Finding and Using Community Transportation, and Advocating to Fill Transportation Gaps

Rachel Fichtenbaum & Joe Bellil

Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council
2019 Independent Living Conference

September 27, 2019
Introductions – Rachel and Joe

MassMobility
• Statewide initiative to increase mobility for people with disabilities, older adults, and low-income commuters
• Raise awareness of existing services
• Foster, develop, and sustain efforts to increase mobility
• www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility

Worcester Transportation Advocacy Coalition
• Federal grant through Easterseals MA
• Encouraging people with disabilities, older adults, and other community members to be part of transportation planning
• https://sites.google.com/view/worcester-transportation-advoc/home
Introductions – you!

• Your name
• Town/region
• What brings you here today? What are you hoping to learn?
Agenda

• Advocacy
• Tools & resources
• Discussion
Advocacy- Having a Seat at the Table

Joe Bellil
VP of Public Affairs & Youth Services
Easterseals Massachusetts

484 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608
jbellil@eastersealsma.org 508-751-6340
Transit Planning 4 All, sponsored by the Administration for Community Living, is an inclusive and coordinated transportation-planning project that has funded a series of pilot projects across the nation, each seeking to increase inclusion in transportation planning and services for people with disabilities and older adults.
Transportation Advocacy Coalition (TAC)

The TAC advocates for reliable, safe, affordable, accessible, dependable transportation that is responsive to the needs of all community residents, particularly of low-income residents, families, people with disabilities and elders who depend on public transportation.

Our meetings usually take place at Easterseals Massachusetts in Worcester on the 3rd Thursday at 11 am of every month. After the WRTA Advisory Committee meeting.
Steering Committee

The Steering Committee individual members are:

- Robert Bilotta
- Michael Kennedy
- Candria Gray

Our project partners are:

- Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)
- Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. (ESWA)
- Center for Living & Working, Inc. (CLW)
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
- Easterseals Massachusetts
WRTA Rider Advisory Committee (RAC)

Join the WRTA’s Rider Advisory Committee to ensure that riders are part of decision-making processes and to advocate for affordable and accessible transportation.

Meetings are open to the public!
First Thursday of every month from 5:15-6:30 PM
Board Room of the WRTA Transit Hub
60 Foster Street
Worcester, MA 01608
The WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Group (TPAG)

The TPAG provides a forum for addressing service related issues that affect people who are seniors (age 60+) and people with disabilities. TPAG addresses all types of WRTA service issues including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, service criteria for WRTA fixed route bus and paratransit services, improving existing services and advising on new services.

The TPAG meets on the third Wednesday of select months from 1:00pm to 2:30pm at the WRTA Hub, 60 Foster Street, Worcester and is open to the public.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission coordinates the meetings.
Pathway of Inclusion

Improvements in Program Planning, Operations and Services

Level 1: Programs Developed for Participants
Level 2: Inform Participants about Programs
Level 3: Consult Participants about Programs
Level 4: Active Participant Involvement in Programs
Level 5: Participants Share Decision Making
Level 6: Participants Play Lead Roles

Less Inclusive
Less Trust
Less Communication

More Inclusive
Increased Trust
More Communication

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Project Objectives

• Support and build on the grassroots efforts of the current Worcester Transportation Advocacy Coalition (TAC)
• Help coalition members survey the transportation needs for their populations
• Encourage more consumers and community members to be engaged in transportation planning
• Provide information to the community on transportation related needs, resources, planning committees, etc.
Project Accomplishment

• Our group helped get one of our steering committee members appointed onto the WRTA Advisory Board.

• We actively supported and hosted 7 Worcester TAC meetings and other activities.

• We supported surveys on older adults, community survey on on-demand services, 1,700 Independent Living Center consumer survey and a community style survey/evaluation for our roundtable.

• Our surveys and Facebook group ads have engaged more participants who are people with disabilities, older adults and their caregivers.

• Over 100 people attended our transportation roundtable.
Phase 2 Goals

• Our first goal is to get a person with a disability appointed to the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) Advisory Board.

• Our second goal comes from our on-demand surveys and transportation roundtable. Participants want more on-demand options that are Accessible, Affordable and Available (AAA).

• Our third goal comes from our surveys, discussions at the TAC and steering committee meetings and from the Transportation Roundtable. We want to establish a reduced fare structure for the WRTA rides.
Looking for a Board Member:

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority | WRTA is looking for an individual, who is a resident of a surrounding town (Not a Worcester resident), to join their Advisory Board and represent the interests of commuters with disabilities.

The requirements are that the person be mobility impaired, have a family member who is mobility impaired, be a caretaker of a person who is mobility impaired or work for an organization that serves the needs of the physically disabled.

