



Rural Transit Needs Assessment Stakeholders Meeting #3 – **Meeting Minutes**

March 26, 2024, 2:00PM – 3:30PM

Meeting Agenda:

1. Welcome – Mike Murphy, Interim CEO, Jaunt
2. Project update – Jeremy Mattson, SURCOM
 - a. Review previous work
 - b. Identification of service gaps
 - c. Stakeholder survey results
3. Next steps – Jeremy Mattson, SURCOM
4. Discussion
5. Future Meeting

Attendees:

NDSU: Jeremy Mattson, Ph.D., Jill Hough, Ph. D.

Jaunt: Mike Murphy, Jason Espie, Juliana Scott

Stakeholders: Ernie Reed, Hal Morgan, Willie Mae Gray BRHD, Kari Hirst PVCC, Karl Carter, Kelly Harris, Diantha Mckeel, Cynthia Neff, Hanna Strauss BRAFB, Kendall Howell UVA, Jim Frydl Greene, Allison Pace, V Carpenter, Alberic Karina-Plun Albemarle, Christian Goodwin

Next Steps:

- Send Meeting Minutes, Slides, Video and Survey Link (Jaunt)
- Provide recommendations (NDSU)
- Propose potential service options (NDSU)
- Conduct cost analysis (NDSU)
- Send draft report to review to Jaunt and stakeholders (NDSU)
- Final meeting with stakeholders in June (NDSU/Jaunt)
- Complete final report by June 30th. (NDSU)

Blue Text = Questions, Discussion, Audience Comments. Regular Text = Presentation

Start time: 2:03 PM

Mike Murphy welcomed everyone and turned the presentation over to Jeremy Mattson, project consultant

Presentation from Jeremy Mattson

beginning with an overview of the meeting agenda (see slides)

- Presentation overview – slide #2
 - o Ridership data review, identify service gaps, peer analysis, establish targets, compare service levels to those targets, stakeholder survey, next steps.

- Maps
 - o Trips per capita 2023(slide #4) – more trips in Charlottesville, Greene, Louisa, and Crozet.
 - o Total trips per population aged 65+ or 18-64 with a disability (slide #5) – more in Charlottesville, Greene, and Crozet.
 - o Total trips per population in poverty (slide #6).

Rural comparisons/Peer analysis (slide #8) – Great Plains

Rural comparisons/Peer analysis (slide #9) – North Carolina

Mobility Gap (slide #10)– looking into household travel depending on how many vehicles the household has.

- Tends to overestimate needs for transit because there can be less demand, or the demand can be met by friends or family. Transit can be expected to cover some percentage of these mobility gaps.
- (slide #11) Nelson, Louisa, Buckingham have high levels of households with no vehicles.
- Trips needed per capita are highest in Buckingham, Louisa, and Nelson, with smaller areas in Greene County and Crozet.

Mike asked how the regions as whole, like Fluvanna County, compare to the states Jeremy used for comparison.

- Answer: within one county there are some areas served well and some less, so could they be averaged out. He has data to show at the county levels and the entire service area. Plans to show county data and average of area.

Jason Espie commented that the dark part of Nelson may be affected by the Ski resort Wintergreen with many empty homes (for households with no vehicles).

Overview of Ridership Models/Reports (slides #12-17)

- TCRP Report 161
 - o Provides equation for non-program demand (trips per year)
- Question asked to explain TCRP: Transit Cooperative Research Program who takes public comments and provides research grants for transportation.
- Mattson Model Estimating Ridership of Rural Demand – based on population, service span, advance reservation requirements, fare level.

Hal Morgan asked what the unmet need in Fluvanna County is, and if micro transit is an option.

Older Adult Population – higher in Charlottesville and in Goochland County (possibly high number due to billionaires in Goochland)

Population with a Disability – higher in Charlottesville.

Low-Income Population – Nelson, Buckingham, Louisa, parts of Greene, in Charlottesville.

- TCRP Report 161 Model predictions for estimated per capita trips.
 - Higher in Nelson, Louisa, Greene, Buckingham,
- Mattson #1 Model – Greene, Nelson, Buckingham, Louisa. Did not include Charlottesville in analysis due to rural factor.

- Mattson #2 Model maps per capita assuming different factors (service 5 days per week, reservations 1 day in advance VS service 6+ days a week with same-day reservations)
 - o More trips if more service days and more time for reservations
- 2:32 Jason asked if the service span (hours) was the same between the two models.
 - o Answer: yes, the difference was days per week of service.

Service Targets (slide #18)

- 3 goals, with groups Age 65 + or 18-64 with a disability and trips per population living in poverty
- 3 goals: basic needs, more than average, and way more (90th percentile) than average
- The first goal may be more appropriate in some less dense places, but in more dense areas like Albemarle then Goal 2 or 3 may work best.

Ridership deficit maps for Goal #1, #2, and #3 (slide #19-21)

Chart with County Level ridership #s and their distance from the different goals (slide #22-23).

