

Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 12, 2024
2-4 PM

Location:

****NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION****

Laconia Senior Center

184 Beacon St W, Laconia, NH 03246

Please park and enter from the back of the building on Beacon Street

Attendees	
Terri Paige, CAPBM	
Andrew Harmon, Citizen member (Secretary)	Teri Palmer, State Mobility Manager, Virtual
Vince Pagano, Regional Planner, CNHRPC, Virtual	Cindy Yanski, Region 3 Mobility Manager (CAPBMCI)
Jane Alden, Town of Tilton	Glenn Trefethen, Lakes Region Planning Commission Transportation Director
Melissa LaRocque, Future In Sight, Virtual	Dave Jeffers, Mid-State Transit
Joyce Cameron, Partnership for Public Health	Carrie Chandler, Helping Hands for the Lakes Region

1. Welcome and Introductions

A. Harmon called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM. Discussion of a quorum ensued, and A. Harmon mentioned 91-A:2.D. Jeffers suggested postponement; C. Chandler arrived and quorum was thought to be present, so minutes were voted on.

2. Review and approve minutes of the November 12th RCC meeting.

Review and approve minutes for November minutes:

M/S Approved, A. Harmon, J. Cameron, G.
Trefethen abstained

3. Changes to Article VIII Conflict of Interest

C. Yanski mentioned the Conflict-of-Interest section of the new by-laws. A draft was included in the meeting packet, and discussion ensued. A. Harmon called for a vote to adopt the form, after which

M/S Approved, J. Alden, T. Paige,

C. Yanski asked everyone to sign the form and email it to her.

4. Mid-State Coordinated Transit & Human Services Plan update – G. Trefethen and V. Pagano

V. Pagano and G. Trefethen gave a presentation on the progress of the Mid-State Coordinated plan, working with Lakes Region and Central Planning Commissions. It was explained how in 2019 the largest areas of concern were a lack of transportation options as well as a lack of knowledge about transportation within the Mid-State region. A survey was conducted in spring of 2024 to begin gathering background information, and a draft will follow, to be presented in spring of 2025. Discussion then ensued on what focuses the plan has, including demographics to be served, transit options available to people within the region, as well as a needs assessment. G. Trefethen stated that the plan will help direct funds, and C. Yanski emphasized the importance of the goals set by the plan. A. Harmon asked if the lack of transportation options had been reported in any particular area, or over the whole region. V. Pagano said that the issue was reported more often in the rural areas. J. Alden then commented about the lack of awareness of possible users of transportation resources, especially in Tilton. Discussion followed regarding possible avenues to inform users, and G. Trefethen asked if there was a particular demographic who were encountering this issue. J. Alden responded that she thought seniors, and added that she had been putting information out to different locations that people may frequent including restaurants, libraries, and colleges. J. Cameron agreed, and explained the approach the Partnership for Public Health uses, which involved a combination of email outreach and interaction at different in person events such as local fairs.

G. Trefethen then asked what needs the other members organizations saw as not being properly met; C. Chandler explained how Helping Hands began as a grass roots organization working through Facebook to coordinate requests for assistance in different manners and is still evaluating their needs as they continue to grow. M. LaRocque mentioned that the clients served by Future in Sight are coordinated through Suzanne Peace, the volunteer coordinator to meet need as it is identified and attempt to match services. G. Trefethen asked for clarification regarding outreach and gaps, and M. LaRocque explained that the ability to match need to services depends on different factors including where the ride is requested as well as how many rides and if drivers are available in the area at the time. She added that different areas have more need, such as the seacoast area. She added that in regards to outreach, Future in Sight's "Silver Retreats" are a great way of driving success as it is a week-long event scheduled a year in advance that allows clients who are blind or visually impaired to interact with Future in Sight and address issues as well as become educated on their services among other activities. G. Trefethen then asked if there were any changes that members had noticed from a post-pandemic perspective, and C. Yanski mentioned that there was a large increase in ridership in the Tilton and Laconia areas, as well as in Franklin. J. Alden mentioned she occasionally got requests to take rides in that area, but could only do so rarely as she did not have a

