

MAPC Grant Proposal

As reviewed 8/21/2020

Program Description

Sudbury, a rural and car-dependent town, is seeking to provide transportation to (1) medical appointments for older residents, veterans, persons with disabilities, and (2) work and medical care for financially vulnerable residents during this national emergency. The town intends to engage two taxi businesses; one is contiguous to Sudbury (Tommy's Taxi in Framingham) but has no WAV service, and the other does provide WAV service from Natick (JFK Taxi).

Data from a Sudbury Livability Needs Assessment, completed in 2019, revealed that transportation to medical services was often a challenge for older residents, because of time and distance limitations for the Council on Aging vans. Another source of medical transportation, FISH (friends in service helping), was becoming scarce as those volunteer drivers aged and left the program. Most troubling, 42% of residents with a disability limiting driving temporarily or permanently "had missed, canceled, or rescheduled a medical appointment due to lack of transportation;" and, more than a third of residents who are not financially secure have trouble with access to physical and mental health resources.

Not surprisingly, transportation problems have been compounded by the COVID pandemic. Council on Aging vans are not yet running and, because of patient safety, will keep rider numbers at a minimum. At the same time, older residents with chronic and other conditions needing monitoring--who delayed seeking it earlier--and residents living with disabilities now require transportation to follow-up care within Sudbury and/or in Concord and Framingham. In addition, a number of financially stressed residents also need transportation to work as well as to health-care services. For this reason, an emergency partnership with Tommy's and JFK taxi companies is very important to town agencies dealing with the above resident concerns (e.g., Council on Aging, Town Social Worker, and Commission on Disabilities), and has strong support of other stakeholders (e.g., Select Board and Public Safety).

Since publication of the COVID-19 grants application, we have been in close communication with the taxi business leaders and we have their published policies on safety practices as dictated by both OSHA and CDC. These businesses also have years of partnering experience with agencies that deal with fragile and vulnerable clients (e.g., South Middlesex Opportunity Council, BayPath Area Agency on Aging). Because their drivers are employees and their leadership team is stable, the town is confident of their level of adherence to safety measures protecting both riders and drivers. Additionally, residents who will be registered for this service will be educated in safe practices by town staff, who will book their appointments.

Trip Request/Dispatch

The total number of taxi and WAV round trips expected to be booked per week (see Attachment 1) will be between 7 and 8. And, eligibility will be pre-determined by relevant Town departments, organizations, and staff according to need. A carefully selected list of individuals will be maintained and monitored by the latter, to assure that priority services can be provided.

The administrative fee will be used to pay for additional hours for the Planning & Zoning Coordinator in the Planning and Community Development Department to serve as dispatcher and to help administer the program. The hourly rate of the Planning & Zoning Coordinator is \$27.84/hour. The \$1,100 administration fee would help to pay for almost 40 additional hours of this person's time for the remainder of the calendar year to administer the program (registering participants, fielding calls, booking rides, etc.). If the program is able to start in Sudbury in July, this would equate to approximately an additional 6.5 hours per month of this person's time to administer the program.

For this reason, we believe that the grant administrative fee (5%) will support additional hours for the Planning & Zoning Coordinator in the Planning and Community Development Department to help administer the program. This individual, in the role of dispatcher, will:

- (1) work closely with Senior Center and related staff, to ensure that rider needs are accommodated and effective communication maintained
- (2) book rides for medical and other requested appointments with the respective company (Tommy's or JFK) at least 24 hours in advance , and
- (3) serve as liaison with the companies and the Town departments, organizations, and staff that have determined rider eligibility, as well as with the Town Transportation Committee that will provide grant oversight.

It is expected that a list with rider and destination information will be sent electronically to each company on a daily basis or as needed, a practice followed by both companies under similar contracts.

Project Budget

See attached detailed cost/use estimates for the total budget of \$23,050 (Attachment 1). In addition to an allocation for proposed round trips by the taxi companies (\$15,000 to Tommy's and \$5,000 for WAV service to JFK), our total project budget includes cost of vehicle cleaning (\$10 per round trip for Tommy's Taxi and \$10 per round trip in the wheelchair accessible vans for JFK Taxi) as well as the 5% administrative fee.

