



Dear REAC Members,

Thank you for agreeing to be part of Green Mountain Transit's Rider Experience and Access Council (REAC). I truly appreciate your willingness to share your time, perspective, and lived experience as riders to help improve our transit system.

REAC was created to help ensure that rider voices are part of the conversation as GMT works to improve the transit experience across our community. Your feedback and insights will help us better understand what riders experience every day; what is working well, where barriers exist, and where we can make meaningful improvements.

Because the council meets four times per year, our meetings will focus on thoughtful discussion and identifying opportunities to improve the rider experience and access to transit. In addition to sharing your own experiences, members will play an important role in helping us think about how we connect with riders more broadly. Your ideas will help guide GMT's outreach and engagement strategies so that we can hear from a wide range of riders in our community.

At our first meeting, we will:

- Introduce members and get to know each other
- Review the purpose of the council and how it will work
- Elect a council chair (I will serve as Vice Chair)
- Discuss rider experience issues that members see as important
- Begin thinking about outreach and ways to hear from more riders between meetings

Attached is a draft charter that outlines the purpose and structure of the council. This is intended as a starting point for discussion, and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions as the group begins its work.

I'm looking forward to meeting all of you and working together.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jamie Smith'.

Jamie Smith, Director of Rider Experience  
Vice Chair, Rider Experience and Access Council



# Rider Experience & Access Council (REAC)

## Committee Member Introductions & Priority Summary

The Rider Experience & Access Council (REAC) brings together riders with diverse experiences using Green Mountain Transit (GMT). Members represent a mix of daily riders, occasional riders, and advocates who rely on or support public transit across Chittenden County and beyond. Collectively, they bring perspectives grounded in lived rider experience, community advocacy, accessibility awareness, and a shared commitment to improving transit service for all riders.

## Committee Members

### Thomas Caswell – Essex Junction

Thomas is a long-time rider with nearly 12 years of experience using GMT fixed-route and LINK services daily. He brings strong advocacy for transit improvements and firsthand knowledge of the system's day-to-day rider experience.

#### Key priorities

- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety
- Fare affordability
- Transfers and connections

### Omar Derzi – Winooski

Omar rides fixed-route services several times per week and emphasizes empathy, collaboration, and representing riders whose voices may not always be heard.



### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety
- Transfers and connections

### **Eben Pendleton – Burlington**

Eben regularly rides the Montpelier LINK route and uses fixed-route transit when schedules allow. He hopes to help improve fixed-route service so it better aligns with rider schedules and needs.

### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach

### **Marty Gillies – Burlington**

Marty is a long-time bus commuter who has used many GMT routes for both work and personal travel. He is passionate about building a stronger transit culture and improving the rider experience through outreach and infrastructure improvements.

### **Key priorities**

- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety

### **Trisha Milton – Burlington**

Trisha rides transit several times per week and brings a youthful, environmentally conscious perspective. She advocates for stronger connections between routes and increased support for fare-free initiatives.

### **Key priorities**

- Communication and outreach
- Fare programs and affordability



- Transfers and connections

### **Valerie Johnson – Burlington**

Valerie has been riding the Montpelier LINK service since 2017 and frequently uses several local routes. She wants to support GMT's continued success and improvement.

#### **Key priorities**

- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach

### **Olive Gallmeyer – Burlington**

Olive is a daily rider who relies on transit as their primary transportation. As a UVM staff member engaged with the university community, they bring insight into the needs of students and staff.

#### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Transfers and connections

### **Winnie Wilkinson – St. Albans**

Winnie rides multiple GMT services and is motivated by improving accessibility and reducing barriers for riders across Vermont, particularly in rural communities.

#### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety
- Fare affordability
- Transfers and connections

### **Marcie Gallagher – Burlington**



Marcie is a professional advocate and “choice rider” who supplements biking with transit. She hopes to contribute her advocacy skills to support transit improvements for Vermonters.

### **Key priorities**

- Reliability and on-time performance
- Fare programs and affordability
- Transfers and connections

### **George Allen Logan – Burlington**

George is a daily rider who values providing clear and unbiased feedback from the perspective of someone who regularly depends on GMT services.

### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Rider comfort and safety
- Fare programs and affordability

### **Evelyn Seidner – Burlington**

Evelyn has advocated for public transit since her time at UVM and continues to promote transit use within the community. She brings a sustainability and community development perspective.

### **Key priorities**

- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety

### **Dianne Booska – South Burlington**

Dianne is a daily rider who does not own a car and brings valuable lived experience navigating transit alongside individuals with disabilities. She emphasizes kindness, fairness, and rider assistance.

