

# Souhegan Valley Rides

Volume 2, Issue 1

December 2009

**Many thanks for your support in 2009!  
Best Wishes to all for health, happiness and success in 2010!**

*From the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative*

## *What would you do without reliable transportation?*

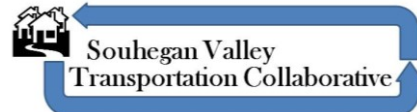
It's the season of hustle and bustle. To the bank, to the mall, to the post office, to the grocery store we go. For those of us with reliable transportation, the season means more traffic and congestion. But what about those without access to transportation?

The average American makes about 4 trips a day, which means that not having a vehicle or being unable to drive oneself interrupts a person's life on a daily basis. Though there's no way to wrap up independence and mobility, tie it with a bow, and put it under the tree, there is a way to help people get through their daily lives with more ease and accomplish essential tasks.

The answer? Community transportation. Large groups of people in every community, including the Souhegan Valley, need access to transportation. Those who are most likely to depend on community transportation to meet their needs are people with medical conditions, the elderly, people with low incomes, youth, people with disabilities, or others who lack a car. In the Souhegan Valley, 1 in 12 people are over 65 years of age and 1 in 30 households lack a vehicle. Depending on the definition of disability used, about 1 in 5 to 1 in 8 residents have some type of disability limiting their daily activities. Thus, it is likely that the Souhegan Valley region has thousands of residents in need of community transportation.

Lucky for them, four Souhegan Valley towns received an early gift last holiday season when Souhegan Valley Rides (SVR) began operating on October 1, 2008 in Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford. This bus service has enabled many residents to make trips to medical appointments and to shopping plazas that they would not have been able to make before. Community transportation, like SVR, improves people's mobility

*What would you do...? ~ continued on page 2*



### **Souhegan Valley Rides**

**A regional community transit service  
initiated by the Souhegan Valley  
Transportation Collaborative**

#### **Current Towns Served:**

Amherst, Brookline, Hollis & Milford

#### **Schedule:**

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (including travel time)  
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

#### **To schedule a ride:**

Call 880-0100 ext. 1

At least 48 hours in advance on **weekdays**

**For more information, please call  
880-0100 then dial extension 1**

**Ride services including scheduling, vehicle  
and driver contracted from the  
*Nashua Transit System***

*Please see page 6 for details about the service*

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and self-sufficiency, enhances economic opportunities for families, reduces required investment in roadways, and preserves small urban and rural communities, among its other benefits.

With 75% of Granite Staters realizing these benefits and supporting accessible and affordable transportation options for all residents in their communities, it is imperative that New Hampshire communities continue to support community transportation. New Hampshire spends only \$0.17 of state funding per person on transit, compared with the \$9.82 per person in Vermont.

To make up for the lack of funding for transportation in the state, local communities are stepping up to ensure their residents have access to community transportation. Towns fund transportation in different ways across the state, but many New Hampshire towns have discovered a sustainable source of funding in motor vehicle registration fees. According to RSA 261:153, cities and towns in the state can collect an additional fee for motor vehicle registrations to support a municipal transportation improvement fund. Money from that fund can be used towards the costs of local community transportation efforts, like Souhegan Valley Rides. The towns of Manchester, Exeter, and Hollis utilize this funding method. Hollis uses the money collected to support Souhegan Valley Rides.

Adding a fee to motor vehicle registrations for community transportation funding is a relatively easy process. The Hollis town clerk said using the fee to fund Souhegan Valley Rides is easy and has not created more work for town officials.

Many residents feel that a small fee added onto their motor vehicle registrations is not a huge deal. "A penny a day equates to \$3.65 per year," said Jim Bélanger, Hollis resident. "Is it worth a penny, or less, per day to guarantee my neighbor a bus ride to a doctor appointment 52 times per year? I think so! Wouldn't my neighbor do the same for me when my time comes? I think so!" he said.

