

# Won't be easy

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The funding obstacles facing year-round public transit for The Valley and commuter service linking for The Valley are significant.

It will not be an easy task to find funds for transit. The local cost will be significant, but the local cost of not finding funding for transit will be even more significant.

Gas at \$4 a gallon may make it too expensive for ski season employees to drive from out of The Valley to the mountains for work. Gas at \$4 a gallon may make it too expensive for Valley residents to drive to the mountains and restaurants and businesses. Gas at \$4 a gallon -- with no sign of ever going down -- is absolutely going to affect how many skiers drive to Vermont from down country.

Sugarbush president Win Smith is 100 percent right to point out, as he did at a recent meeting of the Mad River Valley Planning District, that well-established

resorts provide public transit. They do, and so do well-established and successful resort towns. And that was before gas rose to \$4 a gallon.

The Green Mountain Transit Authority (GMTA), current provider of winter transit in The Valley, is seeking a commitment of a local financial match in hopes of providing year-round local transit and/or year-round commuter service linking The Valley to Waterbury and Montpelier (where other transit opportunities exist).

The numbers aren't horrifying: \$15,000 a year for three years for local year-round service, or \$30,000 for three years for commuter service. But that money has to come from taxpayers' and businesses' pockets and high fuel costs are affecting everyone -- making this task Herculean.

What GMTA needs is a commitment for a local match by July 15. Smith has proposed building a bus barn at the resort as a possible joint venture to satisfy the requirements of the local match. This idea has merit and, at this point, is one thing that can be pursued while the search for funds goes on.