Please note in Attachment 1 that Tommy's Taxi estimates are based on three distinct round trip categories (RIDE 1, RIDE 2, Wild card). Each category is defined by two factors. The first is an assumed distance of a resident from likely locations of health care, shopping, pharmacies, etc., in Sudbury (5, 10, and 24 miles each way, respectively). The second is the probable percentage of

the total budget that would be allocated to round trips in each category (10-, 20-, and 48-mile round trips, respectively). The WAV estimate simply assumes a rider would utilize the entire 3-hour minimum for a round trip to the latter types of destinations.

Because we are initially limiting those who will be provided subsidized rides--given that current estimates of use are of necessity inexact--the Transportation Committee will examine data bi-weekly and, at the midpoint of the grant period (September), determine if changes/improvements are needed and how they could be resourced.

Project Timeline

Assuming funds are awarded in July:

JUNE: Sudbury will define eligibility requirements, contact possible riders, secure needed waivers (data sharing, COVID precautions), communicate and determine priority needs, train dispatch staff in the Planning and Community Development Department, establish data reporting processes internally and with taxi companies. Sudbury Transportation Committee will provide oversight of the grant initiative and ensure a process of continual quality improvement during the grant period.

JULY -SEPTEMBER: Sudbury part-time staff (Planning & Zoning Coordinator) will dispatch rides to companies, liaise with relevant town agencies, collect trip data on weekly basis and report to Transportation Committee on a biweekly basis. Transportation Committee will provide oversight and, at the end of the 3rd month of the grant, complete a short report on performance to goals with recommendations for improvement/changes during the final 3 months

OCTOBER-DECEMBER: As above. In addition, a final white paper on the experience will be completed by the Transportation Committee, when all data and information have been compiled, and used for both internal purposes and external MAPC reporting.

Attachment: COST/USE ESTIMATES FOR MAPC GRANT

Total grant amount sought: \$23,050

- **Tommy's Taxi (\$16,620)**
 - \$15,000 for approx. 162 round trips (see assumptions, below)
 - \$1,620 cleaning (\$10 per round trip X 162 total round trips)
- **JFK Transportation (\$5,360)**
 - \$5,000 for approx. 33 round trips (see assumptions, below)
 - \$330 cleaning (\$10 per WAV round trip X 33 round trips)
- **Sudbury grant administration and dispatch (\$1,100)**
 - Part-time Planning and Zoning Coordinator in Planning and Community Development (see budget details in grant application)

Published rates of partner companies (cleaning cost separate)

Tommy's Taxi (Framingham) Rates: From/to Sudbury and its contiguous towns: \$10 plus \$3.50 for first 2/7th mile plus \$0.50 each 1/7th of mile (i.e., first mile costs \$16; each additional mile costs \$3.50). For trips starting in Framingham, there is no \$10 surcharge.

Cleaning between round trips (see attached procedure): \$5 per ride, \$10 round trip

JFK Taxi (Natick) Rates: For WAV, fee is based on time: \$50/hr, 3-hr minimum.

Cleaning of WAV (see attached procedure): \$10 per round trip

Assumptions: Tommy's Taxi estimates are based on three distinct round trip categories (RIDE 1, RIDE 2, Wild card). Each category is defined by two factors. The first is an assumed distance of a resident from likely locations of health care, shopping, pharmacies, etc., in Sudbury (5, 10, and 24 miles each way, respectively). The second is the probable percentage of the total budget that would be allocated to round trips in each category (10-, 20-, and 48-mile round trips, respectively). The WAV estimate simply assumes a rider would utilize the entire 3-hour minimum for a round trip to the latter types of destinations.

Tommy's Taxi, \$15,000 allocated as follows to three distinct roundtrip categories:

- **RIDE 1, 50% of total (\$7,500):** residents within 5 miles of Shaw's Plaza, including pharmacy, Emerson Medical, dental practices, mental health resources, physical therapy (RT = 10 miles), *\$61 round trip, about 20 round trips/month or about 5 round trips/week*
- **RIDE 2, 40% of total (\$6,000):** residents traveling to Emerson, MetroWest Medical Center, Baker Avenue physician offices, etc. (RT = 20 miles), *\$158 round trip, about 6 round trips/month or about 1 round trip/week*
- **Wild card, 10% of total (\$1,500):** resident traveling 24 miles from pickup to destination; 48-mile round trip costing \$200, *about 1 round trip/month*

JFK Transportation, approx. 33 WAV round trips total

\$5,000 funding over 6 months could provide about 33 round trips total, or between 5 and 6 round trips/month (or about 1 round trip/week) @ \$150/round trip minimum.