



GMT NEXT GEN TRANSIT PLAN

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

June 13, 2017



TOPICS

What is your/your organization's interest in public transit?

Which GMT services do you consider to be the most effective and why?

Which GMT services do you consider to be the least effective and why?

What are the greatest transit issues and challenges?

What are the greatest transit issues and challenges facing your organization/customers/clients?

Are there things transit should be doing beyond what it does now?

Are there geographic areas where transit should be improved?

When making changes, what should major considerations be?

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Conducted to ensure understanding of key issues and concerns

12 interviews with organizations throughout GMT's service area

8 represented rural areas and social service agencies

3 represented Chittenden County interests

1 (VTrans) represented state transportation interests



KEY THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS



All want better transit



Urban and rural interests are very different



Local funding process must be fixed



Urban and LINK services are most effective



Strong desire for more social service transportation in rural areas



Many want fares changed – no consensus on how



GMT's public information is poor



Expand service to new areas and improve existing services

INTEREST IN TRANSIT

RPCs -

All want greater role for transit

In Chittenden County, desire for better transit for all (for many reasons)

Elsewhere, major interest is transit for disadvantaged residents

Social service agencies desire new or better service for those who are socially, economically or physically disadvantaged

State desires best transit possible within acceptable levels of productivity and cost-effectiveness

Important dynamics:

Better Service for All <-> Focus on Disadvantaged <-> Acceptable Costs

Differences between urban desires versus rural desires

MOST EFFECTIVE SERVICES/ASPECTS OF SERVICES

LINK express routes

Urban local services, especially those that are frequent

Unlimited Access Program

Services to some social service programs

The overall range of services that GMT provides

Important dynamic

Stakeholders representing rural and social service interests are most concerned with service for the disadvantaged – but – most point to services for “choice” riders as the most effective

LEAST EFFECTIVE SERVICES/ASPECTS OF SERVICE

Quality of transit information, which many consider to be poor

Commuter routes (take too long, too many stops)

Limited schedules don't match non-traditional or shift work hours

Inadequate weekend service

Service is too slow (too many stops; too many deviations)

Cutaway buses are much less comfortable than standard transit buses

Inadequate service to social service agencies and medical care

Important questions:

Social service agency clients often struggle with transportation

Many want GMT to provide specialized transportation

When should GMT provide that transportation?

When are other options more appropriate?

GREATEST ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Local match requirements – broken in many respects

Perception by rural interests of an overemphasis on urban routes

Rural services for disadvantaged are very expensive to provide

Disconnect between siting of housing and services, and transit availability

Important questions:

How can the local funding process be fixed?

What is the proper balance between urban and rural services?

What is the proper balance between serving higher demand markets and lower demand markets (where individual needs may be great)?

GREATEST ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Public information on available services is poor

Bus schedules often don't match work schedules

Healthcare facilities can be difficult to reach

Walks to bus stops can be poor – particularly in rural areas

There is a stigma to using transit – GMT viewed as mostly serving the disadvantaged, especially in rural areas

Important questions:

How can information be improved?

What is the proper balance between service for work trips and other trips?

How much emphasis should GMT place on providing transit for all?

How much emphasis should GMT place on providing transit for those who are disadvantaged?

CHANGES/IMPROVEMENTS

Revise fare policy – many potential changes, including free

Cultivate sustainable and collaborative partnerships

Coordinate more with RPCs to plan service

Provide more service to meet social service needs

Use emerging technologies to improve and expand service

Important questions:

What is GMT's role in the overall transportation picture?

Which needs are most important?

Should it try to provide all/most transportation not being provided by others?

Should it expand beyond traditional transit?

What partners are needed to increase reach of services?

What new technologies would provide the most benefit?

PLACES WHERE TRANSIT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Many areas identified for new/improved service, including:

Better service on all rural routes

Direct service between Downtown Transit Center and airport

Morrisville – Burlington via VT 15

VT 7 western corridor

Important questions:

How should GMT prioritize service to new areas?

What is the proper balance between expanding to new areas and making existing services more convenient?

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS WHEN MAKING CHANGES

Improve job access, including for non-traditional work hours

Provide better service to meet social service needs

Increase ridership

Increase service frequencies

“Best service to greatest number of people”

And many more...

Important question:

How do we decide what's most important?

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