



Town of Sudbury

<https://sudbury.ma.us/transportation/>

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Thursday, April 18, 2019

9:30 AM

Police Department Conference Room, 75 Hudson Road, Sudbury, MA

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Doug Frey (COD)

Advisory Group Members Present: Debra Galloway, Scott Nix, Adam Duchesneau

Absent: Charlie Dunn, Bethany Hadvab, Dan Nason

Guest: Ben Sisko, Special Operations Manager of Lyft New England

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as acting chair convened the meeting at 9:35 AM.

Selection of Clerk

Debra Galloway agreed to take minutes.

Lyft Presentation

Topics:

What is Lyft Doing/What can it do?

Transit Partnerships and Mass./U.S. Best Examples

Ben responded to a question about background checks. Lyft does a local, state and federal background check on all drivers, then submits names to a DMV/RMV checker (such as Sterling) and then submits driver names to state run CORI check which goes back 18-20 years, or more. Lyft also has a real time spot check – a flag on suspicious behavior, and continuous background checks in states that allow it (Mass. does). Lyft also has a 24 hours critical response line – for both drivers and riders to call in emergency.

Lyft focus is on great transportation that enhances sustainability, takes cars off the road (statistic shared: cars are only used 4% of the time they are owned). Lyft is largest purchaser of carbon offsets, and offers a green mode option on its app where available (can request EV car). Goal is for

50% shared rides in 2020, they are currently at 40%. Shared rides have at least 2 individual riders going to different destinations. They also have a transit app that helps people connect to transit.

Transit Partnerships

- 1) Eligibility based programs
- 2) Community Transit programs

Eligibility based – for special populations: older adults, paratransit, jobs access, income based, geographical area

3 local examples: MBTA “The Ride”, Carlisle Senior program, Plymouth (just starting)

MBTA/The Ride

- Called by riders or a 3rd party -used to be needed to call 2 days in advance, started in 2016.
- Eligibility determined by MBTA – each allotted a specified number of rides, based on previous use, varies could be 2x month, 10x month.
- The app is coded with a service area.
- Average “the Ride” ride cost was \$48, now \$13.
- No central dispatch, 90% are called in by individuals, 10% by 3rd party.

Carlisle COA

- Lyft’s smallest program.
- Riders get allotment of credits per month.
- 4x month subsidized up to \$15, rider pays remaining cost.
- 60 mile radius, must begin/end in Carlisle.
- Opt in program.
- Most appointments are for medical needs according to David Klein, COA Director. Lyft does not report this data individually, though they can aggregate it without names for the client (e.g., COA).
- Funded through CHNA grant.

Plymouth

- COA, RTA and YMCA, contact is Joanne LaFerrara of GATRA.
- Lyft Concierge dispatches all rides.
- Rides for medical, community events, socialization.
- No need for smartphone, can use flipphone, or just call.
- Plymouth COA has staff who takes requests for rides, and then uses online Lyft Concierge (i.e., a Lyft dashboard) to schedule the rides.
- Riders can request immediate ride, schedule a ride for later, or if have a smartphone can use Flex ride, schedule a ride sometime in future, and then request when needed. Flex ride important when the COA office is closed and staff not available to provide Concierge service.

Can riders check to see how long before car arrives? The Concierge dispatcher can see the details once it is requested. The choice of driver is made by Lyft software from whoever is closest. When driver chosen the rider gets a text with car, license plate number, name of

driver. If ride too far away, dispatcher can inform the person who requested it and, if asked, can cancel.

Lyft Concierge developed for a hotel, now used by businesses, and moving to Senior Centers, Assisted living, etc. Concierge is like a dashboard or a larger smartphone for ordering rides.

Lyft is a Transportation Network Company – pairs drivers with riders. A platform for matching personal vehicles that are eligible, with riders who need rides. Lyft does not own the vehicles nor employ the drivers.

Accessibility

Lyft has a contract with First Transit to provide wheelchair accessible transportation. They have relatively few requests for w/c accessible rides (1% of 1%). However, First Transit has a fleet of w/c accessible vehicles (WAV). The best utilization of WAVs is for persons using wheelchairs; it is wasteful for WAVs to be used for those who don't need them. Carlisle owns a WAV vehicle and it is incorporated into the Lyft dispatch there.

