



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, March 4, 2022

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Debra Galloway, Adam Duchesneau, Doug Frey

Core Members Absent: Dan Nason

Advisory Group Present:

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

Guests: Ana Cristina Oliveira, Outreach Specialist, Sudbury Senior Center, Sandy Lasky, Linda Faust, Kay Bell, Lynn Puorro

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:33am. Dan C made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV. He took a roll call, noted a quorum was present, then announced that he was making Adam Duchesneau co-host of the Zoom session.

Selection of Clerk

Debra volunteered to take meeting minutes.

Administrative Updates

Dan reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Updates followed.

SPS/METCO Families

Dan asked Debra and Ana Cristina about the follow up on the two families who participate in the METCO program through Sudbury Public Schools. Ana Cristina reported that one family will not be able to use the Go Sudbury! Uber program because they were hoping to have their child get rides home during early release. Unfortunately, students under age 18 are not allowed to use the Uber program. The other family's phone number was not reachable, so Ana Cristina sent them an email and has not made contact yet. Debra stated that she had been in contact with Superintendent Crozier and Asst. Superintendent Kim Swain with an update.

Follow-up from Last Meeting:

Dan reached out to the Lincoln-Sudbury High School Computer Science club to see if the club members are interested in assisting the Committee with online accessibility for our applications and surveys, or for other possible projects. Dan noted that he emailed during vacation week so that may be the reason why he has not heard back yet.

Dan has contacted Sen. Barrett regarding our transportation pilots and will keep the Committee apprised of any follow-up.

Go Sudbury! Pilot Funding and Program Update

Adam shared the spreadsheet showing the current funding and expenses for the Go Sudbury! Uber and Taxi pilot programs. About \$9,400 of funds remains after February expenditures. Alice and Adam received good news at a recent meeting. Communities in the Making the Connections grant project who have not been able to use their allocated funds voted for them to be reallocated to the Go Sudbury! Programs. MAPC has given permission for this change in the fund use. Adam expects the returned funding to be about \$22,000 – of which Sudbury will receive about two-thirds. Dan offered to draft a letter of thanks to the other communities who have forfeited their grant funds.

Alice reminded the Committee that we had talked about applying for a grant from the Sudbury Foundation. Dan noted that the Foundation follows a seasonal cycle with grant applications. The next cycle may be late spring/summer with funding to follow in the fall. This will not be helpful for our immediate need but Dan will follow up on this process at a later date.

February was a particularly busy month for the Taxi program. Tommy's taxi rides increased from a January total of 31 rides, to a February total of 52 rides, with a concurrent increase in cost to about \$4,000 which is almost double the previous month. Adam noted that a lot of the increase was from one to two riders who were using the program for daily medical rides to Boston. Ana Cristina expects that the increase in cost will most likely extend into March as she knows that there are riders who will have continued need.

The total cost of both Uber and Taxi rides (Tommy's Taxi and JFK Transportation) in February was approximately \$10,600.

Other options to stretch the funding for these programs were explored. The American Cancer Society ride program is not in service at this time. The idea of carpooling riders was also considered. However, due to confidentiality and safety concerns was determined to not be feasible at this time. Using Uber is also an option for medical rides, but availability can be limited in Boston for a ride to Sudbury and vice versa. Linda Faust asked if there were any Boston hospitals providing transportation. Ana Cristina shared that the Boston hospitals do not typically offer transportation to/from Sudbury. She has actually been contacted for help by some of the hospitals when they were looking for transportation for patients.

Debra suggested that the Committee consider asking the Sudbury Council on Aging at their upcoming meeting if they will allocate the remaining Meadow Walk Mitigation funds of \$11,366 toward the Go

Sudbury! Programs. (Meadow Walk mitigation funds were specifically designated for transportation needs.) Dan noted that the COA has been generous with the funds and it would be important to share with them the importance of the program and the need.

MOTION: After discussion, Adam moved that the Transportation Committee request that the Sudbury Council on Aging recommend that the MeadowWalk Mitigation funds be allocated to pay for the Go Sudbury! Uber and Taxi programs. Alice seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

As there is a small number of riders using a large share of the rides, the Committee considered whether to implement any limitations on service or eligibility. The members of the Committee concurred that it would be prudent for Ana Cristina to have a discussion with very frequent riders. This would be to make them aware of the limited funding situation and to encourage those who have other options to use them for some of their transportation needs, for example, one day a week.

There was discussion about whether to consider imposing overall limitations on service or eligibility for the programs. The Committee decided to reserve that option for later if needed. Dan noted that the Committee will want to plan for co-pays and other eligibility and service restrictions if necessary, before we present the Article at Town Meeting. Currently, it is expected that the funding sources we have identified (Making the Connections grant, MeadowWalk Mitigation, if approved, and possibly MAGIC funds) will allow the program to extend to the end of the fiscal year (June 30).

