



MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

March 27, 2018

7:00 p.m.

George Howard Building, Columbia-Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

AGENDA

1. Approval of the February 27, 2018 Minutes
2. Public Comment
3. Announcements/Updates
 - i. Transit Development Plan
 - ii. Office of Transportation Advisory Groups
 - iii. US 1 Safety Evaluation
 - iv. Walk Howard, Pedestrian Plan
 - v. April and June meeting dates

4. Old Business
 - i. FY 2019 Priority Letter
 - ii. Patuxent Branch Trail – Storage Facility

5. New Business

Regional Transportation Agency- Service Update, Improvement Plan Update

6. Adjournment

Future MTB Meetings Dates

April 24, 2018

May 22, 2018

June 26, 2018 reserved (Thursday 28)



Members Present: Jason Quan, Vice Chair **Staff:** Clive Graham, Executive Secretary
Larry Schoen John Ainsley, Recording Secretary
Brian Dillard
Alice Giles
David Zinner

Members Excused: Ron Hartman
Astamay Curtis
Rick Wilson

1. **Approval of the January 23, 2018 Minutes** (minute 01¹)

Alice Giles moved to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting and David Zinner seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0.

2. **Public Comments** (minute 2)

There were no public comments.

3. **Announcements/Updates** (minute 3)

Clive Graham, Office of Transportation (OoT) Administrator made the following announcements:

i. Transit Development Plan (TDP) (minute 3)

The final Draft TDP is complete and ready to be before the County Council in April 2018. It was decided to hold the TDP going to Council until the FY 2019 budget was finalized with respect to funding for implementing the TDP.

ii. Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) (minute 5)

With the large Agenda at tonight's meeting, it was decided to defer this item to the next MTB meeting in March.

iii. Office of Transportation Advisory Groups (minute 6)

There were no updates from the Advisory groups for tonight's meeting. Clive did announce that the County had announced Bike Howard Express a comprehensive strategy to significantly improve the County's bicycle infrastructure over the next 3 years.

¹ Minute references are to the meeting audio recording; see link on the Multimodal Transportation Board webpage.

iv. US 1 Safety Evaluation (minute 6)

Clive said the OoT was reviewing recommendations from the study including changing traffic signal timings, sidewalks, and adding crosswalks to unsafe intersections such as at US 1 and Guilford Rd.

Larry Schoen requested an update on the Downtown Trail evaluation at the next meeting.

v. Walk Howard, Pedestrian Plan (minute 10)

No updates.

4. Old Business (minute 10)

i. Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Attainment Report (minute 11)

The Attainment Report topic will be covered by Tyson Byrne in the new business Maryland Department of Transportation presentation.

5. New Business (minute 11)

i. State Transportation Planning- Presentation by MD Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) (minute 11)

Tyson Byrne, a Regional Planner Manager at (MDOT) gave a presentation of the State Transportation Planning Process. The presentation covered:

- Overview of MDOT Presentation in relation to structure, planning process, funding and the annual attainment report
- MDOT's mission statement
- Maryland's transportation systems
- Maryland's population, economy and trends
- Challenges- safety, congestion, aging population, support for distressed economic regions
- Goals, funding and future of federal, state and local government

ii. FY 2019 Priority Letter (minute 65)

Clive Graham presented the draft FY 2019 Letter. He presented an OoT Memorandum which summarized public meeting input, survey results, and a summary of changes to the letter versus the FY 2018 letter

He requested board members to submit comments on the letter for the OoT consider as it finalizes the letter for the County Executive's consideration.

iii. Patuxent Branch Trail – Storage Facility (minute 101)

Clive described the proposed self-storage facility development in relation to the existing Patuxent Branch Trail.

After discussion Larry Schoen made the following motion:

In accordance with Section 21.503, General powers and duties of Multimodal Transportation Board the MTB furnishes these recommendations to the County Executive:

Direct the responsible departments of the County government to delay any construction authorized by SDP-17-044 that impedes pedestrian or bicycle traffic on the Patuxent Branch Trail until the responsible parties formulate a robust “maintenance of traffic” plan that eliminates or minimizes to the fullest extent possible any impediments during the entire course of construction. Submit such plan for approval by the OoT and MTB.

