

GOFERR
Stakeholders Advisory Committee
Written Responses
As of May 18, 2020

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Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program Answers to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

Organization: **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program**

PO Box 1182

North Conway, NH 03860

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- (1) Please identify your position and your organization.

Mary Carey Seavey - Director

- (2) Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.

Non-Profit Sector

- (3) Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by COVID-19.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the non-profit sector. With the Covid-19 pandemic, conversations about non-profit sustainability have now turned to conversations about their survivability. The following are some examples of how the non-profit sector has been impacted by Covid-19:

(A) Closures and recommendations to keep to groups of 10 or less have impacted the fundraisers that non-profits, resulting in lost revenue to support the non-profit.

(B) Layoffs.

(C) Suspension of services.

- (4) Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months by COVID-19

Carroll County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will be impacted over the next 12 months by Covid-19 as follows:

(A) Loss of major revenue from fundraiser events. RSVP relies heavily on fundraising events to keep our programs running.

(B) RSVP has over 400 volunteers in Carroll County New Hampshire. Most of our volunteers are 65 and older, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Most of RSVP's volunteers are paying attention to recommendations from local

public health departments and taking action to reduce their exposure to COVID-19. The RSVP staff and RSVP Advisory Council members are making routine wellness checks on our volunteers. As part of RSVP's wellness checks we make sure that our volunteers have adequate supplies of food and routine medications, like medicine for blood pressure and diabetes, and household supplies in case you need to remain at home.

- (C) **RSVP has a Volunteer Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program. This program is vital for Carroll County's ambulatory seniors who are 60 and over, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who have no other means of transportation. Many of our RSVP volunteer drivers that give of their time, vehicle, and energy to help these clients get the medical care they need to stay healthy are presently adhering to the governor's stay-home order. RSVP is continually seeking new volunteers during this COVID-19 pandemic to keep program in place. All volunteer drivers are eligible for mileage reimbursement and extended insurance coverage.**
- (D) **RSVP also has a Meals on Wheels Volunteer Driver Program. Like the Volunteer Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program, our Meals on Wheels drivers are adhering to the governor's stay-home order. RSVP is continually seeking new volunteers during this COVID-19 pandemic to keep program in place. All volunteer drivers are eligible for mileage reimbursement and extended insurance coverage.**

- (5) Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

RSVP does apply for charitable grant funding on a regular basis. We also receive some federal and state grant funding, and support from Carroll County. RSVP has not received any funds specifically intended to help address COVID-19 impacts. RSVP could definitely use funds covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

- (6) Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible, an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:
 - (a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.
Funds received would definitely serve a public use and provide a public benefit,

including RSVP's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program and Meals on Wheels Drivers Program.

- (b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.
- (c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.
- (e) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.

Even while RSVP is facing certain reductions in funding and volunteers, we continue our efforts to provide non-emergency medical transportation both locally and long-distance to clients throughout Carroll County. We also continue to support (6) Meals on Wheels sites in Carroll County with volunteer drivers to deliver meals to individuals aged 60 years and older and those younger than 60 but homebound and unable to provide nutritious meals for themselves. Caregivers and spouses of recipients are also eligible. Both of these programs are a critically important component to our local response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (f) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.
 - (g) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.
 - (h) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.
- (7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.

Public Relief Funds received will be recorded under COVID-19 Public Relief Funds

- (8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.

RSVP will follow all Terms and Conditions for Provider Relief Fund Distributions, so the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.

- (9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.

Bald Peak Community Fund, Connie Watson Davis Foundation, Cogswell Benevolent Trust, Granite United Way, NH Charitable Foundation, Rotary Club of North Conway, Skrungloo Farm, Inc., The Gibson/Woodbury Gibson Charitable Foundation all have important impacts on RSVP. Carroll County and NHDOT also have important impacts on RSVP. All of these entities might benefit from public relief funds.

- (10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?

RSVP volunteers presently support (5) food pantries in Carroll County, (9) Meals on Wheels sites in Carroll County, (6) Non-Emergency Medical sites in Carroll County, (3) Bone Builder Programs in Carroll County, (2) hospitals, (3) nursing homes, (3) congregate meal sites, (3) libraries, and 68 Hour of Hunger. If a non-profit or government agency reached out to RSVP for support, we would entertain supporting them, but we are not proactively looking for other agencies to support.

- (11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?

With the governor's stay-home order many individuals could benefit from program offered through local TV Stations, like Valley Vision TV-1301 in North Conway, NH.

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

Thank you for agreeing to provide information to assist the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board (“SAB”). Your contribution is critically important to allow the SAB perform its purpose of developing recommendations to the GOFERR for the allocation and expenditure of federal Covid-19 emergency funds to address fundamental needs of the State of New Hampshire.

Because the Covid-19 crisis has impacted almost everyone and every institution across New Hampshire, SAB expects to gather a substantial amount of information from many sources. In order to accomplish this task effectively and efficiently, SAB requests that all persons who submit information (including those persons who are scheduled to provide oral comments before a SAB meeting) please follow these guidelines.

The SAB is hopeful that many interested persons will submit information and ideas on how the State can best allocate federal emergency relief funds. We plan to read all comments, and for those who make oral presentations to the SAB, we intend to ask questions based on the written submissions.

There is no particular format for the comments, and but we request that you focus your comments as efficiently as possible, and try to limit the number of pages to less than 10.

In order to help the SAB members to the greatest extent possible, we request that you try to address each of the information items listed below. The SAB members have identified these information items as highly relevant to their overall task. While some commenters are likely to provide additional information, and others may not be able to address each item, we request that you try to address the following items in your submission:

(1) Please identify your position and your organization.

Jeff Donald, Community Transportation Manager at the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation. I am the lead staff person for the Alliance for Community Transportation (Regional Coordination Council #10).

(2) Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.

COAST and ACT operate within the nonprofit transportation sector. While COAST serves all residents, ACT’s focus is community transportation serving older adults and adults with disabilities. ACT’s service area includes Strafford County, eastern Rockingham County, Wakefield, and Brookfield, as defined by the State.

(3) Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by Covid-19.

Transportation providers have constrained ridership while they work to purchase equipment and develop policies and procedures around sanitizing their vehicles and ensuring the health and safety of their drivers and riders. Providers have had to

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purchase PPE for drivers, install barriers in their vehicles, and contract with vehicle sanitizers. Some transportation providers have transitioned from bringing riders to the grocery store to delivering pre-made meals. TripLink, the regional call center, has transitioned to working from home. One new laptop was purchased, and a second laptop will be needed if working from home continues. TripLink is also considering the purchase of a new software tool that will allow a staff member's computer to be used for radio dispatching.

