

SELECT BOARD SCENARIOS

Prepared by the Sudbury Transportation Committee

Introduction

On 19 October 2021, the Sudbury Transportation Committee presented an update of transportation services to the Select Board. This included a summary of initiatives to date, provided background on transportation in the town and MAGIC region, and concluded with questions about sustaining services beyond *ad hoc* funding opportunities (e.g., MAPC emergency taxi grant program).

In response, the Select Board requested that the committee provide a business plan for sustainability, to be reviewed in the context of 2023 budget cycle.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe three scenarios based on different measures of ride volume and cost:

1. **LOW:** e.g., continuing with current (or reduced) services;
2. **MEDIUM:** e.g., modest expansion of services (additional target riders, additional destinations); and
3. **HIGH:** e.g., expanding transportation to meet needs identified by the Livable Sudbury research.

Each scenario includes assumptions relevant to the above measures. However, certain assumptions apply to all scenarios. These include:

- Rider co-pays will not cover the total cost of providing services. Additional funding (grants, town subsidy, etc.) is necessary.
- Service coverage by a transit authority is economically infeasible. Partnering with these authorities and supplementing with microtransit, as well as regionalizing Council on Aging vehicles, should be part of service design.
- Strong and continuous marketing is required, as is continuous quality improvement processes.
- Although all scenarios should include smartphone app(s), some concierge service must be part of the system, for residents unable to use smartphone/app.
- All scenarios must address environmental concerns; *specifically, the reduction of single-occupancy vehicles (SOV).*ⁱ

The scenarios are described below. Attachments provide background material and additional detail.

Scenario 1 (Low): Do Nothing, Low Cost 1, Low Cost 1

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Do Nothing

With a do nothing approach it is reasonable to expect that the GoSudbury! Taxi and Uber programs would be discontinued. Keeping skeleton versions may be possible with various grants, but as such would be subject to stopping with little to no notice. Any services provided would be with Transportation Committee volunteer and staff time, assuming Transportation Committee is extended by the Select Board beyond its current sunset date (Spring 2022).

Transportation options would return to being only Sudbury Connection Vans and the MWRTA Dial-a-Ride, limited to those aged 60+ or 18+ with a disability verified by a doctor’s note. Services provided are summarized below.

Service	Sudbury Connection Van	MWRTA Dial-a-Ride = MWRide
Service Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Door to door rides · Weekdays, 9:15 AM to 2:30 PM · Wheelchair accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Door to door rides · T & TH 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM · Wheelchair accessible · MWRTA is MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Where do rides go?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · MWF local & 4 nearby towns: Concord, Wayland, Framingham, Marlborough · T & Th local only 	Local, Marlborough, Wayland, Framingham, Natick, Southborough, Ashland, Hopkinton, Holliston
How much is the fare?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · \$ 1 in town, one-way ride · \$ 2 out of town, one-way ride · Personal Care Assistant (PCA) free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · \$ 2 out of town, one-way ride · Personal Care Assistant (PCA) free · No cash: set up account with MWRTA (<i>see Other Notes, below</i>)
What purposes for rides?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Medical/dental appointments · Grocery shopping · Pharmacy · Errands (only Tuesday & Thursday) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Medical/dental appointments · Grocery shopping · Pharmacy & errands · Social/community events

<p>Who is eligible?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sudbury resident · 60+ years · 18+ with disability verified by doctor's note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sudbury resident · 60+ years · 18+ with disability verified by doctor's note
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Low Cost, Option 1: \$50,000/yr

A low-cost option funded at \$50,000/yr would likely yield significantly limited Taxi and Uber services. In late October 2021, the Transportation Committee noted that over a 5-month period (May – Sept) 298 taxi rides (medical appointments only) had been provided at an average cost of \$70.53/ride for a total of approximately \$21,018. Similarly, over a three-month period 456 Uber rides at \$27/ride for a total of \$12,300 were provided. Extrapolating current level service out over an entire year would cost:

Taxi: $(\$21,018/5) * 12 = \$50,443$

Uber: $(\$12,300/3) * 12 = \$49,200$

Funded at \$50,000/yr current service would have to be cut in half. Options would be to significantly restrict both Uber and Taxi by capping the numbers of rides users could take per month, increase co-pays for both services, and/or eliminate the Uber program altogether (running Uber with no taxi is not an option as Uber does not provide wheelchair accessible vehicles).

