

Williston Transportation ideas

CWK 2/10/20

Background:

- The Western part of Williston is served by GMT urban buses, both along Rte 2 (Red Line) and Rte 2A (Orange Line). Ridership is ~2% of potential. Cultural prejudice and ease of parking at destinations are credited with much of the low usage.
- Mountain View, N. Williston Rd, and the Village of Williston were served by a CMAC-funded 1V village commuter bus (5X/day) from 2011-2019. The 1V route was dropped as part of the NextGen system revisions due to performance.
- There is a lot of interest in shuttle service between Taft Corners and the Village so residents of the village can shop at Taft Corners stores and residents of Taft Corners area can get to civic sites including the Town Clerk's office, Library, and community park. Note: This was not a feature of the 1V which was more of a commuter route to Burlington.
- GMT is having financial and ridership difficulties, so is unlikely to expand routes in the near term.

I believe we need some sort of on-demand/fixed route combination "van-sized" service to complement current public transportation options in the less urban parts of Williston. This might solve "last-mile" problems for some public transportation users and get people where they need to go WITHIN Williston with possible ventures outside Williston to serve Amtrak and Burlington Airport.

Connecting with GMT Urban bus service would be facilitated by a transit center near Taft Corners. In addition to on-demand "micro-transit" service, there might be some sort of fixed route between Taft Corners and the Village with perhaps periodic trips to special locations such as the Brick Church on concert Fridays, Catamount Family Center at event times, and churches on Sundays.

In studying the possible ways to implement this idea, we can learn from related efforts by other organizations in NW Vermont.

Area organizations to learn from (information resources):

- CIDER in Grand Isle
- Essex "Senior" bus
- Hinesburg "Neighbor Rides"
- Tri-Town group (Jericho, Underhill, Cambridge—still in planning stage, but have gathered much info, and working with CCRPC on UPWP.)
- Mount Mansfield Villages (one year old organization)
- CATMA
- Sugarbush Valley "Senior Bus" purchased with local funding and providing all types of rides around Waitsfield. (need to find out more)
- Also: Vt Legislature, including Jim McCullough (on this committee) and Curt McCormack who chairs the Trans Comm in the house (curt.mccormack@gmail.com)

<curt.mccormack@gmail.com>) and VTRANS, particularly Dan (Daniel.Dutcher@vermont.gov) <Daniel.Dutcher@vermont.gov>) and Jackie (Cassino, Jackie <Jackie.Cassino@vermont.gov>)

Potential area partners:

- SSTA (scheduling, sharing ADA rides...)
- GMT (vehicles, maintenance, coordination)
- CVSD (sharing vehicles? Providing some school rides? Rides between ABS and WCS?)
- New Hotels being built (financial support in return for courtesy van service for their customers?)
- Go! Vermont (On-demand ride scheduling, ride-share complement to van service)
- CarShare VT
- CCRPC (data and grants) – (Marshall Distel <mdistel@ccrpcvt.org> and others)
- CATMA (Sandy Thibault - CATMA (<sandy@catmavt.org>))
- Sustainable Transportation Vermont (Julie Campoli <juliecampoli@gmail.com>)
- Businesses or school needing to move THINGS (packages/food/whatever)—long shot but suggested.
- Businesses who want to ADVERTISE on vehicles and in brochures/website/etc???

Williston organizations to engage:

- Rotary Club
- Senior Housing operators (Cathedral Square for Whitney Hill, the ? for the one at Blair Park, and are there more?)
- Churches (might know of member needs)
- Selectboard, Town Manager, Planning & Zoning,
- Sustainable Williston (grass roots organization for support)

From Jim McCullough 12/17/19:

- Williston follow through on conditions of approval for projects with transportation paths
- Williston follow its own regulations when developing its own transportation paths
- incent local park and rides such as at Federated Church; Catamount; Isham Farm; Brennan Woods Park;
- ...
- create and manage a ride share board for carpooling
- create bussing partnership with our school district
- drive time Williston owned/operated courtesy van networking from schools to bring adult passengers to Walmart Transit Center
- Williston courtesy van is on call (such as SSTA) for pick up an shuttle to/from Walmart Transit Center
- Williston develop taxi operations regulations

Notes from 2/3/20 Rural Transportation roundtable:

Per John McBride: Basically we are trying to solve the same puzzle as many: We have vehicles, drivers, and passengers, and we need to get the three together as responsively, efficiently, and effectively as possible.

From CATMA (I think): The State's van pools are held back by difficulty finding drivers (who also coordinate).

From VTRANS: The State views Go! Vermont as the front-end for ride sharing by anyone. They are adding connectivity to the Transit App for trip planning.

Deb: Family is the focus of many rides. People need to leave their work midday to take care of family needs. This limits a lot of shared ride participation.

The Tri-Town group is working on a UPWP with CCRPC to figure out how to INTEGRATE everything, especially both fixed-route and on-demand (micro-transit plus paratransit) rides.

Curt McCormick is planning to do all possible from the recommendations of the Section 20 study on how to increase use of public transportation including:

- Parking disincentives
- Free transit
- Better apps
- Promotion of public transit

He also wants to tax "luxury" cars to fund EVs and public transit. And... may legislate to allow students and adults to be on busses for schools together.

CIDER and SSTA are independent so don't get direct state funding but CAN get other contracts. (I think we should be independent.)

Sugarbush Valley purchased a "Senior Bus" with private money and it provides most rides in Waitsfield.

2/10/20 Transportation Program sub-committee notes

Matt, Kevin, Chapin reviewed mash-up connectivity map and materials shared in advance as well as report from Chapin on the CCRPC's Rural Transit Roundtable of 2/3/20. The below is an attempt to provide an outline to some of what was discussed...

Goals:

- Provide needed transportation options and services to people who live and/or work in Williston.
- Reduce SOV trips (and therefore congestion and carbon).

Objectives:

- Increase utilization of existing programs, particularly GMT bus service and Ride Sharing services available on the Go! Vermont website and app.
- Approach: Keep things simple and incremental and adjust as needed.

Specific suggestions/projects:

1. Increase use of bicycle transportation:
 - a. Do a project on Way-Finding for existing services such as the bike path.
 - b. Consider implementing an electric bike share program with hubs at Taft Corners, Williston Town Hall or Library, and perhaps other destinations. Rationale: Study of existing Bike Share in Burlington/S. Burlington/Winooski shows Williston lacks the density BUT... with e-bikes, distances are shorter and hills disappear. Matt will take the lead starting with analysis work that is part of his degree program.
2. Increase public transportation options:
 - a. Consider offering fare-free access to GMT busses within Williston's borders. Chapin will find out what this would cost.
 - b. Evaluate ride programs in the area such as CIDER (Grand Isle) and Hinesburg Neighbor Rides to learn what works for them that might be applicable to Williston.
 - c. Work with the Tri-Town (Cambridge, Underhill, Jericho) group on their UPWP project with CCRPC as part of this.
 - d. Push for a transit center in Taft Corners. Any ride program would benefit from a hub for transferring from one mode or service to another.
3. Decrease SOV commuting by Williston residents:
 - a. Consider facilitating an Office-Share program to reduce commuting.
 - b. Work with the Town on a work-from-home policy to reduce commuting and as a model for other entities in Williston.
 - c. Publicize and create incentives to use existing public transportation.
 - d. Publicize and create incentives to use existing ride sharing services.