Providers who are funded by FTA Section 5310 operate under purchased transportation contracts so limited service translates into a reduction in funding. These providers still need to cover their fixed costs during this period. Some agencies have also continued to pay staff to ensure their continued availability when services resume.

In Region 10, a volunteer driver program generates the local noncash match for purchased transportation as part of a pool. Their reduction in services has led to insufficient noncash match to leverage FTA 5310 grant funds. This problem is expected to affect the region for the remainder of the State's fiscal year and through the better part of SFY21.

(4) Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months by Covid-19.

The costs of vehicle sanitization will become the new normal for providing services. While those with no other options will again use community transportation, it is unclear if others will forego medical treatment or avoid shopping out of fear of getting sick because of riding the bus or going out into public spaces. If noncash support is unavailable to be used as local match to FTA grant funds, agencies will be pushed to seek additional municipal support at a time when towns will be looking to cut their budgets. Public fundraising efforts will be challenged by growing competition due to an increased need for social services and supports.

(5) Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

The CARES Act loosened restrictions on how FTA 5307 and 5311 funds could be spent. However, these changes did not extend to FTA 5310 funding. If Congress allowed 5310 funds to be spent with the same exemptions for local match, it would help community transportation providers significantly. Additional 5310 funding to cover the costs of

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adapting how services are provided is also warranted. It is unclear if Congress will act.

(6) Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible, an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:

CARES Act funding in Region 10 would help to offset the current lack of noncash match that allows COAST and its partner agencies, Ready Rides, Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels, and Strafford CAP use to leverage FTA 5310 funding. Region 10 is expected to be short \$4,500 in noncash match for the last quarter of SFY20. ACT has budgeted \$50,628 in pooled noncash for SFY21 to support these agencies. If FTA 5310 funds were allowed to be used at a 100%, such as has been allowed under FTA 5307 and 5311 programs, any local match shortfalls would be able to be overcome, assuming adequate FTA 5310 funding levels.

ACT has received \$5,000 grants annually from both Exeter Hospital and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital for the last three years. Given the pandemic's impact on the health care sector, we are unsure of the hospitals' continued support of our work in the coming years.

ACT's estimated need to replace noncash match and hospital grants is \$26,500 in SFY21.

(a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.

The funds will be used to serve nonprofit transportation providers and coordinators operating under existing State and Federal contracts to serve older adults and adults with disabilities. Community transportation contributes to the public health by ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to regular medical care, grocery shopping, and congregate meals. Keeping our vulnerable populations healthy will help to limit the severe demands currently being placed on our health care system.

(b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.

The funds will support the continued provision of transportation services that allow older adults and adults with disabilities to access medical care, go grocery shopping, and participate in society.

(c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.

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The funds will support drivers, cleaners, dispatchers, and other transportation support staff, and will allow riders to shop at local businesses.

- (e) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.**

Transportation providers are a part of our community's infrastructure and must be maintained throughout this crisis. Supporting these agencies now will leave them better prepared for the next crisis as they upgrade equipment and procedures.

- (f) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.**

The use of funds is consistent with local and regional development plans and relevant laws.

- (g) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.**

The funds will primarily benefit the older adults and adults with disabilities who rely on community transportation services.

- (h) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.**

The funds will support agencies as they add equipment to make their vehicles safer or allow staff to work remotely. Except in the case of some software expenditures, these will not be ongoing costs. Funding will also be used to cover a temporary shortage of local match.

- (7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.**

COAST is the fiscal agent for ACT and its financial statements are audited annually the Federal Transit Administration. COAST will report the receipt and use of any funds as required by the FTA.

- (8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.**

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As a federal, state, and local funds recipient, and the fiscal agent for ACT, COAST has extensive experience with public reporting on the receipt and use of public funds. Also, as a former ARRA grant recipient we have demonstrated our ability to respond to a rapidly changing public reporting environment.

- (9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.**

Some of ACT member agency's most important revenue streams include the communities that they serve and the philanthropic sector that supports nonprofit work.

The concern for the need of assistance for the state's communities has been expressed. The sheer size of the assistance needed will take some time to determine and will potentially be longer in duration than any of us would like to think. New Hampshire's communities will need extensive assistance to weather this unprecedented pandemic.

As the economy contracts and the nonprofit sector is asked to do much more, the philanthropic sector will be constrained in its ability to fully respond to the growing needs of nonprofits. This will challenge not be overcome in a few months' time.

- (10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?**

Emergency relief funds will allow ACT and its partners to purchase PPE, modify their vehicles without having to reduce service for their vulnerable clients. Supporting community transportation so that it can function at its full capacity will make a direct contribution to the public health and wellbeing.

Providing financial support that allows transportation providers to adapt to the current public health crisis means that they, and their clients, will be better able to weather future challenges.

- (11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?**

* * * * *

SAB anticipates that its members will be reaching out to diverse interests and persons to request submission of comments, and we thank you in advance for considering these requests. We are all in this together, New Hampshire!

**Guidelines for Written Comments
to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board**

Please check the GOFERR website for current information on how to submit comments. All recommendations and information submitted in response to this request will be available for public inspection and copying in their entirety. For further information, please contact Joe Doiron at the GOFERR offices.

Written Comments
to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board
Greater Salem Caregivers

Thank you for agreeing to provide information to assist the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board ("SAB"). Your contribution is critically important to allow the SAB perform its purpose of developing recommendations to the GOFERR for the allocation and expenditure of federal Covid-19 emergency funds to address fundamental needs of the State of New Hampshire.

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There is no particular format for the comments, and but we request that you focus your comments as efficiently as possible, and try to limit the number of pages to less than 10.

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(1) Please identify your position and your organization.

Richard O'Shaughnessy, Executive Director, Greater Salem Caregivers

(2) Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.

Non-profit special needs transportation, volunteer senior services

(3) Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by Covid-19.

Our organization provides rides and other services for older adults through a corps of dedicated volunteers. We made a decision to ask our drivers their comfort level as to driving during the pandemic. We had to also keep in mind that most of our drivers are retired and older. As such, the pandemic would have a greater impact on them. Our usual pool of volunteer drivers totals 40-50 people. Since early April this number has dwindled to four (4) as many volunteers have stepped back out of concern for their own health of that of a family member.

