

Rural Community Transportation

(RCT)

Caledonia, Essex, Orleans and Lamoille Counties

Elders and Persons with Disabilities

Transportation Committee

(E&D Committee)

Draft version: November 18, 2021

Adopted: _____

Committee Background

The E&D Committee provides oversight and guidance for Rural Community Transportations programs to assist elders and persons with disabilities in Caledonia, Essex, Orleans, and Lamoille Counties. Programs get users out of their homes to medical appointments, to local adult day-care, to senior meal sites, personal and social trips and for essential shopping. These services supplement regular transit services in the area, filling in gaps left by programs like Medicaid.

Partner Organization

- Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) – CVCOA is one of five Area Agencies on Aging serving seniors and their families in Vermont. They are the leading expert and advocate in healthy aging for Central Vermonters and provide resources to age in place. CVCOA serves adults 60 and older living in Central Vermont and Lamoille County, their caregivers, partners and families without discrimination and regardless of income.

Contact: Jeanne Kern, Co-Interim Executive Director, Director of Community and Volunteer Services - jkern@cvcoa.org

Lamoille Adult Day

Riverside Life Enrichment Center

Northeast Kingdom Human Services

Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging

Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) – coordinates, facilitates, and provides administrative support to the E&D Committee in partnership with NVDA.

Contact: Rob Moore, Transportation Planner rob@lcpvvt.org

Northeastern Vermont Development Corporation (NVDA) – coordinates, facilitates, and provides administrative support to the E&D Committee in partnership with LCPC.

Contact: Doug Morton, Senior Transportation Planner dmorton@nvda.net

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Public Transit Division – VTrans is the oversight and fiscal agent for the Elders and Persons with Disabilities (E&D) Transportation Program. Vermont’s E&D Transportation Program plays an important role filling gaps in existing transportation services for older adults age 60 and above as well as individuals with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Vermont’s public transit providers serve as regional transportation brokers and work with human service agency partners to coordinate E&D trips together with Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) provided through Medicaid, contracted service with community organizations and institutions, and transportation for the general public.

Contacts: Ross MacDonald, Public Transit Program Manager -ross.macdonald@vermont.gov

Tim Bradshaw, Public Transit Coordinator – timothy.bradshaw@vermont.gov

Dan Currier, Public Transit Coordinator – dan.j.currier@vermont.gov

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Committee leadership – LCPC/NVDA shall be the lead agency for these meetings. RPCs are responsible for ensuring these meetings take place and engage the full spectrum of providers of services and representatives of those needing rides.

b) Meeting logistics – in-person meetings will be held at the RCT office 1677 Industrial Parkway Lyndonville, VT 05851, unless otherwise noted. Virtual meetings will be held via the Zoom platform and will be organized by LCPC/NVDA.

c) Meeting participation – all meetings are open to the public.

- LCPC/NVDA will prepare meeting agenda soliciting topics from the E&D group. Some agenda topics will remain constant (e.g. ridership and service status).

- LCPC/NVDA will email the E&D group with the agenda, previous meeting notes as well as a calendar invite for the meeting.

- The meeting announcement, agendas, meeting notes and other documents will be available via websites of NVDA, LCPC, and RCT.

- Additional information about the E&D committees, background and purpose is available via VTrans E&D website

d) Reporting requirements – at each meeting, RCT will report on service usage since the previous meeting and status for the fiscal year. The report will sometimes include statewide data for comparison and assist with future evaluation in programming/planning at the public transit partners' level, regional and state levels. RCT will include updates on ridership and fiscal status via email to partners during off months so partners can continue staying informed.

e) Committee Partners Roles and Responsibilities (see also Attachment A): Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) LCPC/NVDA will organize and facilitate the E&D partnership and ensure the workplan guides the group.

VTrans: VTrans will provide E&D program funding and guidance, ensuring compliance and performance measures.

Public Transit Provider: RCT will implement the E&D program and report on ridership and budget data.

Committee partners: Partners will advocate for the program's budget and clients. Partners are expected to participate in quarterly meetings.

f) Allocation of funds - Allocation of funds between partners are currently assessed based on the level of demand by partner. There is transparency of funding allocations between partners as well as a collaborative nature to the committee. If a partner's needs require increased allocation, this request will be discussed at a meeting where all partners are at the table for decision making. The committee will continue to find ways to streamline the process.

g) Contracts, MOUs or other formal agreements between partners. RCT has a standard platform for partner agreements. After discussion between partners and RCT, RCT will periodically revise agreements with updated needs and will send to partners for review and execution.

h) Transportation service delivery, including coordination with other transportation programs, such as Medicaid and Ticket to Ride. RCT staff continues to coordinate with partners and clients on a daily basis to be most efficient and cost effective. If a more significant issue arises, the committee will discuss and come to consensus on modifications to policies or procedures.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The E&D Committee shall meet at least 4 times per year with any additional meetings as needed. Current meeting schedule, subject to change, is at 10am-11:30am on the 1st Thursday of June, September, December, March.

ANNUAL AGENDA

a) Assist RCT as requested with preparation of their grant application to VTrans for April submission. The grant fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30.

b) Adjust allocations among partners throughout the year as needed at a committee meeting for partner consensus.

c) Oversee adjustments to priorities among eligible trip types (critical care, medical, non-emergency medical, adult day, health, congregate meals, shopping, social/personal/wellness, other) and adjustments to trip limits at a committee meeting for partner consensus.

d) Compile and review annual performance measures (details below).

