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## **Transportation in Wellesley – Just What Exactly IS Micro Transit?**

**By Colette Aufranc, Select Board and Mobility Committee and Marybeth Martello, Climate Action Committee**

*This is the second in a series of guest columns about transportation actions in Wellesley to support the town's [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#) and [Climate Action Plan](#) currently in development. The columns are authored by members of the Select Board, Climate Action Committee, Mobility Committee, School Committee, and Trails Committee.*

Changes to transportation behavior in our community are critical to meeting our state and town climate and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals. As our first column explained, recent improvements to the **MBTA Commuter Rail** and “clock face scheduling” means our rail line is now offering regular, hourly, and bi-directional train services to meet regional rail needs. But what if you need door-to-door service? Try micro-transit!

### **What is Micro Transit?**

Micro transit is a curb-to-curb ride share service similar to Uber or Lyft, run by the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). The service is called [MWRTA “Catch Connect.”](#) Currently part of a pilot program and free of charge, Micro Transit helps solve first-mile and last-mile service gaps – the need for a second mode of transportation to reach your end destination. It feeds existing fixed transportation infrastructure – home, work, school, recreation, retail or dining to the green line, train station or bus transfer. Riders using Micro Transit also highlight transportation needs that are not currently serviced by fixed infrastructure and help identify where there are transportation gaps and fixed line service would be worthwhile.

**How to use the MWRTA “Catch Connect” Service.** Like most ride share services, you can access the “Catch Connect” with a smartphone app.

- Download the [“MWRTA Catch” app](#) to a smartphone, set up an account, then use the “connect” button to enter your destination and wait for the transit (usually a mini-bus) to pick you up.
- Use the app anywhere in Wellesley and select destinations outside of Wellesley including Newton Wellesley hospital, Woodland and Waban T stations, Natick Community Center (to link with other Fixed Route bus services), Volante Farms and Trader Joe’s Needham (Catch Connect currently doesn’t offer service for trips in and around Needham.)
- Service is first come, first served; wait times vary but could be up to 30 minutes or more during peak use. Hours are currently 6:45 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Monday through Friday, and may be expanded with additional use.

As with all public transportation operated by MWRTA, the “Catch Connect” service is fully accessible; passengers under 12 years of age must be accompanied; and all passengers are required to wear an appropriate face covering. For now, Catch Connect is free; fares between \$2.00-\$3.00 are expected to start sometime later this fall. MWRTA generally offers fare reductions for senior, disabled and student riders. The MWRTA Catch app also provides

bus schedule and tracking information for their bus network. If you are unable to use the app, “Catch Connect” is also accessible by calling 508-283-5083.

**Meeting Town-wide Climate and Transportation Goals**

Want to catch a ride to and from the grocery store? Have middle school or high school kids who get lunch downtown on half-days and need rides home? Catch the “Catch Connect” this week! Let us know what you think by filling out the MWTRA survey online at <https://bit.ly/3CivaIV>. To take the survey by phone, call 508-206-9218. All survey participants are entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Amazon gift card!

With this convenient shared ride service, we can reduce dependence on single-use vehicles and encourage the adoption and possible expansion of public transportation. Fewer vehicles on the roads also means less congestion. Learn more about Transportation goals for Wellesley by visiting the Public Transportation pages (<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/476/Public-Transportation-Parking> ) on the Town of Wellesley website.

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