AGE-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION WORKGROUP MINUTES

Date: 06/09/2020
Time: 3:00 PM
Facilitator: Brad Cross and Bruce Gartner

In Attendance

Terri Hansen	Brad Cross
Marian Vessels	Nancy Riley
Kathleen Krintz	Jason Quan
Paul Schonfeld (presenter)	
Bruce Gartner	
Paul Verchinski	Jackie Eng
Bruce Fulton	Tomiko Thomas
Tomiko Thomas	Victor Jimenez

Minutes Approved
First: Paul Verchinski
Second: Brad Cross

Announcements:
Presentation –Methods for Managing paratransit services – Professor Paul Schonfeld, Ph.D. P.E., Department of Civil Environmental Engineering, Univ. Maryland (Slides will be shared)
Q&A period following the presentation:
- Bruce asked in terms of what you saw in the algorithms can you give a practical example of real-life improvements that were made for customers?
  - If you have good algorithms and software, you can get significant gains and be able to achieve the same service quality with about 2/3's as many vehicles. May be able to achieve much better quality with the same number of vehicles, in our cases we were thinking about both waiting times at home and response times in the security of the trips. Overall, how many vehicles, miles, driver hours were necessary.

Presentation – RTA Ridership Data for Fixed Route, General Paratransit (GPT) and ADA On-Demand Service – Jason Quan, Howard County Transportation
- Terri stated that the GPT service serves people 60 and over. Look back at the data you have when you look at the 60+ population; that is a huge percentage for the larger demographic.
- Bruce Fulton stated over time the older adults need for transit is going to increase.
- Jason responded that more seniors and communities are trying to locate an existing service. It bolsters the attractiveness of the community if there is existing transit there, which helps seniors with their mobility issues.

- Terri asked if Jason had data that shows what the percentage of fixed routes riders were seniors in FY18 or FY19 to see what the change was once you made riding a fixed route free for seniors.
  - Jason stated that he can look at FY18 and FY19 to see. One thing that was noticed is there were increases in those trips but there was not a decrease in the paratransit side.
- Terri stated that RTA and Office of Transportation did not foresee that Howard County would become an Age-Friendly community but making the decision to let seniors ride for free is an Age-Friendly thing to do. Would be great to have the statistic of what the numbers were before versus after so that we can incorporate that into the report. Not taking credit so much as recognizing that these are the kind of things that Howard County has done already.
  - Jason will get that report to the group.
- Bruce Gartner added while we talk about the great things Howard County has done. One of the policy decisions was to increase the cost difference between the paratransit and the fixed route making the fixed route free for seniors. We did have another fair increase coming up on the paratransit side for July 1st which has been postponed until October 1st.
- Paul Schonfeld made a statement about possibly getting automated vehicles by 2030.
  - Bruce Gartner stated that it would be for a certain population, not for those that need assistance in and out of the vehicles.
- Terri wanted to know how many individuals were using paratransit to get to dialysis appointments.
  - Jason answered that it does include dialysis but the data did not break out by dialysis.
- Bruce Fulton wanted some clarification as the chart shows projective growth GPT versus ADA, and it looks like ADA is growing much faster. It is important to remember that ADA is available to persons regardless of age (they need to meet the requirements of having a disability that prevents them from using public transportation and the citizen has to be certified through their physician) .
  - Jason stated that this is based on the current growth rate since ADA has been in service. GPT is also growing, just not as rapidly as ADA. There is no cap on the number of daily or weekly trips you can take on the ADA, but there is a cap on the GPT trips.
  - Victor mentioned that there are many variables for ADA. The fixed route is changing and added service times for Ellicott City; this impacts the times ADA is available. The trips are growing. The ADA passengers will have more access than they had before. We changed several fixed routes time wise from an hour trip down to 30 minutes.
  - Victor also mentioned that cost for taxi service for wheelchair passengers is expensive.

Terri talked about the email that was sent out in regard to 6-month extension after the Governor lifts the state of emergency. So, we are looking at about May, June 2021 to get the final action plan completed. Hopefully, the state will open back up in a couple of months and will be able to go on site visits and have focus groups and listening sessions. So, for now this gives us time to gather data and do research. Also talked about the compilation report that was sent out. It should help as far as what the community has told us has been done, where are the gaps, and the wants and needs previously identified. What other information do we need that we do not already have?
- Look at what other jurisdictions have done in their action plans.

- Think we are still very much in the gathering data mode. Constantly looking at the vision statement to make sure the group is staying on track. We want to make it friendly to use our transportation as it exists today and in the future.

- Bruce Gartner stated will gather as a leadership group to figure out what to do next. Looking at what others are doing about seniors using our fixed route more and what is it that they need.
- Terri mentioned that there are other aspects of transportation—walking, biking and other aspects. There are a lot of elements for this work group to consider.
- Bruce Gartner stated we have very tough budget cycle coming up. What the budget impact from the capital budget will be will have an impact on plans for public transportation.
- Terri mentioned that by the next meeting we should have budget information to share from the county perspective. County operating budget is just a 1-year budget. Whereas the capital budget is several years. The Age-Friendly group must be inventive and look for positive changes over the next 5-years and possibly partner with businesses to accomplish tasks.

Homework Assignments:
None were given
Next Meeting:
July 14, 2020 – 3:00PM