

MASS MOBILITY

In This Issue

[Aging services, RMV partner to assist older adults](#)

[Bernardston finds new uses for COA van](#)

[Shuttle driver fosters community](#)

[Blue Hills RCC creates action plan](#)

[Upcoming webinars](#)

[Reports and tools](#)

[Paid focus group opportunity for MassHealth members](#)

[Job postings](#)

[Paratransit vehicles for sale](#)

[COVID-19 resources](#)

Quick Links

[Contact Us](#)

[MassMobility website](#)

[Follow @MassMobility on Twitter](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Greetings!

Welcome to the September 2020 issue of the **MassMobility** newsletter! In this month's issue, we highlight creative ways organizations are partnering to connect older adults to mobility and nutrition, a shuttle driver who maintained close relationships with riders during the pandemic, and more news related to transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals in Massachusetts.

As summer transitions into autumn, we invite you to join us in observing some annual events related to community mobility:

- [Falls Prevention Awareness Week](#), September 21-25. Falls prevention helps older adults travel safely.
- [Bay State Bike Month](#). Join MassCommute and MassBike for a virtual bike challenge September 19-27. Cycling can be a fun recreational activity, but it can also be an effective and inexpensive way to get to important destinations.

The newsletter is compiled by **MassMobility**, an initiative of the [Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services](#).

Aging services and RMV partner to assist older adults

State and regional agencies partnered to help older adults renew their driver's licenses and access other resources at six RMV locations in September. As drivers age 75 and older are required to renew their license in person, the RMV [announced](#) in early September that Wednesdays at six RMV locations would be dedicated to seniors to facilitate safety and social distancing. The RMV launched this initiative in Watertown on September 2, adding Danvers, Leominster, New Bedford, and South Yarmouth a week later, and also adding Springfield.

The [Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative](#) (MHAC) saw an opportunity to use these designated hours to connect older adults to additional resources, not just driver's licenses. MHAC reached out to the RMV to see if aging services organizations could exhibit at the RMV locations, and RMV leadership responded enthusiastically. MHAC worked with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to alert the Aging Service Access Point (ASAP) network to this opportunity, and ASAPs responded immediately, scheduling staff to attend and gathering tables and supplies on short notice. The RMV arranged for their security staff who greet customers and ask them about COVID symptoms to also ask customers if they need additional resources, and to refer them to the ASAP table if so. "This all came together very quickly because everyone involved recognized the opportunity to connect people to resources," shares James Fuccione, MHAC's Senior Director. The partnering agencies have remained in touch to collaborate on process improvements as needed.

Based on the success of September Wednesdays, the RMV plans to extend Senior Wednesdays into October as well. Older adults interested in renewing their driver's license or state ID card during the [designated senior hours](#) need to make an appointment in advance. Hours vary by location. Older adults can also get in touch with their ASAP directly by contacting [MassOptions](#).

Bernardston finds new uses for COA van

The Council on Aging in Bernardston has been creatively using its van and drivers to serve older adults who previously came to the Senior Center for meals and socializing. Throughout the pandemic, the COA used its van to help older adults get to medical appointments. In early summer, when they heard from the Franklin Regional Transit Authority that they could also use their van for delivery, new possibilities opened up, and the COA got creative. They began offering delivery options for people who could not come to the Senior Center to the lunch pickup, grocery program, and food pantry that the COA was offering onsite.

When the van goes out for delivery, a volunteer accompanies the driver so that the driver can stay with the van. The volunteer goes up to the senior's house, drops off the delivery, and has a distanced, masked conversation through the doorway. This offers the older adults some company, and allows the COA to do a wellness check and alert seniors to other programs that might interest them. "In a small rural place like Bernardston, having the face-to-face connection is so important," emphasizes Hayley Bolton, Director of the Bernardston COA.

Building on the program's success, the COA has also begun bringing seniors a special delivery on their birthdays. They are currently planning how the COA van can help bring some holiday spirit to isolated seniors later this year. "If there's any silver lining to this, it's that this gives us a tremendous opportunity to be creative, and to find new solutions," shares Bolton. "Our drivers are doing a phenomenal job."

Shuttle driver fosters community among riders

Mark Koenig has been driving the Maynard shuttle since it launched four years ago. A retired social worker and therapist, Koenig was looking for something to do when he saw a job posting. He applied and began driving soon after. Operated by [CrossTown Connect](#), the shuttle runs in the morning and evening, bringing Maynard residents to the South Acton train station, while also bringing train commuters the last few miles to their suburban employer sites.

Every month, Koenig received a list of new riders, and he compiled an email list to use to alert riders to schedule changes, snowdays, and other important updates. When the pandemic began to affect Massachusetts and riders stopped commuting, Koenig let riders know that he would start driving again when they were ready to return to work. Throughout the spring and summer, he stayed in touch, sending occasional humorous emails such as photos of the empty commuter rail parking lot. In August, a rider let him know he would be heading back to the office, and Koenig resumed driving.

"It's a really fun job," Koenig shares. "I like the people. The shuttle's riders have become their own community of people. It's nice to see them start riding again."

Blue Hills RCC creates action plan

A new [action plan](#) spells out steps that the Greater Quincy region can take to improve mobility for residents, especially those who are older, have disabilities, or are low-income. The action plan reflects findings from a multi-pronged needs assessment that took place between September 2019 and March 2020.

Recognizing that transportation is a social determinant of health, the [Blue Hills Community Health Alliance](#) (CHNA) formed the [Blue Hills Regional Coordinating Council](#) (BHRCC) on community transportation in early 2019. Staffed by the CHNA, BHRCC applied for and received grants to underwrite a substantive [needs assessment](#) process. With technical assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), BHRCC held community conversations and focus groups around their region, collected and analyzed secondary data, and hosted a design sprint in which stakeholders developed creative approaches to address the challenges. MAPC and the CHNA staff then reviewed the findings, identified themes, and drafted possible action steps. Before finalizing the action plan, they reached back out to BHRCC members in a second set of conversations to see how the draft action steps resonated and get a sense of stakeholders' priorities.