To keep this regional bus service rolling, the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative is seeking funding from the Amherst and Milford communities through the motor vehicle registration fee funding method. If instituted, this method will create a renewable source of transit funding from these towns. Residents will have the opportunity to vote on warrant articles supporting the use of this method at their 2010 Town Meetings. The Hollis Board of Selectmen agreed to continue to use the motor vehicle registration fee, implemented in May 2009, to fund their town's

portion of the Souhegan Valley Rides operating budget for the coming year. To fund Brookline's portion of the SVR budget, the Brookline Selectmen included a line item in their town's budget for 2010.

For more information about Souhegan Valley Rides, please visit the SVTC website at [www.SouheganRides.org](http://www.SouheganRides.org) or contact SVTC at [Info@SouheganRides.org](mailto:Info@SouheganRides.org) or (603) 673-8482.

*Submitted by Kaley Lentini, GSOP*

*Editor's Note: the Souhegan Valley regional statistics apply to Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon, Lyndeborough and Wilton.*

## Welcome Aboard NRPC, Heartfelt Thanks to GSOP

This month has seen some operational changes at the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). Due to regulatory constraints and SVTC's anticipated growth, we have had to change our fiscal agent. Since our beginning, in addition to being the force that brought us together, the Granite State Organizing Project has graciously served as SVTC's fiscal agent and intermediary. The SVTC Board of Directors extends heartfelt thanks to Sarah Jane Knoy, GSOP lead organizer, and to Kaley Lentini, GSOP outreach coordinator, for their tireless work on behalf of SVTC and the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service. GSOP will continue to have a role in the evolution of SVTC and the bus service given that GSOP holds a seat on the SVTC Board of Directors. Currently, Ellen Groh of Hollis represents GSOP on the board and serves as our Treasurer.

In November, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) agreed to serve as our fiscal agent and the paperwork to initiate this new venture was completed in December. With the prospect of tapping into federal funding, NRPC's expertise in transportation planning will be a huge asset to our organization as we work to keep the bus rolling forward! SVTC looks forward to strengthening our relationship with NRPC and working together to establish a sustainable, regional community transit system in the Souhegan Valley.



## Visit the SVTC Website!

As part of the ongoing effort to “get the word” about Souhegan Valley Rides, SVTC has been developing its own website. Thanks to the talents and leadership of SVTC board member and Hollis resident Jim Bélanger, this website is becoming a reality! While Jim and his committee continue to work on making the site more user friendly, the important information about SVTC and the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service is available on the net!

Please take a moment to visit the SVTC website at [www.SouheganRides.org](http://www.SouheganRides.org). Feel free to share this internet site with your friends and contacts. “Word of mouth” or, in this day and age, “word of keystroke” remains the best tool in the publicity toolbox.

### *Transit Tidbit:*

#### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?**

- Public transportation provides personal mobility and freedom.
- Every dollar invested in public transportation projects generates from \$4 to \$9 in local economic activity.
- Public transportation is an immediate means of helping our environment and conserving energy.
- Public transportation helps relieve traffic congestion, reducing hours of delay in major travel corridors.
- Non-users benefit as a result of public transportation.

From the American Public Transportation website  
[www.publictransportation.org/facts/faq.asp](http://www.publictransportation.org/facts/faq.asp).

## *Many Thanks to Our Contributors!*

Without the support and interest of our contributors, the Souhegan Valley Rides pilot program would never have “rolled out of the garage.” Three cheers and many thanks to the individuals and organizations who have so generously contributed to the implementation of this bus service!

### **Amherst**

The Bean Foundation

### **Brookline**

Ann Somers & Loring Webster

Jerry Farwell of C.L. Farwell Construction

Rich Vertullo of Vertullo Landscaping

Kevin and Cindy Gorgolione  
of Absolute Mechanical Systems

Brookline Community Church

Brookline Lion’s Club

Brookline Women’s Club

Hollis-Brookline Rotary

Town of Brookline

### **Hollis**

Hollis-Brookline Rotary

Hollis Seniors

Town of Hollis

The Marie Le Doux Foundation

### **Milford**

The Kaley Foundation

The Marchesi Fund

The Milford Hospital Association

The Milford Rotary Club

Town of Milford

### **Nashua**

Dartmouth-Hitchcock

### **Concord**

The Endowment for Health

*Please consider  
supporting our supporters!*

In our ongoing effort to strengthen the community presence of SVTC and the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service, members of SVTC will be speaking at the *Milford Rotary Club on January 20<sup>th</sup>* and at the *Hollis~Brookline Rotary Club on January 27<sup>th</sup>*. If you or your organization would like to have SVTC give a presentation about this regional bus service, please contact us at [Info@SouheganRides.org](mailto:Info@SouheganRides.org) or (603) 673-8482.



