

Neponset Valley Regional Coordinating Council

June 17, 2015

Welcome and Introductions

- The planning committee introduced themselves, and all attendees shared their name, organization, and reason for attending.

Background

- Governor Patrick issued Executive Order 530 in 2011, which established a Commission to look into improving paratransit, human service transportation, and community transportation service quality and efficiency around Massachusetts. For more info: www.tinyurl.com/eo530
- The Commission held six listening sessions around the state and developed a report based on their findings. Published in July 2012, the report included over 60 recommendations, as well as three overarching policy recommendations: establish a Statewide Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCCCT), hire a Statewide Mobility Manager, and foster Regional Coordinating Councils around the state. MassDOT and EOHHS have been working together on the implementation of these recommendations.
- Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) have formed in most regions of the state. Each RCC includes a diverse range of stakeholders. RCC region boundaries are fluid and can change as needed. RCCs look different in each region, reflecting local needs and opportunities.

Brief Presentations on Existing Resources and Models

- Neponset Valley TMA (Karen Dumaine) – a local Transportation Management Association (TMA). TMAs are public/private partnerships offering commuter benefits and alternate transportation options such as shuttles, online ridematching, and an Emergency Ride Home Program to employees of member businesses to decrease drive alone commuting: www.neponsetvalleytma.org
- CrossTown Connect (Scott Zadakis) – a coordinated model in the Acton area where towns have centralized the dispatch for Council on Aging services as part of a municipally-led TMA that also provides TMA services to partnering businesses: <http://crosstown-connect.org/>
- Ride Match (Mary Basilone) – an online, searchable database of public and private transportation options targeted to seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Ride Match was developed by GATRA. Currently, the information is most robust for Southeastern Massachusetts, but they are working on expanding it statewide: www.massridematch.org
 - They can also analyze the data to see what routes people are interested in. From Norwood, people are using Ride Match to search for trips to Boston, Logan Airport, and Dedham
- MassRIDES (Adam Blye) – hosts the NuRide platform, which individuals can use to find carpool partners and earn coupons for carpooling, taking transit, or commuting by walking or biking: www.commute.com/nuride

Open Discussion

- Who are the missing stakeholders from the group? – consumers/riders
- There were detailed questions from Councils on Aging (COAs) about how the CrossTown Connect dispatch system operated
 - Service is constrained to weekdays, no evening or weekend operations

- Dispatch is done centrally by Transaction Associates but vehicles are operated by individual COAs
- COA vans pick up and drop off passengers the most efficient way across towns, not just operate within their own town boundaries
- Comment from the Norwood COA – biggest issues in the region are as follows:
 - There needs to be seamless connection between the RIDE and other ADA paratransit services provided by other RTAs
 - Long distance medical transportation is an urgent unmet need
- Utilizing volunteer services, more specifically, can volunteers provide door-through-door escort to patients who come out of medical treatment exhausted and disoriented?
 - What is the liability of a volunteer? MassMobility has published a report on liability for volunteer driver programs and other community transportation: www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/commissions-and-initiatives/hst/annual-reports.html#insurance
 - Suggestion from the Town of Sharon: Volunteers used to drive their own cars but now there is a “retired” town fleet of vehicles insured by the town
- Affordability of transportation, public or private, is a hardship for many residents
- Extending services in the communities to youth and other populations beyond seniors and people with disabilities
- The MBTA’s inadequate service in the region is a big problem
- How do we provide service for people with language barriers? Many towns have substantial minority populations who need to access transportation services
- There is no consistence in the way towns pay for local transit services. While there is an opportunity to acquire vans with funding from MassDOT via Sec. 5310 or MAP, municipalities are not eligible to apply for funds to operate those vehicles. This area was recommended for MassDOT to look into.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, July 15, 10 to 11:30 AM

Sharon Adult Center & Council on Aging, Lower Level, Sharon Community Center
219 Massapoag Ave, Sharon, MA 02067