If riders use a transport wheelchair and can transfer independently into a car, they can use Lyft. Lyft drivers are asked to keep their trunks free so that luggage or a folder wheelchair can be placed in them.

Best Examples of Partnerships:

GoMonrovia – Monrovia CA – north of L.A.

- The City of Monrovia is the geofenced area for Lyft service.
- Shared rides are 50 cents, individual rides are \$1 within city limits.
- They use Lyft to connect to bus system as well.
- Trips have increased from 40,000 to 600,000 per year.
- Residents are able to sell their cars and use Lyft + transit.
- There is an account management team to help people access the service.

Shared ride = at least 2 riders. Most Lyft vehicles have 4 doors/ 5 seatbelts.

Mobility on Demand – Santa Monica CA

- 50 cents/trip for seniors and persons with disabilities – updated Dial a Ride.
- Also use a geofenced area
- Mostly medical, social, shopping.
- There are hands-on trainings to help people use the service. (Run by TRIPPS?)

Columbia, South Carolina

- For Fresh Food Access, has expanded to Atlanta
- 10 discount rides/month, \$5 subsidy

Jobs Access/Reverse Commute – Solano CA

- Connection to RTA, \$2-\$3 per trip.
- Residents/employees use it.

Reimagine Transit, San Clemente, CA

- Connection to bus system
- \$2 per ride

Lyft also able to work with prepaid debit cards, or special prepaid cash cards.

Transportation Network Companies like Lyft and Uber are high volume/low margin business. They cannot offer discounts. However, there are some entities who are providing grants/funding, whether cities/towns, philanthropic organizations.

Lyft is working with employers, especially those with low wage workers, perhaps in the service industry, to help them get employees to work. Alice recommended Lyft be in touch with BizWorks, the state's federally funded office for those seeking unemployment benefits. BizWorks provides counseling, training, etc., for those needing employment and works with area employers.

Lyft also works with Tufts University. Tufts uses Lyft to provide rides for students during late night hours, 10 PM-4 AM.

Carmine reported he is working with a group on a commuter bus from Worcester to Marlborough to bring employees. Are there ways to work together? Perhaps Lyft can help get workers to bus.

Beth wondered if Lyft could help with getting a small group of commuters from Sudbury to Boston for work? Could Lyft shared rides do this? It was unclear whether this would be effective, given the way Lyft works.

Shared rides from Lyft are better priced. Dan took Lyft from airport to a hotel, using shared ride. He paid \$20, but would have paid \$30. Shared price is dynamic.

Doug asked if Sudbury can use Lyft to get WAV vehicles for riders? Yes, may be a longer ETA however. By early summer, Lyft will be increasing WAV capacity.

Using Lyft's online Cost Estimator - example:

Police Station to Emerson Hospital right now (10:30 AM) - \$15-18, cost does vary based on ETA (estimated time of arrival) and there is prime time pricing (“surge” pricing, taking into account weather and traffic).

Prime time pricing helps to encourage a lot of drivers to high demand areas. If a rider waits till demand decreases, price will usually drop.

Lyft has an office in Medford – 40 staff, and also has hubs for drivers – they can bring lost/found items.

Alice stated it’s important to consider what is special (above and beyond the software – which is a commodity) that Lyft has to offer compared to others as we assess what to do going forward.

Dan will follow up with Ben to get safety information that Scott requested.

Newton Senior Center and Via Partnership

Alice reported on conversation with Newton Senior Services Director that Newton Senior Center chose Via, which is a turnkey operation, for a microtransit pilot. Via owns their fleets, and employs the drivers directly. (Lyft competed in this RFI.) The RFI included a template of sample rides for each proposer to respond to. The template included: destinations, riders, etc. Proposers needed to respond with prices. This helped them to select their partner.

Via was slightly more expensive than other respondents, but the cost was offset because the turnkey service relieved Newton staff who currently dispatch rides (to the taxi service), so the staff can address other responsibilities. Via also can scale up quickly and increase coverage so the prices at higher volumes were lower than other respondents.