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Greater Salem Caregivers

At the same time, requests for rides have dropped off dramatically. The doctors are not seeing patients and in some cases are doing only telephone medical visits. (Our older clients are not adept at Zoom).

We have remained open for business. It is imperative that we take people to dialysis, blood work, shopping and errands. We are also helping out delivering food from the food pantries. Our rides from March to April were cut in half from 129 to 68.

(4) Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months by Covid-19.

Greater Salem Caregivers budget for 2020 is \$96,000, of which \$8500 comes from FTA Section 5310 dollars through the Greater Derry-Salem Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (Region 9 RCC). Normally other Caregivers revenue comes from municipal contributions (\$19,000), donations (\$18,500) and the poker room in Salem (\$50,000). Client and community donations are down by over 50% since the beginning of stay at home orders. Poker room contributions are anticipated to be down due to extended closure. Normally we receive contributions from the Poker Room in Salem reflecting a share of ten days proceeds. This typically represents approximately \$50,000 per year. With extended closures and economic pressure on individuals and households we anticipate this revenue will be down significantly this year. We have also been put on notice by the two towns we serve (Salem and Pelham) that municipal contributions may not be forthcoming due to reduced tax revenues and increased costs to the towns. In short, the Caregivers could see the loss of \$40,000 to \$50,000 in revenue over the next 12 months.

(5) Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

We did apply for and receive an \$11,800 Payroll Protection Program Loan through the Federal Government. This may or may not have to be paid back.

(6) Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible,

**Written Comments
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Greater Salem Caregivers**

an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:

Greater Salem Caregivers operates on a budget of \$96,000 a year. The office is open five days a week and we are accessible 24/7 by phone or email. The \$8500 in FTA Section 5310 funding that we receive is the most reliable of our funding sources. The municipal, gaming industry and client donation portions of our budget are all likely to decline significantly for a period of 1-2 years as towns and people get back on their feet financially. Public funds would help with salary, office and administrative expenses such as insurance, rent, phone, computer and supplies. An estimate of assistance needed to continue services assuming shortfalls from these sources would be \$50,000. If this funding were provided through the FTA Section 5310 program we should be able to match the federal funding with in-kind volunteer hours as ride request ramp back up.

(a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.

Greater Salem Caregivers is a Section 501c3 non-profit organization that is currently a recipient of FTA Section 5310 funding. We provide critical transportation services to older adults and adults with disabilities in Salem and Pelham.

(b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.

The funds will support transportation services that allow older adults and adults with disabilities to access medical care, go grocery shopping, and otherwise maintain contact with the communities where they live.

(c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.

The funds will support Caregivers drivers and the two administrative staff that recruit, train and coordinate drivers, and schedule and dispatch rides. Continuation of service will also allow our riders to support local businesses in meeting their basic life needs.

(e) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.

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Greater Salem Caregivers

Our concern is that in the absence of supplemental funding to backfill anticipated losses in municipal and community contributions, Greater Salem Caregivers will be unable to continue. We provide a critical part of Salem's transportation services, dovetailing with the CART transit system. Caregivers operates outside of CART hours and takes riders to destinations not served by CART.

- (f) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.**

Use of requested supplemental funding would not conflict with any local, regional or statewide plans or laws.

- (g) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.**

The requested funds are critical to maintaining Caregivers' services to older adults and adults with disabilities in our service area. Caregivers is a non-profit organization and all revenues go directly to service.

- (h) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.**

Caregivers has been effective for many years in generation municipal and private support in our service communities. We anticipate returning to this sustainable funding model following a transition period during which towns, business and individuals get back on their feet from the COVID19 disruption. Requested funds are intended to stabilize the organization during the remainder of shutdown and this transition period.

- (7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.**

The Greater Salem Caregivers keep detailed financial records. We have a CPA who does our taxes and files our federal and state reports. We have a Board Treasurer who is a CPA. We have a very skilled book keeper. We do our payroll though an outside agency. They do payroll and provide tax reports. Our internal book keeping is done with Quick Books and supplemented with Excel. Monthly reports are given to the Board of Directors and yearly reports to the State of New Hampshire and the towns of Salem and Pelham.

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to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board
Greater Salem Caregivers

- (8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.**

Any reports, questions or inquiries are readily available and could be provided instantly by computer, fax or mail.

- (9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.**

While the State of New Hampshire does not provide funds to the Salem Caregivers directly, we do receive federal funds (approximately \$8,500) through the NH DOT and the Greater Derry-Salem Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (RCC) in the form of a grant to help the Caregivers recruit volunteers to provide assistance to the elderly and disabled in Salem and Pelham.

- (10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?**

If we do not receive supplementary funds to replace our current funding sources, then in one or two years our funds would be depleted and we would cease to exist. The funds would help to tide us over until the economy recovers and we could return to normal.

- (11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?**

Demographically, New Hampshire is second or third in the nation with the oldest population. It is also growing in number. More and more, this age group is receiving medical help from an increasing variety of specialists. This means more visits and more tests. With the exception of the cities and a few of the larger towns, public transportation is nonexistent and, in many places, older people depend on volunteer, self-funding, low budget organizations like the Caregivers to provide the transportation that they need.

Written Comments
to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board
Greater Salem Caregivers

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(1) Please identify your position and your organization.

Steve Goodspeed, Ready Rides Treasurer. We are supported by COAST in Region 10.

(2) Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.

Ready Rides volunteer drivers provide rides at no cost to seniors and those with disabilities to medical appointments for residents of nine rural towns in region 10.

(3) Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by Covid-19.

In March Ready Rides suspended trips except for high priority medically necessary trips such as dialysis treatments. In addition, we began offering pickup of prescriptions and groceries for those in needs even though those trips are not reimbursable under our current contract. Our fixed costs have remained relatively constant. At our April Board of Directors meeting we approved paying our one part time Ride Coordinator the equivalent of 100 hours of work per month plus a temporary \$500/month supplement. In April her actual hours decreased from 100 to under 50. As part of our contract with

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COAST we receive \$10/trip to fund our fixed costs. The average number of trips per month runs over 200 so we typically receive in excess of \$2,000 for those trips. In April we only completed 17 trips so the fixed rate reimbursement will only be \$170. We are unsure when we will resume a full service again with that decision being made monthly based on guidance from the NH Governor and approval from our Board of Directors.

We service nine rural towns where food pantries make up a large part of assistance to those in need. With the national shutdown and substantial layoffs food insecurity is a pressing issue. Ready Rides has approved and donated \$500 to each town pantry and \$1000 to End 68 hours of Hunger. Those donations were unbudgeted and not reimbursed as part of our ride contract. Future donations may be considered.

