


# House Transportation Committee Vermont's Transportation Program for the Elderly & Disabled



Barbara Donovan, Public Transit Program Manager  
Vermont Agency of Transportation  
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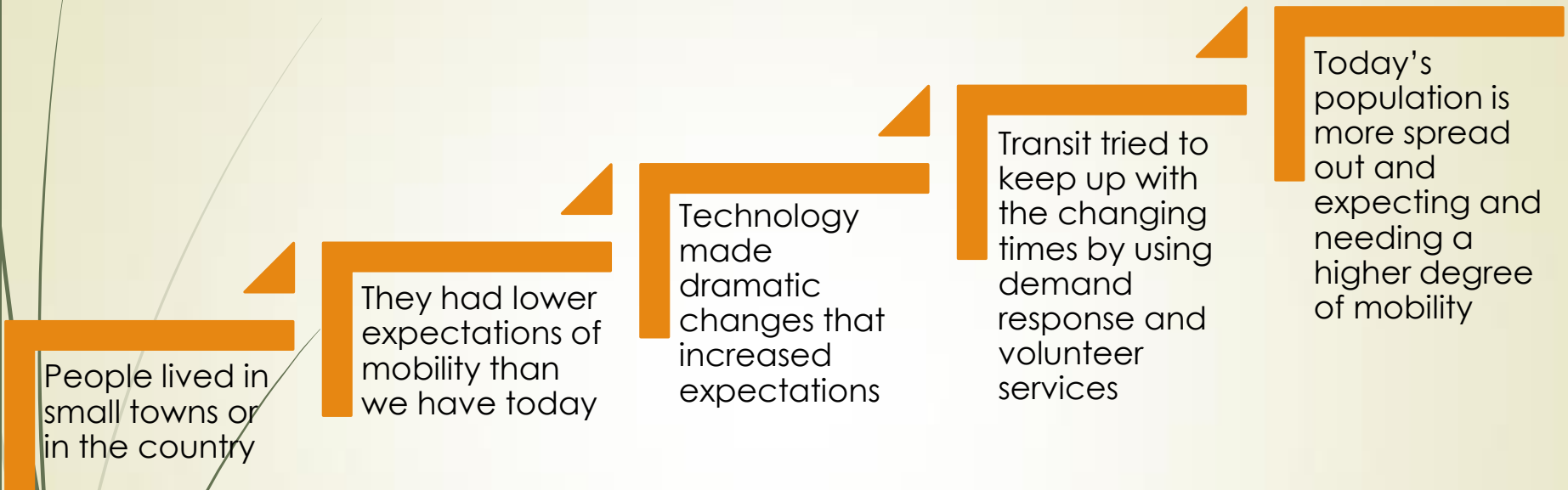




## Early Public Transit in Vermont (electric)

Woodstock, VT 1914

Senate Transportation Committee 1/12/18



People lived in small towns or in the country

They had lower expectations of mobility than we have today

Technology made dramatic changes that increased expectations

Transit tried to keep up with the changing times by using demand response and volunteer services

Today's population is more spread out and expecting and needing a higher degree of mobility



## Evolution of Public Transit in Vermont



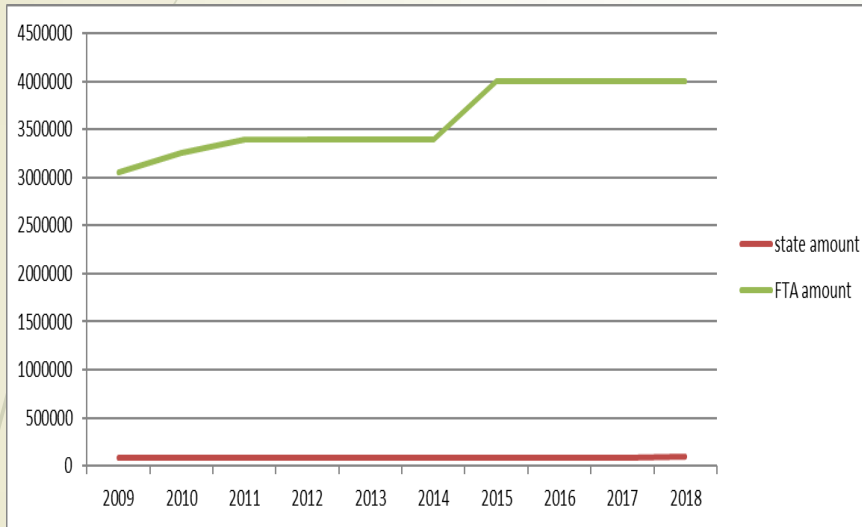
Vermont made major investments in specialized service to the elderly and disabled