Here is a link to the WRTA Advisory Board: [https://www.thertha.com/wrta-advisory-board/](https://www.thertha.com/wrta-advisory-board/)

Please contact [jpell@easternma.org](mailto:jpell@easternma.org) if you have any questions or interest.
Wheelchair Accessible Taxis Needed in Worcester - April 9th, 2019

27 views
More wheelchair-accessible taxis urged for Worcester

By Cyrus Moulton
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Posted Apr 6, 2019 at 7:47 PM Updated Apr 7, 2019 at 1:16 PM

WORCESTER - London has approximately 21,000. Boston has 100. But in Worcester, there is only one wheelchair-accessible taxicab, and members of the local disabled community say one is not enough.
WORCESTER - They’ve crunched the numbers, looked at ridership trends, and examined the potential problems.

And The Research Bureau has concluded that the Worcester Regional Transit Authority is “a perfect candidate” to become a free bus system, saying the $2 million to $3 million cost to making the service free would increase ridership and could be made up through cost savings, increased governmental aid, and partnerships.
Contact Information

https://sites.google.com/view/worcester-transportation-advoc/home

Facebook- Waiting for the bus group
Questions & Answers
TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

TOOLS TO FIND OPTIONS
SUPPORT IN LEARNING TO USE OPTIONS
FUNDING TO EXPAND MOBILITY
Community transportation

All transportation resources in a community that are available to help meet community mobility needs.
Google Transit

transit.google.com
or
maps.google.com
Ride Match

www.massridematch.org
Options from Attleboro to Taunton

From: Attleboro, MA, USA
To: Taunton, Massachusetts, USA

Public Transit Options
Take the The Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority Attleboro / Norton / Taunton (Bus 18) Bus towards Taunton Bloom Terminal.
Depart: Attleboro Transit Center 1:10pm
Arrive: Bloom Bus Terminal (Taunton) 1:45pm

Take the The Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority East Taunton/Raynham Wal-Mart (Bus 8) Bus towards Raynham Walmart.
Depart: Bloom Bus Terminal (Taunton) 2:00pm
Arrive: Silver City Galleria Main Entrance 2:41pm

View Map & Directions

Additional Public & Private Options
Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (Fixed Route)

Customer Service
508-823-8828

Trip Type
Business
Education
Employment
Medical/Healthcare
Other
Recreation
Shopping

Who Can Ride
General Public
People with Disabilities
Seniors
Students
Veterans

Med Wheels (GATRA/United Way)

508-823-8828
Boston hospital trips
Medical/Healthcare
Low Income
People with Disabilities
Seniors
Veterans

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery Program

800-227-2345
Boston hospital trips
Medical/Healthcare
Cancer Patients
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;A Metro Trans. - Bill’s Taxi Service</td>
<td>508-697-0017</td>
<td>Airport service, Boston hospital trips, Education, Employment, Medical/Healthcare, Other, Recreation, Shopping</td>
<td>General Public, MassHealth Recipients, People with Disabilities, Seniors, Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Access</td>
<td>508-837-5738</td>
<td>Adult daycare, Airport service, Medical/Healthcare, Other, Recreation</td>
<td>General Public, MassHealth Recipients, School-age Children, Seniors, Supportive Day Program, Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Class Care Transit Solutions Inc.</td>
<td>781-803-0995</td>
<td>Medical/Healthcare</td>
<td>MassHealth Recipients, People with Disabilities, Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiessling Transportation</td>
<td>800-698-7676</td>
<td>Adult daycare, Dialysis center, Education, Employment, Medical/Healthcare, Other, Recreation, Shopping</td>
<td>DDS-Day Hab, MassHealth Recipients, People with Disabilities, Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taunton Motorized Carriage/Checker Cabs/Cozy Cabs</td>
<td>508-824-5831</td>
<td>Adult daycare, Dialysis center, Education, Medical/Healthcare, Other, Recreation</td>
<td>General Public, MassHealth Recipients, People with Disabilities, Seniors, Veterans</td>
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Travel instruction

The professional activity of teaching individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others how to use fixed-route public transportation independently and safely.
Refer consumers to travel instruction

www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-to-ride-transit-with-travel-instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transit Authority</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td><a href="http://www.berkshirerta.com/traveltraining.php">www.berkshirerta.com/traveltraining.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td>(508) 775-8504 ext. 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td>(508) 823-8828, ext. 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha’s Vineyard Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td>(508) 693-9440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBTA</td>
<td><a href="https://mbta.com/accessibility/travel-instruction-training">https://mbta.com/accessibility/travel-instruction-training</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td>(978) 469-6878</td>
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<tr>
<td>MetroWest Regional Transit Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montachusett Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mrta.us/how_to_ride/travel-training">www.mrta.us/how_to_ride/travel-training</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Valley Transit Authority</td>
<td>pvta.com/traveltraining.php</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Regional Transit Authority</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wrtaparatransit.com/wrta-travel-training.htm">www.wrtaparatransit.com/wrta-travel-training.htm</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Offer travel instruction

- Research & reports

- Professional development
  - Travel Instruction Network
  - Three-day introductory workshops

- Technical assistance
LET'S GET GOING!
Planning for transportation independence

This chart is a starting point to help ensure educators, students and families know their accessible transportation options and can take full advantage of their communities. Transportation education creates a culture that engages students, families, educators, pupil transporters, and public transportation professionals to empower and support student learners. Transportation can begin in grade school and carries students through all their transitions, including to postsecondary education, employment and independent living. There are many options to utilize, below is a graph of different opportunities. Transportation education is especially important for students with disabilities who may have fewer transportation options than their peers without disabilities. Let’s get started!

