

**Regional Transportation Partnership Meeting**

Draft Minutes, December 12, 2024

The recording of this meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/Zp8rZbz3So0>

| VOTING MEMBERS & ALTERNATES       |   | STAFF                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------|---|
| Brian Pinkston, Charlottesville   | x | Christine Jacobs, TJPDC                   | x |
| Natalie Oschrein, Charlottesville | x | Lucinda Shannon, TJPDC                    | x |
| Diantha McKeel, Albemarle         | x | Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC                    | x |
| Mike Pruitt, Albemarle            | x | Sarah Richardson, TJPDC                   | x |
| Katy Miller, DRPT                 | x |                                           |   |
| Randy Parker, Jaunt Rural         | x |                                           |   |
| Vacant, Jaunt Urban               |   |                                           |   |
| Scott Silsdorf, UTS               | x |                                           |   |
| Kendall Howell, UTS (alternate)   |   |                                           |   |
| NON-VOTING MEMBERS                |   | GUESTS/PUBLIC                             |   |
| Garland Williams, CAT             | x | Jason Espie, Jaunt                        | x |
| Jamie Gellner, Alb County PS      | x | Jessica Hersh-Ballering, Albemarle County | x |
| Vicky Marsh, UVA Hospital         |   |                                           |   |
| Peter Thompson, CAA               |   |                                           |   |
| Sara Pennington, Rideshare        | x |                                           |   |
| Ann Wall, Albemarle               | x |                                           |   |
| Peter Krebs, PEC                  | x |                                           |   |
| Mike Murphy, Jaunt                | x |                                           |   |
| Ben Chambers, Charlottesville     | x |                                           |   |
| Jen Fleisher, CAA (alternate)     |   |                                           |   |

\* Remote attendance

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Regional Transportation Partnership Chair, Diantha McKeel, presided and called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. She invited those at the meeting to introduce themselves.

**2. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (MINUTE 3:20)**

Approval of Agenda

Supervisor McKeel asked to add two items to the agenda. The Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership asked to have representation from this board on the CVRHP board. There is also a resolution of support for a PATH grant that needs to be addressed as well.

**Motion/Action:** Ben Chambers moved to approve the agenda as amended. Katy Miller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.



### Approval of Minutes

**Motion/Action:** Unclose parenthesis on Item 4, per Mike Pruitt. Misplaced comma in Item 5. Mike Pruitt moved to approve the September 26 minutes as amended. Natalie Oschrein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **3. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (MINUTE 6:40)**

None.

### **4. JAUNT'S STUDIES (MINUTE 7:10)**

#### Microtransit Potential

Mike Murphy introduced Randall Farwell, Senior Transit Specialist, with Benesch. He introduced microtransit and what it means in general and what it means as a service for Jaunt. He noted that it will enhance and optimize the operating model for Jaunt as well as other benefits for Jaunt and the surrounding counties. He continued with their approach, the feasibility study including mobility gaps and needs maps. He noted that the ADA service is the most expensive portion of the microtransit service. The service would be fully ADA-compliant and only available to ADA-eligible clients.

He continued with the feasibility study in Greene County. He said there was a capacity for up to 25% increase in ridership. They would test Greene County microtransit adopting a microtransit model, serving circulator trips focusing on Stanardsville/Ruckersville area. They would assess the potential for Linked trips in the pilot stage and will assess the extension of US 29N. It was noted that they would need fewer peak vehicles, they will increase productivity, serve more riders and it would be proposed as a pilot program.

He presented the feasibility study in Crozet. He shared the results of that study recommended testing microtransit with two concepts. The first is Circulator, Link, and Connect. The second concept is Connect and Microtransit. He noted that microtransit serves local trips "curb-to-curb" and would transfer to/from Connect trips. He noted that it is lower in priority for a pilot program consideration.

He said the recommendation is to wait on the Crozet pilot to see the operational experiences gained from the Greene County pilot program.

He continued with recommendations, including advancing microtransit as a pilot to serve ADA need in the UZA; advancing Greene County microtransit pilot; Jaunt licensing a cloud-based SaaS platform; and considering future microtransit pilots for Crozet and other communities.

Ben Chambers asked Mr. Farwell to describe the difference between microtransit and para-transit, which he did. Mike Murphy said the majority of trips come from Stanardsville and Ruckersville would

not cost a lot more money to catch the “one-offs” that may occur. Crozet does not work as well and a pilot would drive up the costs.

Mike Murphy said microtransit in the urban areas would be in addition to the Jaunt service. They are not trying to compete with CAT. Their service would be primarily paratransit. It creates greater access to mobility. The service is more of an “on demand” service instead of having to make a reservation a week in advance.

There was a robust discussion about the pilot program and microtransit.

#### Rural Transit Needs Assessment (Minute 45:50)

Jason Espie gave an overview of the study with a focus on identifying service gaps and how they gathered the data. He presented the county-level ridership goals tied to service levels. Goal 1 is basic needs, Goal 2 is on par with other transit service providers, and Goal 3 is optimal. He continued with the county-level ridership deficits for each of the goals and the operating costs to meet those deficits.

Mike Murphy reviewed the needs assessment and recommendations for Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Nelson, and Goochland.

