

To: Sudbury Transportation Committee

Recommendations for Transitioning GoSudbury! Pilots to Town Supported Programs

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Goals:

- Making the programs more sustainable and maintaining resident support
- Continuing to provide transportation services that fill the gaps in need
- Continuing to provide transportation that is accessible to those with financial hardship

Considerations:

- Copayment Survey results
- Sustainability of the program over the years
- Many who need transportation do not have financial need, and may be able to afford copays
- Riders with financial hardship will be able to apply for assistance

Registration

In order to transition the program to the recommended changes, all current riders will need to re-register online (or on paper). This will give them the opportunity to read and understand the changes to eligibility guidelines and copayments. The waivers will be updated and can be signed at the same time.

Eligibility Guidelines

Current:

- Residents 50+
- Residents 18+ with a disability that limits driving
- Residents 18+ with financial need
- Residents who are active duty military or veterans
- Essential workers

Recommended as of July 1, 2022:

- Residents 60+
- Residents 18+ with a disability that limits driving
- Residents 18-59 with financial need
- Residents who are active duty military or veterans
- ADULTS 18+ WHO WORK IN SUDBURY AND MEET ONE OF THE ABOVE QUALIFICATIONS.

We would recommend eliminating the Essential Worker category that was included as part of grant funding during the early days of the pandemic.

Our policy is the ride must begin or end in Sudbury. A number of non-residents may work in Sudbury. If a worker qualifies (age, financial status, disability, etc) then s/he should be eligible. We also have Metco parents who may need to use the service.

Please note: the category “Residents 50+” has been changed to “Residents 60+”. Residents who are aged 50-59 will be considered for the program if they are eligible for financial need.

Recommended Copayment Changes

GoSudbury! Uber

Utilizing information from Sandy’s survey, we are offering for consideration the following copay structure.

Uber is a less costly form of transportation, but the fees have increased in recent months, due to fuel costs and other factors. In addition, Uber is on-demand, available 24 hours a day (in theory), and for any ride purpose.

GoSudbury! Uber Program Copayment Structure*			
	Current	Recommended	Copay Survey “Reasonable” Rates
Within Sudbury	\$1	\$3	\$5
Surrounding towns	\$2		
Beyond surrounding towns up to 35 miles	\$10		
5-10 miles outside of Sudbury		\$7.50	\$5
10-20 miles outside of Sudbury		\$15	\$10
20 – 35 miles outside of Sudbury		\$25	\$15

*Residents and workers with financial need will apply through Ana Cristina, Outreach Specialist at the Sudbury Senior Center. Documentation will be required: for example, MassHealth eligibility, LIHEAP (Fuel Assistance), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or other public assistance documentation.

Financial Need Option

Residents with financial need could have their costs subsidized by Uber gift cards purchased for the program by the Senior Center utilizing the funds allocated by the town. For example, several \$15 gift cards might be purchased. A rider who has financial need and who needs to use the program 1x week to go to Boston might be allocated four \$15 gift cards to help subsidize the cost.

GoSudbury! Taxi Program

The Taxi program will continue to be for non-urgent health care trips only. The Taxi program is more expensive but does offer wheelchair accessible vehicles and scheduled rides. The hours are more limited than for the Uber program.

GoSudbury! Taxi Program Copayment Structure				
	Current	Recommended	Financial Need (not public information)	Copay Survey "Reasonable" Rates
Within Sudbury	No charge	\$7.50	\$3.00	\$5
5-10 miles outside of Sudbury	No charge	\$15.00	\$7.50	\$7.50
11-25 miles outside of Sudbury	No charge	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$10-15**

** Survey responses indicated \$10 for rides 10-20 miles; \$15 for rides 20-35 miles.

Because the taxi program will continue to be used for health care trips only, it is important to keep the copays affordable. On the other hand, the Taxi service is quite expensive and prices are likely to increase. Another consideration: the Sudbury Connection van is available for medical trips in Sudbury, Connection van use can be incentivized for medical trips in town by keeping the Taxi copay higher than the van or Uber copay.