### Ridership Facts as of 12/17/09

#### Registered Riders by Town as of 12/17/09

	Number	Percent of Total
Amherst	39	10.74
Brookline	36	9.92
Hollis	99	27.27
Milford	189	52.07
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>363</b>	

- Approximately 76% of the bus rides involve appointments located in Nashua, 21% in Milford and 3% in Amherst
- About 67% of the riders are female, 74% are seniors and 32% use some type of assistive device such as a cane, wheelchair or scooter
- The number of registered riders has steadily increased on a monthly basis

#### Rides provided by Town and Year of Service as of 12/17/09

	Year 1		Rides provided per month in the second operating year			Year 2		1st and 2nd Years Combined Total Number of Rides by Town	Percent of Combined Total Number of Rides
	Oct. 1, 2008 thru Sept. 30, 2009		Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec 17 2009	Oct. 1, 2009 thru Sept. 30, 2010			
	1st Year TOTALS	% of Total Year 1 Rides				2nd Year TOTALS (YTD)	% of Total Year 2 Rides		
Amherst	96	9.76	32	39	22	93	24.67	189	13.89%
Brookline	13	1.32	0	0	0	0	0.00	13	0.96%
Hollis	229	23.27	25	17	28	70	18.57	299	21.97%
Milford	646	65.65	86	73	55	214	56.76	860	63.19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>984</b>		<b>143</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>377</b>		<b>1361</b>	

- Between February 1, 2009 and December 17, 2009, there were 59 unique appointment locations used by SVR riders: 1 in Hollis, 5 in Amherst, 13 in Milford, and 40 in Nashua
- 9 of these locations accounted for over 65% of the bus service activity: 2 are in Milford and 7 are in Nashua
- Only slightly more than 5% of the service was for shopping trips to 4 local plazas

#### **Transit Tidbit:**

The average household spends 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, and 94% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, the largest expenditure after housing.

From the American Public Transportation, "Public Transportation Facts At A Glance" brochure 2009.



**SVTC Board of Directors as of 1/1/2010**

Janet Langdell, Milford, Chairperson  
Jim Bélanger, Hollis, Vice-chairperson  
Marcia Nelson, Milford, Secretary  
Ellen Groh, GSOP, Treasurer  
Dennie Townsend, Brookline  
Carolyn Mitchell, Amherst  
Ruth Heden, At-large member

**Fiscal agent for SVTC**

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

**SVTC Contact Information**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 753 Hollis, NH 03049  
Email: [Info@SouheganRides.org](mailto:Info@SouheganRides.org) or  
[GetInvolved@SouheganRides.org](mailto:GetInvolved@SouheganRides.org)

**Souhegan Valley Rides** is published every two months (April, June, August, October, December and February). Please email any comments or questions and subscription requests to [Newsletter@SouheganRides.org](mailto:Newsletter@SouheganRides.org) or call (603) 860-1202.

 **NRPC Nashua Regional Planning Commission**

*Improving quality of life through planning*

**For more information about issues, information and planning activities affecting our region, please visit the NRPC website at [WWW.NASHUARPC.ORG](http://WWW.NASHUARPC.ORG)**

The NRPC office is located in Merrimack at  
9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201  
Phone 603-424-2240 ~ Fax 603-424-2230

**SVTC Volunteer Opportunities**

To learn more about SVTC or to get involved in making the bus service a permanent resource in your Souhegan Valley community, please call Marcia Nelson at (603) 673-8482 or email us at [GetInvolved@SouheganRides.org](mailto:GetInvolved@SouheganRides.org)



**GSOP Membership Campaign in the Souhegan Valley**

As part of an ongoing effort to strengthen its voice and numbers, the Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP) has initiated a membership drive in the Souhegan Valley. GSOP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan grassroots organization incorporated in 2002 that works to improve life in south-central New Hampshire. As an advocacy group with a united voice, GSOP members work on issues related to affordable housing, health care, jobs, education and other topics that affect the quality of life in south-central New Hampshire. If you, your church or other organization are interested in more information about GSOP or potential membership, please contact Kaley Lentini, GSOP Outreach Coordinator, at GSOP, 383 Beech St., Manchester, N.H. 03103, (603)668-8250 or [klentinigsop@comcast.net](mailto:klentinigsop@comcast.net).

