

Sally Wray

Mr Lewison

History

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Public transport on the Cape Cod

There is evidence of public transport in the very earliest civilizations, even the mythology of ancient civilizations contain such references. The motivations of these early transport systems were almost all economic. When modes of Transport were in demand, expensive or hard to acquire, solutions were developed at a price which balanced demand.

In 1976 the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) was formed. 1 of 15 rta's in Massachusetts it runs seasonal and year-round bus services throughout the 15 towns on the Cape, as well as on demand door-to-door shared-ride Services through the ADA (American Disability Association) Paratransit and DART. CCRTA also provides scheduled bus services to Boston hospitals.

Thomas Cahir is the administrator for the CCRTA. As I was told on the phone by Fran Moore, the lovely information specialist at the CCRTA, and Mr Cahir himself, Cahir is pronounced as "care", or "care package", as Mr Cahir's father told him. I was also pleasantly surprised by being able to meet and discuss with Christopher Kennedy, the mobility manager (hopefully I said his name right!).

How much utilisation of the CCRTA is there on the Cape?

We had 1.6 million trips last year. We have 400 square miles that we are responsible for and are in our jurisdiction, so that's all of the Cape.

What are the plans for the CCRTA going green?

The whole industry is focusing on going green, as a matter of fact at the conclusion of our interview, Chris and I are heading down to Yarmouth, for an important meeting with the Cape Cod climate change collaborative, because transportation issues, such as greenhouse gasses and fossil fuels that are going into the atmosphere, are coming from transportation entities. There is a focus on electric vehicles and our solar project which will reduce our energy demand by 90+%. We're hesitant to jump right in for a number of reasons. Firstly, because our area of service is much larger than Martha's Vineyard (who have gone green), and we also feel like there is still some research to determine how long the batteries can remain charged and how they react to various climates. We are clearly going to spend our resources on electric vehicles and we've got a 5 year capital electric vehicle plan that we're working on, but we're going slow because we have limited resources.

Where do you receive your funds from?

We depend on all our resources from four different places. One, we receive federal funds from the federal transit administration. Secondly, we also have state contract assistance. Thirdly, we get funds from local assessments, so each of the communities on Cape Cod pay a fee, or assessment, for the services they get. Lastly, we receive money from fares. We charge minimum amounts of money to ride on our service, but it's still about 6.6% of our overall revenue.

What would you change about the CCRTA?

I'm the administrator here so I kind of have the final say on a lot of things, but I have an incredible staff, as you can see from Chris, but I have 16 or 18 other people in the administration here who come to work everyday, and they are passionate about trying to do the best they can. We create new ideas to try to make it easier for people to get where they need to go, we have to manage our money and invest public dollars very wisely and I tell Chris and others on our staff every day that I wouldn't really change anything. I think we're doing some

really innovative things, such as SmartDART and we're building a housing facility on our site, we haven't broken ground yet, but it's going to be a 50+ unit, where people don't need a vehicle, it's called transit oriented development.

The CCRTA is a truly amazing organization. From the incredibly welcoming staff, to the brilliant machine that is the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, Cape Cod could not be any luckier to have them. This has been a fantastic opportunity and I would jump at the chance to do it again!

Thank you!