



MINUTES

RTA Joint Partners Coordination and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium

May 23, 2017

Clive Graham of Howard County Transportation served as Chairperson of the meeting. Stephanie Dittman, the RTA, Office Manager of Corporation, served as the Secretary and recorded the meeting proceedings.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:05pm.

Review/Approval of March 28, 2017 and April 25, 2017 Joint Partners and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium Meeting Minutes (Clive Graham)

The March 28, 2017 and April 25, 2017 Joint Partners and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium Meeting Minutes were approved.

April Financial Report (Suzanne Brown)

The April Financial Reports were presented for review. RTA was \$64,234 over budget for the month of April. For the year, RTA was over budget by \$195,556.

Fare recovery is down almost \$250,000 compared to budget. Fare recovery is the contribution provided by RTA to the Partnership. To ensure accurate fare collections, an electronic fare recovery system is essential, but would cost approximately \$650,000 to install. The suggestion was made to look at the LOTS for an electric fare box solution. Operational cameras to ensure fare collection and fraud prevention are also essential.

The finance and benefits team were introduced and thanked for their hard work, leadership, dedication and contributions.

Action Item: General consensus to to pursue an electronic fare recovery system. At a minimum add it to capital requests in the ATP.

Statistical Snapshot Report (Mark Pritchard)

Mark Pritchard presented the report for review and discussions noting the improvements for ease of format and readability.

The decline in fixed route ridership continues, falling below the numbers reported for FY15 and FY16. Paratransit ridership continues to grow, but it is an expensive service to provide.

Mark Pritchard commented regarding the use of the drivers' tally record keeping system. Recording manually when a rider boards the bus is inaccurate. RTA is far behind as a transit system utilizing a manual fare box that does not process ridership and revenue. The new Routematch system is being installed in June uses GPS and electronic tablets that will replace the paper tally sheets.

Encouraging news is on the horizon with the addition of twenty new vehicles to be added to the current fleet by the end of the year. Twelve paratransit-style buses will be delivered in June, providing service beginning in July. Four of the vehicles are reserved for the Odenton MARC/Savage MARC, Fort Meade route. Although the buses are not intended for fixed route service, for the interim the vehicles will be utilized to provide some of this service. Three electric buses are currently working well in test mode with an anticipated fleet utilization date of July 1st. Seven heavy duty buses are expected to arrive in December.

Ramond Robinson inquired about paratransit services experiencing the same issues with fare evasion as the fixed route. Mark Pritchard answered no, this is a different kind of service with fewer total passengers. Clive Graham commented that he had the opportunity to utilize paratransit service and the driver does not commence the trip without payment. Anthony Foster asked if there is a way to encourage Prince George's County riders to use Metro Access to free up RTA resources. Victor Jimenez said that staff can advise the rider however, the rider decides with whom to schedule the trip. Mark Pritchard commented that some riders are traveling elsewhere in the RTA service area that is not serviced by Metro Access. Anthony Foster is concerned that the State is paying Metro Access in addition to the jurisdictional allocation to RTA.

Anthony Foster asked if there are missed trips with paratransit. Victor Jimenez replied that missed trips are documented as late pick-ups.

Clive Graham requested that Maynard Nash break out ADA and GPT ridership in the Statistical Report. Paratransit service is requiring a considerable percentage of the overall budget. The current figures equate to approximately forty percent of Howard County's bus transit expenses.

GM Reports/Staff Updates (Mark Pritchard)

Operator recruitment efforts resulted in seven new drivers for April and three in May. The June class is forecasted to include eight to ten new operators. Efforts continue to recruit new operators working with Baltimore Media Group for print and digital advertising services.

Although early in the testing process, the simulated operations of the electric buses have resulted in a fifty percent available charge upon return to the Operations facility after 8-10 hours of service.

There were two preventable accidents and three non-preventable accidents reported in April.

Clive Graham inquired about the progress of enhancements and ease to navigation of the RTA website. Sue Poole shared that the website will be developed to make it easier for the public to navigate the website and will include reorganizing the current contents. A target date for completion has not been set, requiring approximately forty to forty five hours for site and mobile enhancements. Current website efforts are focused on the electric bus project scheduled to go live in June. A possible outreach campaign to promote the electric buses is to offer a limited Free Ride Friday for the 401/Green Route. Promotional items to announce the electric buses will be held for a Howard County ribbon cutting event sometime in July.

Sue Poole and Maynard Nash are currently working on Route Shout 2.0 to enable the rider to access arrival times using real time two-way GPS data feed from google mapping provided to the Route Shout App. The new program will be marketed with a test launch date of July 1st. Maynard Nash explained that the application will provide the public with two screens. One screen will provide information on arrival time, followed by a second screen to display a map of the current location of the bus.

The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance invited Ramond Robinson, Mark Pritchard and Sue Poole to provide a presentation to the Advocacy Group regarding Transportation 101. The presentation provided the opportunity to present what is occurring at RTA and to explain the service area. Clive Graham pointed out that the Baltimore Metropolitan Council completed a survey which included awareness of RTA. The results received were very low, most likely because of the prior brand awareness of Howard Transit and CMRT. This highlights the importance of branding to raise awareness of RTA and the service area provided. Sue Poole commented that this is why the current Baltimore Sun advertising awareness campaign is so important.

Nathan Grace asked if the turnover in operator staff is normal for other transit agencies. Mark Pritchard answered that RTA is experiencing a higher number for operator staff turnover. J Davis commented as to the importance of an exit interview to provide information on the reason for the departure of employment.

Transit Development Plan Update (Clive Graham)

Public meetings are planned to occur in August regarding route changes in the service area.

Clive Graham will provide the briefing of route changes at the June meeting.

