



Rural Community Transportation, Inc.

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"COMMUNITY IS OUR MIDDLE NAME"

RCT Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Monday, October 9, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.
Video and Teleconference

Present: Nicole Gratton, Tasha Wallis, Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin, Jonathan Davis, Judy Nommik, Carole O'Connell
Clerk: Renee Stalczynski
Guests: Caleb Grant, Mike Moore, Ross Macdonald, Jeremy Whiting, Cynthia Stuart

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Justin Barton-Caplin.

1. Introductions, Opportunity for Public Comment, and Modifications to the Agenda. Introductions were made. Ross Macdonald introduced VTRANS staff member Jeremy Whiting. Caleb Grant introduced Cynthia Stuart, strategic planning consultant for RCT. No members of the public for comments. No modifications to the agenda requested.

Justin Barton-Caplin made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2023, meeting. Tasha Wallis seconded the motion. All approved.

2. Committee Reports and Updates:

VTrans Update: Ross Macdonald gave an overview of recent VTRANS events. He mentioned a potential Community Ride Program. It was questioned if there would be insurance policy changes for something like a community ride program and Ross explained no insurance policy changes would occur.

It was questioned what guidelines VTRANS is following regarding drug testing now that cannabis is legalized in Vermont. Ross explained that cannabis is not legalized federally, and they must follow federal guidelines for safety sensitive positions.

Caleb Grant said that there is an industry wide CDL shortage due to cannabis being legalized in Vermont and not legalized federally. There is talk about saliva testing which would only test the last 48 hours versus the last few weeks.

Financial Update: Mike Moore shared the current financial dashboard and budget numbers.

Executive Director Update: See attached Executive Director report.

Caleb said the two newest vans were damaged. One will be returning to operation soon and the other will be a lengthy repair.

RCT has two new electric vehicles and Caleb wants to move one to Morrisville for Microtransit. Caleb discussed building an infrastructure for charging in Morrisville, but until that happens Concept 2 has agreed to allow RCT vehicles to charge at their location.

Marketing Committee: The Committee is working on sponsorship for advertising on RCT vehicles.

RCT is participating in the Lyndonville Trunk or Treat. Employees with children, grandchildren, etc., will get a golden ticket from Renee and when they attend the trunk or treat, they turn in the ticket and get a special Halloween goodie bag. The idea is to show that RCT is an appealing place of employment and family oriented.

Personnel Committee: No update.

Nominating Committee: No update from the committee.

Finance Committee: There was a question about where people can find the sponsorship brochure. Caleb said there are 400 copies of the sponsorship brochure available and is happy to provide copies to anyone interested. The brochure is also available on the website.

3. Leadership Team Update: Sandy Thorpe, Operations- see below report from Sandy.

2 new fully electric vans that have room for 4 passengers and up to 2 wheelchairs arrived at the end of September. We are in the process of getting the cameras and radios installed. I believe we are the first in the state to have the fully electric wheelchair accessible vans for Demand Response. Other providers have electric buses for routes. The Fleet department looks forward to this new adventure.

In the next couple of months, RCT will have at least 11 more new vehicles in the fleet. 3 are expected in the next couple of weeks, these will be cut away vans holding 12 passenger and up to 2 wheelchairs. Around mid-November RCT should get 2 new buses that will hold up to 18 passengers and 2 wheelchairs (these are to replace 2 that were totaled in March of 2022. (Yes 2 buses were totaled within weeks of each other.)

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are expecting delivery of 3 Chevy cutaway vans that will hold 14 passengers and have 3 wheelchair positions. By the end of the

year, we should have 2 new gas Ford Transits, holding 2 wheelchairs or up to 7 passengers.

We have 2 mini vans that we are currently getting titles released from VTRANS to put on the auction site. These vehicles are not inspectable and have gone over their useful life (2 of them are 11 years old 7 years past the life expectancy) We will be working on getting release of at least 4 more cutaway vans due to consistent mechanical failures and being past their useful life and mileage expectancy.

Once we get the new vehicles, our Preventative Maintenance costs will be reduced considerably.

Robert, the Operations Assistant Manager - Fleet has been a great asset to RCT (and lessened my work load considerably) He is always there for the drivers with any vehicle or lift concerns, goes right there or walks them through any issues, he has been able to do light repairs (change light bulbs, put an additional screw in, or clamp up a muffler, saving both a trip to the garage, and down time for the vehicle. All the drivers reach out to him for their vehicle concerns.