memorandum of understanding with Franklin. Some discussion followed regarding population increases as a potential cause for the increased requests, and C. Yanski also mentioned the Concord-Laconia connector bus routes. Discussion followed regarding the promotion of the program, including word of mouth from riders as well as the bus itself due to the signs on the bus. G. Trefethen then asked for further input, and A. Harmon mentioned the lack of specific resources outside of volunteer driver programs, and thanked M. LaRocque and Future in Sight for providing rides. V. Pagano asked for anyone to send further thoughts via email, and G. Trefethen asked if there would be future opportunities for input to the plan. D. Jeffers agreed that there would be and restated that the plan in March 2025 is a draft. V. Pagano agreed and added that once the draft is released that either within a future RCC meeting or elsewhere further input could be shared to update the plan. V. Pagano said the plan draft could be found on the Keep NH Moving web site under the Region 3 sub-page.

5. RCC Subcommittee meeting update

C. Yanski mentioned at the previous work plan sub-committee meeting that discussion had come up regarding monthly meetings of the full RCC until sufficient progress had been made regarding the RCC work plan. Members of the sub-committee had suggested that instead the sub-committee continued monthly meetings while the full RCC continued to meet quarterly. D. Jeffers asked clarification if the current meeting was the sub-committee, and C. Yanski clarified that this was the full RCC. She then explained the purpose of the sub-committee, which was to assist in creating the work plan as the by-laws direct the RCC to direct the mobility manager through the establishment of the work plan. J. Cameron(?) asked if the sub-committee had been established, and C. Yanski and A. Harmon advised that one meeting had been held in October. C. Chandler moved that the RCC continued to meet for their quarterly regular meetings, and that the sub-committee continue to meet as necessary on certain topics including the work plan, and that they meet monthly.

M/S Approved unanimously, C. Chandler, J.
Alden,

C. Yanski mentioned there were notes on the sub-committee meeting included in the meeting packet, and some discussion followed about the next potential meeting dates. D. Jeffers asked if there was a copy of the current work plan, or if it would be valuable to review another RCC's regional plan. He added that he would be travelling to Coos County to meet with their RCC in the next week, and thought it might be helpful to get an idea for going forward with the Region 3 plan. T. Palmer replied that Region 1 did not currently have a mobility manager for Coos County, and that Carroll County's manager was part-time, which would make the plan very different from what the Mid-State region would need for their plan. She praised C. Yanski's current work plan, and suggested if anyone wanted to review a different region that possibly either the plans for Region 7 or 8 might align closest as each region would differ from each other in terms of their specific needs. C. Yanski suggested she would send a Doodle poll to the entire RCC membership and whoever was interested in meeting for the sub-committee would respond with the times and dates on the poll that worked. There was general agreement to this suggestion.

6. Mobility Manager Update

C. Yanski mentioned she received an email from Fred Butler at the Department of Transportation that the region would be receiving an increase in funds. She mentioned this would be increasing from around \$370,000 or \$380,000 to \$509,000. D. Jeffers asked what the purpose of the funds were for, and C. Yanski explained that these were 5310 funds, which funded ride services throughout the region, including Future in Sight and the Tilton Senior Center. She added that she had reached out to the Friends program to discuss participation, and they were considering whether or not to remain a RCC participant. Further discussion followed regarding what the fund supports, including the volunteer driver program rides within the region for Future in Sight, Mid-State Transit's volunteer driver program, as well as CAP BM's volunteer driver program and the Merrimack County taxi voucher program. C. Yanski mentioned that this program is almost non-existent due to lack of requests by consumers. A. Harmon asked for clarification on if it was a lack of people requesting service or if the taxis were not participating within the program. C. Yanski responded that it was both, as several of the past participants were now using the Concord-Laconia connector bus instead. J. Cameron asked if people using the hospital emergency rooms could participate, prompting further discussion. C. Yanski explained that Merrimack County Human Services contracted with specific taxis to provide the trips, with 80 percent of the cost coming from 5310 funds and the remaining 20 percent covered by Merrimack County. It was thought that if a person over 60 or a person with a disability asked for a ride, the same could be provided as per the requirements for receiving 5310 funding. G. Trefethen added that if the program did not exist, Merrimack County would have to pay the full cost of the rides. Further discussion followed about how a potential adaptation of the program could work for the Partnership for Public health. C. Yanski suggested bringing any similar ideas to the sub-committee meetings so it could be discussed in more depth before being reported out to the full RCC. C. Yanski mentioned that she had reached out to as many of the volunteer groups in the region as possible, and some discussion followed about whether groups would reach out to take advantage of the increased funds. G. Trefethen expressed that the needs assessment is critical because it can highlight the potential for creating new rides to meet the demand within the region that is not being met currently. C. Yanski also mentioned that she will reach out again to all current members within the RCC as the application for funds will be a "pooled" application which allows for multiple smaller organizations that might not have major requests can be addressed along with the larger groups. Further discussion followed, during which A. Harmon asked about Granite State Independent Living. C. Yanski mentioned they were contracted to provide accessible rides for wheelchair users. G. Trefethen asked if there were any challenges with language services, and C. Yanski said that there were not that she knew of. She added that bus drivers for Concord Area Transit encountered some issues, but they were able to overcome them through several techniques including phone applications like Google Translate and using pictures to communicate by pointing to different images to speak with riders who did not speak a common language. Some discussion followed, and G. Trefethen asked if advertising primarily in English was a barrier to awareness of services. C. Yanski replied that there was a very small percentage of riders who needed additional language support, but that the need was being met. A. Harmon recalled about several services being employed in Manchester by Region 8 where bus riders were able to assist new immigrants through various methods including pictures and body language as well as smart phone translation programs