The action plan includes steps to make progress in five areas: communication, regional advocacy, local investment, coordination of resources, and supportive environments. The next step is to engage the larger community in this process, in order to ensure that the proposed actions reflect current community need and include resident voice. After additional community engagement this fall, the BHRCC will move into the third phase of their project, in which they hope to pilot one or more approaches to improve mobility.

Register for a community transportation webinar

Marketing Community Transportation, Sept 30

[Register](#) for a webinar on Marketing Community Transportation, coming up Wednesday, September 30 from 3-4pm. Looking to inform older adults, people with disabilities, and other community members about your transportation service? Wondering how to get riders back onboard? Presenters from [NADTC](#) and [CTAA](#) will highlight [free tools](#) you can use to promote your community transportation service, as well as tips on how to reassure riders about safety during the pandemic. This webinar is jointly organized by [MassMobility](#) and the [Moving Maine Network](#) as part of a webinar series featuring initiatives from Massachusetts and Maine, as well as mobility management best practices from around the country.

Universities Exploring Community Transportation, Oct 8

[Register](#) for a webinar on partnerships between academia and community transportation, coming up October 8 from 2-3pm. This panel will highlight UMass Boston, UMass Medical School, and Babson University discussing their recent efforts to involve students in learning about how access to transportation affects the health and quality of life of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. This webinar is part of [MassDOT's Innovation Series](#).

[Sign up](#) to receive alerts when MassMobility organizes webinars or related events.

New reports and tools

Stay up-to-date with these recent reports and tools:

- [National survey of older adult cyclists](#) - what riders age 50+ have to say about their experiences and preferences, as well as tips and tools for how local leaders and individuals can support safe cycling for older adults
- [Public transit health & safety](#) - national campaign and [tools](#) from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for transit authorities to use to communicate with riders about COVID-19 and safety
- [Responding to COVID-19: How Massachusetts Senior Centers are Adapting](#) - report from the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging at UMass Boston. Researchers found that 42 percent of COAs provided medical transportation during the pandemic, and 40 percent provided grocery and shopping transportation.

And if you're looking to learn more about [transportation, race, and equity](#), check out this [syllabi resource](#) compiled over the summer to help transportation professors integrate race and equity topics into their courses.

Paid focus group opportunity for MassHealth members

PerryUndem - a non-partisan opinion research firm - is seeking MassHealth members who have used PT-1 transportation to get to medical appointments to participate in a small online focus group discussion. You will be asked to share your experiences using PT-1 transportation and will receive \$100 for your time. No personal information will be shared publicly outside of the group discussion. To see if you qualify to participate in this study please contact PerryUndem at 888-261-9344 (toll free) or info@perryundem.com.

Job postings

The Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) is hiring a [Mobility Manager](#).

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission is hiring a [Principal Transit Planner](#).

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) has several [job postings](#) listed, including a Travel Trainer and a Scheduler Statistician Supervisor.

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is hiring a [Senior Program Associate](#). This position is based out of Washington DC.

GLSS sells paratransit vehicles

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) has a number of used paratransit [vehicles for sale](#) from its fleet. Models and years vary, but all are outfitted with Q-strait tie downs and some also include additional safety equipment. A variety of vehicle parts are available as well. If you are interested in learning more, please [contact Marie Castineyra](#) or call (781) 586-8512 or (781) 584-2894.

GLSS continues to offer a range of [mobility management supports](#) to older adults and people with disabilities in Lynn and other North Shore communities.

COVID-19 and community transportation

Thank you

We want to thank all our readers who are on the front lines helping older adults, people with disabilities, and essential workers. We also wish to send a special thank you to all drivers!

Share your experience

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is doing a [survey](#) of how COVID-19 has affected individuals and communities across Massachusetts, including people who did not get sick. Anyone age 14 or older who lives in Massachusetts is invited to take the [survey](#).

Updates

For up-to-date information about a particular transportation service, please contact the transportation provider directly.

For general information, visit these websites:

- [Massachusetts-based information](#) from the Department of Public Health
- [MassHealth information](#)
- [DDS information](#)
- [MRC updates](#)
- [MCB resources](#)
- [DMH updates](#)
- [EOHHS reopening guidelines](#)

In addition, various organizations have compiled COVID-19 resources related to transportation or mobility management:

- [FTA COVID-19 Resource Tool](#)
- [Massachusetts Councils on Aging \(MCOA\)](#)
- [128 Business Council protocols](#)
- [Transportation for Massachusetts \(T4MA\)](#)
- [Community Transportation Association of America \(CTAA\)](#)
- [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center \(NADTC\)](#)
- [National Center for Mobility Management \(NCMM\)](#)
- [Shared Use Mobility Center \(SUMC\)](#)
- [American Public Transit Association \(APTA\)](#)

Follow us on Twitter

Are you on Twitter? If so, follow us [@MassMobility](#) for links to community transportation resources relevant to organizations and agencies here in Massachusetts. If you aren't on Twitter, you can still see our posts online at twitter.com/MassMobility/.

We want to know your stories

If you have suggestions for news items or topics to cover in future newsletters, please [contact us](#) or [submit a guest article](#). Comments, questions, and feedback are also welcome.

Please share this newsletter

Please forward this newsletter widely to others who are interested in mobility management, community transportation, or related topics and encourage them to [subscribe](#) to receive future newsletters and publications.

You can also read [past issues of all MassMobility newsletters](#).