Efficiency and Regionalization, Community Compact Cabinet Grant

Sudbury as lead municipality was awarded \$80,000 for a second Community Compact Cabinet grant (the first supports the current Master Plan effort). The transportation proposal responds to an Age and Dementia Friendly Best Practice: “Develop policies and services to improve elder economic security and help people age in community, such as... transportation for non-drivers...” The pilot, which will include several other communities in the area, will serve seniors, people with disabilities, financially vulnerable residents, and veterans, with the objective of providing them with transportation services to health and community resources as well as economic opportunities.

Attleboro YMCA/Uber

This Y partners with Uber. Dan has been trying to connect with Robin McDonald to set up a meeting to learn about their program. Hopes to report on this project next meeting.

Beth suggested inviting Kelsey from Emerson Hospital to meetings, especially when we have special guests. Plan in place to invite her. It was noted that we should also reach out to MetroWest Hospital, Marlborough Hospital to see if they have a representative who would be interested in attending.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Workshop

Beth reported that there are several members of the TC that will be attending the workshop on May 14, so may not need another representative. Alice, Chief Nix, and Debra will be attending.

Administrative Updates

Dan reports that Alice has not been formally added by the Selectboard (BOS) but will be at a coming meeting.

Doug Frey, a new Commission on Disability member, will be the new representative to the Transportation Committee (TC). To be approved at a coming BOS meeting.

Unfortunately, State Rep. Carmine Gentile will be retiring from the Council on Aging, so a new representative will need to be appointed.

Member Updates

Debra shared that the MWRTA plans to move up their start date for the new grant funded Route 20 Commuter Shuttle to May (from July). They are looking for parking for commuters who will use the bus shuttle. Debra has contacted Wayside Inn, other possibilities suggested include: super-market parking lots (Shaws, Sudbury Farms, Whole Foods), TJ Maxx rear lot, Chiswick Park back lot. Debra to reach out to Charlie Dunn, Chamber of Commerce, re: survey of local business members about this issue.

Debra received copy of MWRTA grant proposal re: Route 20 Commuter Shuttle, will check about sharing to the Committee.

Debra and Beth met with Doug Halley, Acton Transportation Manager, and Scott Zadakis, Cross-Town Connect Director. CrossTown Connect (CTC) is currently working with Maynard and Emerson Hospital and a shuttle for medical appointments, first to focus on rehab/physical therapy appointments at Emerson Hospital/Baker Avenue offices. They are wondering if it makes sense for Sudbury to partner with Maynard, maybe take turns offering medical rides 1-2 days each week. They even offered to allow our riders to continue to call MWRTA call center to schedule rides. They would work with MWRTA to receive ride information and schedule the rides. Debra will be discussing this idea with MWRTA staff.

Adam reported that the Melone Property Letter of Conditional Eligibility and the Land Disposition development agreement requires the developer to offer a Shuttle to provide transportation services to commuter rail stations in W. Concord, Concord and Lincoln, as well as transportation to other significant destinations within Sudbury, for residents of Quarry North development. Debra reported that CrossTown Connect suggested they could help with planning for this shuttle.

Discuss and Schedule Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, May 21, 2:00 PM, Police Station Meeting Room

Review of Action Items

- Where does TNC levy reside in town accounting? (OPEN) Carty to follow up with Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues; noted that amounts are currently very small
- Chamber of Commerce (OPEN)—survey of businesses re: parking availability (Debra to follow up with Charlie Dunn)
- Alice Sapienza status on Transportation Committee charter (OPEN); this should be settled during a BoS meeting soon.
- MWRTA Grant (OPEN); Debra received, checking on whether can share with group.
- Public Safety LERT and assist training information (OPEN): to be provided by Andi Bailey from Uber
- Public procurement relevance to town contract with TNC (OPEN): Dan Carty will follow up
- Grant Writing help from town (OPEN): Carty to keep this topic (either a hired grant writer or ability to hire part-time consultation services) current, noting this is a longer term item

Future Agenda Items

VIA/Newton

Review and Approval of Prior Minutes

Minutes of 28 March 2019: Beth Suedmeyer moved to approve, Debra Galloway seconded, no discussion, approved with noted edits.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.