Safe accessible transportation may include:

**Public Transit**
- Where do I find out about this service?
  - To find out whether public transit is available in your town or region, find your transit authority on this website and then visit their website or contact them to learn what they offer in your area i.e. travel instruction. [www.mass.gov/info-details/public-transportation-in-massachusetts](www.mass.gov/info-details/public-transportation-in-massachusetts)
- Why is this safe?
  - Drivers have been CORI checked by employer
- How can I provide support?
  - Students will explore travel options in their community. Student will learn how to obtain tickets for public transit. Student will learn to understand public transit schedules.

**Paratransit**
- Where do I find out about this service?
  - To find out whether public transit is available in your town or region, find your transit authority on this website and then visit their website or contact them to learn what they offer in your area. [www.mass.gov/topics/accessible-transportation](www.mass.gov/topics/accessible-transportation)
- Why is this safe?
  - Drivers are certified and trained and CORI checked. Door-to-door service with physical assistance if needed.
- School staff can assist the student in filling out the application for paratransit services
- Examples of IEP goals
  - Student will learn to apply for paratransit. Student will learn the policies and rules regarding paratransit. Student will be responsible for scheduling a ride. Student will ensure that sufficient funds are available to use service

**Driver’s License**
- Where do I find out about this service?
  - [www.mass.gov/service-details/driving-resources-in-massachusetts](www.mass.gov/service-details/driving-resources-in-massachusetts)
- Why is this safe?
  - Professionals help people with disabilities get the accommodations they need or learn at an appropriate pace.
- Encourage the student and family to be evaluated by a professional for the possibility of driving independently regardless of the students documented disability
- Examples of IEP goals
  - Student will begin the necessary steps to obtain their driver’s license. Student will download driver’s manual. Sign up for driver’s education classes offered by the school to obtain a learners permit. Secure accommodations for permit test

**Uber/Lyft**
- Where do I find out about this service?
  - Internet, smartphone application
- Why is this safe?
  - Drivers are certified and trained and CORI checked. Door-to-door service with physical assistance if needed. There is also a feature where riders can ‘share their ride’ so that others may track the ride.
- Staff can assist the student in downloading the preferred app on their phone and understanding how it works
- Examples of IEP goals
  - Student will download necessary app and learn to book a ride with assistance leading to independently booking a ride

**Private Transit**
- Where do I find out about this service?
  - Internet, phonebook
- Why is this safe?
  - Curb-to-curb service.
- Staff can assist the student in identifying a private company in their local community and encourage use
- Examples of IEP goals
  - Student will identify a taxi service, schedule their own ride and move toward independent travel.

www.easterseals.com/ma/explore-resources/transportation/transportation-guide.html
Funding for community transportation

Looking for funding for a community transportation service or coordination effort? Check out these federal, state, foundation, and other funding opportunities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Apply today! Upcoming deadlines
- State funding
- Federal funding
- Private funding
- Other fundraising strategies
- Funding for individuals
- Create an organization whose mission is to fundraise for transportation
- Grantwriting tips
- Data sources
- National resources

www.mass.gov/info-details/funding-for-community-transportation
Community Transit Grant Program

• Annual federal “5310” funding distributed competitively by MassDOT
• Enhancing mobility for older adults and people with disabilities – above & beyond ADA
• Capital & operating
• [Website Link]

[Website Link]
How can MassMobility help?

• Share information
  ▪ Newsletter: [www.mass.gov/massmobility-newsletter](http://www.mass.gov/massmobility-newsletter)
  ▪ Website: [www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility)
  ▪ Existing options & best practices

• Provide technical assistance
  ▪ Connect you with potential partners
  ▪ Conduct research
  ▪ Help design & implement projects
Keep in touch!

Rachel Fichtenbaum  
EOHHS Mobility Manager  
MassMobility  
rachel.fichtenbaum@state.ma.us  
(617) 847-3784

www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility  
Twitter @MassMobility

Joe Bellil  
VP of Public Affairs & Youth Services  
Easter Seals Massachusetts  
JBellil@eastersealsma.org  
(508) 751-6340

www.EasterSealsMA.org  
Facebook: EasterSealsMA  
Twitter: @EasterSealsMA

Monthly Newsletter  
www.mass.gov/massmobility-newsletter