



## Topics for Discussion

- **Ways transportation providers have adapted services due to COVID-19**
  - Need to react to changes at other services (MBTA Commuter Rail), business closures, other planned MBTA closures
    - Green Line closure
  - MWRTA: new route dedicated to grocery stores
  - 128 BC: Addition of Shuttle Attendant position to help speed boarding and avoid long waits
  - Reducing vehicle capacity, increasing frequency→ MWRTA looking at using app tech to improve dispatching to make sure riders aren't stranded
- **Policies and practices around transporting riders who have or likely have COVID-19**
  - Easier to communicate with riders/members when policies are developed
  - Fear rooted in lack of information
  - 128 BC: Purchased UV equipment and provided to vendors
- **New or expanded delivery services**
- **Barriers and challenges transportation providers are facing**
  - Need to pivot on the fly
  - Unknowns around future services
  - Financial uncertainty; vendor layoffs due to reduced service
  - Transition period, need to phase reopening
  - Need to communicate with riders/vendors/members
  - Political concerns
  - Marketing around reopening→ encourage use while promoting social distancing
  - Employers skeptical about transit in the short term, public doesn't feel safe on transit
- **Surprising moments of success**
  - Pride in collaboration with other providers
  - Travel training online while school is at home
  - Volunteer driver programs moving training online
  - Increase in interest for volunteering
  - Highlighted need to prioritize folks who rely on transit and bringing those voices to the forefront
  - Free BlueBikes rides for hospital employees→ grant to extend to May; many hospitals seeing importance of offering corporate memberships going forward
  - Opportunity to rethink what commuting looks like in the future
- **Ways that providers would like to collaborate with other providers**
  - Other forums for communication/collaboration→ MPO Transit Working Group, Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs)
  - Between Councils on Aging (COAs) and RTAs on procedures→ MassMobility can assist
    - Concerns around passengers that need physical assistance, access to wheelchair lift
  - Advocating for funding for PPE→ Lack of grant funding available specific to transportation industry

## Other Themes

- Need to prioritize essential workers, POC, EJ communities that rely on transit
- Need to promote transit/walking/biking long term to capitalize on health benefits of decreased traffic
- Need to communicate as situation rapidly changes
- Importance of training for personnel (re: PPE, procedures etc.)

Monica Tibbits-Nutt, 128 Business Council

- Reached out to epidemiologist with expertise in coronavirus, experience working with hospitals
- Built research and operations team around this
- Looking at all aspects of service
  - New cleaning procedures- identify pain points, points of concern about spread
    - Cleaning between every trip
    - Every day and on weekends
    - Only CDC approved products
    - Sourcing and procedures
    - UVC Disinfection- consultation with epidemiologist showed that other methods were not enough, less supply chain challenges, non-toxic and non-corrosive, leaves behind no moisture or residue, reaches surfaces easily missed by traditional cleaning, NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR SCRUBBING/WIPING
    - As much redundancy as possible
  - On the shuttle
    - Driver temperature and health screening
    - Does not certify health
    - PPE
    - plexiglass driver partitions
    - Training, training, training
  - Physical shuttle alterations
  - New seating layouts
    - Maximize space between riders
    - Minimize riders having to pass one another
    - Reduced capacity of shuttles to 8 from 32
    - “Last stop gets on first, first stop gets on last” board in that order→ easier for vehicles with back doors
  - New roles for personnel- two vendors (We Drive You, TransAction corporate shuttles)
    - New Shuttle Attendant to oversee boarding and protocols
    - Clearly marked individual waiting areas
    - Backup driver cleaning supplies and PPE
  - “If it’s something we can control, we have to try and control it”
  - Treating everyone as possibly having the virus
  - Remove guesswork with “Rider Protocols” on website
  - Help for other orgs: 128bc.org; [lispethn@128bc.org](mailto:lispethn@128bc.org)

Susan Barrett, Town of Lexington, Lexpress

- Has a senior taxi and a bus
- Majority of riders youth or seniors
- After school and essential business closed, no youth
- Called and urged seniors to stay home
- Volunteer network stepped forward to do deliveries
- Remaining riders are adults→ work in essential businesses or on essential errands
- Pressure to completely shut down
- Started using Lexpress bus as a door to door service→ no place for drivers to use restroom/wash hands because municipal buildings were closed
- Schedules of riders very disparate→ hourly workers
- After two weeks of running Lexpress as on-demand, switched over to using senior taxi service
- No way to pay bus vendor
- How do we pay for added costs without line item in municipal budget?
- “All the opportunities that normally exist have very specific eligibility requirements”
- “Enhance and simplify public transportation,” “safety net”

Michele Brooks, Trans Action

- Pivot to “meeting people where they are”
- Virtual ways to connect
- A lot of uncertainty about commuting in the future
- What role TMAs can play → we don’t want to return to the levels of traffic congestion we had before the virus
- Center for Urban Transportation Research guides, CDC, insurance agent
- Procedures for cleaning and disinfecting
- Training drivers on how to use PPE correctly and teach others how to do the same
- Effective boarding procedures
- Importance of airflow on vehicles- HVAC
- Marketing to make it clear to riders what is expected of them
- Custom plexiglass enclosures for drivers
- TMAs rely on member dues → financial concerns going forward
- Procedures are costly and time-consuming
- Important to keep investing the time, and be flexible

Rachel Fichtenbaum, MassMobility

- Age Friendly Rhode Island “Upside down times”
- Community transportation providers have risen to the challenge with creativity
- Reframe “trips as access” → shifting passenger trips to delivery runs
- Reaching out with phone calls to keep people company
- Reduced shared trips
- Suspended fare collection, mail in fares
- Great interest in hearing from peers
- Encourage collaboration to overcome shared challenges