

2016

Addendum to the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan for Southwest New Hampshire (RCC Regions 5 and 6)



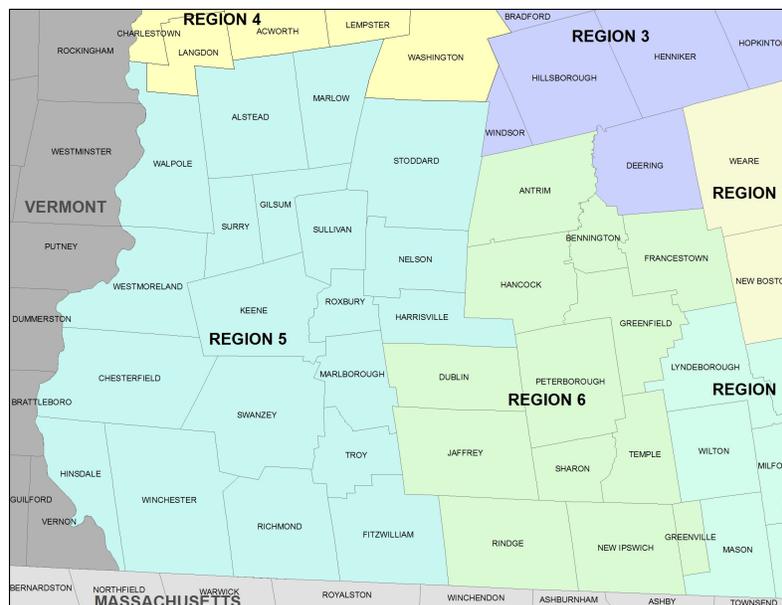
Presented by the Southwest Region Planning
Commission on behalf of the Monadnock
Region Coordinating Council
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I. Preface

The Monadnock Region Coordinating Council of Community Transportation's (MRCC) *Addendum to the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan for Southwest New Hampshire (RCC Regions 5 and 6)* was developed in order to provide the MRCC temporary guidance until it fully updates its Coordinated Community Transportation Plan (Plan) in 2017. In July 2015, the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), on behalf of the MRCC, received a grant to engage the MRCC in a two-year process to revisit its mission and vision, analyze historical trip patterns, identify new coordination opportunities, reengage stakeholders to reevaluate the Region's needs, goals and objectives, and develop a revision of a Coordinated Plan for Southwest New Hampshire. The entire process is scheduled to be completed in June 2017. Since Coordinated Plans are required to be updated every five years, this update fulfills the federal and state update requirement until the MRCC has finished implementing its more robust Plan update process. The last previous update to the Plan was in 2011.

The content in this addendum represents a merger, update and replacement of Plan guidance that originated from Eastern Monadnock and Cheshire County Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) in 2010 and 2011. At that time, the RCCs were separate entities that produced separate Addendums to the 2006 *Coordinated Community Transportation Plan for Southwest New Hampshire*. The Region 5 (Cheshire County) and Region 6 (Eastern Monadnock) Addendum's were remarkably similar, but had some key notable differences. When the Addendum's were written, transportation services in Region 6 were extremely underdeveloped and a key reason for Region 6 electing to be its own Regional Coordinating Council was because members did not want the region to be forgotten, neglected or overshadowed by service providers, most of which were based in Region 5.

Figure 1: Regional Coordinating Council Regions



In 2011, the Eastern Monadnock Region developed some brand new services in towns that had never had service by taking advantage of 5310 Formula funds made available by NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT). In addition, some underserved towns began receiving more service. The new Region 6 services coupled with the fact that there was a great deal of overlap between Region 5 and 6 memberships resulted in the Eastern Monadnock and Cheshire County RCCs deciding to merge into the Monadnock

Region Coordinating Council in 2012. Since 2012, the MRCC's membership has collectively managed over three years of 5310 formula funds used for mobility management purposes and over five years of 5310 funds used for purchasing transportation services. The timeline in Figure 2 show the history of the Region 5 and 6 regions in greater detail.