Donna, the Operation Assistant Manager- Drivers is handling the new driver training (between driving as needed) and doing her own trainings. She has completed ADA training, Passenger Assistant Training, and Drug and Alcohol Reasonable suspicion training. She is getting ready to do an annual driver training within the next month for both van and volunteer drivers. She has had previous safety training and OSHA training and is working to enhance those RCT's programs.

I know that our overtime is still high, but with the continued hiring of drivers in all offices, the reduction of routes in July and the ending of the Crown for the winter, my expectation is that the overtime will be reduced.

4. Bylaw Discussion: Justin Barton-Caplin acknowledged that he sent the incorrect bylaw updates to Jessy Pelow. Correct bylaw updates were emailed to the board at the beginning of the meeting. Updates were reviewed and minor changes need to be made. Justin will update the bylaws and resend them to the board for final review and approval at the next board meeting.
5. *2023 Budget Approval: The proposed 2024 budget was discussed. The biggest increase is due to wages. A competitive wage analysis was performed and that prompted wage changes. The hope is that higher wages will provide higher quality applicants and reduce turnover.

The lease for the RCT Newport office is coming up for renewal, but there will be a rent increase. The Morrisville RCT office space is not up for renewal until 2024.

Jonathan Davis made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 RCT budget as presented. Carole O'Connell seconded the motion. All approved.

6. Strategic Planning Update: See slides attached.
7. New Board Member Recruitment: Skipped for the time being.
8. *Executive Session for Executive Director Review: Judy Nommik, Carole O'Connell, Jonathan Davis, Nicole Gratton and Justin Barton-Caplin entered executive session at 10:47AM and exited at 10:55AM. Caleb Grant joined the meeting back at 10:55AM.

Judy Nommik motioned to increase the salary of the RCT Executive Director by 5% (or to \$136,500 annually) retroactively effective to the first full pay period after September 12. Jonathan Davis seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

9. Other: None.

Adjourn. Justin Barton-Caplin made a motion that the meeting be adjourned; Jonathan Davis seconded the motion. All approved, the meeting adjourned at 11:00AM.

Next Meeting: November 13, 2023.

*Action item and/or Board Vote

Justin Barton-Caplin, Secretary

Date



Rural Community Transportation, Inc.

October 2023

Mission Moment

The photo below represents the conclusion of a mission-rich process and our staff's creativity, perseverance, and openness to new ideas. The fully electric transit is not a vehicle initially designated to be electric. It replaces a van totaled in an accident the week before it was supposed to start as the designated microtransit vehicle. The vehicle sits under a low/no grant-funded structure, and chargers are data-driven and powered by electrical work that will allow us to diversify our fleet.

I want to thank everyone in the RCT community for their determination through many setbacks and openness to embrace a new way of operating!



Operations

Route	Miles	Dead Head Miles	Rides/Trips
Jay-Lyn	7,511		2357
Highlander	3,556		1165
US2	7,722	3805	664
Microtransit	1,381		440
RT 100 Commuter	3,873	949	412
Morrisville Shopper	1,483		241
Crown	2,511	91	384
Demand Response	32,221	6525	1999
TTL	60,258	11,370	7,662

- **18 New Vehicles Deliveries Expected!**
 - September
 - **2 E-transits(4 passenger/ 2 wheelchair spots)RECEIVED!!!!**
 - October
 - **3 vans(12 passenger/2 wheelchair spots)**
 - November
 - **2 vans(18 passenger/ 2 wheelchair spots)**
 - December
 - **3 vans(14 passenger/ 3 wheelchair spots)**
 - **3 gas Transits(8 passenger/ 2 wheelchair spots)**
 - TDB
 - **5 SUV's**
- This month unfortunately, 101 is down for lengthy repairs, and 82 is no longer on the road. 102 did come back after the warrantee repairs were completed, being down for 5 weeks.

Call Center

- VPTA was here last week to help the team get ready for a return of Medicaid to perform reassessment and to do FY 24 audits in November. The team is in great shape to have them come in and do the audit.
- In August we had an increase of scheduled Medicaid Rides.
- The team scheduled 7575 which is 1209 more rides than July.
- With driver/vehicle shortages that did occur, dispatchers accommodated 6329 trips.
- The team took 5393 inbound calls in which 4519 were Medicaid calls.
 - Both the inbound team and the dispatchers had more calls and trips to assign to drivers than in July.