# VTrans History of the E&D Program

- ❑ 1975 – FTA formula program started on a federal level with apportionments to the states based on population of elderly and disabled for capital only
- ❑ Pre-1990 – Vtrans used FTA 5310 funding to buy vehicles
- ❑ 1991 – FTA funding doubled nationwide and required coordination and allowed flexing funding from Federal Highway programs
- ❑ 2005 – FTA allowed 33% of funds to be used for purchased transportation
- ❑ 2000 Census – 17% of Vermonters were elderly, 2020 Census – 25% expected
- ❑ 2004 E&D Program in Vermont began in earnest, 45% allowed for purchase of service
- ❑ Funds are flexed from the FHWA CMAQ/STP into the FTA 5311 program to purchase services for the E&D program
- ❑ 2005 (2003-2004 Act 122 Section 146b established objectives for a study) DAIR commissioned study of the current services to the elderly and disabled
- ❑ 2016 (2015 ACT 40 Section 12) Vermont Elders & Persons with Disability Transportation Program Review

# E&D operations funding over 10 years

# E&D Capital Funding over 10 years

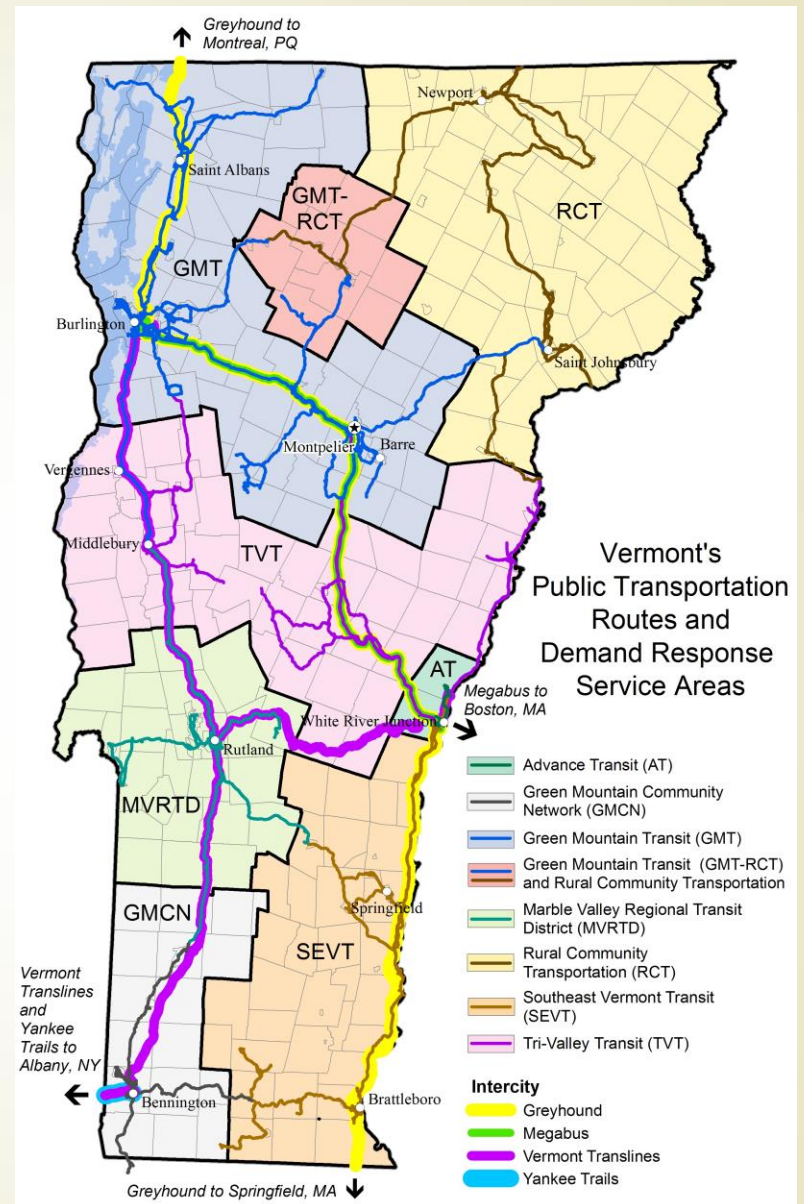


180,000 trips for the Elderly and Disabled in 2017



# How does it work?

- ▶ VTrans established E&D Advisory Committees in each region
- ▶ The Planning Agency in each region is responsible for the committee
- ▶ The advisory committees, RPTACs, create a service plan for the region which consists of how they appropriate the funds to each partner
- ▶ These partners are responsible for providing the local share
- ▶ They meet monthly to discuss transportation issues in the region and how to resolve them
- ▶ VTrans and AHS developed guidelines
- ▶ VTrans coordinators attend meetings



- Transportation is consistently identified as one of the barriers to successful aging.
- Transportation allows the elderly and people with disabilities to live a full life in the home and community of their choice.
- Medical services and increased socialization are shown to lead to more prevention and fewer emergencies and a longer, healthier life at less cost to the state and families.
- Partner agencies need transportation to deliver their programs efficiently and effectively





## Volunteer Drivers

### Giving Back By Giving Rides

Community Rides Volunteer Driver Program is a network of volunteer drivers managed through individual regional public transportation providers to offer cost effective transportation to community members in need of a ride.

### What Does A Volunteer Driver Do?

- Volunteers provide seniors, individuals with a disability and Medicaid clients access to a variety of daily needs, including medical and social services.
- As a volunteer driver for Community Rides, you provide a vital connection for your community members.

**Interested in volunteering?** Volunteers are always needed. [Learn More](#)

Volunteers provide 43% of the rides for the elderly and disabled in the Vermont Public Transit Program