No new dedicated staff would be an option to manage this scenario. Existing Town staff and Transportation Committee volunteers would be counted on to sustain the program as they do currently.

This scenario is independent of the Sudbury Connection Van and MWRTA Dial-A-Ride services as they are managed outside of the GoSudbury! Taxi and Uber programs.

Low Cost, Option 2: \$100,000/yr

Given the extrapolation above current level service **might** be possible for \$100,000/yr. It would still be prudent to cap rides and/or increase co-pays to ensure funds do not run out before the year is over. Again, no new dedicated staff would be an option to manage this scenario. Existing Town staff and Transportation Committee volunteers would be counted on to sustain the program as they do currently.

This scenario is independent of the Sudbury Connection Van and MWRTA Dial-A-Ride services as they are managed outside of the GoSudbury! Taxi and Uber programs.

Sapienza, 1.7.22

Scenario 2 (Medium): Increased Riders/Services

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Scenario 3 (High): Addressing Livable Sudbury Needs

Scenario 1 addresses transportation needs of the town's highest risk residents; Scenario 2 increases availability of transportation to... Scenario 3 encompasses riders and services from the prior scenarios *and* addresses three priority needs from the Livable Sudbury report (Attachment 1 provides background on the Livable Sudbury research, and Attachment 2 shows results of a question about transportation from the research). The priority needs are as follows:

- (1) Commuters: reduction in SOV traffic in and through Sudbury by means of reliable, efficient, and attractive multi-passenger commuter connections to public transit links;
- (2) Special populations (seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, financially vulnerable): reliable, efficient, and attractive on-demand, door-to-door service both within Sudbury and to specific destinations, with subsidies for those meeting affordability criteria;
- (3) All residents (including children/youth, age TBD): reliable, efficient, and attractive multi-passenger options within Sudbury, to specific destinations, including evenings and weekends.

Assumptions of Scenario 3

In addition to the former assumptions relevant to all scenarios, four assumptions are particular to Scenario 3.

- **Scale.** Given the comparatively small size of Sudbury, provision of transportation services that are affordable implies scale economies achieved by (a) collaboration of multiple towns, (b) regionalization of some common services (e.g., CoA vans), and (c) software appropriate to the desired system (reliable, efficient, attractive). Fortunately, examples of these are readily available.
- **Multiple service providers.** Meeting the three priority needs described above will entail state (e.g., MBTA), regional transit authorities, transportation management, and microtransit providers. Partnerships with bike- and car-share companies may also be considered.
- **Smart applications for riders and providers.** The more complex a system, the greater the efficiencies gained by decentralized software allowing real-time coordination among providers and riders. Again, examples are readily available.
- **Sustainability.** Even with scale economies, rider fares will fund only a small portion of the cost of the desired system. Funds from collaborating towns, transit authorities, and grants, along with intelligent negotiation of rates with microtransit providers, and rider co-pays/fares must sustain the system. Examples are readily available.

For a scenario of this complexity, cost cannot be estimated readily. At this stage, only the following matrix of potential sources and uses of funds is provided:

