

**Intercity Bus Consultation Meeting #1**  
**Discussion Notes**  
**6-20-2018**

Is luggage capacity required for feeder service? The FTA regulations do not speak directly to this, but given that the regulations allow for demand-response service to qualify as feeder service, it can be safely assumed that feeder service is not required to have luggage capacity as regular intercity buses do.

At various points, questions arose about subsidy of Greyhound service. Vermont does provide subsidy for the connection between Keene, Brattleboro and White River Junction, but MassDOT does not provide operating subsidy for the route from Boston to Keene via Nashua. MassDOT did provide a bus to Greyhound for that service.

Vermont also provides a subsidy to Premier Coach through its 5311(f) for service on the US 4 corridor in Vermont that extends to DHMC in Lebanon.

Jim Jalbert noted that the bus companies operate the bus terminals and it is a “significant cost” to the bus companies.

There was a question on how specific NHDOT will be in the projects it will put out to bid in the next solicitation. The regulations are not clear on this point, but DOT intends to provide a moderate level of specificity, such as requesting a route connecting listed towns along a roadway corridor, and the desired level of service (number of trips per day) and the general time periods. The request would not include a detailed schedule, nor exact stop locations. This point will be discussed further and no final decisions are made yet.

Question about whether a contractor would have to provide the match... or if DOT solicits a bid or RFP, would the DOT provide the cash or toll credit match? Although there is not a firm answer to this question yet, it is very unlikely that DOT would provide a cash match. It is possible that toll credits could be used, but it is more likely that DOT would facilitate an agreement between subsidized carriers and unsubsidized carriers that a service connects to, so that in-kind match could be used. Stephanie Gonterman noted that Greyhound would not be able to provide in-kind match for a demand-response feeder service because the amount of service could not be specified in advance.

J.B. Mack brought up whether another level of analysis that looks at connections would be done because, right now, there are unreasonable expectations on passengers who want to get to Boston. Larger regional transit agencies like COAST connect to intercity hubs. Answer: yes there will be an analysis of connections and travel times to major hubs for all parts of the state.

It was noted that a 5311(f) service can connect a rural area to an urban area; it does not have to operate 100% within rural areas, as long as it provides service to rural residents to access the intercity network. Such a rural-to-urban service could be a feeder route or a regular intercity route. As a feeder route, it could be demand responsive.

Jim Jalbert pointed out that the commuter market is changing rapidly with some commuters traveling to the Boston area 3 or 4 times per week making it difficult to predict the number of passengers and buses on certain days of the week. The density in Boston is too great and businesses are moving to the edge

of the city reducing demand for bus service to the downtown. Adding just one stop to an intercity route can change the service significantly damaging the value of the route. Introducing new service that fails does not give the public a positive perception of public transit, such as the East-West Express.

Mike Whitten referred to the maps and asked if they could be updated to show the urbanized area, which are excluded from funding by the 5311(f) program. Also, it was noted that the rail lines should be shown on the maps, since they are part of the broader intercity travel network.

Nate Miller brought up the point that Laconia and Claremont have concentrations of transit dependent people and are not connected to the intercity network. Answer: these and others will be the focus of developing a more comprehensive intercity network. For example, CNHRPC studied the potential of service between Franklin and Concord, which could be a feeder service to Intercity Bus at Stickney Ave.

Harry Blunt followed up stating that Concord Coach at one time provided service to Laconia but it was discontinued due to weak ridership and the inability to establish an attractive terminal stop for the bus route..

Colin Lentz said he was stumbling over the word “worthy” as used in “worthy service.” Answer: there is no strict definition, but in analyzing new services, the forecast ridership and productivity would be compared to existing services, and existing services that did as well or better than the new services would likely be considered “worthy.”

Colin also raised the concern that there needs to be a balance between bus service that is market-based and bus service that is needs-based and we shouldn't focus on just market-based service.

Shelley stated, for context, we get \$600,000 per year... no cash match, yes to in-kind match if available. She asked the group what do they see as the priorities for these funds... rolling stock, bus service, facilities?

Mike Whitten pointed out the lack of travel availability across the state such as Keene to Concord and Keene to Manchester.

Fred brought up whether there is a need for cross border transit between NH and Maine. The Maine delegation said there is not and they are very pleased with the Concord Coach bus service in Maine.

Steve Falbel remarked that in the NCC outreach meeting, it was noted that Littleton needs a park & ride lot/passenger facility.

Jim Jalbert cautioned on spending on facilities referencing the park & ride lot at the Dover train station... its lack of use, its cost to maintain, and its reputation for illegal activity at the site. He said that it is a “bear “ to run a facility.

Randy Charlebois of Premier Coach asked if there will be passenger forecasts/projections done on any new proposed service. Steve said there would be.

Peter Allen asked what type of vehicle would be required for feeder service. The vehicle would need to ADA compliant and the prevailing thought seemed to be a small cutaway would be the minimum standard.

Mike Whitten said operating bus service should be the priority as it has the ability to flex to travel demand changes. A facility is fixed and changes to how the public travels may result in the facility being unused.