In conclusion, he said there are significant unmet needs that exist throughout the rural areas served by Jaunt; recommendations are provided for how Jaunt could reach ridership goals in each county with expanded service; future efforts could study specific service improvements; results show the need for increased funding; and the study also surveys some stakeholders and there are qualitative learnings from the study. He noted that all stakeholders requested expanded service levels.

There was a brief question and answer period about how data was gathered and the demographics.

#### **5. REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE (MINUTE 1:12:50)**

Ben Chambers reported that they will be going before the Albemarle Board of Supervisors and City Council to approve their membership in the Charlottesville Area Regional Transit Authority (CARTA). Albemarle is the only member thus far, but they are hopeful that the City will also join very soon. They are looking for a resolution of support for a grant from DRPT. Before they go to the General Assembly (GA), they need to have agreed-upon priorities. There are technical and finance committees to set up and there are bylaws currently being worked on.

What is the appropriate role for the RTP in the future once CARTA is established? There are questions about the role RTP will serve, if any. There needs to be a discussion about this in the future.

#### **6. TRANSIT PROVIDER UPDATES (MINUTE 1:17:38)**

**Albemarle County Public Schools** – Jamie Gellner reported that this year has been a rebuilding year. They hired 15 staff this year. They have been rebuilding processes. They are still short with special

needs drivers and van drivers. There has been an increase in the population that needs to go to different schools including Rivermont and Rockbridge. There are other students who are “families in crisis” (homeless) and foster care students. She noted that MicroCAT has been helpful in bridging the gaps. She reported that they have been able to provide Saturday services and after-hour services so far this year.

**University Transit Services** – Scott Silsdorf said the e-Jest (small electric buses) are on location, but there is a lengthy process to get them on the roads. He said they will be placed into service early in the Spring semester. The night pilot will probably be the first to use them, in addition to the “silver route.”

He reported that Gilly called and said they have slots for battery-electric buses and UTS may be getting them in Fall of 2025.

He reported on the Wahoo Commute program which incentivizes commuters to use transit. There are now 500 participants. There are about 20-25 people who have turned in their parking permits. There will be more marketing on this program in the coming months.

**City Public Schools** – Garland Williams reported that have a grant to get two battery-electric buses. They will arrive in 14-15 months. Dominion has come out to the property to put the infrastructure in place. He said in the summer, the buses have to be on the grid from noon – 6:00. They are working on getting two in rotation and are looking to use up to six in the future as a pilot for the schools.

**CAT** – Mr. Williams reported that in January, they are putting their order in with Gilly for two battery-electric buses. There is a great deal more infrastructure for these buses. It will be about 20 months before they get the buses. There is a great deal of momentum on the improvement of alternative fuel vehicles, including hydrogen-powered vehicles. These uses will take a lot longer to get up and running in the area. They had the opportunity to do two tours in Champaign/Urbana and they learned a great deal from them.

He reported that they have extended service to The Center. Their longest routes have been cut to only 60 minutes, from 70 minutes. They are looking to get service to the jail. They do not have enough drivers necessary to make that happen yet, but they are working on it. He reported that they had 3 of the 8 positions filled, but due to some circumstances, they were back to need 8 drivers. They are interviewing for additional drivers tomorrow.

**Jaunt** – Mike Murphy reported that they are working on another study with battery-electric buses. They are actively engaged in a larger electrification project with Dominion Virginia Power with a federal program called Project Sync. They are working on getting the infrastructure available for in-route charging. They have completed their budget, and they have a strategic meeting planned with their board members in January. He said he had a meeting with DRPT last week in Staunton about the “fiscal cliff” and Jaunt has a better understanding of what needs to be done by 2027. They are taking a different approach to celebrating their team, so they are hosting an “in-and-out” at the Wood Grill on Monday at 3:00.

**DRPT** – Katy Miller said there is a 5311 shortfall. Many of the rural services have expanded, but the funding is short on that. They are asking rural transit agencies on how to raise the amount of state fundings to cover the needs. There is a new director, Tiffany Robinson, and she seems to be supportive of these programs. Lastly, she reminded the board that DPRT’s grant cycle is open from Dec 1 – Feb 1.

**8. STAFF UPDATES (MINUTE 1:43:51)**

Lucinda Shannon said staff is applying for a grant for PATH. There is a letter of support provided to the board members at this meeting. She asked the board to entertain a motion to approve the letter of support.

**Motion/Action:** Randy Parker made a motion to approve the letter of support. Mike Pruitt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, with Katy Miller abstaining.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS/UPDATES/REMINDERS (MINUTE 1:45:40)**

Ms. McKeel reported that the CVRHP requested a representative from the RTP as Diantha McKeel’s alternate on the committee. Ben Chambers volunteered to be Ms. McKeel’s alternate, but cannot serve in that capacity because he is not a voting member. Brian Pinkston volunteered his service as alternate.

**Motion/Action:** Natalie Oschrein made a motion to approve Brian Pinkston as alternate on the CVRHP from the RTP. Mike Pruitt seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be January 23, 2024, from 4 – 6 p.m. in person at the Water Street Center, 407 E Water Street, Charlottesville, VA.

**10. ADJOURN**

Ms. McKeel adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.