

# Inclusive Transportation Systems in Worcester, MA

*Engaging the Community in Worcester's Transportation Planning Process*



# Project – objectives (what did we set out to do)

- Support and build on the grassroots efforts of the current Worcester Transportation Advocacy Coalition (TAC)
- Help coalition members survey the transportation needs for their populations
- Encourage more consumers and community members to be engaged in transportation planning
- Provide information to the community on transportation related needs, resources, planning committees, etc.

# Project accomplishment (what did you do)

- Our group helped get one of our steering committee members appointed onto The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) Advisory Board. The Authority is given general responsibility to develop, finance, and contract for the operation of mass transportation facilities and services within its territory.
- We actively supported and hosted 7 Worcester Transportation Advocacy Coalition (TAC) meetings and other activities.
- We supported surveys on older adults (Senior Center survey), community survey on on-demand services, 1,700 Independent Living Center consumer survey and a community style survey/evaluation for our roundtable.
- Our surveys and Facebook group ads have engaged more participants who are people with disabilities, older adults and their caregivers.
- Over 100 people attended our transportation roundtable. Attendees included people with disabilities, older adults, caregivers, transportation advocates, human service agency staff, legislators, transportation agency staff, researchers and others. We provided various accommodations including having all materials, in an accessible format, emailed out ahead of time to our attendees with visual disabilities; having ASL Interpreters, CART Reporter with a projection screen, Spanish bilingual interpreters, volunteers to assist attendees with mobility disabilities and childcare assistance.

# Lessons learned (If we had this to do over, we would, this worked great...)

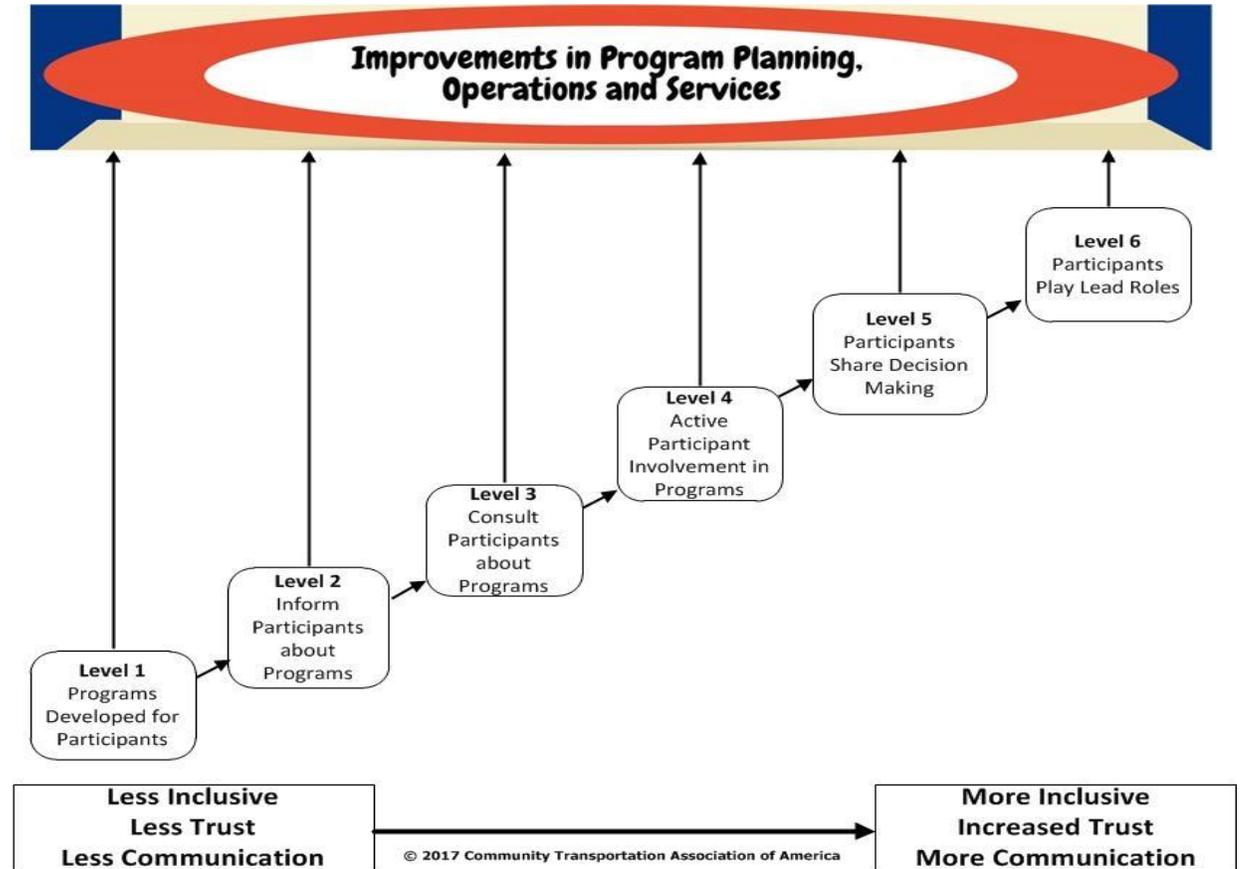
- This was a very successful project and I would do this again. This grant has heightened the level of awareness of transportation planning for people with disabilities, older adults and their caregivers.
- I would have put more resources in staffing and not have counted on our partners as much in regards to the more administrative type of activities.
- I find that there are many different pieces to becoming a decision-maker in the transportation planning process and trying to maintain that level of involvement takes time and commitment.

# Sustainability (what are your carry on activities)

- We plan to continue the Worcester Transportation Advocacy Coalition and to meet on a regular basis.
- We plan to work on these three goals:
  - Getting a person with a disability appointed onto WRTA Advisory Board- a decision-making body
  - We will work to bring more Accessible, Affordable and Available (AAA) On-Demand transportation options to the Worcester including a pilot program
  - We want to establish a reduced fare structure for the WRTA rides

Final assessment on the Pathway to Inclusion with a comparison to your level at the beginning of the process

We started around the Level 3 and 4 and now we are almost at Level 5.



# Conclusion – Sum It Up

- Even with barriers, there are always solutions.
- This grant opportunity has come at a great time and it will help make Worcester's transportation planning be more engaged by community members. Especially, People with Disabilities, Older Adults and their caregivers.