### **Key priorities**



- Accessibility
- Reliability and on-time performance
- Communication and outreach
- Rider comfort and safety
- Fare affordability
- Transfers and connections

## Council Priority Themes

Across member applications, several common priorities emerged:

### 1. Reliability and On-Time Performance

Many members emphasized the importance of consistent schedules and dependable service to ensure riders can reach work, school, and appointments.

### 2. Accessibility

Ensuring transit works well for riders with disabilities, seniors, and those who rely on transit as their primary transportation was a central theme.

### 3. Communication and Outreach

Members highlighted the need for clearer communication with riders and stronger outreach to increase awareness and ridership.

### 4. Rider Comfort and Safety

Members want transit environments where riders feel safe, supported, and comfortable.

### 5. Fare Programs and Affordability

Affordable transit options and equitable fare programs remain a priority for many riders.

### 6. Transfers and System Connectivity

Improving connections between routes and services to make trips smoother and more efficient was also widely identified.



## Summary

The REAC membership reflects a broad cross-section of GMT riders—daily commuters, advocates, environmental supporters, and community members who rely on transit to stay connected. Their shared focus on reliability, accessibility, affordability, and rider communication will help guide recommendations aimed at improving the overall rider experience.



# Rider Experience and Access Council (REAC)

## Draft Charter

### Purpose

The Rider Experience and Access Council (REAC) serves as an advisory group to Green Mountain Transit (GMT) focused on improving the rider experience and promoting equitable access to public transportation.

The council provides a forum for riders, community members, and partner organizations to share perspectives on transit service, identify barriers to access, and offer recommendations that support a safe, reliable, and inclusive transit system.

### Objectives

The council will:

- Provide feedback on rider experience, accessibility, and service usability
- Identify barriers that riders face when using transit
- Share insights from community outreach and rider conversations
- Provide recommendations to GMT staff on improvements to services, communication, and infrastructure
- Help elevate rider voices in transit planning and outreach discussions

### Membership

REAC membership may include:

- Transit riders
- Representatives from community organizations
- Accessibility advocates
- Social service organizations
- Education or workforce partners
- Other community stakeholders

Members are expected to bring perspectives from riders and communities they represent.



## Leadership

The council will elect a **Chair** from among its members.

The Chair will:

- Facilitate REAC meetings
- Work with Vice Chair (Director of Rider Experience)
- Help guide discussions and recommendations

A **Vice Chair** will support the Chair and assist with meeting planning and facilitation as needed.

## Meeting Schedule

REAC will meet **four times per year**.

Meetings will focus on:

- Reviewing rider feedback and experiences
- Discussing barriers to access and service use
- Identifying potential improvements to rider experience
- Developing recommendations for GMT

## Outreach and Rider Engagement

Because the council meets quarterly, members are encouraged to gather rider feedback between meetings.

This may include:

- Conversations with riders
- Participation in community events
- Engagement with partner organizations
- Observations at transit stops or facilities

Members may share key themes or insights at subsequent meetings.



## Role of Green Mountain Transit Staff

GMT staff will:

- Provide relevant information and data to support discussions
- Help coordinate meetings and agendas
- Document feedback and recommendations
- Share council input with agency leadership and the GMT Board when appropriate

## Council Approach

REAC will operate as a **collaborative advisory group**.

The council aims to:

- Encourage open discussion
- Elevate rider perspectives
- Identify practical improvements to the transit system

Recommendations from the council are advisory and intended to inform GMT planning and decision-making.



# Rider Experience and Access Council (REAC)

## Code of Conduct (Draft)

To create a welcoming and productive space for discussion, REAC members are asked to follow these shared guidelines:

### **1. Be respectful.**

Treat all members with courtesy and respect. Different perspectives are valuable and should be heard.

### **2. Listen to understand.**

Give others the opportunity to speak and listen with an open mind, especially when experiences differ from your own.

### **3. Focus on improving the rider experience.**

Discussions should remain constructive and centered on how transit can better serve riders.

### **4. Share space.**

Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute. Be mindful of how much time you speak so others can participate.

### **5. Speak from experience.**

Members are encouraged to share their experiences as riders and the feedback they hear from other riders.

### **6. Keep discussions welcoming and inclusive.**

REAC aims to be a space where all riders feel represented and respected.

### **7. Work collaboratively.**

The council's role is to provide thoughtful input and recommendations to help Green Mountain Transit improve service and access for riders.



# Green Mountain Transit

## Department Overview for Committee Members

### Purpose of This Document

This document provides an overview of key departments within Green Mountain Transit (GMT), outlining their mission, responsibilities, staffing, current priorities, and how they support the agency's overall mission of providing safe, accessible, and sustainable public transportation services in Vermont.

It is intended to help new committee members understand:

- How GMT is structured
- The role each department plays
- Current challenges and priorities
- Opportunities for committee input and collaboration

Information summarized in this document is drawn from departmental responses collected across the agency.

