

## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

This is a new committee with the following objective: To coordinate local transportation planning efforts and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on improving transportation access within and to and from the Town of Stow.

The sole member of this committee has been working on local transportation with a focus on a commuter shuttle between Stow and the South Acton MBTA station. Two options were under consideration. The first option involved identification of a parking area in Stow and implementation of a van service to the train station during the morning and afternoon commuting hours. Since Acton already has a system up and running, we obtained a financial projection of the cost to include expansion of Acton's service to Stow. Unfortunately, this would have been very expensive and we concluded that no commuters would be interested. The second option involved allowing Stow commuters to park in one of Acton's lots where they could pick up their shuttle. Toward the end of the year, Acton cut the annual fee for parking and the shuttle to \$250 and we are now actively promoting this service to Stow commuters. The annual cost of \$250 is less than half of the cost to park at the train station. In addition, commuters get a guaranteed parking space in the Acton lots.

A survey conducted by the Stow Community Chest identified a clear need for enhanced local transportation, including after school service extending that provided by the "late bus". Acton addressed this need by implementing "Dial-A-Ride". Residents can call and arrange transportation to various destinations and parents in particular rave about the service. The issue for Stow is again likely to be cost. Acton's operation is funded by a combination of a grant and taxes, but the grant was not renewed and more tax revenue will be required. Based upon several conversations with the Stow Selectmen, it is clear that there is no support in Stow for any appropriation for local transit. The main reason is that such services benefit a relatively small number of residents. Therefore, the Transportation Advisory Committee member has been reluctant to pursue a "Dial-A-Ride" program in Stow.

There were also several conversations among Stow and area towns regarding a GPS-based dispatch system for our COA vans. As the year ended, Acton agreed to be the lead town on submitting a grant application for technical and other assistance to set up such a system. As of this writing, the application will be submitted shortly.

Unfortunately, although the posting for applicants to serve on this committee has been running for months now, only one person has applied. The future of the Transportation Advisory Committee is in doubt.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen M. Dungan