



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Thursday, June 27, 2019

3 PM

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

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Dan Nason, Bethany Hadvab, Doug Frey

Advisory Group Members Present: Debra Galloway , Adam Duchesneau

Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Carmine Gentile

Guests: Linda Faust, Kay Bell, Patricia Bonenfant, Tony Dumont

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as acting chair convened the meeting at 3:08 PM.

Selection of Clerk

Bethany Hadvab agreed to take notes of the meeting; Alice Sapienza agreed to review and formulate the notes based on meeting agenda.

Review of Action Items

- Galloway spoke with other towns about their transportation programs with TNCs and reviewed her conversation with Dave Klein, director of the Carlisle CoA/Senior Center. See next agenda item for details.
- Carty reported that Gentile will no longer be on the COA but will continue on the Transportation Committee as state rep. LS and SPS contacts will be on the committee in an advisory role.
- Galloway reported that the COA has not met since last committee meeting, but the COA will send a new representative to be on the committee, when one has been identified.
- Carty inquired about parking related to the route 20 commuter shuttle. Duchesneau reported that Suedmeyer is continuing to explore options, including possibly using a vacant gas station lot for parking. Sapienza share concerns about difficulty getting in and out of the location in regards to traffic patterns.

- Galloway noted that information about the MWRTA commuter shuttle from Marlborough to Riverside is now on social media, and that has been a helpful communication tool.
- Sapienza and Carty discussed a need for a more in-depth conversation about town accounting and allocation of Community Compact Funds to specific accounts.
- Carty noted that we need to speak with town manager about whether there is a need to put out a bid for TNCs under public procurement laws. Duchesneau will speak with town manager.
- Hadvab spoke with Neighbor Brigade and stated that they will provide quarterly data regarding number of rides, number of riders and type of rides.
- Sapienza reported that Emerson is a sponsor of Neighbor Brigade, and the Brigade provides transportation in addition to other services. Emerson has reportedly used Community Health Needs Assessment funding to support Neighbor Brigade.

Public Comments

Carty opened the floor for public comment by guest attendees.

Patricia Bonenfant of 655 Boston Post Rd reported that she is appreciative of the route 20 shuttle transportation, but is concerned about the lack of transportation to college. She reports that it costs \$50 a day to get back and forth to Mass Bay via ride-hailing options, and this expense is not manageable. She reports that low income residents cannot better themselves without transportation. She noted job services offered in Framingham, including SMOC, that are not accessible if residents do not have transportation. Sapienza stated people also cannot get to childcare. Bonenfant seconded this.

Carty interjected to share the role and history of the committee, noting that it is a relatively new committee and that there are many transportation gaps and there is a need to hear about these gaps to make next steps. Carty reported that the committee is starting to look at healthcare options. Bonenfant reported that she could not find an application on the website for the committee and expressed an interest in being an active member of the committee.

Frey inquired how Framingham residents get to SMOC. Bonenfant reported that MWRTA provides this service and inquired if this service can be offered in Sudbury. Galloway noted that the town has been advocating for connection to the MWRTA. She is hopeful that the Rt 20 CoA and commuter shuttles will prove that there is a need, and that MWRTA will then add Sudbury to the route.

Faust reported that there is not access to services east of Target or Wayside Inn and that the timing is not adequate, nor is route radius.

Carty acknowledged that there are large gaps and that hearing from the public is critical to better understand the concerns. Faust reported she would like to join the committee. Carty also noted that residents are welcome to join the meeting whether or not they are committee members because public comment is critical.

Update and Discussion - Community Compact Grant / “Making the Connections”

Duchesneau reported that there was not a strong response to an earlier email to the MAGIC community regarding collaborating on the “Making the Connections” pilot program. There was a follow up meeting with MAPC and there will be a meeting at town hall on July 23rd, 2019, from 2-4pm, for those interested in participating in the pilot. Likely topics will include clarification that towns can use TNCs or taxis for on demand transportation and discussion of the program manager position. There has already been a positive response and the hope is to include many of the 13 MAGIC communities in this conversation. JFK Taxi (Natick) and Tommy’s Taxi (Framingham) have expressed an interest in learning more about this program.

Galloway provided details on her conversation with Dave Klein about the pilot in Carlisle, which has been functioning for about 6 months. They spoke with Lyft and Uber. At the last minute Uber required a municipal account to debit payments from; because Carlisle could not accommodate this at the time, the town entered a contract with Lyft. Carlisle employs a transportation coordinator for 25 hours a week.

The Lyft program started only with people with cell phones who could access the Lyft app. Carlisle then expanded to a concierge model in which the transportation coordinator can book rides for people without access to smart phone. Carlisle subsidizes \$10/ride 4x/month for anyone who registers. It is open to residents age 50+ or persons with disabilities or transportation limitation. The pilot with Lyft is offered 24/hours a day, 7 days/week, but the town set a geofence limit of 55 miles out from the center of Carlisle.

Riders pay the first \$2 of each ride. Carlisle Transportation Committee sends a list of registered riders to Lyft 2x/month to allow people access within a 2-week period. Older adult residents were reluctant to use it at first and Carlisle hypothesized it was due to safety concerns and also technology concerns. Use of service picked up. Only 1 ride in February, 6 in March, 12 in April (when concierge rides started). Concierge rides are completely subsidized, because there was not a mechanism to split the cost.

Galloway reports that there is likely a way to address this to provide a consistent subsidy regardless of how the ride is booked. David Klein is open to speak with this committee in the future if needed. One question is what happens if people book a ride via the concierge at the end of the day and need a return ride at an unknown time, because the transportation coordinator is not in the office. Concierge can book ahead. Unclear how immediate on-demand rides are booked when transportation coordinator is out of the office.