David Zinner seconded the motion. After discussion Larry amended his motion as follows:

In accordance with Section 21.503, General powers and duties of Multimodal Transportation Board the MTB furnishes these recommendations to the County Executive:

Direct the responsible departments of the County government to delay any construction authorized by SDP-17-044 that impedes pedestrian or bicycle traffic on the Patuxent Branch Trail until the responsible parties formulate a robust “maintenance of traffic” plan that eliminates or minimizes to the fullest extent possible any impediments during the entire course of construction. Submit such plan for approval by the OoT and MTB to the Department of Public Works.

The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0 with one abstention. Voting in favor: Larry Schoen, David Zinner, Alice Giles, Brian Dillard. Jason Quan abstained.

6. **Adjournment** (minute 155)

Jason adjourned the meeting at 9:35 pm. The next MTB meeting is scheduled for **March 27, 2018 at 7:00 pm.**

Clive Graham
Executive Secretary

3/22/18
Date

John Ainsley
Recording Secretary

2/28/18
Date



Allan H. Kittleman
Howard County Executive
akittleman@howardcountymd.gov

April 1, 2018

The Honorable Pete Rahn
Office of the Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: FY 2019 Howard County Priority Letter

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Please accept the following "Priority Letter" from Howard County. The letter includes a list of transportation projects Howard County is recommending be included and funded by the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) FY 2019-2024 Consolidated Transportation Program and also includes requests for technical and policy support. The projects requested for funding are listed in priority order.

Thank You and Acknowledgments

Before listing our requests, please accept our thanks and appreciation for prior and ongoing State funding for the following projects:

- Widening of US 29 from Seneca Drive to MD 175

MD 32 Corridor Improvements

- Phase 1: Dualization of MD 32 from MD 108 to Linden Church Road
- Phase 2: Linden Church Road to I-70, including MD 32/MD 144 intersection improvements
- Phase 3: Evaluation of the widening MD 32 north of I-70 to the Carroll County line
- Design and construction improvements at the US 1 and Kit Kat Road intersection
- US 29: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Planning for enhanced express bus service to Silver Spring along the US 29 BRT corridor

We also wish to thank you for the valued technical assistance provided by MDOT staff, especially the extensive assistance from the Maryland Transit Administration and the State Highway Administration on the following projects:

- Investigation of safety and congestion issues on the MD 99 corridor between Marriottsville

Road and US 29/MD 99 intersection

- US 1 Safety Evaluation
- I-95 Noise Walls in Elkridge
- US 1 at Montevideo Road intersection
- Blandair Park interchange on MD 175

Requests for Funding

The following recommendations are the result of review and input by County staff from several departments and offices, as well as by elected and appointed officials. Input also included an extensive public involvement process, including a public meeting held on January 24, 2018, a survey, and receiving written comments from approximately 220 people and organizations. The results of the survey and public meeting materials can be found at: *(Add Link when completed)*

Design & Engineering Projects

1. *I-70 Corridor*
 - 1-70: US 29 to US 40; widen one lane in each direction
 - Upgrade/reconstruct the I-70/Marriottsville Road interchange
 - Design and implement I-70/US 29 interchange capacity enhancements
2. MD 175: Evaluate the improvement of existing access points into Columbia Gateway Drive, including a third access point through the potential extension of MD 108 across MD 175 into Columbia Gateway Drive and direct access to Columbia Gateway Drive from I-95
3. MD 175: US 1 to Snowden River Parkway; continued comprehensive traffic modeling leading to design alternatives including the US 1/ MD 175 and US 1/I-95 interchanges
4. Pedestrian, ADA access and safety improvements: design and construct pedestrian safety and sidewalk improvements in Howard county's pedestrian master and corridor plans. The county is specifically requesting the state cooperate, support, and fund development of projects identified in the US 1 safety evaluation, including providing safe crossing for pedestrians at the US 1/Guilford Road intersection
5. MD 108: Guilford Road to Trotter Road; design and construct pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, and streetscape improvements
6. MD 175: US I to Dorsey Run Road; widening and reconstruction including final design and construction of the US I/MD 175 interchange
7. MD 103 at US 29: Addition of a third lane along MD 103 onto the ramp towards US 29 northbound
8. Traffic Signal Back-up Generators: Evaluate and plan a system for developing a back-up generator installation program at key state highway traffic signals within Howard County
9. Noise Walls: Design, and construct noise walls at Dumhart Road, at the southwest corner of I-95 and the MD 216 interchange