Finance

- RCT recorded a loss of \$125,659(\$55,000 attributed to Medicaid) for the month of August.
- Wages were up \$31,653 from the month of August 2022

- Cash balance
 - Aug 31, 2022- \$1,146,410
 - Aug 31, 2023- \$934,673

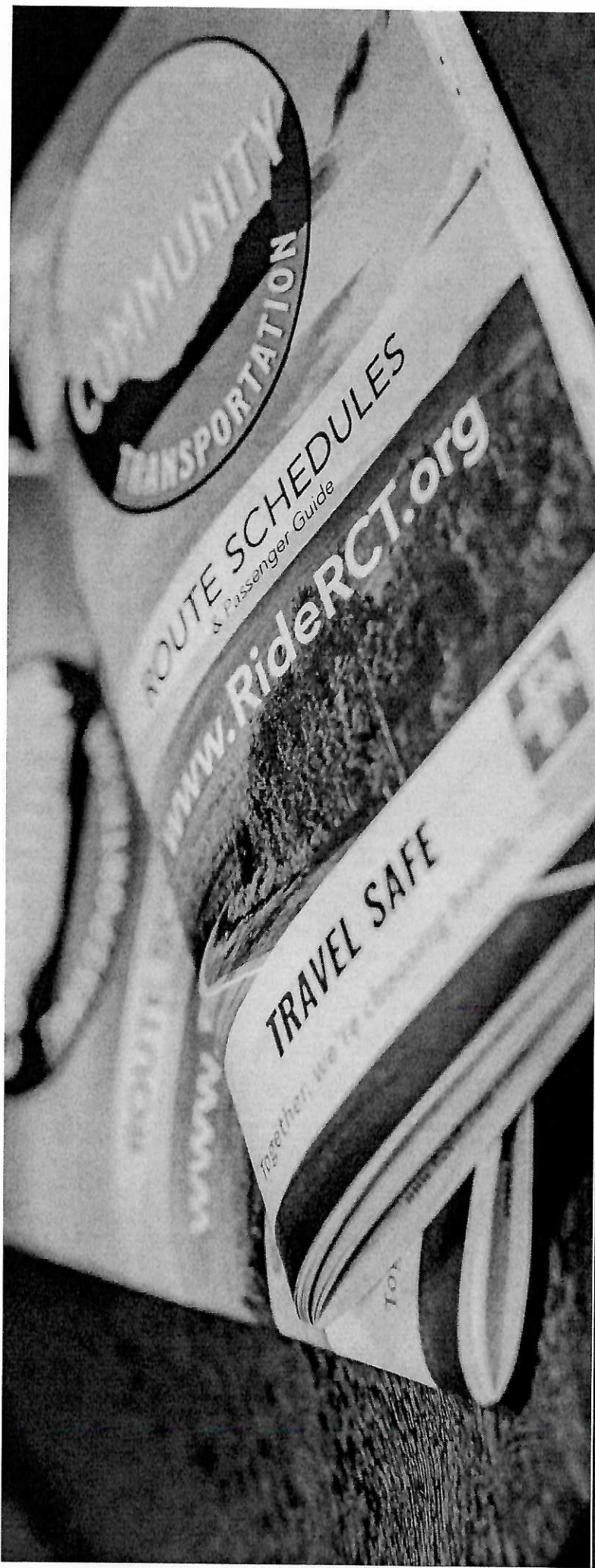
Human Resources

- Please welcome our newest RCT members:
 - John Eastman, who started on September 26th and will dispatch for RCT out of Lyndonville.
 - John Nutbrown, who started with RCT on September 13th and will be a driver for the Lyndonville office.
 - Krystina Forkey started in the Lyndonville Call center on August 12th.
- Open Positions
 - We are currently looking for a part time vehicle cleaner in Lyndonville,
 - a full-time call center representative for either the Lyndonville office
 - drivers for all three of our offices.
- Thank you to the following individuals as they pursue other opportunities. We appreciate their contributions to our mission and wish them best of luck in their next adventure.
 - Chris Newman
 - Christina Corcoran
- July RCT Anniversaries
 - October 2, Sandy Thorpe, **23 YEARS!!!!**
 - October 3, Tito Chamul, **1 YEAR**
 - October 25, Kevin Chickering, **2 YEARS**
 - October 28, Tammy Royer, **9 YEARS**

Initiatives

- Microtransit
 - In the month of August Microtransit provided 420 trips
 - Traveled 1670 miles
 - Served 136 passengers and 36 passengers were first time riders
- Pending Grant Applications
 - Catamount Arts joint Grant
 - Identified as a finalist and invited to submit final application.
 - Green Mountain Power charging infrastructure grant
- Remaining VTRANS capital projects
 - *****A procurement consultant has been retained to complete the procurement process for all the items below.***
 - Planning
 - Rank order retainer consulting contract
 - Transit development plan
 - Johnson study
 - Architectural and environmental design for bus barn
 - Strategic Planning
 - RFP's scoring sheets have been submitted and the award should go out this week.
 - Rebrand Planning

- Transitioning to marketing rank order
- HVAC
- Pole Barn ***COMPLETE**
- Generator
 - Site visits scheduled for the first week of October
- Solar Panels
- Bike racks
- New on-board camera systems
- Morrisville office improvements
 - Working group created
- Lyndonville office improvements
 - Working group created
 - Shredded completed
- Yestermorrow bus shelter
- Rebrand capital items



RCT Strategic Planning

Cynthia Stuart, Stuart Consulting

Introductions

"It is an honor and privilege to have been selected as the consultant to support all of you through the RCT strategic planning initiative."

