

Green Mountain Transit - 2025 Senate Transportation Preview

Contact:

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Background:

GMT is a municipality established under 24 VSA. We operate public transit services in Chittenden, Grand Isle, Franklin, Lamoille, and Washington Counties. GMT's urban and rural systems are funded through disparate federal programs, requiring finances to be managed separately.

- For Chittenden County (Urban), we operate fixed route service and contract with the Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA) to provide paratransit for riders with a disability that prevents them from using fixed route service.
- For Franklin and Washington Counties (Rural) we operate both fixed route and on demand transit. On demand transit is door to door service, including Non-Emergency Medical Transport (Medicaid), Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (O&D), and a variety of other circumstance specific transit options.
- For Grand Isle County (Rural) we contract with Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (CIDER) for on demand transit.
- Fixed route seasonal service in support of Stowe and Sugarbush (Rural).

Transfer of Rural Service:

The FY24 Transportation Bill directed GMT to study transferring our service outside of Chittenden County to other transit providers. GMT is one of a handful of transit operators in the country that operates both urban and rural service. A report was conducted indicating other transit agencies could provide our rural service more cost-effectively, with a recommendation to transfer our Lamoille County service to Rural Community Transit (RCT) and our Washington County service to Tri Valley Transit (TVT).

- Improved focus on urban may be most beneficial aspect of transfer.
- Not eager to lose rural team members.

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- Committed to continued work with VTrans, RCT, and TVT to study and implement transfers if transfers continue to be positive for the whole.
- Recognize our higher costs impact transit statewide.
- All or nothing approach is reasonable, although if complications in one area prevents transfer there may be value in partial transfer.
- Labor relations of transferring service to non-union provider in Franklin County may be most challenging aspect of transfer.

Urban Service Reductions:

GMT's urban operations will spend the last of its federal COVID relief funds in FY26, which means we have a steep fiscal cliff approaching.

- \$700K/year in service already eliminated, including:
 - Elimination of the Jeffersonville Commuter December 2024.
 - Reduction in Saturday evening service December 2024.
 - 36% Reduction in Montpelier LINK service March 2025.
 - Consolidation of St. Albans LINK/Milton Commuter June 2025.
 - Savings to date overtime and not reduction in force.
- \$1.2M in local service cuts to be implemented by July 2025:
 - Final service reduction list to be determined March 2025.
 - Reduction in workforce force will be necessary July 2025.
- Will require an additional \$3M in reductions for FY27 and FY28:
 - Reduction in workforce will be necessary in July 2026.

Assaults on Transit Workers:

Assaults on public transit drivers have been a nationwide problem, and GMT has had multiple employees assaulted by riders in the past year, to include a supervisor assaulted already in 2025. We would like to discuss having transit workers included in the list of protected professionals established in 13 V.S.A. § 1028, which provides for additional penalties when employees who serve the public are assaulted while performing their duties.