(4) Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months by Covid-19.

At this point it is unclear how the recovery of ride volume will occur. Our drivers tend to be older citizens and fear of contracting Covid19 will weigh heavily on their decision to resume providing volunteer trips. We expect some pent-up demand for trips as routine medical care has been deferred but not eliminated. In addition, many of our riders also are very concerned about contracting Covid19 and may be slow to resume requests for trips. Historically we have been able to meet over 95% of all ride requests. We expect the pent-up demand and safety concerns will cause a high number of Unmet needs until a new normal is established.

We have yet to establish sanitation protocols and to provide PPE and sanitation products to our drivers. There are some costs associated with this but a major concern is availability of sanitation products in the near term and this may also delay our ability to provide everything needed to resume service to our drivers and riders.

We are concerned about the liability to Ready Rides for any driver or rider who may contract Covid19 that could be associated with providing transportation. Our ability to prescreen drivers and riders to ensure safe trips will also need to be established and implemented as part of the ride request process.

(5) Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

All of our funding from the federal government comes from 5310 funding. Our yearly contract specifies how the funding is provided and was based on our historical service level of providing about 250 trips per month. With a steep decline in the monthly trip count we will receive a lower reimbursement to cover our fixed costs.

We receive a substantial amount of funding from the nine towns we serve. For calendar year 2020 that funding was approved at March town meetings and we do not expect any changes to the funding that was approved. Depending on the economic squeeze to towns in the next 6-9 months there could be funding impacts in calendar year 2021.

- (6) Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible, an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:**

The CARES Act loosened restrictions on how FTA 5307 and 5311 funds could be spent. However, these changes did not extend to FTA 5310 funding. If Congress allowed 5310 funds to be spent with the same exemptions for local match, it would help community transportation providers significantly. Additional 5310 funding to cover the costs of adapting how services are provided is also warranted. It is unclear if Congress will act.

- (a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.**

Any funds directed to Ready Rides, a 501(c) (3), will be used to continue the ride services we perform. Those funds would be used to cover any shortfall in funding we do not receive under our current contract.

Any additional contributions to food pantries will not come from any CARE Act funding. It will continue to come for our general funds.

- (b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.**

The funds will support the continued provision of transportation services that allow older adults and adults with disabilities to access medical care. We will continue in the near term to provide pickup of prescriptions and groceries which is outside of our current contract.

- (c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.**

The funds will support the Ride Coordinator and costs associated for driver/rider safety and vehicle sanitation.

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

- (e) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.**

Transportation providers are a part of our community's infrastructure and must be maintained throughout this crisis. Supporting these agencies now will leave them better prepared for a recovery as the economy opens up or dealing with a second wave of infections.

- (f) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.**

The use of funds is consistent with local and regional development plans and relevant laws.

- (g) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.**

The funds will primarily benefit the older adults and adults with disabilities who rely on community transportation services.

- (h) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.**

Funding will also be used to cover a temporary shortage of local match.

- (7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.**

COAST is the fiscal agent for ACT and its financial statements are audited annually the Federal Transit Administration. Ready Rides will report the receipt and use of any funds as required by COAST.

- (8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.**

Ready Rides will track and report any receipt of public funds. We currently can track those receipts and expenditures in our monthly financial reports with QuickBooks

- (9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide**

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.

As the economy contracts and the nonprofit sector is asked to do much more, the philanthropic sector will be constrained in its ability to fully respond to the growing needs of nonprofits. This will challenge not be overcome in a few months' time.

(10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?

Supporting community transportation so that it can function at its full capacity will make a direct contribution to the public health and wellbeing.

Providing financial support that allows transportation providers to adapt to the current public health crisis means that they, and their clients, will be better able to weather future challenges.

(11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?

* * * * *

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

Thank you for agreeing to provide information to assist the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board (“SAB”). Your contribution is critically important to allow the SAB perform its purpose of developing recommendations to the GOFERR for the allocation and expenditure of federal Covid-19 emergency funds to address fundamental needs of the State of New Hampshire.

Because the Covid-19 crisis has impacted almost everyone and every institution across New Hampshire, SAB expects to gather a substantial amount of information from many sources. In order to accomplish this task effectively and efficiently, SAB requests that all persons who submit information (including those persons who are scheduled to provide oral comments before a SAB meeting) please follow these guidelines.

The SAB is hopeful that many interested persons will submit information and ideas on how the State can best allocate federal emergency relief funds. We plan to read all comments, and for those who make oral presentations to the SAB, we intend to ask questions based on the written submissions.

There is no particular format for the comments, and but we request that you focus your comments as efficiently as possible, and try to limit the number of pages to less than 10.

In order to help the SAB members to the greatest extent possible, we request that you try to address each of the information items listed below. The SAB members have identified these information items as highly relevant to their overall task. While some commenters are likely to provide additional information, and others may not be able to address each item, we request that you try to address the following items in your submission:

- (1) Please identify your position and your organization.

I am the Executive Director of the Rockingham Nutrition and Meals on Wheels Program, an agency that provides senior luncheons, home delivery of meals to adults in need; transportation for older adults, wellness checks, and other support services to help older adults and temporarily or permanently homebound adults maintain their health, and independence.

- (2) Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.

We are a nonprofit 501c3 organization that operates in the social services, food, meals and transportation sector.

- (3) Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by Covid-19.

Covid-19 has necessitated shelter at home, social distancing, frequent sanitation; to slow the spread and infection rate of the virus. This has impacted our transportation

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services, and community luncheons very negatively. Community luncheons have been converted to home delivery or in a few places, grab and go.

Transportation continued on a much smaller scale, was stopped for several weeks, during April when the height of the pandemic was predicted, and we are slowly reopening ridership in the next couple of weeks. We normally provide over 1400 rides per month. With Covid-19 in April, we provided 116 rides. Buses, depreciation, staff, insurance, and more remain. Including with Covid-19 special cleanings. And transportation is a basic service, often well used, and much needed in living.

Our home delivery program for meals has exploded, as now also eligible are older people who are sheltering at home.

- (4) Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months by Covid-19.

I will stick to transportation here on out, as the boom of home delivery meals, and the bust of congregate meals, is being figured out, in different ways.

