



**Tri-Valley Transit  
Orange/N. Windsor E&D Partner Meeting  
April 19, 2023 – 1:00pm to 2:30pm  
via Zoom  
DRAFT MINUTES**

**Attendees** – Mike Reiderer, Stephanie Stearns, Jade McClallen and Jim Moulton, Tri-Valley Transit; Rita Seto, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission; Alana Phinney, Central Vermont Council on Aging; Mark Bradley, Bugbee Senior Center; Dan Currier, VTrans (left at 2pm).

**Regrets** – Gifford Adult Day; Scotland House Adult Day; Deanna Jones, Thompson Senior Center; Gretchen Pembroke, Clara Martin Center; Wendi Germain, Senior Solutions; Jared Pendak, Upper Valley Services; Amanda Jordan Smith, Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Center.

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. Introductions**

Rita called meeting at 1:00pm and roll called those present. Amendments to the Agenda - Jim requested adding marijuana trips to agenda.

**2. Partner updates**

**Bugbee** – Mark reported that they are still not using their van. People are calling for transportation to senior center activities – should they continue with Dial-a-ride method as Bugbee's own volunteers will drive. Bugbee acts like a secondary dispatch for WRJ. A suggestion might be that Bugbee volunteers become TVT volunteers with a focus/preference for Bugbee clients and the van could potentially be utilized by TVT. This will take a few meetings to sort out but can be implemented easily. Stephanie also commented on the new software that is about to launch will be easier for partners to enter information and track rides with TVT. Microtransit efforts have not focused on WRJ only due to the availability of Advance Transit although their purview does not include specifically E&D. This may be a discussion with AT's new ED Adams Carroll on possible collaboration.

**CVCOA** – Alanna noted there are no major changes with Orange East Senior Center. Mike noted that Quintown has concerns with the Macs grocery store in Rochester closing. TVT is considering restarting the Randolph shopper route on Wednesdays to provide food access in that valley (will have flyers distributed). Alanna noted there continues to be a heavy reliance on Meals on Wheels as there remains hesitancy in group settings. There have been Meals on Wheels qualification changes at the Federal level, and this will impact needs of those being cut off from



meal deliveries. It's more than just a meal delivery, it mostly is the only other human contact clients will have or social check-in they will receive.

### **3. TVT Update**

Jim discussed the marijuana impacts now that it is legal in Vermont and there are legal dispensaries available. However, when clients call for transportation, how does that interact with eligibility of E&D funds which is federally funded. At the federal level, marijuana is still illegal. How does one distinguish between "medical" vs. "recreational"? Do clients outright call for a trip to the marijuana dispensary next to the grocery store or do they call for a trip to the eligible grocery store that is next to the dispensary? There is need for a definitive standard message across the State. This may be a topic for the upcoming E&D Summit with the Cannabis Oversight Board and FTA. At the federal level, "medical marijuana" is really a guidance document, there is no prescription for it like with other drugs.

Jade reported the volunteer trend is up to 20 total. Reviewing trips, 90% of requested trips are for medical purposes. There are 6 volunteers in Bradford area, 1 in NH, 13 in the Rochester/Randolph/Woodstock area. WRJ area needs between Friday to Sunday are unmet (Advance Transit does not run on weekends currently). Mike noted that E&D ridership is based on needs (traditionally to senior center meal sites as there are no bus routes to there). What are the partners' current needs? There is a shift post-Covid where meal sites are no longer the primary needs. During Covid, the grab-and-go meals were successful. TVT needs to morph services to new needs.

### **4. New E&D Partner Guidance**

Rita noted that the original template guidance was from Green Mountain Transit but it was not a simple cut and paste. Mary Claire and Mike drafted the current version which described the current relationship levels with each partner. The fear has always been if a new partner would cut into other existing partners share of the funding. VTrans has clarified that it would continue to increase the pot of funding to meet the unmet needs. We reviewed the full partner and community partner descriptions and requirements. We also reviewed the factors in determining a new partner or new service request:

- Determine how many riders and how often rides would be needed?
- Determine if needs can be met with existing service?
- Evaluate our capacity to add more service?
- Design the service with community engagement and consider including other destinations to meet other unmet need?
- Determine if the new partner will be a full partner or a community partner?



Jim noted there is a missing category to be added which is Special Events like the Special Events in Addison County (QHSO). Are we being proactive or being responsive?

Alanna is interested in the 2 tiers of full partners vs community partners. There now is a new donut since Covid where folks are now remote and businesses are at home. They're no longer clustered in a traditional downtown or village/Central Business District. Other factors to consider are now the home access/ramps – door to door vs. door through door access and what the liability definitions are (Hartford, CT is looking at this model).

The Special Needs Support Center is now considered a new partner and has been successful (this provides transportation to disabled children to afterschool programs that normally are unable to participate in). This is a good pilot partner to run through the New Partner Guidance.

**5. Dial-a-Ride Guidance**

TVT also prepared a Dial-a-Ride Guidance document so partners understand the guidance in providing rides to clients. This is a helpful factsheet for anticipated billing and eligibility requirements.

**6. VTrans Grant Application** – Jim reported it will be submitted by end of the day.

**7. VTrans E&D Summit** – Friday June 9 – 9am to noon virtual.

**8.** Next meeting July 2023

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

Submitted by: Rita Seto, TRORC