Comment from Jason: Buckingham ridership is largely the commuter bus routes. There is minimal demand response for Buckingham

Input from Stakeholders – survey results (slide #24-35)

1. # of responses by county
2. Service Goals per county – days per week and hours per day.
 - a. Saw variations in responses, but more days and more hours were requested.
3. Are any of the following services needed in your area?
 - a. 50-60% said yes to the different services listed.
4. How well are the transportation needs of the residents in your area being met?
 - a. Majority of answers in Moderately, slightly, and not well at all.
5. Ridership goals and deficits – is this information consistent or surprising?
 - a. Results were generally in line with what they expected.
6. Overview of survey comments
 - a. No service in Goochland County
 - i. Large senior population
 - b. Lack of service in Nelson
 - c. Fluvanna and Louisa have limited transportation – difficulty finding rides to medical appointments.
 - d. Should provide service to other cities/counties
 - e. More trips to Charlottesville
 - f. Weekend Service
 - g. Medical trips
 - h. It takes an entire day for a Dr appointment using transportation
 - i. Service is confusing, inconvenient, not ideal for riders' needs (not daily)
 - j. Services need to be consistent and reliable for people to think of transit as an option
 - k. Micro transit has been shown to work and should be expanded and made permanent.
7. How to improve service and meet goals
 - a. Micro transit/on-demand service

- b. Commuter bus
- c. Better marketing
- d. Longer hours
- e. Better scheduling/more convenient
- f. A demand-response service that serves the four senior centers
- g. More frequent trips to/from medical appointments.

Areas identified as needing more service in the Transit Development Plan (slide #36)

- 1. Buckingham County especially New Canton
- 2. Nelson County
- 3. Greene County
- 4. Charlottesville – Crozet – Waynesboro
- 5. Rural areas (all areas outside of Charlottesville)
- 6. Weekend Crozet service
- 7. Weekend Greene County Service
- 8. Madison Heights
- 9. Lynchburg
- 10. Buckingham to Charlottesville
- 11. Louisa

Service improvements proposed in the Transit Development Plan – consistent with rural transit study. (slide #37)

- 1. App-based demand response with a focus on Albemarle County
- 2. Monticello micro transit
- 3. US 29 service expansion to complement micro transit
- 4. Fluvanna Circulator Additional Service
- 5. Stoney Creek/Nelson County additional service
- 6. Streamline Crozet CONNECT
- 7. Streamline Buckingham CONNECT
- 8. New Louisa Circulator Flex Route

Comments/Chat/Discussion

Acknowledgement of previous comments from Ernie Reed on Nelson County and its closeness to Lynchburg, Waynesboro, and Staunton than to Charlottesville and thus the data is not very relevant. More discussion on outlier data based around Nelson.

Vic Carpenter of Goochland says their interest is in the western part of the county, directed towards Charlottesville. The eastern data should be removed because it can skew everything else, the prison will affect the numbers greatly as well as 55+ housing. Focus on the western part of the county would be great.

Hal Morgan asked if the survey comments could be broken down by county, answer was yes, and Jeremy will look into that.

Ernie Reed asked how they can get more responses from Buckingham County

- Answer: the list was expanded to include county executives and administrators. So, the survey was sent to Buckingham representatives, but there was a lack of response. The survey can also be sent out again.

Mike pointed out the request for more service may not be able to be met because the funding from the county is not there so the expectations should be slightly managed. Jeremy said the funding needs would be determined for how much service could be provided and making a case for that funding.

Diantha Mckeel pointed out that the city and county are working towards creating a transit authority, intended to help create a funding stream for transit. The current funding stream just will not work to expand services in the urban area, which is why the transit authority is needed.

Mike pointed out taxes and visibility

Diantha Mckeel - RTP directed the city and the county to give the action items in 90-120 days to begin to create an authority. This process has been started. Intent is to get it together before the next general assembly session and ask for further resources. The question is where is that funding going to come from because it cannot keep coming out of operational budget – real estate tax, gas tax.

Vic Carpenter on the Richmond project

Cynthia Neff – pointed out do the people really understand what Jaunt is/ how they can use it? If more people used it, would there be enough funding?

- Mike pointed out there would be schedule slack time removed and other ways Jaunt could absorb more ridership before additional funding is needed.

Ernie Reed comments on Micro transit. He is interested in the possibilities of micro transit meeting unmet needs. Diantha pointed out MicroCAT in Albemarle County, and people love it. Albemarle has picked up the cost. Usable in Pantops and Albemarle County. People outside of these areas want it to have expanded service. It shows the areas in the Albemarle County urban ring that will use transit.

Jason Espie commented on Micro transit. It relies on a dense area, and Jaunt is doing a micro transit study currently. The cost benefit is in a denser area. The Micro transit study consultants are looking into one around Crozet.

Diantha commented the response team for MicroCAT is 15 minutes.

Mike commented on the concentration needed to operate a micro transit program. Micro transit is also not always curb-to-curb. Sometimes it is from one place to another public transit opportunity. Diantha Points out there is a space for these services in rural areas, but the funding is needed for it, pointed to the Transit Authority Program.

Kendall Howell added the links to micro-CAT and OnDemand in the chat. Commented on the on-demand service UVA offers on their campus.

More comments on next steps from Jeremy. Draft report done in April or May for Jaunt and stakeholders to review before the final meeting in June to present the results. Jason pointed out the survey will be sent out one more time from Jaunt. Diantha Mckeel said Jaunt should be present at the RTP and Mike said they are already working on it.

Closing remarks from Mike, communications will be sent out from Jaunt soon.

3:30

Meeting adjourned.