

Act 59 - Section 20 Report: Methods to Increase the Use of Public Transit

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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Presentation Overview

Legislative Language

Study Methodology

Major Findings

Study Recommendations

Questions and Discussion



Act 59, Section 20

“The Agency of Transportation shall, in consultation with stakeholders, study methods to increase use of public transit in Vermont for both residents and visitors. This study shall review the Agency’s current initiatives and those in other territories, states, and countries; review literature, marketing, and activities regarding methods to increase ridership with special emphasis on rural areas; determine unmet needs from current studies; examine the benefit of providing local connectivity to transit; and evaluate what factors affect public transit ridership in Vermont.”

Act 59, Section 20 cont.

“The Agency shall deliver a written report of its findings and recommendations including where and how to make the most effective improvements in service and criteria to use to determine the priorities of investments”

“The Agency shall evaluate recommendations for potential inclusion in its fiscal year 2021 budget proposal and estimated funding necessary to achieve the recommendations for any new initiatives identified in the study”

Study Methodology



Literature Review – National Cooperative Highway and Transit Research Reports, Trade Journals, University Transportation Research Centers



Analysis of Vermont Transit Services – characteristics of the most / least successful services



Stakeholder Input – two meetings and draft report review



Public Transit Policy Plan alignment – Goals, Target Markets for Increased Ridership, Strategy Development

Major Findings – literature review

- Strengthening community awareness and marketing transit service remains a critical part of attracting new riders.
- Successful rural transit agencies actively manage their services.
- “Old tricks” like regional connecting services, university pass programs, and free ride days are still important strategies.
- “New” ideas and technologies are creating opportunities to grow rural transit ridership.
- Partnerships are an essential part of successful rural transit services.
- Strategies are often synergistic: transit agencies can maximize efforts to increase ridership by coordinating these efforts.
- State support is essential.

Major Findings – Vermont route analysis

HIGH RIDERSHIP ROUTES

High productivity is often a function of limited or targeted service

- Only the best transit corridors have high productivity with a high level of service

High ridership related to several factors

- Major trip generators
- Dense and continuous development
- Frequent and direct (time-competitive) service

In Vermont, ski areas and universities are keys to transit success

- Low/free fares and rider subsidies also important factors



Major Findings – Vermont route analysis

LOW RIDERSHIP ROUTES

Small towns and villages may have mobility needs but still not generate enough demand to support a traditional bus route

- Low service levels not attractive to residents who can drive
- Pedestrian facilities poor or nonexistent in many non-urban areas

Commuter routes face uphill battle in era of low gasoline prices

Confusing/poorly designed schedules can be a barrier

Capital investment also critical to attract choice riders, but hard to justify in low-density areas

- Shelters and lighting
- Cutaways can be a disincentive



Major Findings – PTPP Goals

POLICY GOALS SUPPORTING INCREASED TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Make the most of existing investment

Address unmet needs for mobility

Reduce energy use and GHGs

Reduce traffic congestion and wasted time

Free up resources used on automobiles



Major Findings – Needs Analysis

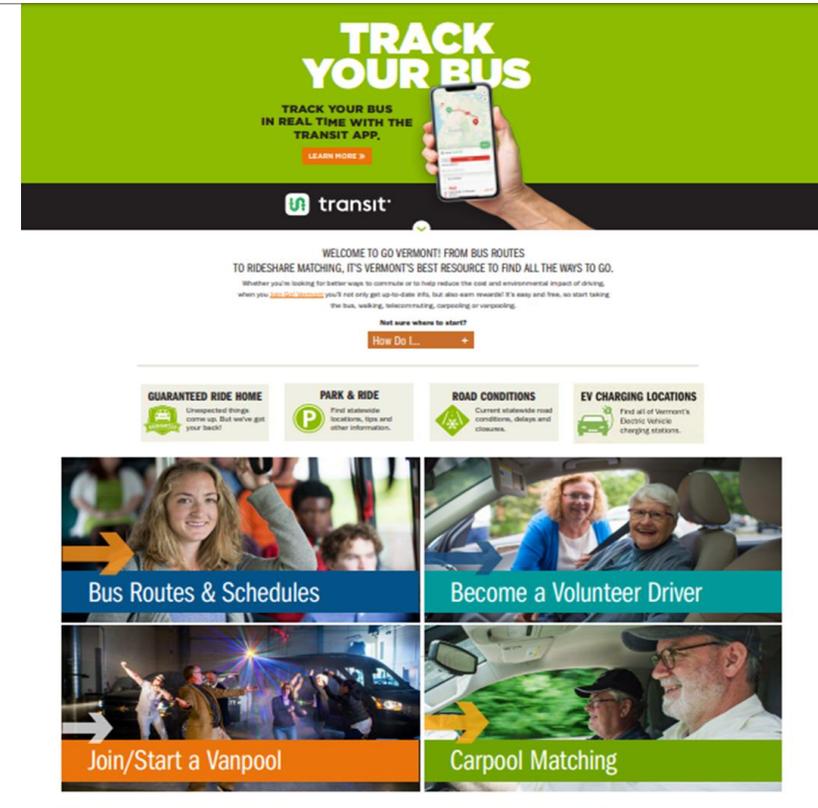
TARGET MARKETS

People with unmet transportation needs

- Older adults (especially over 80)
- People with disabilities
- Low-income individuals
- Youth (mostly age 13-18)

People with transportation options but open to using transit

- Millennials
- Generation Z
- Urban dwellers
- Eco-minded people from any generation



Target Markets

SERVING PEOPLE WITH UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Provide more convenient and available demand-response service

Operate evening/weekend service for job access and other purposes

Employ mobility managers for training and coordination

ATTRACTING PEOPLE WITH TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Improve the convenience of transit relative to driving

Enhance comfort and image of transit

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to bus stops

Make information more readily available

Short-Term Strategies (1-3 years)

Action	Cost	Ridership Impact	Ease of Implementation
Local access connections	Low (variable)	Low	Moderate
Expand partnerships	Low	Low	Easy
Pursue marketing campaign	Moderate	Low to moderate	Easy
Fare Free policy	Moderate, high for GMT	Low in rural areas, high for GMT	Easy for rural areas, moderate for GMT
Invest in technology	Moderate	Low to moderate	Moderate
Paradigm shift for demand response	Moderate	Low in urban area, moderate in rural areas	Moderate to difficult
Capital investments	High	Low to moderate	Moderate
Service increases	High	Moderate	Moderate

Long-Term Strategies (years to decades)



Implement “Complete Streets” and other bicyclist and pedestrian-friendly improvements



Active management and planning of transit services



Better coordination of land-use and transit planning

Questions?

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