



## Regional Transportation Advisory Council Meeting

### September 10, 2014 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza,  
Boston, MA

## DRAFT Meeting Summary

### 1. Introductions

David Montgomery, Chair (Needham) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance list, see page 7)

### 2. Chair's Report—*David Montgomery, Chair*

D. Montgomery summarized the topic of community transportation as all transportation services in a community, including fixed route, demand response, public transit, human transportation, town shuttles run by councils on aging and other mobility options. Community transportation aims to remove barriers and improve mobility for all people, especially seniors and people with disabilities. The services include public and private transportation resources in a community that help to meet mobility needs.

D. Montgomery added that the Advisory Council improves its ability to offer well-informed comment and interaction with the MPO as a result of panel discussions like today's forum.

### 3. Community Transportation Forum

#### **A.) Heather Hume – *Panel Moderator, Manager of Paratransit Programs, MBTA and MassDOT***

H. Hume described the Americans with Disabilities Act related services which were provided by THE RIDE, the MBTA's paratransit service system in the greater Boston service area which provided 1.2 million rides in 60 communities in 2013.

H. Hume described some services provided through THE RIDE. The in-person eligibility center is a clearinghouse to help applicants coordinate their applications for service and to fill out necessary registration forms. The service significantly reduces the time it takes to apply for service.

Pilot programs being offered now include THE RIDE's Relief Transit Program, aimed at reaching out to people who cannot afford THE RIDE. A taxi subsidy program is being considered for people who cannot comply with certain requirements of THE RIDE program, such as 24-hour advance call-in is being tested to help meet lifestyle needs of eligible riders.

Structural program changes include adjustments made to service zones which have helped mitigate transfers between vendors, shortening travel-times for riders and reducing program costs for the MBTA.

**B.) Theadora Fisher – Mobility Outreach Coordinator for the MassMobility Initiative, a program of the Office of Human Service Transportation Office (OHST) within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)**

The many consumers requiring transportation services led to the 2001 creation of the OHST to coordinate mobility and manage program transportation costs. Today OHST provides transportation services to 38,000 individual consumers making over a million rides per year.

EOHHS hosts the MassMobility Initiative which increases transportation services to people with disabilities, seniors, and others who need transportation and raises awareness about existing mobility options. Resources through the OHST are available at the website: [www.mass.gov/hst](http://www.mass.gov/hst).

OHST coordination between different services improves efficiencies for fragmented transportation service providers. As a result of the 2011 Executive Order 530 (EO 530), the Paratransit Commission investigated community transportation and paratransit issues and recommended establishing a Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCCCT), hiring a statewide mobility manager and forming Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs).

The RCCs provide a forum for open discussion of local unmet needs, assist with implementation of relevant EO 530 recommendations, communicate policy issues to the SCCCT, improve core services in the system and provide innovative services and new connections to existing services. RCCs are made of diverse groups of stakeholders including local officials, state agencies, community advocates, service providers and employers.

The three Boston-area RCCs are North Shore, Minuteman and MetroWest. Boston Core RCC is being launched. The RCCs are designed to help with transportation coordination activities including vehicle sharing programs, commingling-populations programs, travel instruction services and volunteer drivers programs.

T. Fisher encouraged members to visit the OHST Website (listed above) and to get involved in community transportation by joining an RCC now being formed throughout the Commonwealth. Building partnerships with other towns and organizations will help to prioritize transportation, find shared goals and search for funding sources.

**C.) Sue Temper – Assistant Secretary of Programs, Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs**

Gradually driving less until there is no driving at all describes the way seniors shift to needing door-to-door service, as described by S. Temper.

In Massachusetts, local Councils on Aging (COA), area transportation systems and volunteer programs were funded at \$1.4 million in federal fiscal year 2014 for program planning purposes. With this funding, Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) identify gaps in services and seek to develop community solutions. Currently, the delivery of services to the elderly is cobbled together based on area agency funding, COA local programs and volunteer programs.

COAs have provided 1.3 million local rides using 58 vans, and 28 AAA grants have been given. COA budgets are made locally which preserves local autonomy and system priorities for medical, grocery and senior activities. In some towns, discounted taxi rides are part of the mix of services offered to seniors in need of transportation services.