I predict our organization, regarding transportation, being impacted poorly over the next 12 months by Covid-19 as

- 1) Covid-19 issues are still occurring, and the time when this will be much better managed is not known, especially for the short term.
- 2) The clients we serve are in the highest risk group.
- 3) The virus is very transferrable.
- 4) Alternative ways to handle some of the tasks usually managed with transportation have surfaced during the pandemic, and until people can be more assured of their health safety, transportation is not likely to return to normal levels
- 5) We as providers are challenged with bus cleanings, spacing, and more so that it is not easy to simply open up again
- 6) Without riders at normal levels, income generated by rides, donations, funding, all fall way short of even just the infrastructure of transporting.

- (5) Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.

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Not that I know of for transportation.

The Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services from the NH Department of Health and Human Services has allowed us to draw down funds with people days or “Effective retroactively back to March 18, 2020 contracted Title IIIB Transportation providers who provide on demand shopping for and delivery of groceries and other basic needs are authorized to invoice for the delivery of those services at their current transportation rate while the state is under a Major Declaration Disaster.” A plan how this is to happen is to be submitted to the State and approved.

Although this may allow us to draw down some transportation funding that otherwise would be lost, it means setting up a new system, and new service, while trying to open up slowly some old ones, during a challenging time.

Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible, an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:

For Region 8& 9 Request in total \$41,000: \$25,272 to replace lost revenue from BEAS (Title IIIB funding) that forms the local match for their Section 5310-funded Derry-Londonderry and Hampstead Shuttle services. These services are provided under contract by the Manchester Transit Authority and represent over 6,100 trips per year to connect older adults to senior luncheon locations, grocery shopping, and medical appointments. These shuttle services are continuing to operate to get older adults to medical appointments, though ridership is down significantly.

Because BEAS allocates Title IIIB funding on the basis of “person days”, this loss of ridership results in inadequate Title IIB match to operate the services. Support equivalent to a full year of match is requested based on an assumption that even if services resume this summer vulnerable populations will continue to be reticent to travel unless absolutely necessary, and the likelihood of a resurgence of the virus next fall and winter.

Also, passenger donations are down, Town funding is down, fixed costs to maintain the infrastructure of an essential service continue, additional costs are incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the long period of the pandemic exacerbates all, and with no clear idea when the pandemic is contained, there can be no return to normal in the near future.

We are also experiencing issues with our greater Plaistow shuttle, which is also in this region. In this case, we own and operate the vehicle, and perform the service. This vehicle is also closely connected with the local community center which has been shut down. Ridership due to Covid-19 containment practices have also decreased greatly here. We request \$15,728 for this area. We are also receiving a

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cutaway bus that will replace our current minivan, which increases our insurance costs, registration costs, gasoline costs, driver skill set and cost, and more.

For Region 10: For the ACT region \$30,000. In the Act region, we are also providing transportation for older adults that has been severely impacted. We have the same issues here, loss of Town funding, loss of BEAS person days, match for 5310, unknown end of the pandemic, need for additional costs for PPE; we have been special cleaning the vehicles already. We operate three vehicles in the ACT region.

- (a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.

The funds serve a public use, transportation, and provide a public benefit, mobility of a population at risk of decreased or lost mobility.

- (b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.

The ability for a significant sector of the population to maintain their mobility is a win win for the whole community; as local businesses get more customers, this population segment is able to live longer at home and in their communities; stabilizes the property tax base; all promoting the general welfare of the state's citizen's.

- (c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.

Our transportation of this population is primarily to senior luncheons, grocery shopping, pharmacy shopping, sometimes employment, medical appointments, and more. These are economic and social activities. A number of riders also volunteer at our centers, so preserving transportation for them to get to volunteer activities bolster the economies. Having transportation available for older adults also decreases the number of single vehicles on the road, and increases safety. As one passenger noted, "I was able to give up my car, thanks to the RNMOW Shuttle. "

- (d) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.

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RNMOW has been in operation for 42 years. For a good number of years now, we have also been members of the Regional Coordinating Councils for 2-3 areas of the State. We are working together to provide transportation in a coordinated efficient way. Much progress has been made.

Covid-19 has particularly impacted the mobility sector in a negative way. Consider the bailout of the airlines. Public transport in NH has been slower to come into being, and to being supported in this State. Therefore, it is more fragile than in other States. Stabilizing it, helping it to weather this Covid-19 pandemic, will do much to maintaining many excellent coordinated work being done in this state for transportation. Plus, with looming climate changes issues as well, public transportation has a huge role to play now and in the future in sustainable livable communities.

- (e) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.

It is not.

- (f) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.

Yes, as a 5013c we are a community service provider, and in our case, of basic needs like nutrition and mobility for groceries, medical appointments, and the like.

- (g) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.

Covid-19 is hopefully a one time, although it looks to be rather a long time onetime event; that has had huge impact. This use of funds will be consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds.

- (7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.

We already have management and fiscal practices in place that appropriately track and report on the use of Federal/state and other funds. We easily can separate out and track public relief funds and account for them in our organization's financial statements.

We are annually audited, are in compliance, and have been for years, with systems that reflect and show accountability, transparency, and performance.

We are annually audited in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the US and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in the Government

Guidelines for Written Comments to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board

Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our audit also includes a report on compliance for each major federal program. We received an unmodified opinion on our financial statements, with no significant deficiencies, no instances of noncompliance, compliance for the major federal award programs.

- (8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.

We have contracts with the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, a relationship with the CFI Medicaid Waiver for home and community living; and more demonstrating that we are used to, comfortable with, and have been in compliance with the reporting requirements of these two State bodies, and other funders.

- (9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.

The requests through the Regional Coordinating Councils reflect other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on us.

- (10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?

We cannot currently draw down the traditional funds for transportation as, due to Covid-19, shelter at home; social distancing, has seriously decreased the number of riders, for good reason.

What these funds will allow is for us to support the infrastructure, the drivers, the insurance, and keep it all available and going until ridership returns to normal. The particularly hard part about Covid-19 is the unknown and the time involved already.

- (11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?

So much has been impacted, for everyone, worldwide, because Covid-19 kills a good number of people, and can seriously sicken many others.

Something I have noticed during this pandemic is what counts, and what people value. So many have had to live with fear of the pandemic, radically decreased mobility, issues about grocery shopping, isolation, decreased socialization; getting sick, getting others sick through transmission; hygiene, safety.....

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Lots of underpaid employment positions are reflected in what people care and value. People care about and value who is looking out for their loved ones in nursing homes, in social services, in day cares. Mobility is highly valued. So to my mind, and not to go too long here, basic services like public transportation, meals on wheels, education, health care, grocery stores, police and firemen. These services and providers matter.

