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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Green Mountain Transit to Resume Urban Fare Collection on January 2, 2024***

**Burlington, VT**—Green Mountain Transit (GMT) will resume fare collection on January 2, 2024, on Chittenden County and LINK Express routes. Fare collection was originally scheduled to restart on July 1, 2023, but additional state support will allow GMT to make fare infrastructure improvements before resuming fares.

GMT stopped collecting fares in March 2020 as a COVID-19 infection control measure. By offering free service, riders were able to enter buses through rear doors, greatly reducing contact between drivers and riders.

Prior to the pandemic, GMT earned about \$2.5 million a year in fare revenue. GMT used federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to replace fare revenue through June 2022. Since July 2022, fare revenue replacement has been provided by the State of Vermont, and additional state support to GMT is allowing fare free service to be extended until January 2024.

“We sincerely appreciate the financial support that allowed us to offer our service free of charge to the communities we service,” said Clayton Clark, GMT General Manager. “With pandemic relief funds running out, we need to return to our longstanding practice of having a portion of our operating expenses paid for by our riders.”

GMT requested the fare free service extension so that it could improve its fare collection system. Previously, GMT had used fare boxes from multiple providers, which limited more advanced payment options, such as onboard credit card payments. When fare service restarts it will be with a single fare box system that will provide improved payment options, both in terms of how riders pay and how fast riders can pay when entering the bus.



“If we have to return to fare service, we want our riders to have better options,” said Clark.

GMT will begin receiving public comment on fare service in June, with the anticipation that fare plans will be finalized this Fall. As a condition of receiving additional state funds, GMT must assess its fare system to find ways to protect economically vulnerable riders while also ensuring that fare revenue covers at least 10% of the operating costs. GMT must report back to the Legislature on their fare plans in December 2023.

Moving from an analog system that relied on cash and paper tickets to one that accepts cash, digital payments, and smart passes will take time to implement. GMT anticipates that some features will be ready when fare collection restarts, and others may be rolled out at a later time. The service will continue to be honed based on rider feedback and experience in managing the new system.

For specific questions or comments related to fare resumption, please contact Jamie Smith, Director of Planning and Marketing, at [jamie@ridegmt.com](mailto:jamie@ridegmt.com).

To see the most current information regarding fare resumption:

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