Ramond Robinson commented that most of the route changes in the TDP are in Howard County due to the higher volume of service area provided in Howard County. The elements of scale are different for Anne Arundel County and Prince George's County.

Action Item: TDP Public meetings to occur in August. Clive Graham to provide a briefing of the route changes at the June meeting.

FY18 Budget, Allocations, Memorandum of Understanding (Clive Graham)

Once the MOU is signed amongst the four jurisdictions providing an agreement on the funding, the Commission can be seated. Clive Graham will edit the MOU previously proposed to reflect the change to a one year agreement. He commented that based on previous discussions at these meetings, the consensus was to have an interim MOU for the first quarter covering July through September 2017.

Pending the financial commitment of budget approval of the individual jurisdictions, the budget provided in the MOU would apply only to the first quarter of FY18.

A second MOU reflecting the FY 2018 adopted budgets of the partners could be completed after June 30.

Service changes/public hearing schedules (Clive Graham)

Clive Graham began discussion on service changes and the scheduling of public hearings and meetings. Emphasis needs to be made to eliminate any confusion between the public meetings regarding specific routes and the public meetings on the TDP to be held in August.

Howard County budget approval will be voted on Wednesday morning, May 24. Additional funding of \$250,000 has been added to the budget for improvements at bus stops to provide installation of pads and bus shelters. The enhanced additional funding is not included in the proposed budget

Howard County has a policy for making changes to routes in the RTA service area. A Public Hearing is required for changes for several anticipated changes. Route 203/M will be replaced with service provided by new Route 504. Howard County is contemplating a new route 409B pending funding approval. If approved the new route will include North Laurel, the Food Center area and the opening of a new Community Resource Center on Guilford Road. Plans are to hold one formal hearing to accept testimony on all the changes to service.

The policy allows for additional meetings exclusive to one or other partner with feedback to be presented to the entity holding the hearing. If the hearing is held on July 10th in the absence of a seated Commission, the Howard County Public Transportation Board would hold the hearing. Suggestion was made to hold the hearing as an Agenda item for the July Partners meeting. Sue Poole expressed interest in providing an Anne Arundel County location for the meeting to provide riders affected by the service changes the opportunity to attend. Ron Skotz said that upon the release of the thirty day notice announcement the public is provided the opportunity to comment.

Ramond Robinson requested that a meeting be held in Piney Orchard, and inquired about the process to change the Route 502/B, working with Prince George's County. Sue Poole suggested that the meeting be held in the evening and in a location with an accessible bus stop to allow for public attendance.

Clive Graham suggested July as a suitable target for the hearing regarding any changes to the route. Any additional changes to the routes as a result of the budget approvals without adequate funding for the service could be scheduled for September. Ramond Robinson suggested that any changes in service due to inadequate approved budget funding will need to be held in June or July with changes effective after the first quarter. Ramond will be aware of the amount of approved budget funding available for service on June 15th. Jai Saunders cautioned that if the other jurisdictions do not receive approved budget funding for routes shared with Howard County, this will affect the funding required to be provided by Howard County.

Clive Graham requested that any changes to the 501/Silver route be communicated as soon as possible. Clive envisioned the upcoming July hearing being limited to three routes changes. Any additional route changes should be delayed for a future date.

Ramond Robinson said with the uncertainty of the budget funding approval until June 15th, he can't assure the adequate funding for service after the 1st quarter. Anthony Foster noted that Prince George's County will be considering potential modifications effecting FY18.

Clive Graham suggested a target public hearing date of July 25th. However, if the Commission is not seated, they cannot hold the public meeting and the meeting would be held by the Howard County Public Transportation Board. Separate informational meetings could be hosted by each jurisdiction prior to the Public Hearing.

J Davis said it sounds like there are three different sets of upcoming hearings; route changes regardless of budgets, any service changes as a result of inadequate approved funding for a jurisdiction, changes to fare structure to standardize fares.

Clive Graham commented that there will be additional meetings regarding the TDP. This will be a meeting to allow for input from the public regarding the planning process and recommended route changes in the TDP before they become finalized. Clive reiterated, there needs to be a July target meeting date for the route change meetings. August will be the target date for TDP related meetings. September is the target date for any service changes due to approved budgets effecting current service level funding.

Mark Pritchard expressed that cuts in service require lengthier time periods far greater than thirty days. The thirty days is limited to the timeframe to provide adequate notice to the public of an upcoming meeting. It is of great importance to adhere to June 30th as the last day for the jurisdictions to alert of any upcoming cuts in service to match available approved budget funding. Providing financial commitments that will affect service changes after the first quarter can be presented at a meeting in July. Clive Graham explained that to hold a hearing on July 25th, advertisement of the meeting will need to be provided by June 25th. Ramond Robinson will know the Anne Arundel County approved budget funding by then, with possible service changes based on the amount of the available approved funding.

Action Item: Public Hearing date to be set and route specific changes be identified.

Adjournment: 3:00pm

Attendees:

Ramond Robinson	Anne Arundel County
Mike Dyer	City of Laurel
Nathan Grace	City of Laurel
Clive Graham	Howard County Office of Transportation
Allison Calkins	Howard County Office of Transportation
Jai Saunders	Howard County Office of Transportation
Earl Armiger	Howard County
Judith "J" Davis	Prince George's County
Anthony Foster	Prince George's County Office of Transportation
Mark Pritchard	General Manager, RTA
Ron Skotz	CAO, RTA
Andrew Johnson	Assistant General Manager, RTA
Sue Poole	Director of Communications and Marketing, RTA
Suzanne Brown	Director of Finance, RTA
Victor Jimenez	Call Center Manager, RTA
Maynard Nash	Planning Manager, RTA
Stephanie Dittman	Office Manager, RTA