Figure 2: Coordinated Transportation Milestones in Regions 5 and 6

Year	Milestone
2006	Coordinated Community Transportation Plan for Southwest NH Adopted - <i>December</i>
2007	New Hampshire establishes the State Coordinating Council - <i>July</i>
2008	
2009	
2010	Eastern Monadnock Coordinating Council (EMRCC) application approved by State Coordinating Council - <i>April</i> Cheshire County Regional Coordinating Council (CCRCC) application approved by State Coordinating Council - <i>September</i> EMRCC Plan Addendum Adopted for Region 6 - <i>October</i>
2011	CCRCC Plan Addendum Adopted for Region 5 - <i>February</i> CCRCC begins appropriating funds for services for the first time using FTA 5310 Purchase of Service funds - <i>June</i> EMRCC begins appropriating funds for services for the first time with FTA 5310 Purchase of Service funds - <i>October</i>
2012	CCRCC and EMRCC vote to merge into Monadnock Region Coordinating Council (MRCC) - <i>March</i> MRCC begins implementing second year FTA 5310 Purchase of Service grant - <i>July</i> New fixed route transit service starts in Hinsdale (supported by MRCC) - <i>November</i>
2013	MRCC begins implementing first round of FTA 5310 Formula Funds for mobility management and purchase of services - <i>July</i> MRCC begins implementing third year of FTA 5310 Purchase of Service grant - <i>July</i>
2014	MRCC implements second year of FTA 5310 Formula Funds for mobility management and purchase of services - <i>July</i> MRCC begins implementing fourth year of FTA 5310 Purchase of Service grant - <i>July</i>
2015	MRCC awarded Federal Transit Administration 5305(e) grant to update Coordinated Plan - <i>July</i> MRCC begins implementing third year of FTA 5310 Formula Funds for mobility management and purchase of services - <i>July</i> MRCC begins implementing fifth year of FTA 5310 Purchase of Service grant, this time a two year grant - <i>July</i>
2016	MRCC Community Transportation Addendum is Adopted - <i>February</i>

II. Introduction

In the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire, access to basic and essential services can be challenging for residents who are unable to obtain reliable transportation due to age, disability, income or other reasons. Numerous studies, reports and plans have pointed to the need for improved and increased transportation services for these residents.¹ Some of the transportation challenges facing the region include lack of affordable transportation options, limited public transportation service, no night or weekend transportation, limited wheelchair accessible transportation, and increased demand for long distance medical transportation.

Today only Keene, Hinsdale and Walpole have fixed route bus service. The other 30 communities in the region rely primarily on demand responsive services such as volunteer driver programs, which primarily provide medical related rides, or human service agency transportation, which is often limited to clients enrolled in agency programs. As the region's population continues to grow in size and the median age

¹ See [Monadnock Region Future](#), 2015 by Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC); [Southwest Connects: Southwest Region Transportation Plan](#), 2015 by SWRPC; [MAST Action Plan](#), 2012 by Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation; [East West Transportation Alternatives Study](#), 2013 by SWRPC; [Route 12 North Transit-Paratransit Feasibility Study](#), 2010 by Steadman Hill Consulting Inc.; [Route 119 Transit Expansion Feasibility Study](#), 2009 by Nelson Nygaard Associates; [Route 10 Job Access Reverse Commute Study](#), 2008 by SWRPC.

continues to increase, the demand for transportation will continue to increase. A coordinated effort is needed to help narrow the anticipated gap between the demand for and provision of transportation service.

The coordination process founded by the MRCC and its predecessor Eastern Monadnock and Cheshire County regional coordinating councils has been used as an opportunity to increase services for residents by building new and improving existing community transportation services in the Region and with neighboring Regions. In addition, the MRCC has served as a forum for citizens to express their interests and needs regarding transportation in the Region. Through coordination, the MRCC hopes to reduce duplication of services, increase efficiencies and ultimately, create a balanced network of diverse transportation services.

