

Press Release from the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative
For Immediate Release

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Regional Bus Service Expands as of July 5th

The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative is pleased to announce expansion of the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service effective July 5, 2011. Availability of this dial-a-ride type bus service will increase from three days per week to five days per week Monday through Friday. Additionally, the hours of operation will increase to 8 AM to 6 PM including travel time to and from the garage in Nashua. Depending on scheduling and destinations, a passenger could get picked-up as early as 8:30 AM and dropped off as late as 5:30 PM. Rides for shopping will be available two days per week on Mondays and Thursdays to five locations: Market Basket, Shaw's and Stop & Shop in Milford, Walmart in Amherst, and in Nashua the Hannaford supermarket on Coliseum Avenue.

While the focus of Souhegan Valley Rides continues to be on transportation assistance for non-emergency healthcare appointments, more potential destinations will be added to the service in response to community requests. Starting July 5th, residents may request rides to local Town Halls, libraries, and municipal facilities; local senior activity centers including the Parkhurst Place Community Room and the Milford Area Seniors, the Hollis Seniors, and the Brookline Seniors; the Nashua Senior Activity Center and Nashua YMCA; and the local community dining locations sponsored by St. Joseph Community Services. Rides are provided on a first come first serve basis but when scheduling conflicts arise, priority will be given to healthcare related appointments.

The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) is made up of community representatives from each of the participating towns, and oversees the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service. SVTC has been working closely with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) and the Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation #7 (RCC) to secure federal funding for local community transportation needs. Through the State of New Hampshire's allocation of federal Section 5310 funding, resources are available to each of the RCCs to help fund coordinated transportation services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Recently, a contract through the NH Department of Transportation was approved in Concord for use of 5310 funding for the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service expansion.

Expansion of the bus service is being implemented on a trial basis and future improvements will be based on community suggestions, passenger travel patterns, and funding availability. Currently, the four participating communities share the cost of providing the actual bus services. Going forward, this municipal funding will be used towards the 20% matching funds required under the federal 5310 program. Grants and donations from local organizations, businesses and individuals pay for the administrative expenses of providing the service. SVTC contracts with the Nashua Transit System (NTS) to provide the buses and call center operations. SVTC, NRPC, and NTS will continue to work together to improve the service to better meet the transportation needs of our communities.

Souhegan Valley Rides (SVR) is an affordable, door-to-door, shared ride bus service available to residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, and Milford in need of transportation assistance. The fare is \$2 each way per passenger and medically necessary companions ride free. Rides are available within the four towns, and to and from Nashua. Passengers are asked to register for the service and this can be done easily over the telephone. Rides must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance. Passengers need to call to cancel a ride when changes arise. For better service efficiency, cancelations must be called in at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled ride. To register, schedule a ride, cancel a ride or for more information please contact the NTS call center at 880-0100 ext. 1. General information about SVTC and the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service is available at www.SouheganRides.org or by calling Marcia Nelson at 673-8482.