Financial Need Option

Residents with financial need will apply for reduced cost through Ana Cristina, Outreach Specialist at the Sudbury Senior Center. Documentation will be required: for example, MassHealth eligibility, LIHEAP (Fuel Assistance), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), or other public assistance documentation.

Taxi Payment and Reservations

Deciding how to structure the copayments for the taxi program has proved to be challenging. After considering a number of options, including asking riders to pay in advance for each ride, or having riders use a debit account at the dispatch agency or through an app/town account, we offer the following idea. This idea has its merits and flaws, and we are open to discussion of other ideas.

Taxi Copay and Reservation Procedures

Taxi riders will be asked to reserve rides 3 days in advance by contacting the Senior Center for a voucher. Vouchers will be available for each of the 3 ride distances: within Sudbury (\$7.50), 5-10 miles from Sudbury (\$15) or 11-25 miles (\$25) from Sudbury. After rider's request and pay for the voucher, they will contact CrossTown Connect (CTC) dispatch to schedule their ride. CTC will ask if they have purchased their voucher before scheduling the ride.

Payment may be in the form of credit card to the Town of Sudbury or a check mailed to the Senior Center. Credit card payments are subject to the Senior Center setting up a system to accept credit card payments (which is the Senior Center is planning to do for other programs as well).

Both programs will continue to communicate to prospective or current riders that those with financial hardship can contact Ana Cristina at the Senior Center to discuss their needs and accommodations will be available. Persons who have financial need will be asked to provide documentation.

For Both GoSudbury Uber and Taxi Programs

Urgent Situations

In order to provide support for a rider in urgent need of service, a supply of vouchers and/or gift cards will be maintained by the Senior Center and Town Social Worker's office, perhaps with donations of support from community members. The vouchers/gift cards will be for use in an urgent situation for someone who may not usually qualify for financial need, or for someone who has a time sensitive need for service and qualification might impede that service.

Frequency/Cost of Usage

For both the Uber and Taxi programs, there is the possibility of a rider using the program to excess. We continue to understand and expect people to utilize the Uber program for whatever ride purpose is needed (taxis will only be for healthcare related rides). However, we recommend that the Committee consider language in the registration process to ensure that riders understand that should usage appear to be overly excessive or expensive, a staff person will reach out to discuss other options. We should also ensure to include information about the Sudbury Connection van service to encourage use of this service when available and appropriate.

For comparison, below is a summary of policies used by other towns:

- Newton: \$2/trip (NewMo program - all residents; seniors' fee also applies to transportation to certain nearby medical facilities)
- Weston
 - Free taxi transportation to medical appointments to local towns as well as to Boston. Rides are limited to four 1-way rides per month.
 - Discounted rides by JFK transportation; a maximum of 10 vouchers may be purchased each month
 - Zone 1 – Weston: \$5 one-way
 - Zone 2 – Lincoln, Waltham, Wayland, Wellesley: \$12 one-way
 - Zone 3 – Concord, Natick, Newton, Framingham: \$17 one-way
- Lexington
 - Subsidized tax voucher system: Vouchers cost \$5 each and participants can buy a maximum of 12 vouchers per month. Trips cost 1-3 vouchers (\$5-\$15) **each way**, plus an optional tip of \$1-\$3.
 - LexPress busses, various fares (free - \$2 per ride)
- Wayland: medical taxi voucher program
 - Pay \$15 for a book of vouchers worth \$25 in meter time. Depending on the distance you are traveling you may need to purchase multiple books to cover your total fare.
 - For Boston Only: A one way taxi voucher for Boston trips may be purchased for \$42. This will cover the JFK flat rate fare of \$70 for one way to Boston. You will need to purchase two Boston tickets for a round trip.
- Sandwich CoA vans: Suggested donations- Sandwich, Mashpee \$5.00; Bourne, Hyannis \$10.00; Falmouth, Yarmouth \$15.00; Plymouth, Wareham \$20.00
- Scituate Senior Center: Local trips: \$1.75 / \$3.50 round-trip; 10-ride pass: \$15 medical out-of-town: \$10 local round-trip, \$20 (Plymouth or Boston)