The MRCC covers a territory that includes 23 Cheshire County towns (Alstead, Chesterfield, Fitzwilliam, Dublin, Gilsum, Harrisville, Hinsdale, Jaffrey, Keene, Marlborough, Marlow, Nelson, Richmond, Rindge, Roxbury, Stoddard, Sullivan, Surry, Swanzey, Troy, Walpole, Westmoreland, and Winchester) and 10 western Hillsborough County towns (Antrim, Bennington, Frankestown, Greenfield, Greenville, Hancock, New Ipswich, Peterborough, Sharon, and Temple). At the time of writing there are 11 active members of the MRCC, but the number is growing.²

Figure 3: Current Active Members

• American Red Cross	• Keene Housing Kids Collaborative
• Cheshire County	• Monadnock at Home
• Citizen Member – Chuck Weed	• Monadnock RSVP Volunteer Center
• Contoocook Valley Transportation Company	• Monadnock United Way
• Home Healthcare, Hospice & Community Svcs	• Southwest Region Planning Commission, ex-officio
• Keene Housing	

In addition to its active members, the MRCC has identified and/or collaborated with many other partners since its origins in 2010. The MRCC envisions many of these partners becoming active members and participating in many of the MRCC's future activities as coordination framework evolves. Partners offering transportation services or transportation fleets are considered by the MRCC as being potential affiliates for 5310 grants or other transportation service contracts to expand or improve services in Southwest New Hampshire upon becoming active members. These parties are identified in Figure 4.

Figure 4: MRCC Partners

• Adventure Limousine and Transportation	• Monadnock Community Hospital
• All Towns in Region 5 and 6	• Monadnock Developmental Services
• Cheshire Medical Center	• Monadnock Family Services
• Connecticut River Transit	• Monadnock ServiceLink
• Disabled American Veterans	• Merit Care Transportation LLC
• First Student, Inc.	• Peterborough Taxi
• Grapevine Community Resource Center	• R. R. Diluzio Ambulance
• Granite State Monarchs	• Southern New Hampshire Services
• Ideal Taxi	• Sunshine Taxi
• Jaffrey-Rindge Memorial Ambulance	• The River Center
• Keene Center Genesis	• Thomas Transportation
• Keene Senior Center	• Tony's Taxi

² The number of members in good standing or "active members" is based on the MRCC bylaws, which require that members sign a conflict of interest statement, have good attendance, and volunteer to assist with subcommittee work as needed.

III. Mission and Vision

Previously, the MRCC had two operating mission and vision statements for Region 5 and 6. In November of 2015 and February of 2016, visioning sessions were held to develop one mission statement and one vision statement for the MRCC. The mission and vision statements, which follow, were developed through a consensus-based process that included stakeholders familiar with the MRCC region. Through the visioning sessions, MRCC members developed strategies to construct the mission and vision statements and address specific organizational goals.

Figure 5: MRCC Mission & Vision Statement

<p><i>Mission Statement</i> To actively lead and engage the Monadnock region in building an innovative, coordinated, and resilient transportation network.</p> <p><i>Vision Statement</i> A regional transportation network for everyone.</p>

MRCC members worked to create a Vision Statement that was to the point, concise and clear. They also found it significant to keep the statement simple and direct so that multiple groups could participate in achieving this vision. Additionally, the MRCC agreed that a visual representation of key words through a word cloud could further describe what *transportation for everyone* signifies.

Figure 6: MRCC Visioning Session Word Cloud



IV. Needs

While the needs expressed in the 2006 Coordinated Plan remain relevant to the Monadnock Region³, there are additional needs that stakeholders have identified since 2006. The MRCC has found it useful to speak about needs based on the perspectives of its three major types of stakeholders: users, providers and purchasers. The term *users* is meant to refer to the people that utilize community transportation services whether they are clients, patients or members of the general population. *Providers* describe the organizations and companies that are operating the community transportation system whether they are providing rides or arranging and scheduling transportation services. *Purchasers* are organizations, communities and other stakeholders that invest funds into the community transportation system. Using these stakeholder categories are bulleted lists of needs for each stakeholder type.