## Agency Mission

Green Mountain Transit works to provide **innovative, accessible, and sustainable public transportation services** to communities across northwest and central Vermont. Departments across the agency collaborate to maintain reliable service, manage public resources responsibly, and respond to evolving transportation needs.



# Department Overviews

## Finance Department

### Mission

The Finance Department manages the agency's financial resources to ensure GMT remains fiscally responsible, transparent, and capable of sustaining transit operations and capital investments.

### Core Responsibilities

- Financial planning and budgeting
- Accounting and financial reporting
- Treasury and cash management
- Internal controls and fraud prevention
- Grants and funding management
- Accounts payable, receivable, and payroll

### Staff

- Director of Finance
- Director of Grants
- Controller
- Senior Accounting Clerk
- Senior Staff Accountant

### Key Role in the Agency

Finance ensures that resources are directed toward **safe, reliable, and accessible transit services** while maintaining compliance with federal and state requirements.

### Major Initiatives

- Improved financial reporting systems
- Accounting technology upgrades



- Development of an **Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)**
- Payroll and ERP system modernization

## Funding Sources

Primary federal funding sources include:

- **FTA Section 5307 Urban Formula Grants**
- **FTA Section 5311 Rural Formula Grants**
- Preventive Maintenance funding

## Current Challenges

- Outdated accounting software
- Limited staffing capacity
- Long-term uncertainty in transit funding

## How Success Is Measured

- Clean audit opinions
- Positive results from FTA triennial reviews
- Compliance with fund balance policy
- Stakeholder satisfaction (Board, Finance Committee)

## Rural Transfer Considerations

- Financial planning related to service transition
- Asset and liability transfers
- Reconciliation of accounts payable/receivable

# Human Resources

## Mission

Human Resources manages the agency's workforce lifecycle, ensuring GMT maintains a productive, compliant, and supportive work environment.

## Key Functions



- Recruitment and hiring
- Training and development
- Employee relations
- Compensation and benefits administration
- Labor relations
- Workplace compliance

## **Staffing**

Currently staffed by **one HR Director**, serving the entire organization.

## **External Stakeholders**

- Department of Labor
- Federal Transit Administration
- Benefits providers
- Workers' compensation partners

## **Key Responsibilities**

- Manage employee handbook and union agreements
- Oversee Drug and Alcohol Program compliance
- Handle onboarding and workforce planning

## **Current Challenges**

- Limited HR capacity relative to workforce size (~200 employees)

## **Key Priorities**

- Supervisor and leadership training
- Employee benefits administration
- Workforce retention and engagement

# **Department of Rider Experience**

## **Mission**



The Rider Experience Department focuses on ensuring passengers have a **positive, accessible, and reliable experience using GMT services.**

## **Responsibilities**

- Passenger engagement
- Marketing and communications
- Customer service operations
- Public outreach
- Rider feedback collection

## **Staff**

8 team members including:

- Director of Rider Experience
- Marketing Coordinator
- ADA Coordinator
- IT Coordinator
- Downtown Transit Center Manager
- Customer Service Representatives

## **Key Activities**

- Conducting rider surveys
- Managing public communications
- Supporting fare implementation
- Coordinating engagement groups

## **Current Challenges**

- Communicating effectively with a diverse riding population
- Addressing passenger conflicts and behavioral issues

## **Performance Metrics**

- Ridership trends
- Reduction in service inquiries
- Customer satisfaction survey results

## **Upcoming Priorities**



- Annual rider engagement process
- Improving public perception of transit
- Communications around upcoming service changes

## Planning Department

### Mission

The Planning Department designs and evaluates transit services to ensure they are **equitable, efficient, and responsive to community needs.**

### Core Functions

- Service planning and scheduling
- Ridership data analysis
- Public engagement
- Strategic service development
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) planning

### Staff

- Director of Planning
- Transit Data Analyst
- Transit Planner & Scheduler

### Key Projects

- Implementation of **15-minute service between Burlington and Market Street**
- Development of bus stop guidelines
- Service prioritization policies
- Data strategy development

### Funding

Funded primarily through **federal planning funds via the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.**

### Current Challenges



- Ensuring equitable participation in planning processes
- Developing better data management systems
- Aligning cross-departmental systems

## **Key Metrics**

- On-time performance
- Ridership data trends
- Reliability improvements

# **Transit Infrastructure**

## **Mission**

Maintains and improves GMT facilities, vehicles, and passenger amenities through sustainable capital planning and proactive maintenance.