Hadvab inquired about contracting with Go Go Grandparent and Galloway noted that Carlisle is exploring this. Bonenfant suggested the possibility of a call forwarding service that forwards to the cell of an on-call concierge.

Continued Discussion of 3/6/12-Month Action Plan

Sapienza reported that Carlisle already has a pilot and there is no reason to wait for a formal steering committee to start planning Sudbury’s pilot. She suggested beginning and then merging any progress into the official Community Compact program to be directed by the steering committee once the committee is in place. She also suggested telling taxis that there is a set price, based on what will be paid to Lyft or Uber, and not pay taxis additional fees due to distance they need to drive from headquarters. (Some taxi companies have vans, which can be helpful for small groups going to the same or nearby place.)

In terms of Sudbury's pilot, Sapienza noted that one way to proceed is to put aside a set amount of money and once the money runs out, the subsidies will cease or more funding will have to be taken from mitigation or other funds. Galloway said that this was how an earlier, proposed, MetroWest Health Foundation pilot would have been designed.

Carty noted that a 6-month pilot should allow us to identify the origin of rides and to demonstrate the existing needs with data to MWRTA to potentially expand services. Discussed starting with a dollar amount and not limiting rides to increase data collection and reduce barriers to riders. Committee suggested starting at \$20,000 and starting with a geofence and a small copay, similar to the COA vans that are \$1 in town and \$2 outside of town.

Hadvab inquired how and if other transportation options would be encouraged first. Sapienza discussed how other towns have limited social visits to a certain number a month, and also have limited on-demand rides to times and situations when other service are not available due to timing, destination, and immediacy. She reported that Lexington has higher copays of \$7-\$14 based on three geofenced areas around the center of that town.

Hadvab acknowledged the need to take surge pricing into consideration. Frey inquired if copays are very low, how do we ensure that services are used appropriately and allow the funding to go as far as possible. Duchesneau stated that people may need multiple rides a day and we don't want to limit rides during the pilot to gather data. Sapienza noted that Coolidge phase II went before the zoning board and agreed to pay the town \$10,000 toward transportation. These funds will not be available until construction phase progresses.

Carty identified the need to set parameters around prequalification. Sapienza suggested criteria including being on food stamps. Hadvab noted that there is a gap where low income individuals are struggling financially but no longer qualify for food stamps. Members then discussed what type of data should be collected, with a focus on obtaining helpful data for future and better planning, but without being obtrusive to residents. Carty suggested that, during the pilot program, we ask participants to engage in a focus group. Hadvab suggested a data collection that is not requiring residents to attend a meeting due to multiple stressors and lack of transportation that can limit ability to attend meetings. Carty suggested interview or survey and suggested that anyone partaking in the pilot program would be expected to provide some form of feedback as identified by the team.

Carty stated that, if we allocated \$20,000 dollars for subsidies, that could provide about 800 rides (assuming an average ride cost of \$26, which is similar to the average experienced in the CAR pilot). That translates into about 2-3 rides per day. In terms of geofencing, setting a limit of 30 miles from the center of Sudbury should get people to Logan and Worcester. Carty inquired if there should be ride cap, and members suggested pegging the rider copay to that charged by the CoA van: \$1 each way in town, \$2 each way in contiguous towns, and \$10 for towns beyond that up to 30 miles.

Sapienza noted that extenuating circumstances can be taken into account as needed during the pilot and beyond. Carty inquired if we want to cap the number of rides per month. Committee decided not to do so during the pilot. Carty recommended a pilot review and to update as needed quarterly. Sapienza reported that usage reports can be provided weekly. Duchesneau inquired if all companies providing rides can provide data in the same format. Galloway will follow up with Carlisle to see how they handle HIPPA concerns. Hadvab noted the difference in data that will be collected in Summer vs. the school year. Team would like to start the pilot as soon as possible and ideally August first to collect summer and fall data.

Frey inquired about how to advertise. Discussed the need to have ongoing and various forms of advertising to ensure that all residents are aware of this service. Discussed post cards, Sudbury TV, newsletters, word of mouth, etc.

Carty inquired which transportation provider to start with. Lyft is smaller but Frey reports more accommodating to people in wheelchairs. Faust stated that Lyft is cheaper but Sapienza reported that there is not a significant difference. In addition, about 65% of drivers work for both Uber and Lyft. Sapienza and Hadvab noted the potential for people to pool rides based on common need. Sapienza inquired how to encourage Uber/Lyft pool or shared ride to common destinations. Carty noted the potential for a copay discount for riders using pool.

Faust inquired about expanding the RIDE through MBTA and expressed frustration due to the fact that the RIDE does not service Sudbury. This is an MBTA program and only services towns with an MBTA station. Sapienza noted the need for additional bus shelters.

Review and Approval of Prior Minutes

Minutes of 12 June 2019: Sapienza moved to approve minutes. Unanimous agreement.

Next steps

- Figure out procurement requirements-Duchesneau
- Loop in town manager- Duchesneau
- Finalize parameters-fees, geofencing, limitations, discounts—all members.
- Figure out requirement for Lyft/Uber/Taxi
- Create registration form-Galloway will look at her past form for past Uber pilot and/or ask Carlisle
- Develop comprehensive marketing plan

Next Meeting

Given the ambitious goal of starting a transportation pilot before the Community Compact Grant process is complete, the group agreed to meet on Tuesday, 2 July 2019, at 9:30 AM at the DPW facility, 75 Old Lancaster Road. This hour-long meeting will be focused on details regarding the Sudbury pilot parameters (fees, geofencing, registration, limits, etc.).

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:54 PM.