



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, 17 December 2021

10:30 AM – 11:45

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Debra Galloway, Adam Duchesneau, Sandy Lasky

Core Members Absent: Dan Nason, Doug Frey

Advisory Group Present:

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nersessian, Mary Warzynski

Guests: Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV), Linda Faust (Guest)

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, and after confirming a quorum was present, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting and called roll at 10:33 AM. Dan C announced this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV for future viewing.

Selection of Clerk

Debra volunteered to take meeting minutes.

Administrative Items

Dan reviewed several items from the recent weeks:

1. Dan reported that the Transportation Committee Annual Report is due to the Select Board office by January 31. Dan will write a draft and bring it to the next Transportation Committee meeting.
2. Dan noted that Adam shared information about the company Spare Labs, an on-demand software provider. Dan will invite them to a future meeting in January.
3. Dan reported that the Select Board voted on their final list of annual goals on Monday night. Transportation is in the top 6, at #6.
4. Dan reported that the Select Board is working on a plan for ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds oversight.

5. Although the information about the Community Connections grant was provided too late for the Committee to consider applying for it, Dan reports that State Rep. Carmine Gentile has talked with the MWRTA about it and hopes to help us plan to apply for this next year.
6. Dan has been in touch with Sudbury Public Schools (SPS) regarding a METCO family that has applied for the GoSudbury Uber program. SPS will create a list of potential METCO families who may need transportation through GoSudbury. The Transportation Committee will probably need to extend the distance limit beyond 25 miles for some of them to participate in the program.
7. Dan reminded Committee members who are volunteers to stop by the Town Clerk's office to be sworn in, if they have not done so, since being reappointed.

MPO Regional Transportation Advisory Council

Sandy attended the Boston MPO Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC) meeting on Wednesday, December 8. The key presentation was: *Perspectives on Regional Transit Authorities, with Collette Aufranc, Wellesley Select Board, and Meghan Jop, Wellesley Executive Director of General Government Services*. Sandy found the information shared quite interesting. There were participants from North and South Shore, as well as Boston and MetroWest. She recommends that the Transportation Committee invite Collette Aufranc, from the Wellesley Select Board, to attend one of our meetings.

Wellesley has been working on Microtransit and has done a lot of analysis that would be valuable to our planning. One challenge noted by them and others at the meeting: riders having to use multiple apps and reservation systems in order to get rides. Another issue noted by Wellesley: they are providing Microtransit to community college in Wellesley, but are not currently able to provide Microtransit rides to the local Newton-Wellesley hospital, although nearby, because it is in a different town.

Dan asked that Sandy provide contact information for the Wellesley Select Board and Alice will provide contact information for Newton transportation system. Dan will invite them to a future meeting.

Making the Connections Meeting

Alice reported that both Acton and Stow were finally able to begin providing Uber services using the Making the Connections grant funding. Unfortunately, Maynard has continued to have difficulty due to insurance and CORI (Criminal Record Check) concerns relative to the Taxi and Uber companies. Alice noted that there has been discussion of making the MPO the lead "contractor" with Uber, for the region, rather than using the Town by Town approach.

Uber Data/Transportation Needs Survey

Alice reports that Dan has evaluated the data from Uber about trip times and wait times. Most drivers for Uber arrived in under 30 minutes from the request time. If riders attempt to request the Uber ride about 30 minutes prior to the time they need to leave, they should not have difficulty arriving on time for an appointment. Debra will ensure that this information is communicated via email to the GoSudbury Uber users. Unfortunately, there were a very small number of outliers - riders who

waited up to 48 minutes for a ride. Debra wondered if the data includes riders who tried to get an Uber ride but found that there were no drivers available.

The resident survey on Transportation needs is still available until sometime through January. Debra will communicate with both GoSudbury Uber and Taxi users that the survey is still active for those who have not participated yet.

MAPC Report

Alice and Adam prepared and submitted the MAPC report on the grant progress for the Taxi program. Alice will share the report with Committee members via email.

Taxi Data

Dan thanked Alice for the Taxi data, he will be processing the data for a report on ridership.

Finances

Adam explained the funding/expenses spreadsheet that he shared with the Committee. The spreadsheet contains the monthly expenses for the two taxi companies' services, as well as for Uber services, along with the Grant funding usage up to Nov. 30, 2021. Adam reported that there is just under \$3,000 in the MAPC funding left and about \$33,000 in the Meadow Walk Mitigation funds. If spending continues at about \$8,000 - \$9,000/month, the funds should last through March 2022.

Grants

Debra shared that she will apply to BayPath Elder Services for grant funding from their allocation of ARPA funds. Applications are due on January 10, for funding to be received from April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. Alice offered to assist with the grant application.

Dan noted that the Sudbury Foundation announced their grant cycle. Applications are due by January 1 for review in April; and due by April 1, for review in June 2022. Dan hopes to put together a transportation funding request for the January 1st deadline. Alice offered to assist with the application if needed.

Dan shared that the Select Board's number one goal is to develop and follow a process for allocating the town's ARPA funds. He does not expect those funds to be allocated before April 2022, but there is the possibility that some of these funds will be allocated toward transportation at that time.