Background:

- 20 Years in Banking Industry
- Six Years Consulting in the Northeast Kingdom
- Volunteer Experience on National, State & Local Boards
- Raised in the Northeast Kingdom
- Care Deeply About Making a Positive Impact in Our Communities
- Passionate About Adventure Travel & Hiking



Cynthia Stuart

Stuart
CONSULTING



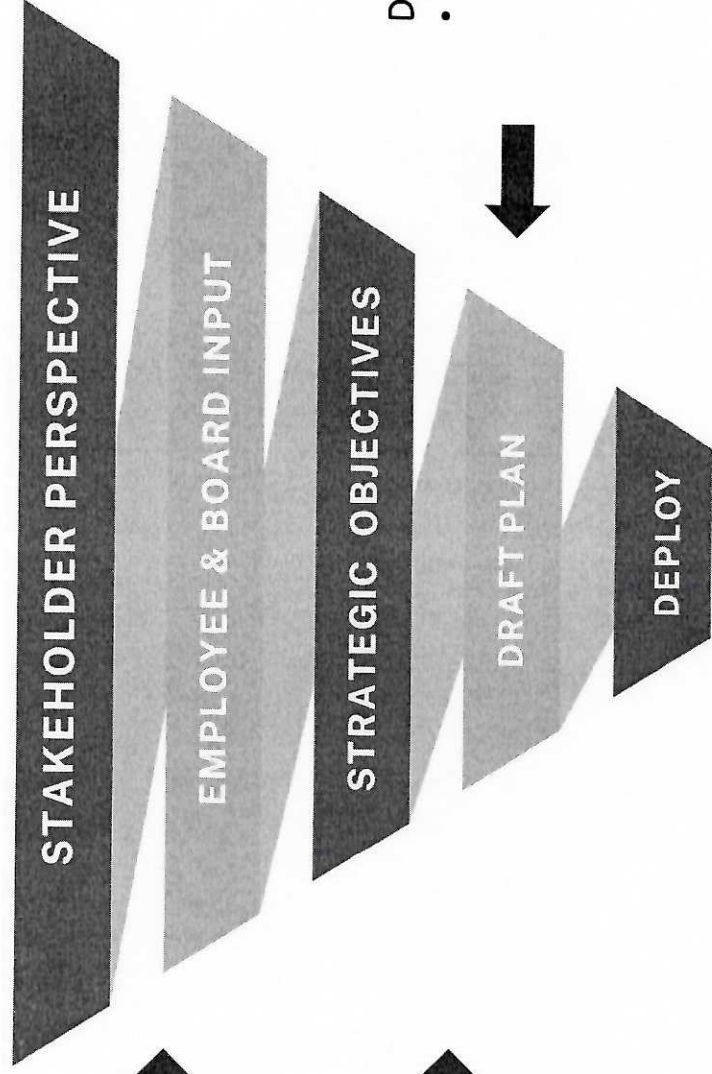
Strategic Planning

Research Phase

- Measure Current Strategies Against Mission & Vision
- Identify Trends
- Uncover Fresh Ideas & Opportunities