# What I'm hearing:

- This year I attended a Southwestern Gerontology Conference in Killington and hosted a special session on transportation for the elderly. Most of the questions I received were for specific people who needed transportation for a limited need. This reinforced my belief that the transportation needed is not as much broad based but one on one brokering of their needs.
- We met with 211 Vermont to discuss how they provide information on transportation for people and how many requests they receive
- Working with Hospitals on Rides to Wellness to see if we can secure additional funding and last minute rides for those who's transportation access is erratic.
- Interactive Map of southwestern Vermont that shows smaller neighborhood groups providing assistance
- Worked closely with VAADS and COVE to get their take on current conditions and what needs to happen in the future
- Each issue we follow up on seems to lead to solving a personal access problem rather than putting wide-scale increases on the street

Credit: Barr  
Blond


# What do we need to do this year?

- ▶ Write the Public Transit Policy Plan/Human Service Transit Coordination Plan with an E&D workplan
- ▶ Revisit each E&D committee and listen to their concerns.
- ▶ Review/Rewrite the E&D Committee Guidance
- ▶ Host transit conversations at major and regional meetings
- ▶ Determine how to make eligibility more consistent without losing individual groups ability to fund additional resources
- ▶ Consider a universal application for transportation assistance
- ▶ Review 211 process
- ▶ Create E&D Workplan as part of Public Policy Plan update
  - ▶ Analyze resources
  - ▶ Analyze delivery systems
- ▶ Create 'Ticket to Ride' program at each transit agency (how to prioritize)
- ▶ Create an Army of Mobility Managers across the state



# Discussion

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(1) Provision for basic mobility for transit-dependent persons, as defined in the public transit policy plan of January 15, 2000, including meeting the performance standards for urban, suburban, and rural areas. The density of a service area's population is an important factor in determining whether the service offered is fixed route, demand-response, or volunteer drivers.

(2) Access to employment, including creation of demand-response service.

(3) Congestion mitigation to preserve air quality and the sustainability of the highway network.

(4) Advancement of economic development objectives, including services for workers and visitors that support the travel and tourism industry. Applicants for "new starts" in this service sector shall demonstrate a high level of locally derived income for operating costs from fare-box recovery, contract income, or other income.