assisting exchanges with the riders. C. Yanski reiterated she would reach out to the non-profit transportation providers in Region 3, and some discussion followed, during which J. Alden suggested a potential project would be using radio programs to extend public outreach. C. Yanski said the applications would be due soon, and emphasized if anyone had a project idea to please submit as quickly as possible.

C. Yanski shared the 5310-funded ride numbers for the region since the last quarterly meeting, and mentioned the need and ridership had increased continuously over the last three years. M. LaRocque asked what the criteria for requesting funds was if the organization requesting received funding from other regions as well as the purposes those funds could be put towards. C. Yanski said each region would differ, and the purposes could vary as long as the organization was providing rides. She added one organization used their funding purely for advertising. T. Palmer said she was working with F. Butler at DOT to create specific mobility management activities in order to better direct funding as the 5310 funds were intended for supporting the activities rather than the mobility management role directly. She added that she and F. Butler were working on creating a one-page flier to help respond to confusion over mobility management activities before the application window closed. She suggested people reach out to her as well as C. Yanski and T. Paige if people had questions.

C. Yanski reviewed the data for the 5310 rides provided, and gave an overview of specific data points within the provided graphs and charts within the meeting packet. A. Harmon asked if people who were online who could not access the information to please reach out to C. Yanski as there were some issues getting the documents to share virtually through Zoom. It was mentioned that denials of service were high during the summer months as the IRS required a specific set reimbursement rate be used for reimbursing mileage for volunteers of \$0.14 per mile versus \$0.67 per mile for direct employees. Any driver who was reimbursed at the employee rate who received up to the minimum amount to require a 1099 form were forced to do so. This caused drivers to either reduce their hours or leave the program entirely. C. Yanski finished by stating the increased denials were due to a combination of the drivers quitting and an increase in ride requests. She said that there are remaining volunteers are now aware of the new requirements, and there is also legislation being drafted nationally to help promote pushing IRS to update the volunteer reimbursement rates. Some discussion followed about the potential legislation. T. Palmer included a link to the organization, and mentioned that either the Commission on Aging or the Alliance for Healthy Aging had elevated this to their priority list. A. Harmon asked if the link could be sent out after the meeting, and C. Yanski agreed to do so.

C. Yanski then mentioned the taxi voucher program, and mentioned there were 0 rides requested for the months of August through November. She added she would like to open the program to all seniors, but that the split in costs would change from 80/20 with an agency to 50/50 if the contracts were with individuals instead. Some concerns were mentioned regarding administration of the program if contracts were with individuals as well, but that would be minor if the RCC wished to pursue expanding the program to cover taxi reimbursement for seniors when other resources are not available. C. Yanski finished by reviewing the data for Future in Sight as well as the financial breakdown of the 5310 funds overall and the remaining balances by program and individual project.

7. Other or New Business

No updates were given.

8. Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn at 3:55 PM.

m/s/approved, A. Harmon, J. Alden