



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, January 22, 2021

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

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

Core Members Absent: Dan Nason

Advisory Group Present: Lisa Kouchakdjian

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Ellen Joachim

Guests: Linda Faust

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting. Dan made an announcement that 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.

MAPC COVID-19 Taxicab, Livery, Hackney Transportation Partnership Grant and Taxi Program a.k.a. the "Go Sudbury! Taxi Rides Program"

Adam shared the MAPC Taxi Rides Grant Costs file created by him and Alice using data from the taxi rides scheduled by Beth Perry, with the group. According to their calculations on taxi use up to today and projections through the last week of January, they expect that there will be about \$5,000-\$6,000 left in funds for riders to use in February. If the program proceeds without restrictions, it is projected to exceed the funds available. The Committee considered allocating more of the Transportation Mitigation funds that were to be used for the Uber pilot to the Taxi rides program, but decided against it. We want to be able to provide as many funds as possible to the Uber program, in part, to ensure we can get adequate usage data for future planning. Debra suggested that we limit the Taxi Rides program to medical appointments only for the month of February. Others agreed, and the limitation was clarified to include medical, dental and therapy (physical, occupational or mental health)

appointments, which are considered the most critical needs. The program will not be able to provide rides for other purposes, including grocery shopping or pharmacy visits. Alice noted that pharmacies are able to offer delivery of medications. Debra shared that the Senior Center offers a volunteer program that does grocery shopping for those who need it. In addition, Taxi Rides program participants who have a smartphone will be able to sign up for and use the new Uber program, which has a target start date on or around February 1. The Committee is hopeful that the COVID-19 Taxicab, Livery, Hackney Transportation Partnership Grant to extend the Taxi Rides program will receive approval from MAPC. It is expected that the decision will not be made until the end of February at earliest.

Linda Faust is interested in participating in the Uber program, as she will miss not using the Taxi Rides program for shopping and other purposes. Linda will be added to the beta test of the Uber program. Debra will notify Ana Cristina, who will facilitate assistance and training for Linda to use the program.

Lisa Kouchakdjian asked about the original purpose of the Go Sudbury! Taxi program. This program originated from the Urgent COVID-19 Taxicab, Livery, Hackney Partnership Grant. It was considered an emergency grant to assist with COVID-19 related transportation needs, and to benefit both the riders and the taxi companies. The Transportation Committee hoped to stretch funds through the grant end date of February 28. Data about ridership, including what types of rides are needed, and which rider groups are using the transportation (older adults, persons with a disability, veterans, persons with financial need) as well as rides provided will be useful for future planning and advocacy.

Alice Sapienza moved to restrict Go Sudbury! Taxi Rides for February outlays to medical, dental and therapy appointments until further notice. Seconded by Sandy Lasky. Unanimously approved by voice vote.

Dan Carty will reach out to both taxi companies to notify them of the change. Debra will notify Ana Cristina to share this information with the registered riders, via email and phone. Adam will ensure that the Town webpage is updated with this change in the Taxi Rides program. Beth Perry will notify riders as they call in to schedule rides.

Survey Responses

Sandy Lasky noted that, overall, the responses to a satisfaction survey of riders indicated a high level of satisfaction, with an average score of 4.4 to 4.5 out of 5. There were 4 of the respondents who either did not understand the scale or rated their ride experience much lower. She recommends that we reach out to those riders to find out what happened. If warranted, staff should also follow up with the taxi companies about any concerns raised (if not already communicated). Debra will ask Ana Cristina to contact the 4 riders who rated service poorly and to follow up. Linda indicated that she was one of the 4 people who rated some service poorly.

Alice noted that we will need to follow up with a survey to all registered riders when the program ends.

Doug asked about progress on contacting riders who seemed to be overusing the service back in December. After reviewing the data and noting that one of the WAV riders decided to stop using the

service during the surge, only one person was contacted. It turned out she was using the service to get to work.

Go Sudbury! Uber Program

There is a conference call with Uber on Monday, Dan is unable to participate; Debra will participate in his stead, along with Alice and Adam. There will be discussion about co-marketing materials, to ensure the materials are in accordance with both Uber and Go Sudbury! policies. Sandy noted that there is little time to market as beta test is beginning soon. The initial outreach will begin with the current taxi riders.

The program may start on or about February 1. Ana Cristina currently has 5 riders identified; Linda Faust will be the 6th rider in the beta test group. Ana Cristina will contact 5-6 more riders to inform them about the opportunity. She will also contact Linda about training for visually and hearing-impaired users.

Ana Cristina will send rider data to Uber, with Beth Perry as backup. Once riders are approved and their information is sent to Uber they will download the app and set up an account, or if they are already Uber users, they will be invited to add the Go Sudbury account.

Doug asked about Uber's ability to provide WAV rides? Has it changed? Are they working on it? Alice reports that she doesn't think they have found a way to provide this type of service, but we will verify this at the meeting. If Uber is unable to provide rides to those who need a WAV, then the Committee will need to find a way to provide this service, using either JFK or Sudbury Senior Center vans. Debra reported that the Senior Center vans have in the past been used only for in-town and contiguous town service.

Training and instructions should be prepared for the launch. For example, how to download app, the difference between a personal account and Go Sudbury account. Alice mentioned that Uber does have a lot of training information on their website. Debra has also scheduled the TRIPPS organization to provide a virtual Ride Hailing class through the Senior Center in March.

Beta users can help us to figure out what is needed, but providing feedback.

Landham Road and Route 20 Crosswalk

Linda Faust brought up a concern about safety in using the Landham Road crosswalk. She lives at Coolidge at Sudbury which is next to the crosswalk. She has tried to advocate for changes to make it pedestrian friendly and safer. The auditory sounds to indicate when to cross were not loud enough for her and a hearing companion to hear over the traffic noise, and she cannot see due to visual impairment. She suggested a company called Polara from Florida that makes crossing systems for persons who have visual/hearing impairments. Dan shared that this is an important issue, he has advocated for the improvements to this intersection, and recognized that it is better than it was, but not as good as it could be. He will reach out to Dan Nason, DPW Director, about this concern.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the Friday, January 8 Transportation committee were approved as amended, moved by Alice and seconded by Debra. Unanimous approval via voice vote.

Next Meeting

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Friday, January 29, at 10:30 AM.

Follow Up Items

Dan noted that he would send survey data to the entire group. He also stated that he owed Deb and Ana Christina an updated Word version of the signup document.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:34 AM.