

MAGIC “Making the Connections” Program
Steering Committee ZOOM Meeting
Wednesday, May 6, 9-10:17 AM

Participants: Adam Duchesneau (Host: Sudbury), Alice Sapienza (Sudbury), Erica Uriate (Bolton), Travis Pollack (MAPC), Madeleine Blake (Carlisle), Marcia Rasmussen (Concord), Franny Osman (Acton), Austin Cyganiewicz (Acton), Aniko Laszlo (MBTA), Abha Singha (Carlisle CoA), Scott Zadakis (CTC)

Absent: Jesse Steadman (Stow).

After introductions of attendees, Adam began the meeting with reviewing the “to do” list that resulted from the prior meeting of April 14th; added to this agenda was the recent posting of taxi/livery grants by MAPC. What follows is the discussion of these items.

Circulation of Sudbury waiver documents and IMA: Adam distributed these as requested by Marcia Rasmussen (no discussion).

Excerpt of Carlisle Lyft experience: Madeleine summarized the town’s experience based on a recent email from David Klein. The funding of \$5K for this initiative was allocated from CHNA funds. After preliminary meetings with Uber and Lyft, the decision was to enter an agreement with Lyft at the end of January 2019. Although less than a year’s time, this pilot had to terminate in November 2019, because the CHNA funding would end (actually, the town only used \$3K in the 8 months of the pilot). Carlisle provided a \$10 subsidy towards each ride. The individual paid the first \$2; the subsidy then paid the next \$10, and the individual paid for the remainder. All riders had to have their own Lyft account, and the subsidy was limited to four rides/month within a 55-mile geofence from Carlisle center.

The CoA decided not to conduct income “vetting” of riders. Initially, the program was limited to residents 65 years or older; it was then lowered to individuals 50 years and older because of slow ramp-up. David believes the slow start was because of unfamiliarity of riders about TNC usage. CoA started using Lyft’s “concierge” service, and that was more popular (Carlisle paid). Overall, there were about 60 riders, 20 rides/month (the Lyft reports to the town were not that helpful). Because even the 8-month pilot demonstrated that important needs were being met—particularly after-hours and Concierge assistance—the town is continuing but now using some funding from the CoA.

There will be a new CoA director next week (Joan Ingersoll), so a more formal writeup of the experience can be completed. This current pilot (under the same agreement with Lyft) will focus on riders who have smartphones and, thus, try to limit the Concierge option. Initial experience underscored how much administrative work was involved in such transportation services.

Aniko asked how many needed Concierge service, but data were not immediately available. Franny questioned if Carlisle would continue to be part of the Making the Connections program; the answer was a definite “yes.” Alice noted, with regard to the assessment of the Lyft management report, that it was critical to negotiate the required data. Sudbury’s experience with Uber reflected the beneficial outcome of such negotiation. She also confirmed, based on the town’s Transportation Committee efforts, that there is a high administrative effort needed. For all collaborating towns, the grant-funded Program Manager assistance (Nelson/Nygaard) will be crucial.

Travis responded to a query about the slides Dave presented at the initial steering committee meeting that there should be materials on the MAPC website. Travis will send link to all and Aniko can send the actual document to those who need it.

Grant extension due to COVID19: Alice was in touch with Sean Cronin (Senior Deputy Commission of Local Services) about the Community Compact Cabinet grant and the possibility of an extension because of the pandemic measures. Sean recommended getting back in touch with him in 6 months, to let him know our status at that time. He stated that if an extension were needed, it would be given (the end date currently is May 2021).

Amendment language for grant extension: Travis will send Alice the amendment language MAPC used for a grant extension (added to the state’s contract form).

Bolton livery proposal: Erica provided a 2-page memo to the Steering Committee requesting \$4,000 to fund a pilot using the Clinton Livery service. Because her proposal is such an excellent example of how towns can define a desired transportation initiative, it is attached to these minutes. Erica noted that riders would pay the same fee as is paid to the MART van for the Livery service.

Travis asked about dispatch and data collection, and Erica replied that the Bolton CoA would do dispatch for the new livery service, and ride data would continue to be collected manually. She also stated that there should be no problem about after-hours pickup, because the livery would require advance notice to schedule, so this is not an on-demand service (similar to MART, which requires advance notice). Hours per day of service for the livery are expected to be Mon-Fri 8:30 AM- 4 PM. If the pilot achieves what is planned, the CoA would like to extend MART services to include evening activities. Travis specified that the data collection, therefore, should also document services that MART can provide, because they are freed up by livery transportation to medical appointments.

MAPC grants; Travis described the new COVID grants to taxi/livery businesses—announced yesterday--designed to help such businesses become more efficient/effective given competition from TNCs. With current pandemic conditions, the state realizes there is a pressing need for additional transportation (besides public transit) and for other uses such as food delivery. The ap-

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plication went live 5/4/20, and municipalities have until 6/12 to apply for help to vulnerable populations (note: these grants are not for TNCs but taxi/livery businesses). Vulnerable populations include: older adults, veterans, homebound individuals, persons with disabilities, medical staff and first responders, persons facing food insecurity, essential workers [defined by Exec. Order No. 21] without access to an automobile or other transit, and homeless persons.