Capital & Construction Projects

1. US 29 from the Middle Patuxent River to Seneca Drive, widening including access improvements to the Rivers Edge Community, and accommodations for BRT.
2. Transit Capital Improvements:
 - Purchase rolling stock (buses) to replace vehicles that have exhausted their useful life to maintain a fleet with a state of good repair and to expand service on a number of the most traveled fixed routes
 - Rolling stock, road and signal improvements and development of high quality BRT stations in Downtown Columbia and future stations for the US 29 BRT system
3. Bike Howard Express. Funding, support and cooperation to implement Howard county's comprehensive strategy to significantly improve bicycle infrastructure during the next 3 years, including the north laurel connections bicycle route from savage to north laurel, new shared-use pathways providing bicycle access into Downtown Columbia, Columbia Gateway and along Dobbin Road, and nearly 14 miles of bike lanes and wayfinding on county roads, including important crossings of state roads.
4. US 1 Sidewalk: Construct sidewalk along US 1 southbound in the median between North Laurel Road and the Prince George's County line
5. MD 108: Construct intersection improvements along MD 108 at Ten Mills Road
6. MD 100 and MD 103: Replacement of the existing interchange

Requests for Technical Assistance and Support

We would like to request MDOT's cooperation and technical support and assistance for several important county led projects and initiatives on state roads and highways. These projects reflect the county's desire to advance projects in coordination with the state to ensure timely and effective project delivery. These projects are:

- US 1: MD 175 to just north of Montevideo Road; phased arterial highway reconstruction including pedestrian, transit and streetscape improvements
- US 1: Construct intersection improvements along US 1 at MD 103 (Meadowridge Road), and Whiskey Bottom Road
- Widening of the Marriottsville Road Bridge over I-70 to enable future widening of Marriottsville Road north to MD 99 and south to US 40
- Continue to support planning for a transitway connecting Downtown Columbia; Oakland Mills, and Columbia Gateway Office Park, including a possible transit bridge over US 29
- North South Connector/Jug Handle: a major collector planned to connect the US 29/Broken Land Parkway interchange to Little Patuxent Parkway, including a spur off the existing northbound US 29 off-ramp pursuant to the Downtown Columbia Plan

- MD 108: Construct intersection improvements along MD 108 at Centennial Lane
- Future designation of Downtown Columbia as a Transit Oriented Development
- Design and implementation of road capacity improvements at Broken Land Parkway/Snowden River Parkway and MD 32, including bicycle and pedestrian access improvements to park and ride lots.

Other State Initiatives

1. The County urges the state to fully fund and implement MDOT's MARC Growth and Investment Plan improvements on the Camden Line, including track improvements, rolling stock and additional service.
2. The County fully supports the SHA's I-95 Active Traffic Management project. We urge the MDOT to continue to advance it.

Both of these projects are needed to ensure safe and efficient travel throughout the region and Howard County.

Thank you for considering Howard County's priority transportation needs.

Sincerely,

Allan H. Kittleman
County Executive

Thank you for your positive endorsement of Howard County's state transportation projects and priorities.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mary Kay Sigaty, Council Chairperson

HOWARD COUNTY DELEGATION

Senator Guy J. Guzzone, Chair

Delegate Eric D. Ebersole, Chair

Copy:

Howard County Delegation

Howard County Council Members

Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, Howard County Government

James F. Ports Jr., Deputy Secretary for Operations, MDOT

R. Earl Lewis Jr., Deputy Secretary for Policy, Planning, & Enterprise Services, MDOT

Tyson Byrne, Manager of Regional Planning, MDOT

Gregory Slater, Administrator, MDOT SHA

Eric Beckett, Chief, Regional & Intermodal Planning Division, MDOT SHA

John Concannon, District Engineer, District 7 MDOT SHA

Puskar P. Kar, Assistant District Engineer, District 7 MDOT SHA

Kevin Quinn, Administrator, MTA

Suhair al Khatib, Deputy Administrator & Chief Planning, Programming & Engineering Officer, MTA

James Raszewski, Director, Local Transit Support, MTA

Todd Lang, Director of Transportation Planning, Baltimore Metropolitan Council

File: CTP Priority Letter FY 2019 to FY 2024

Update to the October 20, 2017 RTA Report on Service Improvement
Prepared for the Multimodal Transportation Board Meeting
March 27, 2018

This Report was prepared in response to the Contract Manager's October 10, 2017 request for a report to address recent service issues that indicate systemic failures across RTA operations.

