need assistance with Medicare Advantage plans, Community Partners is offering appointments (in-person, phone, Zoom) offering support on plan selection. Available slots have already filled for Rockingham County through end of enrollment period. Appointments for Strafford County Also CP is moving, leaving Chestnut Street office in downtown Dover. Will now be across from the Works. Nothing changing with Rochester or Crosby Road offices.
- RPC – The GACIT hearings on the NHDOT Draft 2027-2035 Ten Year Transportation Plan are in full swing. There are three more hearings in the ACT region: Greenland on 10/22 at 5:00pm with Executive Councilor Stevens, Durham on 10/23 at 10:00am with Councilor Kenney, and Dover at 1:00pm also on 10/23 with Councilor Kenney.
- ABLE NH – There is an ABLE NH member meeting tonight, and a Lunch and Learn on Medicaid 10/24. Alex will be voted in as new Co-President
- COAST – COAST implemented service changes over the weekend, scaling back several routes as a cost cutting measure. Ridership is up: COAST carried 410K riders last year, up 10% from prior year. Ridership has grown 40% over the last two years, continuing to bounce back from COVID lows. That said, federal funding is not keeping pace with growing expenses for driver salaries, insurance, etc. If don't get newsletters let Rad know and he'll sign you up. Send him a note.
- COAST – Despite cutbacks on some routes, COAST has been able to expand service on what has to date been called Route 7 On Demand. That service now includes any destination in Newmarket or Exeter, as well as ServiceLink and Market Basket in Stratham. The fare is now a consistent \$3 vs a sliding scale. Rebranded to Newmarket-Exeter COAST Connector.
- GSIL – GSIL closed transportation program 9/30. Still have transportation reimbursement program. Fed funds for direct transportation no longer available.

11) Adjournment

Chair Rad Nichols declared the meeting adjourned at 10:31

Minutes taken by Scott Bogle