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

a) Attend the Annual E&D Summit organized and scheduled by VTrans (Public Transit Providers and RPCs)

b) RPCs will work with E&D Committee members to facilitate the creation of an annual work plan, goals and objectives by June 30, 2021.

c) RPCs will work with E&D Committee member to periodically facilitate E&D Rider Surveys and follow up with respondents who opt-in/volunteer to provide additional information on their experiences.

d) E&D Committee will develop annual goals/objectives and other activities that will be implemented to achieve them, and anticipated schedule for activities. The committee will annually review services on effectiveness.

- e) Develop a “Welcome packet” or Ride Guide for new riders/clients.
- f) Select workplan tasks for next year (to be worked on July 1 2021 through June 30 2022):
 - Developing a “How to add a new partner 101”
 - Developing a mission statement
 - Evaluating existing membership and identifying opportunities to add riders or local groups
 - Developing an E&D service area map

ANNUAL REPORTING

- a) Number of trips and number of unduplicated riders provided for each partner four times a year to coincide with committee meetings.
- b) Assessment of rides tracking spreadsheet (trips by town, trip purpose, etc.) four times a year to coincide with committee meetings.

Attachment A: E&D Committee Member Duties

Regional Planning Commission (RPC): NVDA/LCPC will

- Organize and facilitate regular E&D Committee meetings quarterly (at a minimum).
- Facilitate the development of Regional E&D Committee work plans, goals and objectives.
- Help VTrans with centralized tracking of some E&D basic information
- Facilitate E&D Ridership Surveys and follow up- method will vary by region but could include interviews, focus groups, etc.
- Ensure meeting announcements, minutes, committee documents, etc. are available to the public
- Assist VTrans with organizing and advertising the annual E&D Summit as requested

VTrans: VTrans will

- Update E&D Committee Guidance and relevant documents.
- Develop E&D Committee workplan template, inclusive of sample goals and objectives.
- Develop guidance for E&D Ridership Surveys and follow up tasks.
- Distribute and review guidance document, and sample work plan at a regularly scheduled TPI meeting.
- Provide information about what basic E&D information needs to be tracked centrally
- Attend E&D Committee meetings to assist with E&D tasks as needed.
- Organize an annual E&D summit
- Release an update to the 2004 E&D Guidance (Expected summer 2020)

Public Transit Provider: RCT will

- Provide transportation and track participation per the 2020 E&D Guidance.
- Assist RPCs with regular E&D Committee meetings quarterly (at a minimum). Provide relevant information needed by the committee, such as updates on usage of the E&D program funds to date.
- Assist RPCs with the development of Regional E&D Committee work plans, goals and objectives.

- Assist RPCs with ensuring public access to meetings and committee documents.
- Assist VTrans with centralized tracking of E&D data, including, but not limited to:
 - Number of riders broken up by E&D Partners
 - Number of trips based on trip purpose and trip mode
 - Number of denied rides and reason and/or trip purpose constraints
 - Cost per trip, mile, hour by trip purpose and trip mode
 - Rider complaints with subset of driving or customer service related
 - Number of coordinated trips with other Vermont transit providers
 - Number of trips provided with various funding sources i.e. Medicaid and E&D
- Assist RPCs with E&D Ridership Surveys and follow up- method will vary by region but could include interviews, focus groups, etc.
- Provide community outreach and marketing efforts to better educate the public on the E&D program. Invite community members to E&D committee meetings to better understand the transportation needs within the community. Consider offering a “travel training” for new clients, including in person assistance on how to use public transit, boarding the vehicles, utilizing special equipment in the vehicles, etc. See Committee Partner Duties section.
- Maintain a volunteer recruitment program to increase capacity reduce trip costs.
- Maximize regional trip coordination through Paratransit Dispatch software technology and statewide shared scheduling databases
- Maximize vehicle ridership capacity through more efficient Mobility Management tools
- Providing staff and volunteer driver training for assisting persons with disabilities and/or special needs. Consider collaboration with partner agencies to provide expert guidance on this topic.

Committee partners: Partners will

- Assist RCT with preparation of grant applications for submission to the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) by providing necessary data upon request.
- Prior to grant submission, discussion between RCT and partners agreeing on funding needs will occur.
- Participate and engage with the E&D committee.

- Allocation of funds between partners are currently assessed based on the level of demand by partner. There is transparency of funding allocations between partners as well as a collaborative nature to the committee. If a partner's needs require increased allocation, this request will be discussed at a meeting where all partners are at the table for decision making. The committee will continue to find ways to streamline the process
- Contracts, MOUs or other formal agreements between partners. RCT has a standard platform for partner agreements. After discussion between partners and RCT, RCT will draft up agreement with updated needs and will send to partners for review and execution.
- Transportation service delivery, including coordination with other transportation programs, such as Medicaid and Ticket to Ride. RCT staff continues to coordinate with partners and clients on a daily basis to be most efficient and cost effective. If a more significant issue arises, the committee will discuss and come to consensus on modifications to policies or procedures.
- Collaborate with RCT on providing staff and volunteer driver training for assisting persons with disabilities and/or special needs. See RCT Duties section.