

MONADNOCK ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION FUND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

February 23, 2017

Subcommittee Members Present: Michael Acerno, *Vice-Chair, Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Ellen Avery, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Frank Dobisky, *Thomas Transportation*.

Southwest Region Planning Commission staff members present were Henry Underwood, *GIS Specialist/Planner* and Liz Kelly, *Planning Technician*.

I. Welcome

Henry Underwood welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a brief overview of the agenda.

II. Municipal Transportation Fund (RSA 261:153. VI) Project Background

Henry Underwood gave some background information on the municipal transportation fund enabled through NH RSA 261. The law enables New Hampshire communities to charge an additional fee, up to \$5.00 per motor vehicle registration, to be used towards a municipal transportation fund. The fund can be used for a variety of transportation improvement projects including but not limited to roads, bridges, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, parking and intermodal facilities, and public transportation. In the Monadnock Region, the Town of Swanzey and the City of Keene have recently implemented this fund.

Henry Underwood stated that the purpose of this subcommittee would be to provide guidance and information to other towns about the benefits of implementing a vehicle registration fee to help fund local transportation projects. He said that the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) should be looking at ways that the fee can be used to further support its Action Plan objectives and strategies. Mr. Underwood also mentioned that MAST recently submitted a letter in support of NH House Bill 121, which would raise the maximum amount of the fee from \$5 to \$10. The bill recently passed an important milestone, an “ought to pass” vote by the NH House Municipal and County Government Committee.

Ellen Avery asked when the next hearing for the bill will be so the Monadnock Region Coordinating Council can send their own letter of support. Henry Underwood volunteered to find out and send the date out to the group. Michael Acerno noted that he would like to know how the transportation providers present could access some of these funds. Currently the City of Keene applies money generated from the fee towards infrastructure. He noted that it would be great to see some of the funds be allocated to transportation agencies. He mentioned the City of Lebanon’s support for Advance Transit as an example.

Henry Underwood mentioned that finding out how places (such as the City of Keene) distribute funds and decide on where that money will go will be an important part of this project. Once the subcommittee collects background information from other towns and cities, the group will have to decide how MAST wants to communicate the information to other towns that do not collect the fee. Ellen Avery mentioned that Peterborough is considering implementing the surcharge in their community.

III. Goals, Objectives, and Work Plan

Henry Underwood explained the importance of having a subcommittee work plan with specific goals, strategies, and activities so that the group can be organized and accomplish their work efficiently. He reviewed the tentative project timeline that was distributed during the MAST Annual Meeting. Michael Acerno noted that the subcommittee should think about how they would like to see this fund used while they work on the project. Frank Dobisky mentioned that documenting ways a community can benefit from the fund will also be important for conducting outreach. Ellen Avery said that CVTC has statistics that could be used for outreach purposes regarding rides provided, how many drivers live in a town, etc. She received feedback from the Town of Jaffrey staff that the Town doesn't use the fee because an additional tax would be unpopular. Michael Acerno noted that a selling point could be that all the funds raised stay within the community for municipal transportation improvements.

Henry Underwood showed the group a chart listing goals, objectives, and activities that achieve said strategy. There were also columns that identified the target audience and who will accomplish each activity. A sample goal and objective was provided based on the project description shared during the Annual Meeting.

Goal:

Assist Southwest NH communities with their consideration for adopting a registration surcharge and municipal transportation fund to improve access to alternative modes of transportation and multiple strategies of the MAST Action Plan.

Objective:

Increase awareness of the benefits of a municipal transportation fund as well as other important considerations related to adoption and consideration.

Mr. Underwood requested that the subcommittee decide on strategies and activities they would like to pursue. There was one strategy decided upon and a number of activities discussed by the subcommittee members present.

Strategy 1:

Learn how New Hampshire communities are currently allocating the fund.

Activity 1:

Conduct in-person meetings with town/city staff.

Michael Acerno noted that the most comprehensive resource stating how towns who have implemented the fee use the funds is the Local Financing for Transportation Projects in NH report by the Upper Valley Transportation Management Association. However, attendees noted this was a cursory look throughout the state, and didn't provide sufficient detail in certain areas. This is why in-person interviews will be the most effective way to get the information needed. Frank Dobisky said that it would be helpful if SWRPC staff could provide assistance in setting up meetings/interviews for subcommittee members with municipalities. Ellen Avery suggested the subcommittee interview the two communities in the Monadnock Region that have the fee (Swanzey and Keene) and also speak with staff from Claremont and, either Hanover or Lebanon. Discussion ensued about potential interview questions to ask towns and cities.

Activity 2:

Reach out to transportation providers who participated in the adoption of a municipal transportation fund.

Ellen Avery suggested that the subcommittee also reach out to transportation providers, specifically Van Chesnut from Advance Transit, to discuss how they were able to receive funds from the City of Lebanon. It was also discussed that other towns outside our region that allocate municipal transportation funds monies to transportation providers should also be interviewed. Henry Underwood agreed to look into this before the next meeting.

Activity 3:

Document what the subcommittee currently knows about the fund.

Ellen Avery noted that we should compile a fact sheet providing basic information on the municipal transportation fund so that everyone is clear on the basics of the fund when they go out on interviews or speak with towns during the outreach phase.

Henry Underwood said that he recommends the subcommittee continue working on the work plan at the next meeting. He also said that he will update the chart and send it out to the subcommittee for their review.

IV. Subcommittee Meeting Schedule

Henry Underwood mentioned that this subcommittee has flexibility on where it meets. Ellen Avery suggested the Dublin General Store as a possible meeting location in the future, to which the group agreed. Henry Underwood stated he would send out an online poll to the subcommittee to determine the next meeting date.

V. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Kelly
Planning Technician