I hope as time passes and some real solutions to the problems caused by Covid-19 come to fruition; that what mattered, and who was doing the work is remembered, and valued and paid more accordingly in society.

* * * * *

SAB anticipates that its members will be reaching out to diverse interests and persons to request submission of comments, and we thank you in advance for considering these requests. We are all in this together, New Hampshire!

Please check the GOFERR website for current information on how to submit comments. All recommendations and information submitted in response to this request will be available for public inspection and copying in their entirety. For further information, please contact Joe Doiron at the GOFERR offices.

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Jim Jalbert, Transit Representative
Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR)**

**FROM: Scott Bogle, Rockingham Planning Commission
Nate Miller, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission**

DATE: May 18, 2020

RE: Section 5310 Provider Emergency Needs for Greater Manchester & Greater Derry-Salem RCCs

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major unforeseen implications for providers of transportation services for older adults and individuals with disabilities in the Greater Manchester and Greater Derry-Salem regions and throughout New Hampshire. Providers have sought to continue offering rides for medical appointments and other essential trip types with modifications to protect both riders and staff. While some costs are reduced based on fewer service hours, many costs are fixed and expenses in certain areas are higher such as increased frequency of vehicle cleaning, purchasing personal protective equipment for drivers, and in some cases the need to offer pay bonuses to entice an adequate number of drivers to work with increased hazard of contracting COVID19. At the same time certain revenue streams tied to trip volume such as fares, donations, in-kind volunteer hours and Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) Title IIIB funding have been greatly reduced. Other revenue sources such as municipal funding are anticipated to decline in the aftermath/recovery period of the coming year. We ask the GOFERR to consider that, for the small non-profit organizations that provide Section 5310 services, any significant decrease in these revenues threatens the viability of services and even solvency of the organizations themselves. The following attached request forms describe the needs for two agencies that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funding through the Region 8/9 Regional Coordinating Council (Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels and Greater Salem Caregivers), while the section below offers several broader policy recommendations for use of Section 5310 and Title IIIB funding during the COVID19 related shutdown and reopening/recovery.

Policy Recommendations for Section 5310 and Title IIIB Programs

While the CARES Act provided relief to urban and rural transit agencies receiving FTA Section 5307 and Section 5311 funding respectively, the Act did not provide relief for Section 5310 recipients which tend to be small non-profit organizations serving some of New Hampshire's most vulnerable citizens.

- Suspend match requirements for Section 5310 funds similar to CARES Act allowance that 5307 and 5311 funds appropriated under the Act may be used with a 100% FTA share. Certain projects in this and other RCC regions are dependent on in-kind hours from volunteers that are not being generated

during the pandemic, and as described above other sources of local match are likely to be reduced or lost due to COVID19.

- Allow access to Section 5310 funding even if services have been suspended or curtailed. This is critical to covering fixed costs and keeping drivers on staff to allow smooth service startup following the end of social distancing; and is consistent with CARES Act rules for Section 5307 and 5311.
- Temporarily modify BEAS reimbursement provisions for Older Americans Act Title IIIB transportation funding. Title IIIB funding is needed to keep critical services on the road, but reduced ridership keeps adequate funding from being available under the current “person days” reimbursement method.
- Authorize additional funding for expenses specific to COVID19 including PPE, vehicle modifications for driver safety, vehicle sanitation and expenses related to remote work (laptops, videoconference subscriptions, VPN setup) and hazard pay for drivers.
- Plan to increase Section 5310 allocations for a 1-2 year period following reopening recognizing that there will likely be reduced municipal support as local budgets tighten around the state.

If further information is needed regarding the needs described here please contact us at sbogle@therpc.org / 603-658-0515 or nmiller@snhpc.org / 603-669-4664.



May 18, 2020

Jim Jalbert, President
C&J Bus Lines
Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery
Re: 5310 Program CARES Act Funding Needs

Dear Mr. Jalbert:

Thank you on behalf of the Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC), for your interest in addressing the needs of New Hampshire's 5310 transit providers during the current COVID-19 crisis. As I'm sure you appreciate, our region's 5310 transit providers, the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) and the Nashua Transit System (NTS) have been impacted by increased costs associated with providing enhanced protections for employees and riders, reduced service and loss of revenue. The municipalities that contribute funding to community transportation providers are also under increased financial stress which could threaten future funding for these vital programs and the elderly and disabled residents that they serve.

Service limitations for SVTC and NTS paratransit riders coupled with the elimination of fixed-route NTS service and suspension of Nashua's bike and e-scooter share programs have exacerbated existing gaps in the region's transit and alternative transportation service. In addition, most volunteer driver programs have also cut or eliminated service. For the region's elderly, disabled, transit-dependent low-income and other disadvantaged populations, identifying appropriate and available transportation alternatives and navigating the process of qualifying for available services has become more daunting than ever.

To offset current and potential revenue losses for our region's 5310 transit providers, and to provide relief to contributing municipalities, we respectfully request financial assistance in the amounts of \$57,500 for SVTC and \$81,354 for NTS. A detailed summary of the financial needs of each agency is attached.

Further, to help overcome challenges in the delivery of community transportation services, we are requesting financial assistance to implement a new program to assist area residents in accessing services that remain available. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is seeking \$50,000 in funding to implement a three-year pilot one-stop ride-matching service for the region. The service would allow potential users to fill out a Rider Profile on-line or by phone to determine eligibility for differing transportation services based on age, physical ability, income, place of residence, medical needs, ride purpose, and other factors. Riders would then be

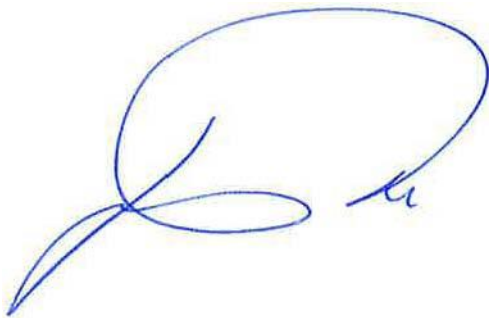
matched with appropriate transportation services. Further, users would be able to stay informed of service changes by checking the website, by email, social media, and other means. The proposed program is a priority of the recently adopted *Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Greater Nashua and Milford Region 2020-2024*.

