

## **Sudbury Transportation Committee Minutes**

**Friday, March 3, 2023**

**Dan Carty, Chair, called the virtual meeting to order at 10:30 AM**

### **Core Members Present on Zoom screen**

Dan Carty, Chair; Deb Galloway, Adam Duchesneau, Bob Lieberman, Alice Sapienza, Kay Bell joined at 10:35, after trouble connecting audio

**Core members absent** - none

**Advisory members present** - none

### **Advisory members absent**

Martha Welsh, Dan Nason, Chief Scott Nix, Representative Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nersessian, Mary Warzynski

**Guests:** Linda Faust

### **Confirmation of quorum**

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:00 AM. Dan Carty made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV. He noted a quorum was present, then announced that he was making Adam Duchesneau co-host of the Zoom session.

### **Selection of Clerk**

Kay volunteered to take the minutes.

### **Review of action items from last meeting**

1. Uber geo-fence: Adam was not able to progress on that yet.
2. ANNEX "beta-test" riders: Ana Cristina is unable to attend today.
3. Middlesex Advisory Group of Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) funds: Adam was not able to submit an invoice yet.
4. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) grant: Alice will report later in meeting.
5. Give rider feedback to Annex: Adam is still working on connecting with them.
6. Check with Town Counsel on eligibility for Annex: Dan is waiting for reply.
7. Data on enrollment/usage: Dan will go through that later in meeting.
8. Website verbiage on change of ride caps for Uber: Dan worked with staff on that.
9. Crosstown Connect: Dan contacted to let them know that thought the Uber ride cap is now raised to 10, taxi remains with a ride cap of 6 per month.
10. Uber riders, inform of increase: Ana did that.

11. Adjustment to Uber dashboard to allow 10 rides: Adam did that.
12. How to receive donations: Debra will reach out to Dennis Keohane on that.

### **Today's meeting items**

1. Financial update
2. Rider data
3. Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) meeting – postponed, but some feedback is in
4. Minutes – Feb 17, 2023
5. Prep for town meeting
6. Annex operationalizing
7. Hybrid meetings, if needed – some rooms will have equipment ready soon; Adam shared that he has learned that the MA House has passed a budget item that would extend remote meeting option to end of March 2025. No action so far from Senate.

### **Finances**

1. Dan shared the file he had worked on: Of the \$87,000 we received for the taxi program recently, \$81,143.65 remains. With the average monthly spending over the last six months, he projected the current funds would last to December 2023.
2. For the Uber program, starting with the \$100,000 that Town Meeting provided we have \$22,561.43 remaining. At the rate of spending for the last six months the funds would last until August 2023.
3. This is a conservative and somewhat inexact projection; there are variations in different months, but it's useful and clear. Bob noted that with the increase in the ride cap to 10 per month for Uber we'll need to observe the change in pattern.
4. Kay asked if there is a seasonal pattern we see over a year. Dan noted that the December/January ride usage drops a little for both programs.
5. Alice asked if Dan could footnote where the changes in ride caps were in the months, having gone down and now increasing for Uber.

### **Rider Data and Town Meeting Report**

1. Dan shared a table Alice had generated: It showed November 2022 through January 2023 listing number of rides overall and number of unique riders for both taxi and Uber. Dan worked with the Alice's rides data and anonymized enrollment data, covering four months for each program.
2. Taxi: 157 enrolled, 44 users, 685 rides
3. Uber: 192 enrolled, 55 users, 338 rides
4. There were 87 (rather than 99) unique users because 12 people took rides in both programs.
5. Dan shared individual usage data over recent four months that showed very few users had taken rides in numbers exceeding the current monthly caps of taxi (6) and Uber (10), even among those 12 using both programs. Dan will continue to aggregate monthly rider data.

6. Alice asked that Dan include in this reporting a statement stressing the randomized assignment of rider number ID for anonymity and to provide the confidentiality to which the program is committed.
7. Kay suggested that the design of this data presentation tells the story well and that it might be useful to have prior time periods shown in this format for comparative consideration. It could show how we have evolved and adjusted the program in an iterative process.
8. Alice noted that it may be timely to again conduct a user survey, too. Debra agreed.
9. Bob observed that 44 Uber users took 685 rides, and 55 taxi users took 338 rides, meaning 11 fewer riders took twice as many rides demonstrating the importance of the Uber program. And it was noted that an Uber ride is much lower cost than a taxi ride.
10. Dan then shared enrollment data. Going back to July 2022 when everyone was asked to re-enroll:
  11. Uber total: 157, over sixty: 124, financial need: 26, disability: 25, military: 6
  12. Taxi total: 192, over sixty: 169, financial need: 20, disability: 33, military: 5
  13. Components add to more than total enrollees due to some having multiple qualifications.
  14. Dan will add to these data monthly. He plans to “match up” these sets of data.
  15. Bob suggested that Dan correct the January and February lines to 2023 and Dan cheerfully made the edits on the spot.
  16. Debra observed that in the data: Taxi users over 60 years = 88%; Uber users over 60 years = 79%. She commented that perhaps a good name for the taxi program could be Medical Taxi, as that is the intended use.
  17. Alice highlighted, for the presentation, that these data can be termed internal management data. We also are focused on route development and developing a transportation mode model that will make this all fiscally sustainable.
  18. Kay and Alice discussed: explaining who rides now is important and adding that these targeted group with high need is not the full scope of our long-range goals as we also have documented need for transportation of the broader community. Use of the graphs and maps generated by CTPS will be so helpful in showing well what and where the need is. Kay suggests reminding those at Town Meeting that many of them drive and can easily get into their vehicle and just go to the doctor in the city or to Emerson, for example, and that we have residents who don't drive who need to get to those places, too.
19. Dan is tracking when a draft of a presentation for Town Meeting will be needed for the Select Board to approve. No date yet. Alice will help Dan and it will be part of our future work. It will be ten minutes, max. Dan sees “What happened since last year?” as key. Also, “What's next?” Debra noted that number of users was of great interest to the Select Board.
20. Linda Faust, 189 Boston Post Road spoke. She fits three categories of user, over 60, financial need, and disability as she is blind and has hearing loss. She has not used Uber because it cannot serve her properly as a blind person. How can that be captured in the data? And when will Annex get going to serve her transportation needs? Dan sees bringing on Annex as that next step area. Kay points to this as unmet need and Alice noted we can