Planning Phase

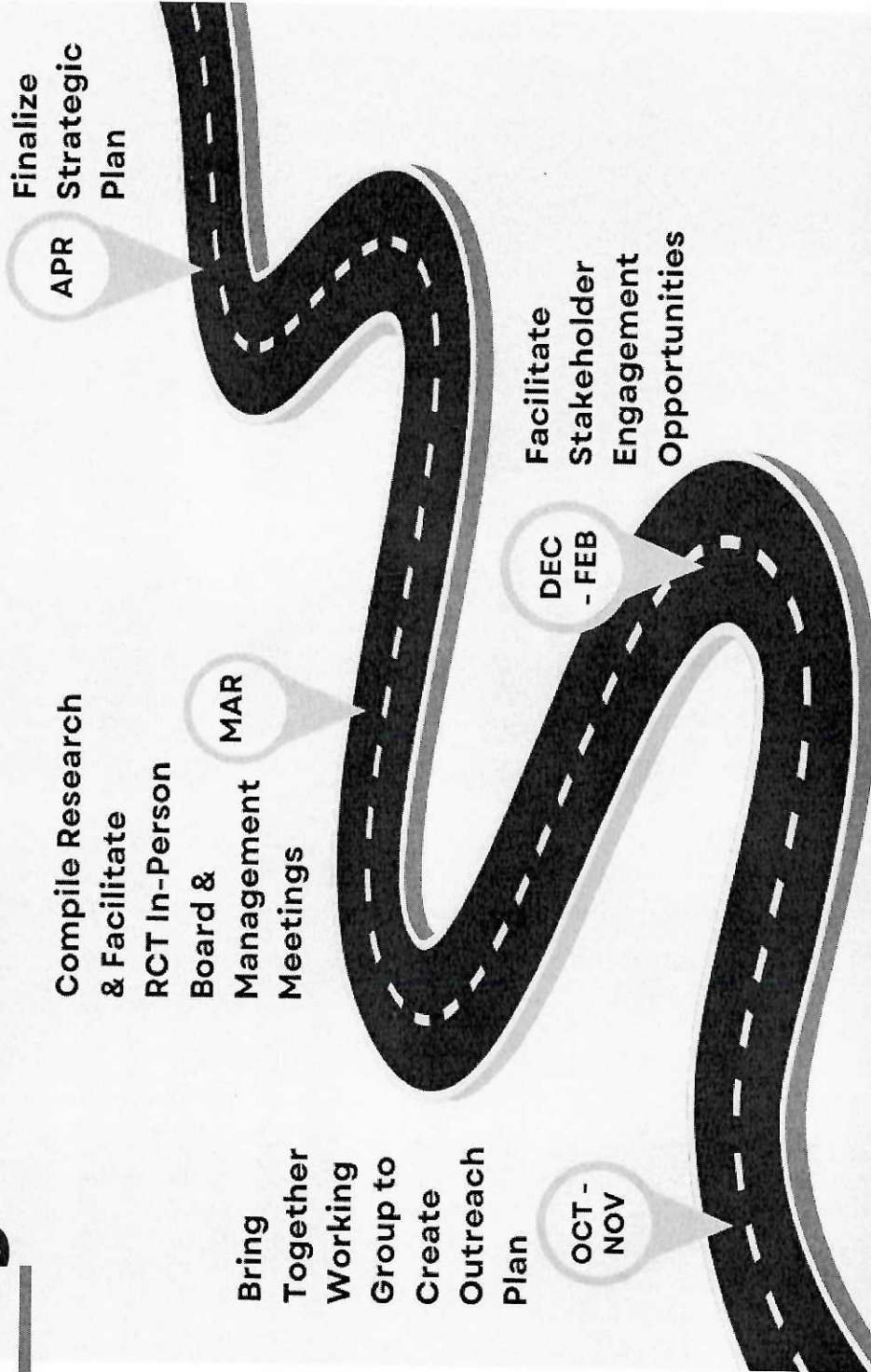
- Bring Together Planning Participants
- Facilitate an Interactive Process Around Key Focus Areas



Drafting Phase

- Draft a Comprehensive Strategic Plan with Strategic Objectives, Tactics, Actions, and Key Performance Measures

Planning Timeline



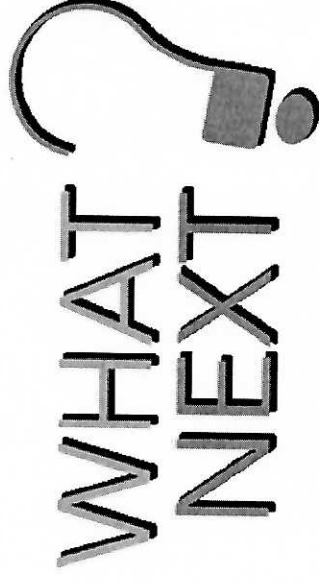
Planning Focus Areas

FOCUS AREAS	AREAS TO EXPLORE
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Strategies and Efficiencies • Company Culture and Morale • Accountability and Compliance • Board Engagement
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Current Communication Strategies for All Stakeholders • Opportunities to Test New Communication Strategy Preferences
Operational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet • Facility Management • Project Completion & Punctuality
Service Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted Services Maintenance • Expansion Into All Areas of Rural Vitality • Resilience and Responsiveness to External Challenges & Opportunities
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Management • Grant Proposal Vision & Advocacy • Local Match Maintenance • Supplemental Funding
Organizational Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission & Vision • Competitive Advantage • SWOT Analysis • Understanding of Transportation Needs of the Region

Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
Leadership (Board, VTrans, NVDA, LCPC, RCT Executive Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission & Vision Exploration - Indepth Online Survey - One-on-One Focused Conversations - In Person Planning Meeting March 2024
Community Partners (Nonprofits, Town Select & Planning Boards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Survey - Postcard Mailing - Community Conversations - Organization Outreach (NEK Prosper, NEK Collaborative)
Transportation Dependent Entities (Adult Day Facilities, Hospitals, Treatment Facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Survey - Postcard Mailing - One-on-One Focused Conversations
Employees & Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing Employee Satisfaction Reports - Community Conversations - Mission & Vision Exercises
Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging (fun) and Simple Survey Process

Next Steps



Bring together a strategic plan working committee of RCT managers and board members to determine the details of the stakeholder outreach plan.

* Possible working committee meeting dates: Friday October 20th & November 3rd



Mission & Vision



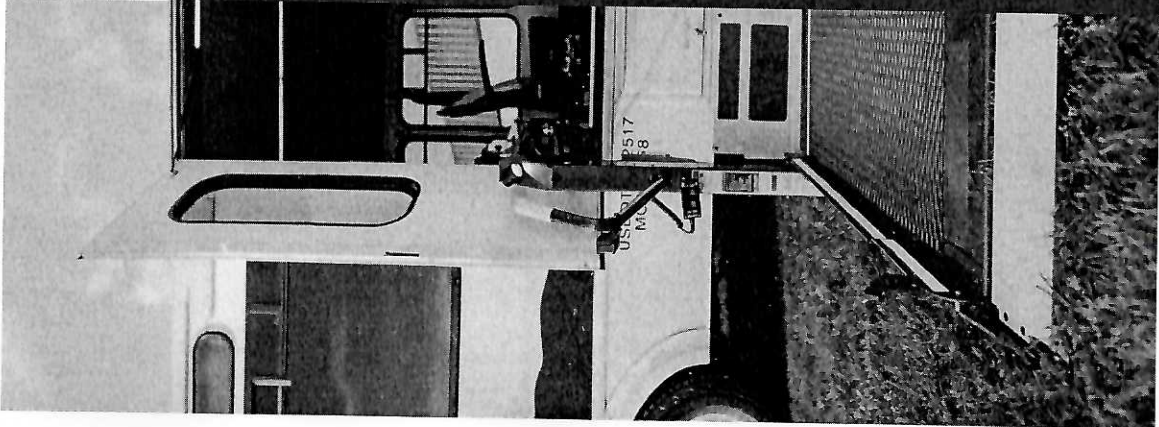
Who are we?

"RCT is the public transportation agency for the NEK and Lamoille County as well as parts of Washington County." – Survey Respondent

To Explore:

- RCT is a critical partner to entities who's business models rely on transportation services for their clients and customers.





What do we do?

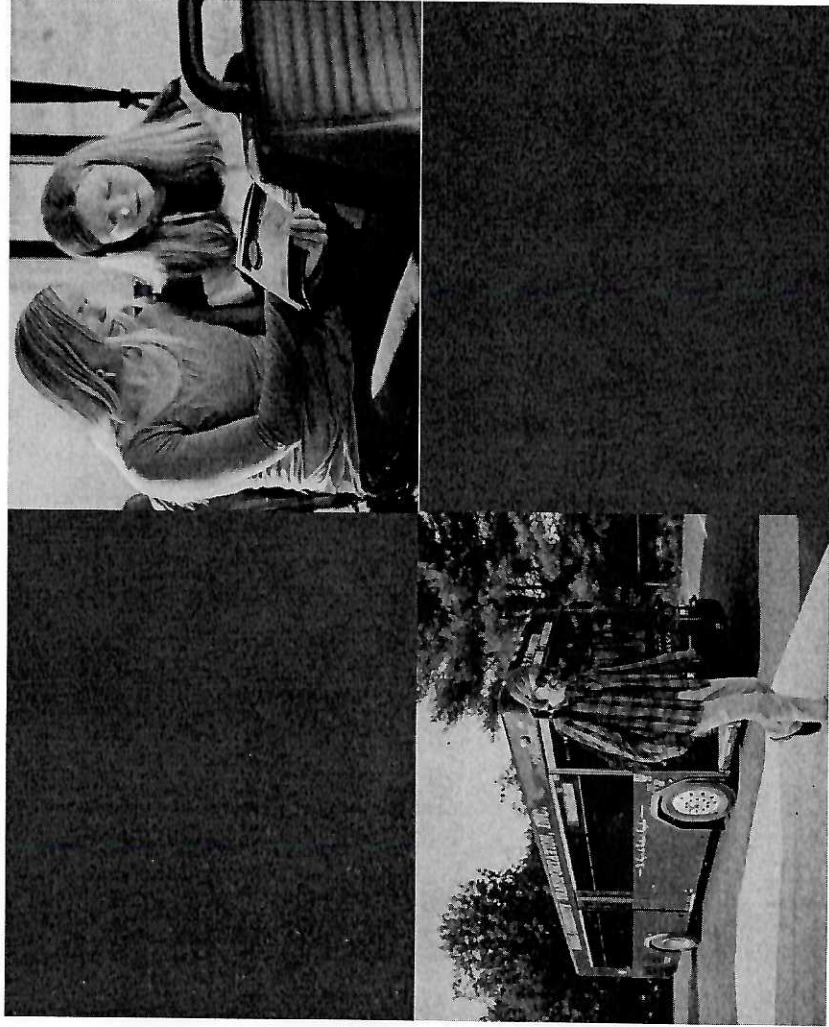
To Explore:

