



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## **RRPC ELDERS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (E&D) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, March 8, 2023, 11:00 AM**

### **MEETING DETAILS**

Virtual: [Teams Meeting](#), ID: 239 820 319 213, Pass: CpxDkJ | Call: 1-802-440-1368, ID: 598 674 540#

In-Person: The Opera House, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 67 Merchants Row, Rutland, VT 05701

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Yvonne Wedin	MVRTD	Maryesa White	One-2-One
Jessie Butterfield	VCIL	Tammy Brown	One-2-One
Diane Drake	ARC	Ethan Pepin	RRPC
Courtney Anderson	SVCOA	Devon Neary	RRPC
Laurie Knauer	Castleton Community	Nic Stark	RRPC

1) INTRODUCTIONS/APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA

Called to order at 11:04 AM. Motion to approve previous meeting minutes by Knauer seconded by Butterfield. Motion to approve current meeting agenda by Butterfield, seconded by Wedin.

2) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

None present.

3) E&D Summit

Pepin talked about the upcoming E&D summit on June 9, and encouraged all partners to attend. Pepin explained that this meeting would be virtual and suggested that partners could attend as able without having to commit to driving to an in-person event.

4) RIDE GUIDE PROMOTION

Pepin talked about the list he created of partners to help distribute the ride guide including medical centers, food shelves, and senior centers. Pepin noted that many of the medical facilities and senior centers were concentrated in larger communities, with food shelves providing coverage to more rural areas. Pepin discussed his desire to reach out to smaller communities and suggested promoting the ride guide to town offices and libraries. Anderson expressed some concerns with the distribution of the guide, noting that the listing of wellness and personal trips on the guide was leading to people calling looking for wellness/social personal rides which SVCOA

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had to deny due to prioritizing medical trips. Neary said that it was important to remember that the program was still under budget and had more money to spend than other partners were not using. Neary said that SVCOA should be considering approving a limited number of social & wellness trips since there would be an opportunity to redress any budgetary imbalances at the next quarterly budget adjustment. Neary emphasized that while SVCOA's budget was tight, there remained a substantial surplus in the program as a whole. He suggested that while driver recruitment also limited ride capacity, that issue should be addressed separately to untangle rides denied due to lack of drivers and rides denied due to lack of funding, since the latter was much easier to address in the short term. White expressed concerns with recruiting drivers and suggested that many drivers were looking at this as more of a job leading them to prefer long trips where they would receive larger reimbursements. White suggested that maybe the program should adapt to this and compensate drivers better to encourage more to volunteer. Neary noted that he was not opposed to compensating volunteer drivers in principle but clarified that the current reimbursement rate is set by federal regulations. Wedin explained that if they were to offer even a half cent more of compensation, they would have to be reclassified as employees and their compensation would be taxable income. Wedin suggested that partners experiencing driver issues should push riders to partners who utilize MVRTD's driver pool as they are better able to accommodate rides currently. Knauer asked Wedin if bus trips were an allowable ride type. Wedin asked for clarification about what was meant by 'bus trips'. Anderson explained that bus trips are pre-arranged rides for a larger group to go to a specific activity like a museum and are allowable as social trips under current guidelines.

5) DRIVER RECRUITMENT

Stark gave an update on work he had done on researching distribution channels for driver recruitment marketing. Stark contacted PegTV (local public access), who offered to air a PSA for free, as well as post to their digital community bulletin board. Stark also explored advertising on Facebook and Front Porch Forum but noted that it would incur a small cost. Stark suggested setting aside a small amount of money to run a targeted promotional campaign online, while distributing analogue materials to local partners.

6) PARTNER UPDATES

SVCOA: Anderson did not have anything new to report, but thanked the committee for a productive discussion on opening up allowable trip types. Anderson noted that allowing more rides could start to eat into the budget, and this situation should be monitored to ensure the overall grant is staying on track, but it will provide crucially needed rides to the region.

Castleton Community: Knauer shared that Castleton finally has a new volunteer driver who is not driving full time, but is helping fill the gaps. Regarding rides, there have been no changes in ride

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patterns.

ARC: Drake discussed event planning work for ARC's spring and summer events calendar, noting she expected to spend down the rest of her budget providing rides to these events.

MVRTD: Wedin reminded partners that February denials should be sent in to her by Friday using the new spreadsheet. Wedin also went over the specific guidance given by VTrans Dan Currier that exercise programs as senior centers would now be classified as wellness trips. Anderson asked for clarification about whether senior exercise classes at other locations would be covered. Brown explained that these programs typically happen in whatever space is donated to be used, such as churches or the Godnick Center. Wedin stated that she believed those would qualify but would verify with VTrans Dan Currier. Knauer asked a follow up question about exercise classes at pools. Wedin offered to ask VTrans Dan Currier about this as well.

One-2-One: Brown stated she had nothing new to report. She continues to coordinate with Wedin to learn the new spreadsheet for denied trips.

VCIL: Butterfield commented that things have been mostly the same. Butterfield has been away from the main office recovering from COVID-19.

7) ADJOURN

Adjourned at 11:41

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