

## Survey Respondent Context

- Number of residents approved for GoSudbury programs (Uber and taxis, as of 3/14/22) = 161
- Survey respondents = 70 = 43% of approved residents
- Among respondents, *unique users* of GoSudbury programs are:
  - 34 unique users of Uber
  - 50 unique users of taxis
  - 7 individuals who use both (i.e., 77 unique users of the combined programs)
  
- **GoSudbury Uber**
  - Number of survey respondents who used Uber at least once = 39 (= 44% of respondents; = 25% of registered)
  - Number of survey respondents who used Uber > 2X = 25 (= 64% of respondents)
  - 40% of survey respondents provided verbatim comments; of those who did:
    - 43% positive (e.g., “it has been so important to help me without a car and being low income it’s wonderful”)
    - 18% negative (e.g., “it was so hard to get a ride last time I tried; I gave up on the program. I would like it to work.”)
    - 49% neutral (e.g., “as far as seniors go we are the best loyal volunteers all around the world”)
  
- **GoSudbury Taxi**
  - Number of survey respondents who used taxis at least once = 35 (+50% of respondents; 24% of registered)
  - Number of survey respondents who used taxis > 2X = 25 (= 64% of respondents)
  - 33% of respondents provided verbatim comments; of those who did:
    - 13% were positive (e.g., “game-changer for our family, when juggling medical appointments for my ailing father-in-law on dialysis while our two children were in hybrid school during the pandemic—thank you!”)
    - 23% were negative (e.g., “one out of three chemotherapy trips to Emerson Hospital was so late I had to drive myself to the appointment”)
    - 64% were neutral (e.g., “is there a schedule for when this service runs?”)

## Some Inferences From Comments

Two issues stand out from the verbatim comments provided by survey respondents: the importance of communication about transportation, and the importance of transportation in general.

**Importance of Communication.** Communications about the GoSudbury programs should be evaluated for clarity and (especially) reach. Fewer than half of the residents who are approved for the programs use the services, and a number of comments imply that even those registered and approved do not fully understand the services.

Of the four target groups that are eligible for the current programs (seniors, people with a disability affecting driving, financially vulnerable, and veterans), only a small percentage has applied and been approved. For example, recent demographics for the town show that about 4,000 residents are 60 years or older (a number of them are also living with a disability limiting driving) and about 500 households (including seniors) can be classified as financially vulnerable.

The question is: Have these residents and households received effective information on available transportation programs? One respondent to the survey noted:

You're assuming that EVERY senior has access to a smart phone with this application. The low-income seniors or disabled can't afford cable television nor do they receive the CoA newsletter when this program was first launched. Many don't know of its existence due to poor communication from the CoA and no Town Crier.

**Importance of Transportation.** Riders who used the GoSudbury programs commented on their many benefits, including “for people low on funds due to increase in food and who cannot afford clothes.” Services that respondents could “rely on” were described as “a life line” and “game-changer for our family.” Some residents required only a few rides to help with unexpected needs; others required transportation to work or medical appointments on a regular basis. However the service was needed, it met a vital gap.

These comments highlight the challenges many residents face in terms of transportation, which is consistent with findings from the Livable Sudbury needs assessment:

Being able to get where one wants and needs to go helps people maintain social ties, obtain needed goods and services, access local amenities and be engaged with the community. *In this study, transportation issues relating to driving barriers, traffic, walkability, and overall satisfaction with available transit options emerged as significant issues* (emphasis added).

But, critical comments also underscore the importance of transportation. If a driver for either program was late, people “missed appointments, [were] late for medical appointments; [and suffered] long waits out in the cold.” Residents of any age with a disability faced greater problems because of the limited accessible rides available to the GoSudbury programs. Uber does not

Sapienza, DBA  
3.26.22

provide accessible vehicles at this time, and the taxi company that does own such vehicles is heavily booked by organizations with long-term contracts in place. One college-age rider noted it was not possible “to have on demand rides... as a disabled person I can’t take advantage of the things that my peers...can.” Another rider “used the wheelchair van once but it was never available once school started [for the hours requested].”