- RCT supports livable communities in the rural Vermont landscape.
- RCT provides vital transportation services for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

"Provide variety of transportation services with volunteer drivers, wheelchair accessible vans and mini vans. As well as shuttle routes." – Survey Respondent

"We provide Medicaid transportation services, other transportation services to help meet additional needs, and we provide limited public transportation." – Survey Respondent

For whom do we do it?



"Individuals that have no other means of transportation, elderly and disabled, Medicaid eligible, and choice riders that choose to use out services and ride our shuttles." – Survey Respondent

"For the communities that we serve." – Survey Respondent

To Explore:

- Ways to reinforce and strengthen partnership models. RCT services are vital to these partners.
- Meeting the transportation needs of community members beyond the current rider profile.

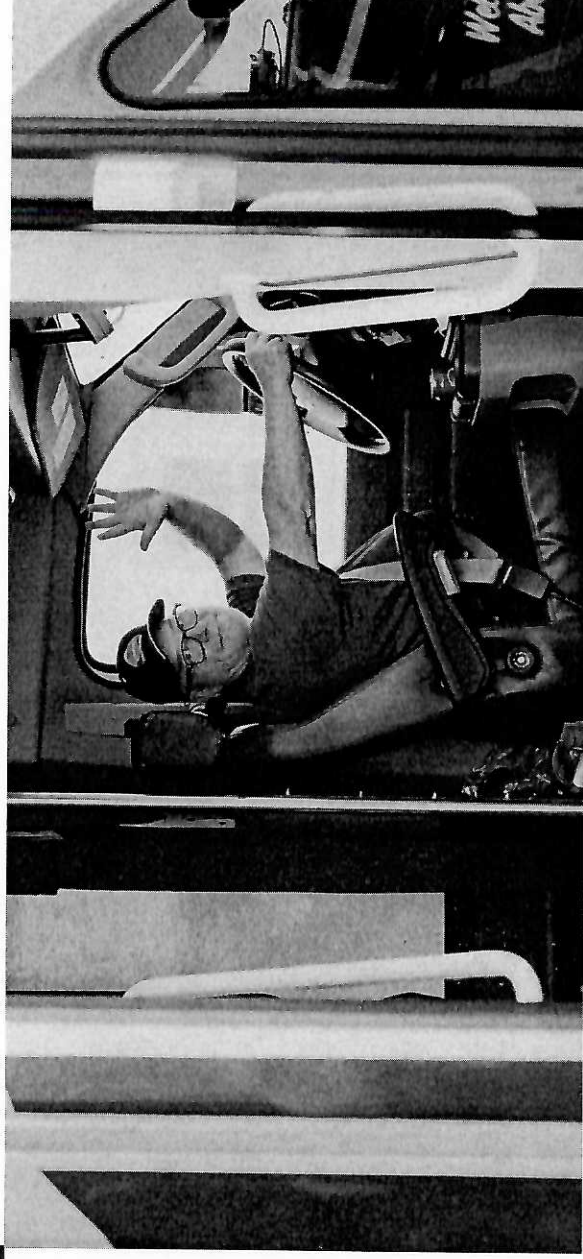
How well do we do it?

"We do an amazing job at Medicaid reimbursed transportation given the limited resources we have. Unfortunately, due to VTrans funding and limitations on funding, our transportation services for the general public are lacking in much of our service area." – Survey Respondent

"Through the hard work and dedication of our employees and our volunteers." – Survey Respondent

To Explore:

- The community's transportation needs and future vision for our rapidly changing rural area.



