



**February Operations Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, March 8, 2021**  
**101 Queen City Park Road | Burlington, VT 05401**

**Present via ZOOM:**

Commissioner Baker  
Commissioner Sharrow  
Commissioner Waninger  
Commissioner Polyte

Jon Moore, GMT General Manager  
Nick Foss, Director of Finance  
Jamie Smith, Director of Marketing and  
Planning  
Mathew Kimball, Capital Projects Manager  
Christopher Damiani, Transit Planner  
Nathan Bergeron, Union Steward  
Hakeem Nuru, HR Coordinator

**Absent:**

Commissioner Wallis

**Meeting called to Order**

Meeting Opened- 10:02AM

**Adjustment of the Agenda**

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Approval of Committee Minutes • February 8<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Quorum was present. Meeting minutes were approved.

**Performance Dashboard Review**

Jon Moore reintroduced the additional metrics referenced in the previous meeting related to Operational Safety and the ADA, NEMT & MyRide services. Stating that there may be up to a month of lag in reporting on data points collected by external sources, such as the SSTA.

Of the new metrics, Moore highlighted the ADA Boardings per Hours metric, which have seen a decrease in demand attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. GMT has agreed to temporarily waive contract stipulations where SSTA is required to maintain that metric or face a penalty.

Moore also highlighted the ADA Percentage of Sedan & Minivan Trips metric, which has a set goal that is higher than SSTA's historical capacity. This is being addressed with incentive programs in the SSTA contract to build a larger volunteer base to support the service goal.

Moore focused on the increases in MyRide ridership and boardings per revenue hour, which he mentioned are critical metrics for the continued success of the service.

Commissioner Sharrow inquired about the addition of a MyRide *Miles Operated* metric, as a means to depict some of the cost savings of the program. Jamie Smith confirmed that this metric is available and Moore stated this could be provided in the future.

Commissioner Sharrow also questioned the metric *Urban Preventable Accidents* which showed that no preventable accidents occurred since August 2020. Moore stated that a review was done on previous months and although some accidents did occur since August, none to date have been deemed preventable based on GMT's criteria of a preventable accident.



## June Service Changes Proposal and Discussion

Jamie Smith introduced the following service updates:

1. The Middlebury Link (on Route 7): GMT and Tri-Valley Transit (TVT) are in conversations to transfer the Middlebury Link Service to TVT, which has historically seen declines in ridership. This arrangement would:
  - Provide a cost savings to GMT, as the program's cost has continually increased without a financial match from the communities served
  - Likely see an increase in ridership coming from Addison County to Chittenden County
  - Allows for better schedules and outreach to the ridership served at a lower operating cost
  - Frees GMT resources to provide better service in the reduced service area
2. Removal of Colored-Naming on Urban Routes: Route confusion, in part due to limited interlining on the routes, have promoted the argument to revert to a numbered route system.
  - Prior to a public meeting, survey data will be collected from passengers and drivers regarding interlining.
  - The current schedules show both route colour and number, with additional detailed passenger information to follow in future renditions (I.e.: Clarification on interlining routes)
3. White Cap Industrial Park (WCIP): Request from WCIP from GMT to provide additional service in the area for their employees, along the Williston Route.
  - Currently only two outbound trips stop at the WCIP site
  - Smith is researching when to add an AM, PM & Midday stop to best serve WCIP's employee base, as well as field research on routing buses around the area to best accommodate the proposed service change
4. St Albans Link Service Adjustment: Prioritization of underutilized routes in the VTrans Park&Ride and GMT service areas.
  - The current proposition is to stop serving the Collins-Perley parking lot, to instead serve the state owned parking Park-and-Ride across from the Northwest Medical Center.
  - Damiani stated that the change is considered minimal and would come at a cost savings for GMT.

Smith disclosed that these proposed changes will be going through public process, which would include public meetings and outreach efforts via the local TAC meetings. Before being brought to the board for approval in April, with implementation planned for the June schedule.

Commissioner Baker inquired about the estimated cost savings from TVT's adoption of the Middlebury Link service route. Moore stated that negotiations are on going, and currently TVT is reviewing if it is possible to operate the service using the currently available funds from GMT and VTrans.