Source of Funds	Examples	Use of Funds
Collaborating communities	Sudbury, Stow, Maynard, Acton, etc.	Tax levy assigned to subsidies for resident transportation services
Regional Transit Authorities	MWRTA, LRTA, MART	Vehicles and drivers, operating costs, etc., for fixed route and “loop” services
State Transit Authority	MBTA	Public mass transit hubs (commuter rail, etc.) and paratransit within area (RIDE)
Federal grants	ARPA, US DOT, etc.	Transit authority support for above uses, including smart software
State grants	MPO, Community Transit, CCC, etc.	Community support (pilots, subsidies, etc.), including smart software
Demonstration grant agencies	RW Johnson, Ford, etc.	Targeted transportation pilots (health care, reducing social isolation, developing workforce, smartphone education, etc.)
Rider co-pays	Geofence co-pays within and beyond communities; targeted destinations, etc.	Partial support for services
Donations, gift vouchers, etc.	Community residents	Partial support for individuals and/or services

Examples of community transportation systems include the following:

- Acton (town fund for transportation)
- Lexington (bus and taxi)
- Newton (Via system)
- Weston (taxi, CoA van)
- Marin County (TA partnership with Uber).

Attachment 1: The Livable Sudbury Needs Assessment

Transportation is the second of eight domains of community attributes that the World Health Organization characterized as vital to population health and quality of life: physical, social, economic, psychological, etc. During 2018, researchers from UMass Boston's John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies conducted an assessment of the livability of Sudbury. The final report published in 2019 noted:

...In this study, transportation issues relating to driving barriers, traffic, walkability, and overall satisfaction with available transit options emerged as significant issues.... Expanding transportation options for specific segments of the community, such as supported options for those with mobility limitations, was also desirable.

Data from research for the Livable Sudbury report revealed the following (Attachment 1 provides additional detail):

- **Transportation is identified as crucial by a wide range of stakeholders:**
 - Families with children under 18 years
 - Residents age 60+
 - Residents of all ages with a participation limitation
 - Residents of all ages who are not financially secure.
- **The range of specific transportation needs identified implies a variety of options to meet them**
 - After-school transportation for children and youth (fixed route, vans)
 - Transportation to medical appointments, social service appointments, respite opportunities such as adult day care, etc. (scheduled and on-demand)
 - Transportation to shopping, appointments, evening, and weekend services, meetings, and socialization opportunities (shuttles, vans, etc.)
 - Affordable transportation to employment venues, childcare facilities, commuter rail, MBTA routes, as well as services similar to the preceding.
- **A number of the transportation options must be both affordable and accessible**
 - 42% of residents with a participation limitation reported they “had missed, canceled, or rescheduled a medical appointment due to lack of transportation.”
 - More than a third of residents who are not financially secure are not satisfied with their “ability to get where they want to go.”
 - Nearly half of residents 60+ are not satisfied with their “ability to get where they want to go.”
- **Transportation gaps affect all livable domains, reducing the overall “livability” and long-term attractiveness of the town**
 - Lack of transportation limits *social participation*

- Lack of transportation affects overall well-being (*domain of community and health services*)
- Lack of transportation affects *housing* options and limits access to *outdoor spaces*
- Lack of transportation limits *civic participation and employment*
- Lack of transportation can result in segments of the town population “not feeling welcomed” (*respect and social inclusion*).

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Attachment 2: Details on Transportation

Table 4. “Which of the following would you use for trips in Sudbury or surrounding communities, if they were available?”		
Groups reporting lower interest	Type of transportation	Groups reporting higher interest
	Ride-sharing: 50%	Not financially secure (41%) With a participation limitation (32%)
Age 60+ (1%) With a participation limitation (11%)	Afterschool transportation: 35%	With children under 18 at home (61%)
With children under 18 at home (26%)	Fixed-route, fixed-schedule local bus: 31%	Not financially secure (43%) With a participation limitation (47%)
With children under 18 at home (18%)	On-demand local bus/van: 25%	Age 60+ (38%) Not financially secure (31%) With a participation limitation (63%)
	Taxi service: 20%	With a participation limitation (26%)
With children under 18 at home (6%)	Transportation to medical appointments: 14%	Age 60+ (33%) Not financially secure (33%) With a participation limitation (58%)

ⁱ Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization notes: “There is a ... direct relationship between policies that manage parking supply and policies that manage vehicle trip generation [i.e., parking availability increases SOV use].”

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