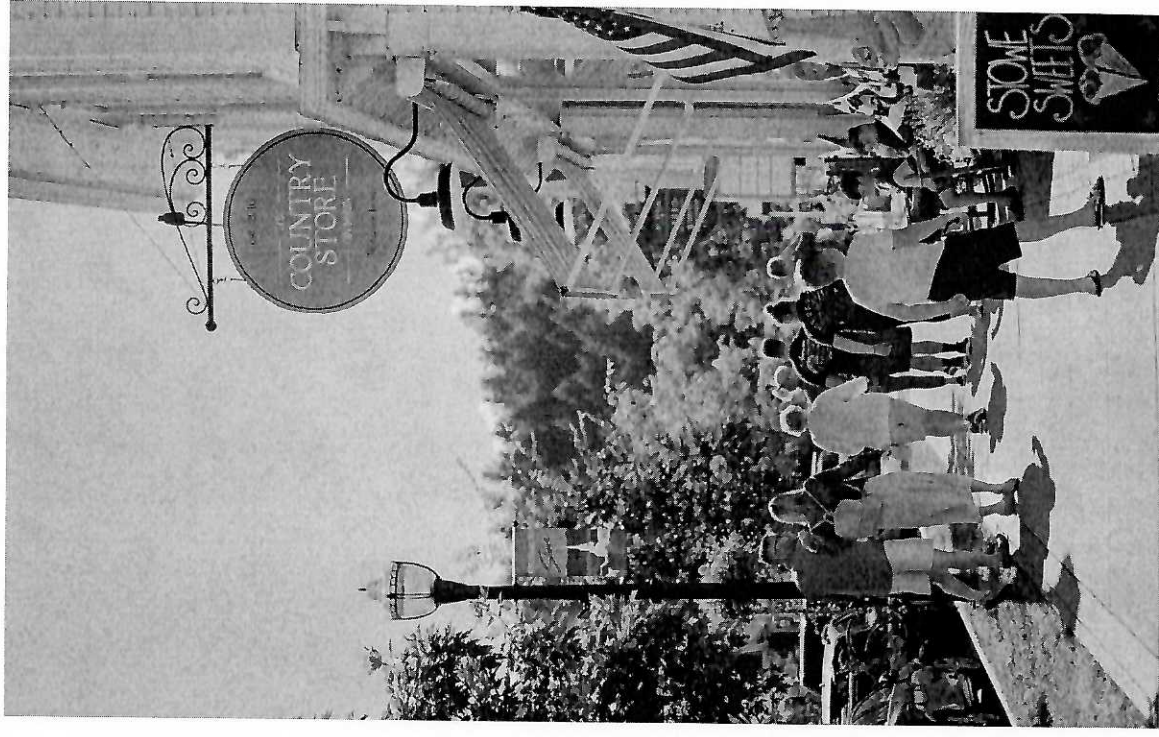
Why do we do it?

To Explore:

- What having public transportation means to the people RCT serves.
- How public transportation supports the vitality and viability of our rural communities.

"To provide transportation services to passengers that have no other means of transportation." – Survey Respondent

"We want to provide a safe reliable transportation to ensure in a rural area that the community can utilize if in need of transportation." – Survey Respondent



Insights About an Effective Strategic Planning Process



- *Communication with the admin staff, with the communities, and our partners. We know partners always say Transportation is an issue but it is usually individual needs, not community.*
- *Continue with the Leadership meetings and communicate with staff. A cohesive work environment that can provide transportation for everyone that needs it.*
- *I feel the planning process should include the leadership team, staff and the board. I would like for transportation to be available for all passengers that are in need of services and to have a pleasant work environment.*
- *Transparency, communication and stakeholder involvement.*
- *Not only deciding what is important, but also ensuring flexibility and alternate solutions on the planning process. Ultimately the outcome that I envision gives RCT more options for the members in our community that may need our services in the future and beyond.*

Insights About an Effective Strategic Planning Process



- *General questionnaire; analysis; working group of board, management and consultant to brainstorm and develop vision and mission, future plans/ events and timelines, means for amending, evaluation process; presentations to RCT members and feedback; revisions; final presentation.*
- *Planning Outline/Timeline (with deliverables, process, and deadlines or estimated deadlines) Engagement - ensuring that the Board, Staff, and Community Stakeholders are engaged in the process thru out and/or at various key decision points. Decision Making process -- just being clear who makes what decisions Role delineation - role of consultant, role of management, role of board - in process. Focus on unmet needs - ensuring that our process outlines any gaps that we may want to address.*

Thank You

Cynthia Stuart

Stuart Consulting

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Please reach out anytime!