Commissioner Baker questioned why interlining was infeasible under the current organizational structure. Smith clarified that this is due to a several compounding issues, including driver schedules (and built in breaks), which make interlining a challenge. Moore stated that interlining may also come at a significant cost to GMT and the proposed changes would decrease passenger confusion in the long run.

## GMT Student Transportation Discussion



The VTDMV have contacted GMT regarding the Tripper Service (whose primary ridership base are school-aged children in the Burlington School District). Moore stated that the VTDMV is concerned that GMT's neighborhood service in Burlington does not meet state regulations, specifically with regards to the vehicles utilized in the service (i.e.: school buses). However, it is uncertain if the Tripper Service meets the incidental requirement, as the routes are open to the public.

VTrans and VTDMV are in active discussion on the topic of compliance of all state agencies, routes served and in what fashion each is catering their school-aged children ridership.

GMT Legal Counsel believes that the ridership of children is incidental to GMT's total ridership, thus the program would be in compliance. Moore emphasized that GMT is willing to modify service to best serve the school districts' riders, and is awaiting guidance from VTDMV and VTrans.

Commissioner Baker inquired why the legal separation between school buses and public transit vehicles exists as it pertains to the transportation of children, particularly as it impacts access for school-aged children in rural communities. Moore stated that micro transit could serve as a means to avoid this key compliance issue and clarified that the FTA guideline exists to prevent the use of federal funds to compete with private school bus providers, unless there are no such providers in the region. Moore noted however that current Vermont law is more restrictive than federal mandates.

Commissioner Sharrow questioned if the pick-up and discharge at the student's home may pose an issue for GMT, citing that a majority of reported harm within minutes of their pick-ups and drop offs. He shared the opinion that there may be an adopted liability by using public transit vehicles as a substitute for a traditional school bus. Moore noted that guidance from the VTDMV stated that the MyRide service was in compliance, as student ridership was considered incidental to the overall ridership, so no school bus is required to run the service.

Commissioner Sharrow expressed the opinion that GMT should perform a deeper review of the laws related to this, as well as waiting for additional guidance from all related state and federal agencies. Moore agreed to share the guidance received from GMT legal counsel additional guidance as it becomes available.

### **Washington County Site Selection Study Update**

Nine sites (located in Montpelier, Berlin & Barre) have been screened by contracted consultants, as potential sites for GMT operations in Washington County.

Upon further analysis, three were selected as prospective sites and were assigned weighted numerical rankings based on their efficacy in following criteria:

- i. Site Access: Appropriate access to reach and use the site
- ii. Development Costs: Estimated costs associated in developing the site for use
  - i.e.: Topography; Storm-water Considerations; Access Improvements; Water & Sewer etc.
- iii. Land Use Compatibility: Land zoning and neighboring uses in relation to GMT needs
- iv. Environmental Impacts: Environmental justice and potential impacts on adjacent land uses
- v. Wetlands/Floodplain Issues: Proximity to wetlands and flood plains
- vi. Impact on GMT Operating Costs: Operating costs associated with deadheads (to and from site)

Kimball stated that additional criteria may be added later in the site selection process, based on data collected from community outreach, estimated acquisition costs and development possibilities. A final report is expected in April 2021 with additional detail on the criteria used to rank the sites.



Commissioner Baker inquired on the logic behind the ranked weighting system and why some criteria were considered more important (had a higher weights) than others. Kimball reported that conversations with GMT staff and the consulting team are still on going and the weights are subject to adjustment in future iterations of the site rankings.

Commissioner Sharrow questioned if there was a direct link between *Site Access* and *Impact on GMT Operating Costs*. Kimball elaborated that former is more concerned with ease to get to and from the site (i.e.: road conditions and vehicle pathways), while the latter is primarily associated with deadhead costs.

Commissioner Waninger queried the capacity which GMT's organizational values aligned with the site selection process. Moore stated that the primary focus has been operation-centric and more emphasis will be placed on values-centric arguments in the site selection process, in addition the criterion of *Environmental Impacts* and *Wetlands/Floodplain Issues*.

### **Adjourn**

Commissioner Baker motioned to adjourn; Commissioner Waninger seconded, all others agreed. Meeting adjourned at 10:52AM.