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CATA On Demand to Continue Another Year on Strong Results

Gloucester, MA, April 20, 2022 -- Gloucester's year-long public transportation pilot project is closing out its first year on strong growth and a positive outlook. According to Cape Ann Transportation Administrator Felicia Webb, CATA On Demand will continue through at least mid-2023 and may become a permanent part of CATA offerings in Gloucester.

The service uses an Uber-like software application for iPhone and Android devices (<https://canntan.com/cataondemand/>) that allows customers to request rides between locations at times convenient to them.

CATA On Demand customers have taken more than 15,000 trips in the first year. Two-thirds of riders used the service more than three times a month and 30% called for service from their mobile eight or more times each month.

CATA's Felicia Webb said she saw steady increases in demand through last August before leveling off as COVID concerns increased and winter set in. Nevertheless, monthly ridership remained strong with daily ride records set in February and March. She expects to see the numbers continue to increase throughout the spring and summer with support from some of the city's larger employers

"The benefits are cost and convenience. As a result, we've seen strong demand from riders traveling between MBTA stations and local neighborhoods to the industrial parks and downtown and in travel between locations around the city to Addison Gilbert Hospital and Gloucester Crossing," said Webb.

Addison Gilbert Hospital Vice President Jason Andree agrees: “CATA On Demand has been an important transportation resource for employees and patients. In the first year, more than 2,000 trips either originated or ended at the Hospital. This has improved access to quality medical care at a low cost. I’m very pleased to know that CATA is extending -- and looking to expand -- the service.”

Riders are also showing their support. Frequent rider Jay Smiledge says that “The CATA On Demand bus service is incredibly convenient. I really like the service and the app is easy to use to schedule trips. In fact, I speak very highly about it to others.”

Early supporters of CATA On Demand were the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the Gloucester Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, Applied Materials, Addison Gilbert Hospital and Gorton’s.

“CATA On Demand shows the value of collective efforts to address a community and business need, in this case for affordable and accessible transportation,” said Mayor Greg Verga. “As more people become aware of the service, I expect ridership to grow to include a wider and wider audience. It is encouraging to see members of our community take advantage of this affordable, modern, and efficient service.”

The rate for a one-way trip is \$2.00. Passengers ride at no cost if their employers are sponsors. “Riders can request a ride when they need one and don’t have to plan their day around the bus schedule, all at very low or no cost,” notes Webb.

The service runs between 7:30am and 8:00pm, Monday through Friday. CATA has one van scheduled to run throughout the day, with a second available during peak periods. CATA is seeking drivers to allow the number of vans to continue to increase as demand grows. It is also looking past mid-2023 to offer continued service to support the Gloucester 400 celebration throughout that year.

Mike DiLascio of the EDIC board of directors said the corporation “encourages more employers and employees in the industrial parks to participate in the growing success of this important transportation resource.”

Ken Riehl, CEO of the Chamber said the project “could serve as an important model to improve public transportation throughout Cape Ann. It’s good for employers, employees, residents and visitors alike and deserves support.”

Employers interested becoming a sponsor can contact CATA’s Webb at webbf@canntan.com.

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