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## **Middlesex 3 Coalition and the Town of Bedford Win Federal Grant to Expand Transit for Residents**

*Bedford, Massachusetts- June 22, 2016-* The Town of Bedford has partnered with the [Middlesex 3 Transportation Management Association \(M3 TMA\)](#) to win a \$47,000 federal transportation grant through the Massachusetts Community Transit Program. The grant will help to fund a two-year pilot program to launch a resident on-demand shuttle in the Town of Bedford. The Middlesex 3 TMA is a public-private partnership among the communities of Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Westford, and businesses located in the region. Since the Middlesex 3 TMA works with communities on transportation at the regional scale, Town of Bedford Town Manager Richard Reed and Economic Development Coordinator Alyssa Sandoval reached out to the Middlesex 3 TMA to partner on the grant application.

The pilot program represents the first resident-focused transportation initiative for the Middlesex 3 TMA, which, until now has primarily focused on shuttle and carpooling services to area companies and corporate parks, such as The MITRE Corporation, iRobot, E Ink, The District, Crosby Center, and the Xchange. The idea is to start the program in Bedford, which has dedicated staff to support it, and eventually, if successful, expand it out to other Middlesex 3 communities. Acton's CrossTown Connect on-demand shuttle program served as an influential model as the service was first being contemplated.

Through the new service, Town of Bedford officials hope to not only increase transit ridership generally but also to attract new riders - including seniors, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth – who may not have used public transit before. Bedford Selectman Margot Fleischman states "I am delighted that the Town of Bedford is making strides to address the lack of transportation alternatives available to our residents. The need for transportation cuts across all age groups and walks of life, and our new community shuttle will be a great resource for everyone. Developing this pilot program has been an amazing collaborative effort, and it is my hope that it will spearhead future efforts to reduce car-dependency in our region."

The service will also include a dispatch call center that will allow riders to make reservations directly and provide for extensive data collection and analysis on trip requests and ridership, such as popular destinations. As Bedford Economic Development Coordinator, Alyssa Sandoval notes, “by allowing for data collection and analysis, we plan to design and make adjustments to the service as we go forward based on the data we are collecting.”

Aniko Laszlo, Statewide Mobility Manager at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, describes the Middlesex 3 TMA and the Town of Bedford partnership as an innovative model as it “demonstrates how to work collaboratively in solving regional transportation challenges. We hope that the Middlesex 3 project will serve as a role model for other groups working on local mobility problems throughout Massachusetts.”

“This terrific state and local partnership will bring important transportation options to the residents of Bedford,” said State Representative Ken Gordon, who sits on the Joint Committee on Transportation and is a supporter of the Middlesex 3.

“Government can work for the people, and this is one way that we will make the lives of our residents better. This will help our seniors who may not have a car at their disposal. It will address traffic congestion and challenges to our environment. It is an example of the good work that comes when people work together.”

The transit pilot program also has garnered widespread local and regional support from Town of Bedford boards and committees as well as educational institutions, such as Middlesex Community College with campuses in Bedford and Lowell. “At Middlesex Community College, we believe expanding local transit in Bedford and the surrounding region will enable students to gain access to career training that can help them build productive careers in the thriving local economy,” said MCC President James C. Mabry.

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