*Believe it or not -*

*2010 Town Meeting is approaching fast!*

**Milford and Amherst –**

As SB2 towns, “part 1” of Town Meeting occurs in February with the Deliberative Session followed in March by Town Elections and Voting on Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Hollis and Brookline –**

These towns conduct more traditional Town Meetings with Town Elections on March 9<sup>th</sup> and Town Meetings on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Watch your local papers and Town website for more specific details. See you at the polls!**

**A reminder** - As a social services agency, SHARE meets the criteria as a destination for bus rides. If you have an appointment at the SHARE Center on Elm Street in Milford and need transportation, please consider using the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service.

**Fare Voucher Program**

Thanks to continued support from and collaboration with SHARE and the Hollis Seniors, SVTC is able to offer a voucher program for the bus fares. The vouchers are available for riders who are unable to afford the fare for each trip. To obtain a voucher, please request one when scheduling your ride with the NTS dispatcher. For more information, please contact Marcia Nelson at (603) 673-8482.



## Frequently Asked Questions

*The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative and the Nashua Transit System are committed to making this a comfortable and reliable service. If you have ideas, suggestions, complaints or compliments, please let us know by calling us at 880-0100 extension 1. Thank you for riding with us!*

### How the service works

- The van operates between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM (including travel time) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Riders are asked to pay \$2.00 each way. Exact Fare Only – No change can be given. Fare vouchers are available and can be requested when scheduling a ride.
- Rides will be given to social service agencies, pharmacies and health care appointments, including doctor visits, dialysis, physical therapy, counseling and hospital services. Rides for local shopping are available on Thursdays only – call for details.
- Service is available to ALL residents of the four towns.
- Riders are asked to register for the service in advance and can register by calling 880-0100 extension 1.
- Riders will be picked up at home by a vehicle equipped with a lift.
- Service animals are permitted and Personal Care Attendants ride free.
- A rider may bring one guest if the guest pays the fee. NTS must be notified.

### What information do I need to schedule my ride?

- Your full name
- Your telephone number
- The date of your trip
- The pick-up address
- The drop-off address
- Whether you use a mobility device
- The times you would like to arrive at and return from your destination
- Whether a personal attendant/PCA or companion will be riding with you

### How far in advance do I schedule my ride?

Please call 880-0100 extension 1 at least 48 hours (weekdays only) in advance to schedule your ride. **Rides needed on Tuesdays must be scheduled by the previous Friday, rides for Wednesday must be scheduled by the previous Monday, and rides for Thursday must be scheduled by the previous Tuesday.**

Riders can call up to **two weeks** in advance to schedule a ride to an appointment. For riders attending dialysis or other ongoing, regularly scheduled appointments, NTS's dispatching staff will work with the individual rider on extended bookings.

### What if I no longer need a ride?

It is very important that you call NTS if you are not going to need a scheduled trip by 5:00 PM the day before your scheduled trip. To cancel a trip, please call 880-0100 extension 1.

### Riding the Bus

Please be prepared to meet the vehicle at the curb if you do not need assistance. If you do need assistance getting to the vehicle, and have told us so, please be ready at the building entrance door that you specified while making your reservation. When boarding, please have EXACT FARE ready. For the comfort and safety of all passengers, eating, drinking, smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted in the vehicles. Radios and cell phones are a distraction to the driver and other passengers, EARPHONES only, please.

### Other Important How-To-Ride Tips!

The vehicle may arrive anytime within a thirty (30) minute "window", up to fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after your scheduled pick-up time.

For example, if your pick-up time is scheduled for 9:00 AM, the vehicle will arrive between 8:45AM and 9:15AM.

Once you are inside the vehicle, the driver will assist you with your seatbelt, if requested, and secure your wheelchair if you have one.