Finally, the RCC is also seeking assistance for the nonprofit Gate City Bike Co-op. The Co-op utilizes volunteers to repair bikes for donation to low-income individuals. For recipients, these bikes are often the primary or only means of transportation, and with regular NTS fixed-route service suspended, the need is greater than ever. Due to the impact of COVID-19, however, the Co-op has had to close its Nashua location. Gate-City Co-op is seeking financial assistance in the amount of \$24,000 to resume its repair and distribution of bicycles while maintaining social distancing and maintaining both volunteer and recipient safety.

Thank you once again for your support for the transportation needs of some of our communities' most vulnerable residents. If you have any questions about any of these requests or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a smaller loop and a short horizontal stroke.

Jay Minkarah
Executive Director



Souhegan Valley Rides

*A curb-to-curb shared ride bus service
We get you there and back*

May 18, 2020

To: The GOEFERR Stakeholder's Advisory Committee

From: the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative

Re: 5310 Program CARES Act funding needs

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative's need for additional funding to address COVID-19 related challenges. Established in 2008, the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) is a grassroots volunteer-based non-profit organization of area citizens concerned about transportation options in the Souhegan Valley. SVTC's efforts represent proactive planning to provide community transit services that meet a current need and help our hometowns establish the groundwork to meet future needs.

SVTC subcontracts with the Nashua Transit System (NTS) to provide "Souhegan Valley Rides" - a "dial-a-ride" type demand response bus service available to residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon and Wilton NH. The focus for this service is on providing transportation to non-emergency health care appointments and other essential services, and on assisting those in greatest need – senior citizens, residents living with a disability, and other transit dependent populations. Rides to most destinations within the six towns and Nashua are available as scheduling allows, and other residents may use the service as space is available in the schedule

Using the format provided by your office, the following are our responses to the survey questions:

1. Carol Books, Chair SVTC Board of Directors and Janet Langdell, SVTC Mobility & Planning Manager
2. Transportation – Community/Public Transit
3. The Covid-19 pandemic has lead to plummeting ridership, loss of fare box revenue, stretching of limited financial resources, and skepticism among passengers and the general public about the safety of using public transportation. There has been a need to implement changes in vehicle scheduling and utilization to limit the number of passengers per vehicle in order to maximize social distancing.

Covid-19 precautions and restrictions have lead to increased costs for our transit provider in cleaning and sanitation expenses and costs for personal protective equipment for staff and drivers. These costs will more than likely extend beyond the next 12 months. We anticipate that our transit provider will experience additional expenses for modifications to the vehicles to better protect staff and passengers.

To fully fund our programs, 30-35% of SVTC's annual budget is derived from municipal contributions, fundraising activities, and grants and donations. Many of our annual fundraising opportunities have been canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of these events were scheduled for the summer and fall suggesting that others will also be canceled due to Covid-19 or by the threat of a second surge. SVTC has heard from local philanthropic organizations that they will be re-prioritizing their donations towards direct Covid-19 relief and that support for "general" operations may be limited or non-existent.

4. SVTC's services are funded by the FTA 5310 program administered by the NHDOT, municipal contributions, private donations, foundation grants and fundraising events. Currently, the federal and municipal funding sources are insufficient to cover the full cost of purchase of services, and SVTC relies on local philanthropy and fundraising to make-up that deficit. Up to now this formula has been very successful.

The upcoming and following year budget cycles, spanning the post lockdown and ensuing year of reopening and re-balancing, could be very problematic. Recently NHMA reported significant revenue and expense issues for the cities and towns due to Covid-19 and that is expected to be "long term and significant". Federal 5310 funding through NHDOT has been "flat funded" for two years and there is no indication that this will change in the next year. Already six of our "usual" annual fundraising opportunities have been canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and we anticipate that other events will also be canceled due to Covid-19 or by the threat of another Covid surge. SVTC has heard from local philanthropic organizations that they will be re-prioritizing their donations towards direct Covid-19 relief. For non-profits who rely on philanthropy for general service funding, even only on a limited basis, this news raises concerns about the immediate future and our ability to provide needed services in the upcoming year.

Going forward if we cannot accept cash for fares and do not have an alternative payment system appropriate for the populations we serve, then fares would need to be waived creating even more ongoing reduction in revenues or be supplemented through increasingly limited philanthropic avenues.

In addition, we have heard locally and read nationally that there is a perception circulating that public transportation is not safe to use due to potential exposure to the Covid-19 virus. Some have called this the "shunning of public transportation" and this has significant implications for future outreach and marketing efforts as we move forward in managing the ramifications of this pandemic. The full costs related to new outreach and marketing avenues are still unknown but for a simple six town marketing campaign the cost will easily be in the thousands of dollars.

SVTC has been put on notice by NTS that their purchase of services rate will be increasing next year and in the following year. With limited federal funding, stretched municipal budgets, and dwindling donation and fundraising opportunities the future looks daunting. CARES Act funding to assist with augmented outreach and immediate rising costs would be instrumental in helping us get over the Covid-19 hurdle and move forward to a more stable and sustainable service environment.

5. SVTC purchases public transportation services from the NTS. In calendar year 2019, residents of our six communities used 4600 trips to attend various healthcare appointments, buy groceries,

complete other essential appointments, and continue to participate in community life. In order to provide service NTS requires SVTC to contract and pay for a specific number of hours of service per month. Under the contract, even with decreased demand, SVTC is obligated to pay for service hours that may not be used by passengers but are required to secure the transit services. For March and April 2020 that requirement translated to payments for over 50% of contracted hours totaling nearly \$15,000. Fortunately, NTS was able to leverage CARES Act FTA funding to cover these costs but NTS will not be able to do this going forward.

Low ridership and decreased demand will continue for the foreseeable future due to Covid-19. But there will still be residents in need of transit assistance. In our area of New Hampshire there are very few options for rides – the informal friends and family when they are available; a taxi service that most of our passengers cannot afford on a regular basis; one volunteer driver program that is unable to meet all of the local demand due to a lack of volunteers and lack of handicapped accessible transposition; and us.

It will take some time, effort, and additional outreach to get ridership back up to “full steam”. Like so many other New Hampshire non-profits providing valuable community services, SVTC is scrambling in a tightened philanthropic environment to raise funds to cover current operations and the additional expenses projected to offset the impact of Covid-19.

Municipal budgets were set during the second week in March 2020. Given the current situation we would be unable to ask for more from these sources and it is possible that four of our towns could reduce their apportionments to SVTC due to their own Covid-19 funding challenges. Given that the Covid-19 impact on municipal finances is projected to reach into next year, funding for SVTC's 2021 – 2022 budget will be equally as challenging.

