

Proposed Letter to Editor

Getting Where You Want To Be Is Not Easy In Sudbury

The Sudbury Planning Board has embarked on a substantial effort to update its Master Plan to meet our current realities and needs to help guide the town forward. Our primary focus and goal is to produce a Master Plan that will guide the expected and unexpected decisions the town will need to address in the next decade.

An opportunity exists for Sudbury to create new, tangible, and substantial added value for its citizens through better transportation options. An increased focus on transportation has already begun in town and is the highest priority in the recent Livable Sudbury Assessment. The needs for new solutions are numerous. Directing attention to both the intrinsic and fiscal value of our citizens' time is making the payback for good solutions worth the investment in time, tax dollars, and other resources.

The value of effective solutions is high and getting higher because transportation is at the center of a wheel of critical needs with spokes including social participation (millennials will not move to Sudbury because they have no connectivity) or reaching health services (think of the value of a missed appointment to a health care provider). One spoke touches on the anxiety of a late diagnosis or a missed pharma refill to a patient of any age. Another spoke speaks to our conservation investments which are not achieving their full potential if we cannot easily and safely get to those great outdoor spaces. Achieving and maintaining well-paying employment relies upon dependable transportation for our citizens as already approximately 8,000 of our residents commute daily to the east for good jobs and financial security. We do not need more studies to know rising commute times by car is a major cost in stress, and valuable personal time is made unavailable because we are in the car or worse trapped in a stalled rail train.

Some solutions could include transport to employment venues and childcare, intra-community (across town lines) transport to Commuter Rail or MBTA ground routes, to regional transportation authority services, to medical transportation and improved after school transportation, as well as others.

Sudbury can best provide these solutions through supporting intra-town partnerships, several of which have already begun to take shape, with paid professionals as well as more volunteers. Collaborations exist such as the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority now being focused on the new Route 20 shuttle to the Riverside Station Greenline; a newer state funded grant helping expand more localized van services for a limited time; and a new Microstranist pilot funded through the state's Community Compact Cabinet Program.

If bringing improved transportation to Sudbury sounds complex, it is. Our Planning Department is now focused on clarifying those opportunities which can return the highest value.

The Master Plan Steering Committee needs your energetic involvement all along this ever-changing road map. Track our website: <https://sudbury.ma.us/masterplan/>

Submitted by Robert May

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