## **Core Responsibilities**

- Transit Asset Management
- Capital project development
- Facility maintenance
- Procurement oversight
- Vehicle fleet replacement planning

## **Staff**

- Director of Transit Infrastructure
- Capital Projects Manager
- Facilities Manager

## **Major Capital Projects**

- Electric bus charging infrastructure
- Battery-electric bus procurement
- Facility improvements at Queen City Park Road
- New Central Vermont facility planning

## **Capital Funding**



Primarily supported by:

- Federal Transit Administration funding
- Vermont Agency of Transportation funding
- State grant agreements

## Current Challenges

- Heavy reliance on competitive grant funding
- Deferred maintenance on facilities
- Identifying a replacement Berlin facility

## Upcoming Priorities

- Facility upgrades and maintenance plans
- Capital project management improvements
- Long-term capital funding strategies

# Operations

## Mission

Operations ensures GMT's daily transit service runs safely and reliably by managing drivers, fleet maintenance, and field operations.

## Staff

Approximately **100 employees**, including:

- Director of Transportation
- Operations Manager
- Drivers
- Mechanics
- Maintenance staff
- Operations supervisors
- Security staff

## Core Responsibilities



- Bus operations
- Fleet maintenance
- Route implementation
- Field supervision

### **Key Performance Indicators**

- Ridership levels
- Safety incidents
- Cost efficiency

### **Challenges**

- Maintaining adequate funding
- Staffing and equipment levels to meet service needs

## **Key Themes Across Departments**

### **Funding Stability**

Many departments identified **sustainable funding** as a major challenge affecting service levels, infrastructure investment, and staffing.

### **Workforce Capacity**

Several departments noted **limited staffing relative to workload**, especially in HR and finance.

### **Technology and Data Systems**

Improved data management, software systems, and analytics are priorities across multiple departments.

### **Coordination Across Departments**

Effective transit service requires strong coordination between planning, operations, finance, infrastructure, and rider engagement teams.



# Opportunities for Committee Engagement

Committee members can play an important role in:

- Supporting long-term funding strategies
- Providing community perspectives on riding GMT services
- Supporting rider engagement initiatives
- Assisting with outreach events and data collection



# Vermont Open Meeting Law

## Quick Guide for Advisory Committee Members

Vermont's Open Meeting Law (1 V.S.A. §§ 310–314) ensures that the public has access to the meetings and decisions of public bodies. If you serve on a public board, committee, or council (such as the Rider Experience & Access Council), your meetings must generally be open and transparent.

### 1. What is a “Public Meeting”?

A meeting occurs when a **quorum (majority) of members gather to discuss or make decisions about public business.**

This includes:

- In-person meetings
- Virtual meetings (Zoom, Teams, etc.)
- Hybrid meetings

Even **informal discussions** can count as a meeting if a quorum is present and public business is discussed.

### 2. Meetings Must Be Open to the Public

Public bodies must:

- Allow the public to attend meetings
- Allow the public to observe the discussion
- Provide reasonable opportunity for **public comment**

Members of the public **do not have to speak**, but they must be able to listen and observe.

### 3. Public Notice Requirements

Meetings must be publicly announced in advance.



## Regular meetings

- Posted **at least 48 hours in advance**
- Must include:
  - Date and time
  - Location (or virtual link)
  - Agenda

## Special meetings

- Posted **at least 24 hours in advance**

Notices are usually posted:

- On the organization's website
- At designated public locations

## 4. Agendas

An agenda must be included with meeting notices.

The agenda:

- Lists the topics to be discussed
- Helps the public know what will be covered
- May be adjusted at the start of the meeting (with a vote)

Public bodies **should avoid discussing major issues not listed on the agenda.**

## 5. Meeting Minutes

Minutes must be taken and made available to the public.

Minutes must include:

- Members present
- Motions and votes
- A summary of discussions
- Decisions made

Draft minutes must be available **within 5 calendar days of the meeting.**



## 6. Email and Communications

Members should **avoid discussing committee business outside public meetings** when it involves a quorum.

Examples to avoid:

- Group email discussions that debate issues
- Messaging chains where a majority participates

Administrative emails (scheduling, documents, reminders) are generally fine.

## 7. Executive Session (Closed Meetings)

In limited situations, a public body may enter **executive session**, which closes part of the meeting to the public.

Common reasons include:

- Personnel matters
- Legal issues
- Contract negotiations
- Confidential information

Important rules:

- The body must vote in open session to enter executive session
- No final decisions can be made in executive session

## 8. Virtual Meeting Requirements

If meetings are held remotely:

- The public must have **equal access** to participate or observe
- Instructions for joining must be included in the meeting notice

## Key Principle

Vermont Open Meeting Law is based on a simple idea:

**Public decisions should be made in public.**



Transparency helps ensure accountability and public trust.

## **Learn More**

Vermont Secretary of State – Open Meeting Law Guide  
<https://sos.vermont.gov>