6. SVTC's programs and funding are focused on addressing community needs. Our mission is consistent with the purpose of 5310 funding in that we serve primarily senior citizens and residents living with a disability, and our goal is to improve mobility for these populations by removing barriers to transportation service and providing affordable, accessible transportation options. In addition to the ride service, SVTC provides mobility management, a non-governmental funded subsidized bus fare program to residents in greatest need, and coordinates its efforts with other community transportation providers in our area.

Continued availability of this service in the Souhegan Valley will assist transit-dependent residents who otherwise have insufficient alternatives. As the stay-at-home orders are lightened and businesses re-open, access to transportation will allow residents to get out to local businesses and resume some of their more “normal” activities. Access to rides has the potential to help offset some of the social isolation imposed by the Covid-19 situation which is especially important for the well-being of our older residents and those living with a disability.

We knew coming into 2020 that SVTC had a challenging two-year budget cycle ahead of us with rate increases, new contract requirements and little to no prospect of additional governmental funding. And this was before Covid-19. Additional funding now will allow us to revise our strategies and longer-term plans in order to continue to meet the needs of transit dependent populations residing in our six town service area and to be better positioned for the future.

SVTC's work is supported by the greater Nashua region's transportation development plans and by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

We would respectfully request funding to offset anticipated revenue shortfalls in the amount of \$57,500.

Revenue Source	Amount
Municipal Contract Relief	
Amherst	\$6,000
Brookline	\$4,000
Hollis	\$3,000
Milford	\$32,000
Mont Vernon	\$1,000
Wilton	\$2,000
COVID-19 Related Costs	
Mobility Management	\$3,500
Community Outreach	\$4,000
Subsidized Fare Program	\$2,000
Total	\$57,500


- 7-8. As with any special grants or funding, SVTC can specify a line item in our budget process for restricted funds to account for receipt and use of those funds. We are able to track costs by activity and program and generate a report thereof.
9. Community and public transportation providers throughout the State are facing the same or very similar challenges around public and personal safety, ridership and funding. Locally, SVTC foresees an opportunity to extend our collaboration with Friends In Service Helping (FISH) which provides a volunteer driver program.
10. The additional funds would allow us to implement a broad-based community outreach campaign in collaboration with our transit provider and other stakeholders to promote the use of community transportation. This would also be an opportunity for SVTC to work with Friends In Service Helping to promote volunteer driver participation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Carol Brooks, Chairperson SVTC Board of Directors



Janet Langdell, Mobility & Planning Manager

May 18, 2020

Dear GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Nashua Transit System's need for additional funding to address COVID-19, as we return to service and move forward. The following are our responses to the GOFERR Stakeholder Advisory Board survey questions:

1. Camille Pattison, Transportation Manager, City of Nashua. I oversee The Nashua Transit System (NTS).
2. General - Public services and transportation.
3. Nashua Transit System has seen a significant reduction in farebox and advertising revenue, and we anticipate this to continue for the next year. In addition, we have incurred additional costs in obtaining PPE, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer dispensers and installing temporary and permanent protective barriers on our fleet.
4. Transit agencies across the country will be facing decreased ridership and therefore revenue reductions over the next year and possibly longer. Many passengers will have continued concerns about safety, and in some cases this may influence riders to seek alternative transportation options, leading to a continued decreased in farebox revenue for the foreseeable future. Transit agencies will continue to see a decrease in advertising revenue as well, a key component of most agency's budgets. Another key component are the local contracts that NTS maintains to provide on-demand van service in eight neighboring communities. As ridership in these towns dips, it may be increasingly difficult for towns to continue contributing towards the cost of service.
5. NTS has received CARES Act funds to assist with the need for additional 5307 operating funds that we receive from the Federal Transit Administration. However many transit agencies also receive 5310 funds, as NTS does, and the CARES Act did not address this funding stream. NTS can use 5310 funds to provide paratransit services to disabled and elderly populations, including maintaining our van fleet.

Nashua Transit System will use 5310 funds to support public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and

individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate. Projects include the following:

- Vehicle Rehabilitation (repairs)
- Preventive Maintenance
- Parts
- Radios and Communication Equipment
- Vehicle wheelchair lifts, ramps and securement devices
- Computer hardware and software
- Dispatch systems – Routematch
- Passenger Facilities and Enhancements

6. The funds will assist NTS in balancing our budget for FY21 and continuing to provide paratransit service within Nashua and the greater region. NTS will continue providing a critical transportation service allowing residents of the region to access vital shopping, medical, employment and social service destinations.

NTS respectfully requests a total of \$81,354 to assist us in continuing service in FY21. This amount is based on an estimated reduction of 25% revenue with the Towns of Hudson and Merrimack, and a 75% reduction of Plus Company revenue due to decreased service demand. We anticipate an overall reduction in paratransit and advertising revenues, as well as an increase in costs for PPE, barriers, and cleaning supplies.

Funding Source	Total Annual Contract	Estimated Reduction on Funds	Funding Requested
Hudson	\$16,149	25%	\$4,037
Merrimack	\$38,866	25%	\$9,717
Plus Company	\$23,000	75%	\$16,100
Paratransit Farebox Revenue	\$38,000	50%	\$19,000
Advertising Revenue	\$30,000	75%	\$22,500
Extra Cleaning, supplies, barriers	\$10,000		\$10,000
Total	\$156,015		\$81,354

7. NTS would include a revenue line item for public relief funds in our budget and would keep a separate spreadsheet of expenditures allocated to this revenue line item.
8. The City of Nashua's financial system has the capacity to track costs by specific activity and function.
9. Overall the Transit Industry across the state will face significant challenges moving forward, including reduced farebox, reduced advertising revenue, reduced ridership, and less interest in public-private partnerships. Transit agencies are facing additional on-going costs to address COVID 19. These include increased frequency of cleaning either with additional staff or outside companies, cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment for staff and customers, hand sanitizing dispensers and protective barriers on vehicles. It will take time for all passengers to feel comfortable riding transit again, and in some cases people will find alternative forms of transportation.
10. These funds will allow NTS to negotiate reduced contract amounts, for FY21, with the Towns of Hudson and Merrimack, if ridership remains low. Additionally these funds will replace the loss of revenue from the Plus Company and advertising, allowing NTS to continue providing the same level of service that customers are accustomed too. Finally, additional funds will also allow us to easily provide hand sanitizer and protective barriers on our van fleet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Camille Pattison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Camille Pattison, AICP
Transportation Manager, City of Nashua
Nashua Transit System

C: file