Co-Payment Survey

Sandy developed a survey to ascertain the rider's perspectives on co-payments for both GoSudbury Uber and Taxi services. The survey is designed to help the Committee understand whether riders will adjust their usage with higher co-pays for Uber and/or with a newly added co-pay for Taxi service. Riders will indicate whether a co-pay is too high (they would stop using the program), reasonable (continue to use the program) or too low (they question whether the program could continue).

Sandy included estimated co-pay amounts in the survey but would like the Committee to consider what the actual co-pay levels should be for the purposes of the survey. Alice and Debra have some information on co-pays from other towns. Alice, Debra and Sandy will share information to come up with a reasonable proposed co-payment schedule for both the GoSudbury Taxi and Uber programs.

The second page of the survey includes questions to learn more about riders' feelings about paying higher co-pays: for non-medical appointments; to help others who cannot afford to pay to get a ride to medical appointments; as well as, helping with higher co-pays to help others get to essential work-places.

It was agreed that with the institution of new co-payments, the Committee will want to consider changing the system from co-pays based on town destinations to a mileage-based system. There are several large towns in the area and destinations in those towns can include significant mileage. The Committee may change to a system based on, for example, a certain co-pay for up to 10 miles or up to 15 miles or more per ride. Alice shared that Weston and Newton have designated co-pays based on distance travelled.

Survey Accessibility

Linda Faust, who is visually impaired, shared that she will need to have assistance with participating in the survey as these online surveys are not adaptable to her screen-reader. Linda prefers not to have to use up a staff person's time for this purpose. Kay Bell suggested that perhaps the survey can be adapted. MS Word has some accessibility options that may allow the survey to be adaptable to a screen reader. Sandy will add language to the survey to indicate that people can ask for help if needed. She also wondered if the town has survey software that would provide better accessibility for people who are visually impaired. Sandy will create both an online and a phone version of the survey.

FY 2023 Business Plan for the Select Board

At the conclusion of the Committee's October presentation to the Select Board, we were asked to develop a business plan for sustainability, showing high/medium/low assumptions about ridership and cost. Dan shared on the screen a list of options for the Transportation Committee to consider, provided by Alice.

The three levels of service listed included: low, e.g. continuing with current (or reduced) services; medium, e.g. expanding services (same target riders, additional target riders); and high, e.g. expanding services to map results from the Livable Sudbury survey.

Dan suggested that Committee members add more detail to each of the options. This should include the expected cost, and what is needed to provide the service: staff, vans, cooperation from other stakeholders, etc. Dan offered to put together a description of the low-level or current services option.

There was discussion about whether the Low level of service should be what the current level is, or if it should be more limited? The current level of service would cost about \$85,000-\$100,000 annually. Adam suggested that the cost for the current service level is expensive and may be a lot to ask for from Town Meeting. Should we have scenarios 1 and 2 for the Low plan? For example, Scenario 1 would cost \$50,000, and Scenario 2 would cost \$100,000. What is the cost if we keep running the Taxi service but not the Uber service? We will want to look at data, such as how many riders are being served.

Alice reported that the current level of service is serving a small number of individuals, we might want the current level to be the low-level option, and have the medium and high options expand on that. Sandy shared that a friend of hers recently signed up for the taxi service to assist with her husband getting to treatments. The friend was pleased to learn of the service and will be sharing the information with her local community. Sandy expects that there will continue to be growth in the number of users of the Taxi program.

Dan will elaborate on the low option to include two scenarios, current service level and a more limited level of service (scenarios 1 and 2). Adam will add detail to the medium level option. Alice and Debra will collaborate on the high-level service option. Debra will also work on the commuter service option, perhaps in discussion with the MWRTA.

Funding possibilities for transportation service in FY 2023 include: FY 2023 Town funds, grant funding (MPOs, Sudbury Foundation) and copayments by riders. The Committee members feel that town funding is needed to create sustainable transportation services. Grants will be able to supplement these funds to offer additional support/services.

Action List

Dan Carty – written Annual Report to the Town; invitation of Spare Labs to a future meeting; METCO follow up; process Taxi data to include unique riders, and complete the Sudbury Foundation grant application (with Alice's assistance).

Alice Sapienza – will share the MAPC report with the group; work with Debra to develop the high-level service option and co-payment plans; and assist in the Sudbury Foundation grant application.

Debra Galloway – will apply for the BayPath Elder Services grant funding; will work with Alice on the high-level service option and the copayment plans.

Adam Duchesneau – will work on the medium-level service option.

Sandy Lasky – will further develop and refine the transportation survey on co-payments and survey implementation as well as assist with co-payment decision making.

Next Meeting

The Transportation Committee voted unanimously to set the next meeting for **Friday, January 7, at 10:30 AM** via Zoom.

Meeting Minutes

Dan shared the minutes of the prior meeting and one typo was corrected. Alice moved to approve as amended, Sandy seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Alice moved to conclude the meeting, Debra seconded, and the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:46 AM.