



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, May 13, 2022

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Adam Duchesneau, Kay Bell, Bob Lieberman, Debra Galloway

Core Members Absent: Dan Nason

Advisory Group Present:

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nerssessian, Mary Warzynski

Guests: Sandy Lasky, Linda Faust, Lynn Puorro

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:32 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 took roll call, noted a quorum was present, then announced that he was making Adam Duchesneau co-host of the Zoom session.

Selection of Clerk

Alice volunteered to take meeting minutes. Dan stated that the normal rota for minute-taking would be: Debra, Alice, Dan, Kay, and Bob.

Administrative Updates

Dan first welcomed Kay Bell to the Committee (taking the place of Doug Frey, who will be missed). Kay asked about the focus of the group and was referred to the charter and material on the website. Dan noted that he has asked the Select Board to renew the Transportation Committee for another year and then listed meeting agenda topics (but not the order) for discussion:

- Town Warrant article (\$100,000 for transportation)
- Update on finances (Adam)
- Grant opportunities; e.g., Sudbury Foundation (Dan), MPO's Community Transportation Technical Assistance Program (Alice)
- Recommendation to Select Board from Business Plan (Alice, Dan)

- Communication of transportation options, including “hot line” (group)
- Bike Safety (from last meeting).

Update on Financial Status

Adam reviewed the expenditures and resources available for the GoSudbury programs via his updated spreadsheet. He said we should have about \$30,000 for the programs (taxi and Uber), including MAPC allocation and remainder of Meadow Walk mitigation. As the program summary showed, we had a large increase in Uber usage between February and March—from 138 rides in February to 223 in March and 249 in April. Despite the increase, the average ride cost has not changed (\$20/ride) for Uber. Because taxi rides are limited to medical appointments, the numbers and cost have been stable (average cost \$74/ride).

We do not know if the Uber increase is the start of a rising trend or if it will stabilize and at what level. Sandy asked about causes for the increase, and Debra noted that there have been new users, and the recent Patch article (sent to the Committee) will likely generate more interest. She also pointed out that one rider had multiple appointments in Boston for medical care, which is now finished, and that another frequent user has found alternatives. Dan stated he will do a deep dive into the Uber statistics for a more detailed analysis.

Adam also reminded the group that we have Uber subsidy money available through the Making the Connections (Community Compact) grant. Initially, we determined we would not use the \$20,000 grant money allocated to subsidies, but that is now a possibility as is drawing on the \$10,000 given to this program by MAGIC.

In terms of taxi funding, Adam said we are good through this calendar year, without drawing on the \$100,000 allocated by the Town. However, given transition from MAPC to Mass Development and information Alice had received from MAPC, there will be less money available for the next funding cycle.

There was a brief discussion of parameters for the GoSudbury programs (set at the start of the initiatives and described on the website), and agreement was reached that we would consider co-pay options and ride limits at the next meeting. To aid in that future discussion, Debra and Alice would review results from Sandy’s earlier survey of riders, as well as information on how other area towns handle these issues. Debra and Alice will distribute a summary of these findings prior to the next meeting.

Dan stated that we began these initiatives explicitly omitting constraints beyond the qualification parameters (e.g., age, financial vulnerability, veteran status, temporary or permanent disability) and that there was no expectation we would “pull the rug out” from residents needing transportation. Even with copays and other limits, exceptions will be available for those in need, as other municipalities have ensured.

An additional related topic (because of the financial implications) was raised: how can transportation services be managed? Does it make sense to have the towns manage the programs or to create a separate nonprofit to do so? Kay said that Lexington had created a nonprofit, and possibly Needham as well, and she would look into this.

Grant Opportunities

Earlier, Dan had submitted a proposal to The Sudbury Foundation for a \$100,000 grant for transportation services. Recently, he met with the new Executive Director, Sonia Shah. She was interested in the proposal and had a question: because the amount we requested would essentially be the quarterly total available, would we be willing to postpone submitting? The group discussed this option. Dan suggested, because the Warrant article had passed, we could withdraw the Sudbury Foundation proposal for perhaps 6 months.

In the meantime, Alice had mentioned the benefit of seeking technical assistance from the MPO and will craft an application for that request. If we even have the possibility of such assistance before we meet with the Select Board on the Business Plan, it will make our recommendation to pursue Scenario 3 (a larger regional approach) even stronger.

Communication

Given the stability of our transportation programs provided by the passage of the Warrant article, Dan brought the group up to date on a possible “hot line” or recorded message about available transportation services. Linda Faust had, at the last meeting, asked if that were possible. Dan said a free Google message could be set up with a 3-minute recording. The purpose would be not to provide the complete menu of services but to note where information would be available and to provide telephone numbers for people who could provide more information (e.g., Senior Center, Planning). Dan asked the group to think about the message, for discussion at the next meeting.

Curtis Middle School

Dan met with members of the Curtis Bike Safety Group, who told him of their desire to have a bike lane on Route 20. Because that is a state road, the process is a fairly complex one (although encouraged under the Complete Streets initiative). He did tell the group about the Rail Trail and the possible bike usage along that corridor and encouraged them to have Curtis students continue to advocate for bike safety and for them (in high school) to continue with these efforts at a broader Town level. Dan and Adam will have an offline discussion about bike safety and bike lanes along Route 20.

Other Updates

- The Transportation Committee still awaits decisions from the Select Board regarding ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds.
- Bob Lieberman has not been receiving Transportation Committee emails (yet).
- Kay Bell wanted to add to the Uber deep dive the question as to how many rides access public transportation (if that detail is possible).
- Adam said the taxi companies want to know if grant funds will cover cleaning in the future (we may not know that till MassDevelopment publishes the grant application on 23 May).
- Debra reported that MWRTA is searching for a new administrator, and she asked members to send her questions that she might ask candidates.
- The Making the Connections grant has been extended through December 2022.

Meeting Minutes

Transportation Committee meeting minutes for 22 April will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Friday, May 27, at 10:30 AM via Zoom.

Actions for Next Meeting

Dan summarized what will be undertaken before May 27:

- Thank-you to Mary Warzynski for her kind words on the Warrant article passage (Dan)
- More detailed Uber data analysis (Dan)
- Notifying Sonia Shah that we will postpone submitting The Sudbury Foundation proposal (Dan)
- Investigating options for managing transportation: Lexington (Kay)
- Seeking technical assistance from the MPO (Alice)
- Issues we may face with procurement, etc., under MassDevelopment's taxi grant (Adam, Alice)
- Bike lane on Route 20 (Dan and Adam)
- Possible transportation services for employees in Sudbury (grocery stores, Target, Emerson Medical), using Sandy's experience with earlier discussions (Dan, Charlie Dunn)
- Future transportation parameters (Debra, Alice)
- Hot line message (all members).

Adjournment

Debra moved to adjourn the meeting, Alice seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.