User Needs:

- Easy access to comprehensive information about available transportation resources
- Consistency of transportation services and routes
- Increased options that are affordable for and accessible to people with disabilities
- Access to medical appointments, employment, education and job training, shopping, daycare, and after-school activities
- Increased affordable long-distance options
- Access to social visits, cultural events, and other community activities
- Affordable and flexible fee options
- Weekend and evening transportation
- Trained escorts for users in need of travel assistance and continued support for travel trainer programs
- Integrated transportation—trip planning, coordinated services, expanded infrastructure (Park and Ride, bus stops, etc.)
- Education, awareness and acceptance of community transportation
- Trip reduction through coordination of human services, intake procedures, and home based service delivery
- Minimum level of service to people residing in Region 6 communities

Provider Needs:

- Funding
 - Sustained funding for existing services
 - Funding source for local match
 - Identifying and breaking down perceived and actual funding barriers
 - Education and training on funding resources
 - Funds to build organizational capacity (e.g. staff, vehicles)
- Streamlined reporting
- More volunteer drivers – especially for long distance trips
- Data collection
 - Management system to track ridership, growth and other trends
 - Track unmet need
- Technical assistance
 - Joint vehicle purchase and maintenance
 - Insurance

³ See the Conclusion section on page 18 for a summary of priority needs listed in the 2006 Plan.

- Technical assistance for new providers
 - Overcoming coordination issues (i.e. vehicle sharing, trip sharing, and driver sharing)
 - Joint purchasing
- Establish minimum operating standards
 - Driver training program
 - Shared vehicle standards
- Fostering private/public partnerships
- Trip reduction through coordination of human services, travel training, intake procedures, and home-based service delivery
- Improved communication among providers

Purchaser Needs:

- Information and education (e.g. annual report)
- Improved communications among RCC members
- Funding partnerships; leveraging funding to achieve maximum use of funds (e.g. DOT, Foundations, HUD, USDA, CDFA, CDBG, EDA, Towns, HHS)

V. Action Plan

The addendum's action plan is a synthesis of the original goals, objectives and strategies of the 2006 Coordinated Plan. Four goals provide the framework for objectives in the plan. Strategies are developed annually in a MRCC work plan to address the MRCC Action Plan.

Goal I: Improve general awareness about community transportation resources, needs and the benefits of coordination

Objectives for Goal I:

- a. Create a vision of coordinated transportation services in the Region
 - i. Generate vision statement
 - ii. Communicate with and provide updates on MRCC stakeholders, the SCC and its subcommittees, neighboring RCCs, and the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) on a quarterly basis
- b. Generate support for ongoing transportation services coordination.
 - i. Establish an active membership committee that serves to diversify the MRCC membership base by identifying and inviting new stakeholder participation.
 - ii. Create working relationships and partnerships with other transportation-focused organizations.
 - iii. Utilize information gathered from existing transportation feasibility and corridor studies for Routes 9, 10, 12, 101 and 119 to help guide decisions for expanding or improving transit / paratransit services in the Region and to implement recommendations produced by these studies.
- c. Develop a marketing campaign about resources, needs and coordination
 - i. Maintain Web presence, including social media
 - ii. Print materials and distribute plan and other support materials
 - iii. Develop press releases on MRCC events and accomplishments as required
 - iv. Work with MRCC to distribute and update Community Transportation Directory to regional human service and transportation providers and the public

- v. Prior to general distribution of this directory, the MRCC, in coordination with neighboring regions, will:
 - 1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the directory and make necessary modifications
 - 2. Develop a plan for public distribution of the directory
- vi. Develop a presentation to deliver to communities that effectively communicates the importance and need for coordinating and improving community transportation
- vii. Inform taxpayers and legislators on the need for preserving existing funding streams for community transportation
- viii. Develop educational resources for taxpayers and legislators that inform them about the gap in community transportation funding