include that important question the upcoming survey. Kay added that this will get at those in the current user group, and that we have yet to reach beyond.

21. Kay noted that if the latest data that will reflect the recently adjusted ride caps. Dan will strive to place in the most up to date data.

### **AARP Grant Application and CTPS Study Report**

1. AARP Grant is a \$50,000 demonstration project grant. Alice has drafted the application with help from other members. While the project is relatively small, six months with limited hours of operation, it could discover useful data on times and routes in an on-demand, route specific (loop?) offering and provide proof of concept.
2. The route planner from CTPS Alice learned that having just one Metro West Regional Transit Authority van and one driver for six months, it would be possible to test potential MWRTA routes and a “flier” such as a weekend offering to serve the various faith communities.
3. Linda Faust, 189 Boston Post Road, asked if that will be door-to-door service. Alice said the small van will be wheelchair accessible and the service will be curb-to-curb. Debra described the Council on Aging van service as closer to door-to-door as the driver is permitted to assist a passenger if needed. The MWTA van for this demonstration project would be curb to curb, entering the Coolidge and reaching the building entrance and similarly it would stop as close as possible to any store or building entrance as possible.
4. Smart phone call is likely to be the way to book the ride. Dan noted that while this is very early stages it is good to hear the details that will need to be addressed in implementation.
5. Dan shared graphics provided by Blake Acton at CTPS. The first was a graph showing that for combined Taxi and Uber most rides are taken to inside Sudbury destinations with the next most frequent being Boston.
6. Dan showed a map of Sudbury and the area surrounding. Lines showed ride destinations in a radial array. Thicker lines showed the largest number of trips going to Sudbury, Marlborough, Framingham, and Concord. The routes of commuter rail lines are shown, too, and it is clear that very few trips go to any commuter rail because of the difficulty of access it. Implied is a possible next step: to work with MWRTA to get riders more easily to rail stations in the future.
7. Dan shared another ride data map zoomed into Sudbury with eight locations labelled. Five were housing/apartment complexes, three included shopping plazas, and one was the Senior Center. Frequency thickness of lines showed that, indeed, the populations we are targeting are using services, with some destinations within Town. There are a couple of other residential locations that have not yet begun using these services.
8. Dan shared a graph displaying rides taken at each hour of day from before 5:00 AM to after 10:00 PM with each time slot having three bars: weekday, Saturday, and Sunday. Alice has requested the same information broken out for taxi and Uber separately.
9. The next TPS meeting will be Monday, March 6.

10. The AARP grant application is tedious with many items to be filled out. The committee will need to help clarify specifics of what we want to include such as: achieving mode-shifting, like using an on-demand MWRTA van to reach a set of destinations in abutting towns, rather than using Uber. Also, possibly including the weekend faith community rides as a component. Dan thanked Alice for doing “the heavy lifting” on a difficult and important project task. Debra noted that the data showed some early morning usage that might inform this effort.

### **Minutes**

1. Feb 17, 2022: Revised draft minutes from Debra were presented with suggested changes highlighted. Alice moved and Kay seconded that the revised minutes be approved. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

### **Next meeting**

Friday, March 17, 2023, at 11:00 AM

### **Other**

Kay shared that she had occasion to read the agenda of the Framingham Commission on Disability to which a letter the MWRTA was appended which enumerated questions and concerns they have, including the practices of the paratransit drivers having changed since the disruption caused by the pandemic. Where prior times drivers assisted riders from bus to door, that is not happening now. Linda Faust asked if/when will paratransit service might come to Sudbury. Kay clarified that there is no suggestion that paratransit service will be coming to Sudbury as that service provided in Framingham is based on many factors that don't exist in Sudbury.

### **Adjournment**

Kay moved and Debra seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kay Bell.