Volunteer programs filling the needs gap for services to the elderly include Friends in Service to Humanity, a local program that recruits volunteers for primarily medical transportation. AAA recruits volunteers for 1-1 transportation for grocery, medical escort and medical advocacy. COAs share local vans and buses for senior transportation services operated by volunteers.

Boston has both an AAA and a COA operating a shuttle providing mostly medical rides. The Boston COA operates 20 vans that have made 44 thousand rides in federal fiscal year 2013, mostly to medical destinations and connecting seniors to Commission events from pick-up locations. The BCOA also operates a taxi coupon service.

A local program in the North Shore is NEET (Northern Essex Elder Transport). Once operated by Elder Services of Merrimack Valley (ESMV), it now operates in 14 communities offering volunteer medical transportation. The program collaborates with COAs and ESMV to receive ride requests and to recruit volunteers. The service is funded with suggested fare donations and through some financial support from ESMV.

Trip Metro North is another innovative program to provide transportation services to consumers. The program is funded by US DOT FTA 5310 program and pays mileage reimbursement to drivers through the passenger who recruits the driver. This allows for

24/7 transportation as agreeable to both parties with consumers managing a maximum benefit of 150 miles/month at the rate of .50/mile.

Independent Transportation Network of Greater Boston is an innovative program for transportation. This is an annual dues paying membership program. The program offers pre-paid arm-to-arm car service and is about half the price of a taxi ride. Created in Maine 20 years ago, it is now coming to the Boston area. Half the riders have lower income so this program may serve the larger community well.

**D.) Monica Tibbits-Nutt – 128 Business Council Director**

M. Tibbits-Nutt presented a review of her own transportation management association's transportation network, program development, and engagement with private carriers.

The Route 128 Business Council was the first transportation management association (TMA) in the Commonwealth, entering the market 30 years ago. The mission has been to seek local solutions to environmental and transportation issues while building a sustainable community.

Route 128 Business Council has 10 communities served by the Route 128 corridor extending from Needham in the south to Burlington and Woburn in the north. There are 129,000 employees in these communities of which 26,000 are served by the Route 128 Business Council.

Shuttle service available for businesses and residents include Route A, serving Alewife Station to and from the Bay Colony Corporate Center, and Route B serving Alewife Station to and from the Hobbs Brook Office Park. Other shuttle routes connect riders to and from Alewife Station to Windsor Village and to Vox on Two. Inter-local connector service is available to Needham, Waltham and Lexington's Hartwell area. In 2013, the nearly 300,000 shuttle passengers served represented a gas savings of almost 65 thousand gallons.

The 128 Business Council takes a for-profit approach with marketing and branding its services. The ongoing analysis of dimensions of service areas helps to identify new and innovative ways to expand services and get people onto TMA buses. Currently, two buses have received grant funding while the rest are provided by member corporations. Funding the service is dependent on the communities and the private companies served.

**E.) Mike Gowing – Chair, Board of Selectman, Town of Acton, and current Advisory Council vice Chair**

An Acton Health Department Assessment conducted in 2008 identified transportation as the most critical item regarding the community's health. After years of planning, a shuttle service was created to try to meet these needs. It was launched with grant money. A Community Innovation Challenge Grant (CIC) allowed the town to coordinate the services of its shuttle service vans. This led to a steep increase in efficiency in service provision in Acton.

Activities in local service expansion involved several towns in the Acton area providing van service through the use of community COA vans. In addition, private companies with employee vans agreed to use their vans in opening their return trips to people who would be commuting in opposite directions.

Acton created a Transportation Trust to channel all the funds for the cooperative project and more towns and companies are requesting to join in the ongoing effort. The CIC grant is focusing on small pockets of business that need employment-based transportation and are hoping to benefit from the transit traffic.

This community based model shows that communities and businesses can work together for mutual benefits, if someone takes the initiative. The model is transportable and can be applied to other areas of the state and other towns have already made inquiries into the program.

**DISCUSSION:**

H. Hume responded to a question by J. McQueen regarding program redundancies: THE RIDE is public transportation which follows specific rules based on a customer's inability to use fixed-route. This makes it difficult to mix missions but the MBTA is working on making economies whenever possible.