Goal II: Improve and maintain governing framework

Objectives for Goal II:

- a. Review governing documents as needed
- b. Nominate and vote for MRCC officers annually
- c. Review standing committee structure as needed
- d. Improve internal MRCC communication mechanism as needed
- e. Develop outreach to key stakeholders who are not yet MRCC members as needed
- f. Review process for communicating with the State Coordinating Council and its subcommittees, neighboring RCCs, and the MAST as needed
- g. Improve evaluation process for prioritizing service delivery as needed
- h. Define the role of lead agency and identify a lead agency for administering FTA 5310 funds or other revenue sources as needed
- i. Update streamlined, standardized framework for data collection, reporting, and dissemination as a tool to document met and unmet needs as needed
- j. Re-evaluate goals and accomplishments at the end of each fiscal year as well as evaluate the existing mission and vision statement

Goal III: Develop new funding sources and continue to maintain existing funding streams

Objectives for Goal III:

- a. Continue to apply for 5310 funding from NH DOT
- b. Find or create resources to educate and train participating MRCC members
 - i. Help providers understand and comply with NH DOT contract requirements
 - ii. Inform members on developments regarding the 5310 funding and other possible funding available through NH DOT
 - iii. Inform members on available federal, state, or private funding opportunities
- c. Examine ways to identify and leverage local, state, and federal funding and encourage joint pursuits of funding among MRCC stakeholders.
- d. Work with SCC and state officials to increase funding flexibility in order to expand services.
- e. Continue to fund public transportation service.
- f. Continue to fund on-demand transportation service for persons age 60 and older and persons with disabilities
- g. Continue to fund and enhance transportation service for access to employment, education and training
- h. Continue to fund the development of ridesharing services
- i. Inform taxpayers and legislators on the need for preserving existing funding streams for community transportation

- j. Develop educational resources for taxpayers and legislators that inform them about the gap in community transportation funding
- k. Explore use of 5304 funds or other sources of funding to evaluate expansions or new services in the region
- l. Develop sources of funds at the local level
- m. Continue to explore intercity bus funding to connect adjacent regions
- n. Work with MRCC transportation providers to apply for collaborative grants or other funding sources

Goal IV: Implement regional coordination activities

Objectives for Goal IV:

- a. Evaluate information collected during the MRCC's evolution to integrate into the ongoing implementation of the Coordinated Plan.
- b. Adopt tools, methods, and standardized data collection parameters recommended by SCC to document unmet community transportation needs
- c. Establish improved long distance medical ride service
- d. Establish standards of operations for all participating service providers
- e. Continue HCS' travel training program with human service providers and encourage HCS to share best practices and lessons learned through this program with MRCC and neighboring RCCs
- f. Assess the current level of coordination and reach consensus on short, medium and long-term coordination steps that are consistent with SCC guidance
 - i. Short term: Create plan of easy to accomplish coordination activities
 - 1. Update and disseminate a centralized directory of community transportation resources for use by customers and service providers
 - 2. Develop opportunities to create one-stop access for information for customers including but not limited to the establishment of a website
 - 3. Form a shared training curriculum for service providers
 - 4. Establish a shared policy on vehicle specifications among service providers
 - ii. Medium term
 - 1. Establish minimum operating standards for transportation providers
 - 2. Integrate volunteer driver programs into regional coordination efforts
 - 3. Define Regional Transportation Coordinator roles and responsibilities
 - iii. Long term
 - 1. Foster a customer-oriented perspective among purchasing entities, transportation providers and human service agencies
 - 2. Make sharing resources possible through adoption of minimum operating standards
 - 3. Help providers understand and implement cost-allocation and billing guidelines needed to fully coordinate transportation services