

Transportation Team
March 18, 2010
4:00-5:45 PM

Members Present: Jim Wood, Chris Huck, Ann Beverage, Carol Dyar, Penny Vaillancourt, Elery Keene, Linda Woods

1. Jim spoke first of the value of “Where We’ve Been/Where We’re Going.”
2. Jim had a printed copy of the Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition newsletter for everyone. (Thanks for doing that, Jim.) Linda encouraged participants to share this newsletter with interested individuals/groups.
3. Jim distributed the goal sheet from the original Catalyst to determine the team’s current priorities.

PROJECT 1: Develop Infrastructure to Encourage/Enable Bicycle & Pedestrian Alternatives

- Elery: working to get bike racks downtown. Jim: need to coordinate with Shannon (WTVL Main Street)
- April 7, MDOT/ Advisory Committee meeting/ revised version of transportation plan that seems realistic/ 6 bus system in Augusta; 4 bus in Waterville
- Jim: Peter is doing a great job with the trails. This group will continue to support Peter’s awesome work.
- Chris: Need a better hub to serve all of downtown’s needs
- Jim: need comfortable benches (however, benches cause problems with people congregating)
- Penny: important to market materials about the “Share the Road” program; Elery: haven’t done much with this yet
- Chris: performance standards for new development—requires developers to include bike & pedestrian access
- Jim: public bathrooms connect well with this. Elery thinks Shannon is working on this.
- Ann: talk of putting the hub into the new Chamber of Commerce Building (but not much is happening with this now)
- Jim: suggests transit hub—inside of Concourse by Silver St. Extension; Chris: where *The Sentinel* building used to be; Jim: easy access for Hathaway dwellers
- Jim will invite Shannon to the next meeting

- Jim: walking school bus projects = instead of busing kids to various schools, a coordinator walks a group of children to a certain location. Elery: Has anyone talked to local schools about this? Jim: not that he knows of Elery: How far do the kids walk? Jim: up to 2 miles Ann: This must work better in more urban areas.

PROJECT 2: Improve & Expand Public Transportation

- Jim: supports green transportation, but can't justify it economically for his organization; has a desperate need for buses and gas-powered are currently more affordable
- Chris: Is there an opportunity to get funding for these because of the possibility of off-sets? Jim: certainly worth looking into Elery: Seems to be state money for green alternatives. Has any one looking into this? Jim: Portland uses CNG buses. Augusta uses propane power. Since these get half the range, they don't work in rural areas.
- Jim: committed to green public transit as it becomes economically viable
- Inter modal = discuss with Shannon
- Local mass transit = work in progress
- Carol: likes the idea of First Student buses
- Extend passenger rail service is a good long term initiative. Jim: supports this in any way possible Elery heard they might get passenger rail service to Lewiston-Auburn. Penny: looking at passenger & lighter rail in Portland; Carol: developed the rail bed from Solon to Cousineau (in North Anson) to Embden; looking at quarrying; rail bed is still there
- Support increase in gas tax. Elery: thinks this will get people to use public transportation & is better than letting the gas companies get the profit; Jim: tough sell with this name, but makes sense
- Trolley service between towns = although this is a good idea, it isn't feasible.
- Discourage kids from using cars Jim: perhaps could tie this into walking school bus

PROJECT 3: Reduce the Consumption of Fossil Fuels in Personal Vehicles

- Car-sharing programs: Elery: more places needed for Park & Ride/ Penny: talking with various people about a parcel of land. If it goes well, one will be WTVL-Oakland line by I-95 South Exit. Also looking in Fairfield downtown. Marden's was approached and is not confirmed./ Jim: wondered about Head of Falls. Ann: looking for buildings there/ Penny: state-owned property has no cost; just a sign; thinking of one at former Digital building/ coming "soon"
- Discourage parents from driving kids to school—ties into promoting other resources & alternatives
- Promote use of electric vehicles & establish recharging stations—not yet in Maine as far as Jim knows
- Elery: many companies are employing telecommuters

4. Discussion of current state of public transportation

- intercity bus system— fiscal commitment from Maine General
- GoMaine has commuter vans that were discontinued due to low ridership. Vans are available to get back into service/ target of sooner rather than later
- Asking for a commitment from municipal budgets right now seems difficult.
- People acknowledge public transportation as a good idea, but ask where the money will come from.
- Carol: suggests use of Zip Car; hears from seniors in Somerset County that they need transportation; Colby has a Zip Car program that is under-utilized.
- Carol: recommends Gocal.org for suggestions
- Carol: Fast Fleet: municipality-driven transportation; cooperative use; might change the dialogue; thinks we should investigate this to see if it could work; helps the public to see municipality is looking into the issue
- Carol: Main Street Skowhegan has a lot to learn from Somerset Country Area Resources Program (SCARP).
- Jim: discussion with Backyard Farm & New Balance to get kids involved in healthy activities; public transportation in the summer to areas where there are activities for kids; buses are open to general public, so people are using them for a variety of errands. Rely on 130 volunteers as drivers
- Jim: Move More Kids on KVCAP web site
- Not a lot of intercity transportation between areas
- Interest from white water rafting companies—can't get enough people to work because people can't get to the company
- Jim: a survey produces a spider web of crossed routes of need
- Linda wondered about using school bus during the summer. There are multiple state laws that make this difficult.
- Jim: There are not enough resources for seniors currently, esp those with Medicare.
- Penny: The importance of getting seniors connected with their lives because it improves the quality of lives.
- Jim: The demand exceeds the resources to provide it. Seeing more & more of (older) people who live in the country needing transportation.
- Jim: looking at primary corridors, but doesn't address the outlying areas
- Jim: Commuter routes will only work if they can coordinate with businesses' schedules.

5. Three primary issues for 2010: enhancing public transit, new Park & Ride lots, marketing the walking trails and tying this knowledge together (Addition from Linda: At a conference I attended on Saturday, the owner of Snakeroot Organic Farm in Pittsfield hopes the map will include the Farmers' Market. Please consider this.)

6. KVCoG & DOT—working on a corridor management plan/ objective to integrate the forms of transportation & use limited transportation funding to support development/ Chris is attending a series of meetings on this issue to get input from various towns & their zoning system/ would like time at the next meeting to discuss this

PROJECT 4: Incorporate Alternative Modes in Transportation Planning

- Rosemary has a relationship with Pam-Am Railways. Need to get her involved
- Chris: What is the result of the KMD survey of signal timing? Ann: There is a meeting coming soon.
- Housing units near downtown: Hathaway Building will do this.

The next Transportation Team meeting is **Thursday, May 13** at 4:00 in Chris Huck's office at KVCOG.

Notice to Team Members:

The next meeting of the Waterville-Augusta Transit Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 7 at 1:00 in Room 216 at the Maine Department of Transportation, Child St, Augusta.

The agenda will include a review of the latest revision of the Transit Evaluation and Plan along with a discussion regarding a roll-out strategy for the new system design.

Please let Jim Wood know if you are available to attend.