Funds are available through this calendar year but likely will persist. As Erica stated, even if the state slowly “opens up,” the most vulnerable populations will be last to enter safely. Travis said some grant applications are coming in already, and the funding is open to all listed organizations in the state. Aniko asked how much money was available; Travis could only approximate that there might be hundreds of thousands now, but amounts are not clear yet. Aniko affirmed the beneficial breadth and width of vulnerable populations to be served.

Travis noted that grant proposals should address dispatch, record keeping, etc. Aniko asked if there were any minimal reporting requirements on populations served and purpose of trips, because such data would allow the state to modify funding to focus on what is needed (as opposed to buying vehicles). Travis replied that step 10 in the grant application asks how information will be collected and what will be documented. The purpose is to collect data but not put undue burden on grantees. As Aniko underscored, the transit problem is likely to linger for some time; thus, it is important to put operating money behind meeting these needs. Travis described one initiative in which the Stoneham Senior Center operated as if it were a command center for food insecurity (their system is very complex, however). They process up to 15 orders per day and use town staff and vehicles right now. Travis concluded that one can apply online, and that it is important to describe safety measures that both sides would adhere to (see grant).

Franny suggested that the CTC communities could apply together and perhaps implement an efficient system faster than if each town applied. Scott agreed to bring this up with the members. Travis asked the group what their relevant needs were now, given the grant focus. Alice mentioned food insecurity (especially shopping for at risk residents), as well as work transportation. Franny recommended asking town social workers and Departments of Health for their input. Because of the needs and short timeframe, Alice suggested we set up another meeting focused on only on these grants. Sudbury’s Transportation Committee will be meeting on Friday (5/8), and stakeholders will address the MAPC announcement. Scott stated he would try to convene a small group of the members of CTC next Monday, to address a regional approach to the grants, and Franny volunteered to host a Zoom meeting.

Adam agreed to hold a steering committee meeting focusing on the grants next Wednesday, 5/13, at 9 AM, and ended the Zoom meeting at 10:17 AM. He will send out the invitation to the next meeting.

Town of Bolton - Request for Funding

The Town of Bolton seeks approval from the “Making the Connections” Steering Committee to allocate **\$4,000** of grant funding to Bolton’s microtransit pilot study. Below is a preliminary outline of the study.

Existing Public Transportation:

- Bolton currently participates in MART through the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority providing subsidized public transportation to seniors and disabled residents.
- This service is managed through Bolton’s Council on Aging (COA).
- The MART van can occupy up to eight (8) residents.
- Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- The majority of rides typically carry one (1) resident at a time for routine medical appointments.
- Medical appointments take priority and occupy the MART van for portions of the day (depending on the length of an appointment or location, the MART van may be tied up waiting for a rider).

“Gap” in Existing Public Transportation:

The MART van provides service to limited number of seniors and disabled residents for mostly routine medical appointments. The COA seeks to free up the MART van so that it can be used by more residents for a greater variety of activities (the “gap”).

Proposed Transportation Service to assist in “Filling the Gap”:

- Bolton seeks to contract with Clinton Livery to take on existing routine medical appointments.
- The COA can easily negotiate a contract with Clinton Livery since the anticipated level of service and cost are known.
- Clinton Livery provides curb to curb transportation service.
- It is anticipated that Clinton Livery will charge \$3 per mile.
- Clinton Livery maintains a fleet of vehicles including handicap accessible vans.
- Drivers are well vetted.
- Drivers care for their riders providing a sense of safety and companionship.
- The COA will continue to act as dispatch for the rides.
- The COA will coordinate additional activities for seniors.
 - Grocery shopping
 - Retail shopping
 - Lunch/dinner outings
 - Cultural activities

- Day trips
 - Trip data will be collected from Clinton Livery and MART (waiver?). This data will help to determine if there is need for additional transportation services.
 - The Project Manager’s time/effort will be limited.
 - The need for marketing & outreach will be limited.
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Below is a table of routine medical appointments anticipated to be fulfilled by Clinton Livery. These appointments are extrapolated from 2018/2019 MART usage data and costs are based on Clinton Livery pricing (\$3 per mile).

Medical Facility	Location	Average Mileage	Average #of Trips	Price per Trip	Total
Acton Medical	Acton	13 miles	15	\$39	\$585
Clinton Hospital	Clinton	5 miles	3	\$15	\$45
Edward Kennedy Health Ctr	Worcester	17 miles	12	\$51	\$612
Doctor’s Office	Worcester	19 miles	12	\$57	\$684
UMass Memorial	Worcester	18 miles	10	\$54	\$540
Marlborough Hospital	Marlborough	9 miles	40	\$27	\$1080
Doctor’s Office	Marlborough	10 miles	5	\$30	\$150
Dentist’s Office	Westborough	14 miles	4	\$42	\$168
Reliant Medical	Worcester	10 miles	3	\$30	\$90
Reliant Medical	Leominster	5 miles	3	\$15	\$45
Total Cost			107		\$3,999

Anticipated Outcome:

- More seniors and disabled residents use MART.
- The COA offers a greater variety of activities to seniors.
- Seniors become more engaged and less isolated.
- The transition from MART to Clinton Livery is seamless for existing riders.

Regards,

Erica Uriarte, Town Planner