In response to a concern raised by C. Porter that there is potential for wealthier communities to be better served than others, T. Fisher said the distribution of services based on income and community location presents some difficult equity issues that are challenging to resolve.

Information on ride availability and services is making its way to the various COA and TMA websites in the region, stated T. Fisher in response to a question by B. Steinberg on the ease of finding service and schedule information particularly on an *ad hoc* basis.

A single point of service dispatch allows for easier access for general populations. (M. Gowing)

Communications are important, both individually and collectively, in maintaining relationships with the businesses and communities. Annual meetings and ongoing community meetings provide outreach possibilities which over time result in cultivating a natural link to the Council as a general resource. (M. Tibbits-Nutt in response to a question by J. Keegan)

Rideshare programs like Uber and Lift provide helpful last-mile options and will add to the mix of services and markets in communities that have traditionally been underserved. Expanded rideshare programs add a positive presence to communities and ultimately bring diversity and help the public think about transportation in a more holistic way. (H. Hume and M. Tibbits-Nutt, in response to a question by T. Kadzis)

#### **4. Election of Officers – *Steve Olanoff, Immediate Past Chair and Election Committee Chair***

The Election Committee met on August 7, 2014, to consider possible nominees for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2014 – 2015 term. The committee reviewed the members interested in serving as officers of the Advisory Council and voted to recommend nomination of Mike Gowing for Chair, and David Montgomery for Vice Chair. Members were invited to nominate others for these offices. There were no nominations from the floor for either of the offices. Nominations were closed as of the end of the meeting. An election of officers for the 2014 – 2015 term is scheduled for the October 8 meeting. Candidate statements will be distributed prior to the next meeting, and officers will be elected.

#### **5. Minutes – February through June 2014**

Minutes for the Advisory Council meetings of February 12, March 12, April 9, May 14 and June 11 were approved with corrections noted.

#### **6. Chair's Report - David Montgomery, Chair**

Some of the activities of the MPO over the summer include voting to endorse the 2018 Transportation Improvement Program; a presentation from MAPC on MetroNorth Priority Development and Preservation Plan; two amendments to the TIP; presentation on the schedules and visions and goals of the LRTP; MAPC demographics related to the LRTP; and presentation on the Public Participation Plan which is currently distributed for public review and comment.

#### **7. Member Take-Away Points; Old Business, New Business, Member Announcements**

There were none.

#### **8. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.

## ATTENDANCE

### Agencies (MPO & Other non-Voting)

MassDOT - Aeronautics Division  
Old Colony PC

### Agencies (Voting)

EOEEA

### Municipalities (Voting)

Acton  
Cambridge  
Needham

Quincy  
Weymouth

### Municipalities (MPO & Other Non-voting)

Boston

### Citizen Groups

AACT  
Association for Public Transportation  
Boston Society of Architects  
Massachusetts Bus Association  
MassBike  
MassCommute  
MASCO  
Riverside Neighborhood Association  
Route 128 Business Council  
WalkBoston

### Guests

Heather Hume  
Theadora Fisher  
Mary MacGuire  
Pat Sullivan  
Julia Wean  
Ananth Pandran  
Alex Despompdo  
Karen Dumaine  
Gloria Copec-Bent  
Deb Sherman  
John Keegan

### Staff

Matt Archer  
Janie Guion

## Attendee

Steve Rawding  
Paul Chenard

Sue Temper

Mike Gowing  
Katrina Crocker  
David Montgomery; Rhain  
Hoyland  
Susan C. Karim  
Owen MacDonald

Tom Kadzis

Mary Ann Murray  
Barry M. Steinberg  
Schuyler Larrabee  
Mark Sanborn  
Chris Porter  
Julia Wallerice  
Paul Nelson  
Marilyn Wellons  
Monica Tibbits-Nutt  
John McQueen

MBTA  
MassMobility  
AAA SNE  
128 Business Council  
128 Business Council  
TransComm  
ABC - TMA  
Transaction Assoc.  
Transystems Corp.  
Door2Door  
SCM Transportation

David Fargen  
Alicia Wilson