

Proposal to the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority

Plan for Expansion of MWRTA Van Service in Sudbury

February 16, 2016

Due to a growing population of people 60 and over, as well as a sizable and growing population of persons under 60 who have a disability, the Sudbury Senior Center proposes to expand Van service in Sudbury.

The population of Sudbury residents who are 60 and older, which was 1,625 in the year 2000, has nearly doubled (to 3,770) at the end of 2015. The Senior Center has added 22 new riders in the last year, including 14 from the new Coolidge at Sudbury 55+ development.

The current van service is offered Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM to persons 60+ and persons with a disability under 60, who reside in Sudbury. The Senior Center and Council on Aging Transportation Committee conducted a survey of van riders in November 2014 which indicated that van riders were interested in more frequent shopping trips to out of town destinations, along with extended service hours. Since our survey, the Senior Center has continued to receive requests for extended transportation hours during the week and service on the weekend, as well as transportation out of town.

Service Expansion

The Sudbury Senior Center and Council on Aging proposes to expand current transportation service hours and destinations. The Senior Center would like to, on a trial run basis for 6 months (May 17 – October 17), add the following:

- Service for two evenings per week from 4:00 – 7:00 PM, preferably Tuesdays and Thursdays, by using the Dial a Ride services from Kiessling Transportation through the MWRTA (with the potential to add service on one weekend day during the trial period).

This additional service will require an “on-call” Senior Center staff person between 4:00-7:00PM (as well as any added weekend hours). This person would be available via phone to answer concerns or questions about a particular rider (for example, they are not answering their door, etc.).

- Offer a scheduled day each week to meet the Framingham Route 2 or 3 fixed route bus in the Nobscot area of Framingham, on Water Street (at the new McAuliffe library or other appropriate location) and/or the meet the Marlborough Route 7C bus at the Wayside Country Store in Marlborough (depending on demand). The day of the week would be coordinated to coincide with one of the days that we are offering evening service, so that riders could use the van to go somewhere on the Framingham or Marlborough routes and then come back in the early evening.

- Offer transportation to the Framingham hub at 15 Blandin Avenue in Framingham on a Tuesday, to meet the Boston Hospital Shuttle bus for drop off and pick up. This would be offered on an as-needed, as reserved basis for riders to get to the Hospital shuttle to Boston and back. Riders would need to request this ride 1 week in advance. In order to do this, one of the full time van drivers would need to shift their schedule for that day to 7:00AM-2:00PM or we would use a part-time driver to work from 7:00-8:30 AM.

All of the planned additional services will require extensive planning between the Senior Center staff and the MWRTA Call Center and other MWRTA staff to ensure a smooth transition. I am proposing that the additional Dial a Ride hours and the service schedule changes begin on May 17 to allow time for planning and publicity. I will plan with MWRTA and Senior Center staff to hold information sessions as well as travel training for riders.

Budget

The cost estimate for expanded hours, based on information from MWRTA staff is as follows:

Expanded services for Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

6 hours per week at \$50/hour = \$300 week or \$300 x 4.33 weeks/month = \$1,299.00 per month or \$15,600.00 per year. This current annual cost figure is an approximation.

Evaluation

During the fourth month of the trial period (September 2016), Senior Center staff and COA (Council on Aging) Transportation Committee members, as well as, MWRTA Staff will review ridership and costs to evaluate the use of the expanded service hours and destinations. The COA Transportation Committee will make a recommendation as to the continuation of the three parts of the program expansion after October 17, 2016.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to increase service and ridership in Sudbury, with an additional goal of illustrating the need for a future fixed route bus along Route 20 in Sudbury.

The Sudbury Senior Center and Council on Aging look forward to continuing our successful partnership with the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority in expanding an accessible transportation network in the MetroWest region.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.