Call Taking and Information about Service

The following items have been implemented or are being considered to improve call taking and timely response to customers:

- ✓ Lead CSR and Mobility Manager review all voicemails so that messages do not get lost in the system.
- ✓ All calls receive a response including those in voice mail prior to the CSR's leaving for the day.
- ✓ Meeting was held on November 12, 2017 with CSRs and supervisors/ dispatchers stressing the importance of communication, cooperation, and teamwork.
- ✓ On Saturday, March 3, 2018 a refresher customer service training session was held with the supervisor/dispatch team to stress the need to treat both external customers and co-workers with dignity and respect. Respect and Communication are priority.
- ✓ In November 2017, we placed a CSR in dispatch office from 6 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. to assist with call overflow and getting up-to-date information to customers. This additional staff person wasn't found to be needed in the early morning hours, so they've been returned to the Call Center to perform their regular duties.
- ❑ Increase staffing in call center to decrease the number of call dropped and reduce hold time. **Two additional CSR positions were included in the FY 2019 proposed budget, but due to funding constraints won't be funded. Management team will be assessing operating needs and will make any organizational changes needed to better address service needs.**
- ❑ Consider extending service hours for customer service until 11 p.m. **Management team will be assessing operating needs and will make any organizational changes needed to better address service needs.**
- ❑ Raise the profile of call taking measurements with RTA management and monthly Partner-Commission review. Reduce abandoned calls from the current average of 12% to 6%. **6.7% of calls were abandoned in February 2018. We will continue to strive to achieve 6% or below for abandoned calls.**

Complaint Resolution-Customer Service and Training

There have been concerns voiced about RTA's complaint resolution process, not receiving response, and how some bus operators and CSRs deal with the public. An operations supervisor with people skills was designated in early 2016 to take the lead in investigating complaints.

- ✓ The specific procedures of duties and responsibilities for taking, investigating and responding to customer complaints was reviewed and modified in the fall of 2017. The Lead Supervisor and Assistant General Manager of Operations are meeting twice a week to review customer complaint investigations and responses. **An organization-wide initiative will begin in late spring to review all existing policies to make any necessary improvements and ensure compliance.**
- ✓ RTA has an Access data base available for tracking complaints that accommodates complaint entry and response. The system supplies a tracking number for each complaint. **The Contract Administrator now has remote access to our complaint database.**

- ✓ Effective in November 2017, a standard that every customer complaint received is responded to within 48 business hours, and documented in the database. **We are working to ensure that this standard is met.**
- ✓ Enhance customer service training in new hire entry level training.
- ✓ We are providing training to existing bus operators on improved customer service and provide additional monthly recognition of operators with no complaints and accidents.
- ✓ All RTA Commissioners, Partner staff, and MTB members are invited to visit/meet with operators, dispatchers/supervisors, and maintenance staff.
- ✓ **Funding for some of the additional camera equipment needed was found and the order was placed.** We will continue to seek funding to equip all remaining buses with video cameras useful in investigation of complaints. At minimum need to get audio recording of driver area by front door where many customer complaints begin.
- ❑ Consider purchase of Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) customer service training module or if too expensive find another customer service training program. **Under consideration.**
- ❑ Consider purchasing a complaint tracking software module available to Contract Manager, Partner Staff, and RTA staff which indicates status of complaints. **Under consideration.**

Communicating with Contract Manager on Service Day

In order to keep the contract manager more consistently informed of service issues and problems, a windshield of metrics will be provided reviewing the performance for the previous day. Examples of metrics include:

- Numbers of road calls/which routes
- Number of fixed route scheduled hours lost
- Number of fixed route scheduled miles lost
- Routes discontinued, reason, and time frames
- Accidents
- Number of paratransit passengers scheduled per hour
- Number of paratransit passengers scheduled to taxi cabs
- Number of calls received, hold time, number of calls dropped.
- Total buses available and total buses out of service
- Complaints by category- rude operator, late bus, etc.
- Number of preventive maintenance inspections scheduled vs. completed

While communication between RTA leadership and the Contract Administrator has improved since my arrival in November 2017, a formal reporting process has not been established. We will work with the Contract Administrator to develop a regular (frequency to be determined) report format to communicate all pertinent information.