Note: If Town Meeting approves the funding article for Transportation for FY 2023, the funds would be available beginning on July 1, 2022.

Dan reminded the Committee members that we have also requested American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help with the Transportation pilots. The program data clearly provides evidence of need. The Select Board has scheduled an additional ARPA Listening Session to gather additional resident input. He expects that ARPA funding decisions will be made sometime between the Listening session on March 24 and Town Meeting on May 2.

Uber/Taxi Program Survey

The survey was finalized by Sandy and sent out via email by Ana Cristina. Ana Cristina emailed the survey link to 170 riders and has begun to reach out to 15 more by phone.

Dan shared the preliminary data results from the Co-pay Survey and thanked Sandy for creating the survey. There are currently 43 respondents, though one of them was Dan who was testing the program. Twelve respondents left comments. Of the respondents, 58% had not used Uber, and 44% had not used the Taxi program. Sandy reported that none of the respondents' comments indicated that they felt that co-pays or co-pay increases would affect their ridership. Dan confirmed for Linda Faust that the survey was sent to all the people who signed up for both programs.

Sandy asked if we might send out a reminder about the survey and the Committee agreed this would be a good idea. Debra and Ana Cristina will follow up on this.

The Committee decided that March 25 would be a good end date for the survey. That will allow for 3 more weeks for survey participation, but will allow time for data review before the April 1 Transportation Committee meeting.

Dan will extract the current preliminary survey results to a document to share with the Committee.

Select Board Business Plan

Dan shared version 5 of the Select Board Business plan that Alice recently updated. Alice reported that she was able to expand on Scenario 3 by taking the estimated cost of \$1,000,000 and allocating a portion to each town based on the town's population. With this estimation Sudbury would be responsible for approximately \$220,000 toward a regional transportation program amongst the six proposed towns.

Sandy observed that there is only an incremental cost from Scenario 2 to Scenario 3, which results in a more robust program. Alice reported that this is due to economies of scale since the regional approach would serve a larger population. Dan stated that the challenge is to bring all the towns to the table and to have the staff available to coordinate and plan a regional program. He remarked that there is precedent for this as Sudbury is part of the Regional Housing collaborative in which several towns support a staff person to coordinate housing in the area.

Linda Faust wondered why the town of Hudson was not included in the proposed 6 town collaboration. Alice stated that Hudson was originally going to be part of the Making the Connections pilot. Hudson could be added to a future collaboration. Unfortunately, Hudson does not have a commuter rail stop as Lincoln, Concord and Acton do.

Sandy suggested that we communicate with Sen. Barrett to help with coordination with other towns. Dan shared that Sen. Barrett's district no longer includes Sudbury. However, Dan plans to communicate with Senators Barrett and Eldridge, along with Rep. Gentile regarding the current status of the transportation program and possible future collaborations. Dan will also update the Select Board chair regarding the Transportation committee's progress on the Business plan.

Alice will make corrections to the plan and share it with Committee members.

Dan thanked everyone for their work on the business plan and noted that the Uber program has reached the one-year anniversary mark.

Annex Accessible Transportation

Doug is researching information for the next meeting.

Member Updates

Debra shared that the Sudbury Council on Aging Chair will be recommending a new representative to the Transportation Committee at their next meeting on March 14. Dan will ask that the appointment be voted on by the Sudbury Select Board at their March 22 meeting.

Doug will be moving to another town and will leave the Sudbury Commission on Disability as well as the Transportation Committee. He expects that he will be available until the end of April. Kay Bell, Chair of the Commission on Disability, is aware and shared that she will recommend a new representative for Select Board approval as soon as appropriate. We will miss Doug and thank him for his contributions and wish him well!

Emerson Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment

Alice met with Kelsey Magnuson of Emerson Hospital Community Programs and with Franny Osman, Acton Transportation advocate, regarding Emerson Hospital funding for medical transportation. It appears that there is a very limited amount for transportation services and the plan is still being discussed. There will not be funds available to support the Go Sudbury pilots.

Topics for future meeting with MWRTA

The Committee plans to have a discussion with Senator Barrett regarding future plans for transportation before planning a meeting with the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA).

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the February 18, 2022, Transportation Committee meeting were reviewed on screen with edits. Alice moved to approve the minutes, Doug seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Next Meeting

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Friday, March 18th at 10:30 AM via Zoom. Debra reported that she will be on vacation that day and will not attend. Dan, Doug, Alice and Adam all are available and will constitute a quorum for the meeting.

Adjournment

Adam moved to adjourn the meeting, Dan seconded, and the motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 11:39 am.