

Dear Members of the Stockbridge Selectboard,

The Town of Great Barrington seeks to partner with the Town of Stockbridge in applying for a microtransit pilot grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation under Section 5317 to establish a demand-response transit program.

Demand-response transit (DRT) is defined as “public transit that is not traditional fixed-route, fixed-schedule, but rather a service that **responds** in some manner or form to individualized requests or **demand** for transportation service” (NASEM 2009, 3). The proposed pilot would operate using a shared-ride, on-demand model—with true on-request service, similar to a shared-ride Uber or Lyft—with rides bookable by telephone or smartphone application.

The Great Barrington Council on Aging currently provides transportation for Stockbridge seniors and persons with disabilities, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. These trips primarily provide access to medical appointments, access to shopping and pharmacies, and transportation to social events at the Claire Teague Senior Center. The fare is \$3.50 per one-way ride.

In December 2021 and January 2022, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) of South Berkshire County and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) conducted the Berkshire County Microtransit Survey (n = 2,232). This survey was distributed to county residents and asked questions about how likely participants were to use the service, how frequently they would use it and at what times of day (see [Table II](#)).

As a result of this survey, other public input opportunities, a nationwide review of successful services, and extensive stakeholder engagement, the Berkshire County Microtransit Planning Study recommends a 1-year microtransit pilot service in South County—within the municipalities of Great Barrington, Egremont, and Stockbridge. The recommended service would operate Monday through Sunday (see [Table I](#) for recommended pilot hours of operation).

	Start Time	End Time
Monday - Friday	6:30 AM	7:00 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM	7:00 PM
Sunday	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM; 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM	

Table I: Proposed Microtransit Pilot – Service Hours

The municipalities of Stockbridge and Great Barrington are currently served by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) Route 21, which provides hourly local service via Routes 102 and 183, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM – Monday through Saturday. The Main Street – Downtown Stockbridge bus stop received approximately 3 riders per day in each direction during Calendar Year 2021 (per BRTA data). Glendale Post Office, the other BRTA bus stop in the municipality of Stockbridge, saw an average of less than one rider per day in each direction during 2021. The Route 21X, Great Barrington to Pittsfield express, saw less than one rider per month from Stockbridge, in each direction. This route operates three times per day.

The existing BRTA Route 21, in addition to providing a very limited span of service, also services a very small portion of Stockbridge—along Routes 102 and 183. This limits access to area employers, both in Stockbridge and Great Barrington; and housing developments, such as Heaton Court (served through an on-demand arrangement) and Pine Woods (requires crossing Route 102). Since all trips traverse Route 183, it takes around 30 minutes to get to Downtown Great Barrington—about three times the drive time.

The expected likelihood and frequency of demand-response system usage, per survey results are shown below in Table II. 70.5% of Stockbridge respondents indicated they were likely to use the service, with 63.5% indicating frequent use (weekly or greater).

Municipality	Expected Usage Likelihood <sup>1</sup>	Expected Frequent Service Users <sup>2</sup>
Great Barrington	73.9%	57.1%
Stockbridge	70.5%	63.5%
Egremont	63.6%	59.3%

Table II: Expected Usage and Frequency

The proposed pilot zone would include portions of Stockbridge not currently served by BRTA, as well as providing greater access to employment opportunities for lower-income and disabled persons—as well significantly increasing transportation options for seniors.

The overall pilot additional cost, building on existing Great Barrington Council on Aging resources, is estimated to be around \$187,300. The MassDOT grant would provide a 50% operating match of approximately \$93,650—with the remainder to be provided by a local match. The Town of Great Barrington is requesting a commitment of \$10,000 from the Town of Stockbridge. We are also requesting a commitment from the Town of Egremont.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tate Coleman  
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Town of Great Barrington, MA  
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<sup>1</sup> The proportion of respondents who were “Somewhat likely,” “Likely,” or “Very Likely” to use the service.

<sup>2</sup> The proportion of respondents who indicated they would use the service at least once or twice per week (including those who indicated expected daily use).