Maintenance and Improving the Vehicle Fleet

The number of high mileage buses in the fleet, combined with older and newer light duty vehicles not designed for the demands of fixed route service will continue to be a challenge despite the addition of newer, heavy duty equipment. Currently there are nine different model buses in the fleet. Efforts to standardize the fleet begun in the budget process in 2016 continue with RTA having now having one paratransit bus model the Phoenix manufactured by Coach and Equipment, Inc. of NY State. The ENC

brand heavier duty fixed route bus with initial delivery of seven units in December is now targeted as the fixed route model for future procurements. **As of February 2018, all seven new buses are in revenue service and they are helping with bus availability and service delivery.**

- ✓ A second shift (3 p.m. to 11 p.m.) lead technician has been implemented and we are experiencing positive results. The lead technician increases the opportunity for more work direction to be given and greater accountability from the technicians and service/fueling staff in completing assigned tasks.
- ✓ Andrew Johnson, AGM Operations is providing additional management help to the maintenance department in a number of areas including holding technicians and outside vendors more accountable and responsible for repairs made. There have been multiple documents created (Monthly Road Call Checklist) – this checks road calls vs. last PM data with tech name added for follow-ups, (PM compliance Checklist) supervisors will go behind the PM techs work to do a cross check of completion, and jobs (Repairs) are now being timed by a time clock being used to monitor work productivity.
- ❑ We continue our efforts to have preventive maintenance be the guiding approach of the RTA maintenance functions. **On-going effort.**
- ❑ Investigating increased training opportunities for technician staff including new fixed route ENC brand buses. **On-going effort.**
- ❑ Request that Partner governments make it a legislative priority to recognize that RTA operates in both the Baltimore and Washington urban areas and that MTA/MDOT should provide at least some level of capital financial assistance for heavy duty bus procurements. Currently RTA believes it is treated by MTA more like a rural transit system meaning that in the last seven years there has only been financial assistance available for light duty paratransit vehicles and not for fixed route heavy duty buses. **On-going effort.**

Shelter Upgrade, Expansion, Maintenance and Cleaning (Need additional information. Update pending.)

Shelter maintenance, cleaning, upgrade, and expansion is a real issue that needs clarification about who does what. A plan needs to be developed for the use of funds available to Howard County that includes a schedule of exactly which shelters are going to be renovated, removed, and where other shelters need to be placed. In addition, RTA working with Howard County (where the shelters exist), needs to come to an understanding of what is required for cleaning and maintenance. Currently shelters are pressure washed twice a year. At minimum a discussion needs to occur if that is the level and type of cleaning that needs to occur on a regular basis.

- Howard County Office of Transportation (OoT) and RTA staff need to look at a schedule of planned upgrades and relocation of shelters.
- OoT and RTA need to agree on the type of cleaning required at the shelters and frequency.
- RTA is likely the best to maintain shelters. Agreement on the budget resources to accomplish this on a sustained basis needs to be identified.

Replacing previous CMRT/ Howard Transit Signs with RTA Signs

Converting previous CMRT and Howard Transit bus stop signs to RTA signs has not been completed. Early efforts included the Dept. of Corrections changing signs but did not prove to be workable.

- ✓ RTA hired an individual in March 2017 to work on the signs and he has made progress. In the early days of the RTA, inmates at the county correctional center were used to change old signs from CMRT/Howard Transit to the new RTA style signs. Had it worked, it would have been a low cost solution but scheduling and logistical problems made it unrealistic.
- ✓ The Bus Stop Improvement employee uses the pickup truck procured to complete the sign work for bus stops.
- ❑ A forecast of how many signs have been replaced and the remaining number of signs to be replaced will be provided in the next update.