

**TRANSPORTATION EQUITY TASK FORCE**

Thursday, February 10, 2005

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Sojourner Douglass College

**ATTENDANCE**

Ed Cohen – Transit Riders League  
Sandy Conner – Workforce Transportation and Referral Center  
Tom Curtis – MD Department of Disabilities  
Dick Doran – Community Assistance Network  
Nancie Etzel – Anne Arundel County Commission on Disability Issues  
Karin Foster – Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Monica Haines – Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Jennifer LaFever – MD Developmental Disabilities Council  
Cindy Parker - Citizen  
Glenn Robinson – Morgan State University  
Sara VanKeuren – Baltimore Metropolitan Council

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2004 MINUTES**

The minutes were reviewed and 1 change was requested (Page 2, Replace “One member noted...” with “Ed Cohen noted...”). The amended minutes were approved by consensus.

*[HANDOUT: September 9, 2004 Minutes]*

**PRESENTATION: TOM CURTIS, TRANSPORTATION ADVISOR FOR THE MD DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES:**

Mr. Tom Curtis presented information to the group about the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDD), instituted on July 1, 2004. The organization advocates for services that are implemented in such a way that it keeps in mind the needs and input of people with disabilities, families, and service providers. In other words, they work to ensure that the notion of “Nothing about us without us” is kept in mind when decisions are being made.

Mr. Curtis reported that the Departments areas of focus are:

1. Ensuring least restrictive environments
2. Children’s disability issues
3. Cognitive/mental disabilities and the institutions that serve these individuals
4. Research

Mr. Curtis also noted that the Department serves as an advocate for accessible transportation in the state. He then discussed a number of areas MDD is working on.

- Paratransit – MDD has been monitoring “on-time” statistics of the new providers (contracted by MTA). He reports that services are getting better. They will continue to monitor and support procedures that increase efficiency and quality of service. He also let members know about Dial-a-Lift – a program for people that require a bus with a wheelchair lift due to a physical disability. It allows them to call Dial-a-Lift (410-682-5438) and request a ride on a lift equipped bus.

- Fixed route services – They are working on wheelchair accessibility of buses and on having new enunciators on buses that will help people with sight impairments to be able to clearly hear their stop information. In addition, they are working on the MTA bus route restructuring process by working with planners to ensure that the top 100 locations that people with disabilities frequent most often will be served efficiently by the new routes.
- Taxi Access – this is a new program available to certified individuals where they can use one of 18 service providers for a reduced fee (\$3.00 each way). This is getting a great response from individuals who want to go directly to/from their appointments. One setback, however, is that most taxis do not accommodate wheelchairs. This has been a barrier for some individuals, but MDD is working on this (perhaps finding contractors that have wheelchair access, etc).
- Ticket machines – Many blind customers were having difficulty with the ticket machines used at the Light Rail and Subway stations. MDD conducted a demonstration to show make MTA officials aware of the problems. As a result, new machines with better audio components will be installed in 2005.
- NEXTEL mobility network – This is a new program that will be placing cell phones with staff at the areas top 100 locations that are most frequently visited by people with disabilities (i.e. hospitals, MTA disability certification office, etc). This will allow people with disabilities the opportunity to place a free call to check on their ride, etc.

Finally, Mr. Curtis stressed the importance of individuals being involved. He encouraged people to report to him any concerns they have or problems they have witnessed (He can be reached at 410-767-3629). He also suggested that people contact Michael Deetz at MTA about the bus route restructuring and/or Joyce Callahan, Disability Coordinator at MTA, regarding MTA services for people with disabilities.

### **UPDATE ON THE BALTIMORE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND TRANSPORTATION (BREJT) PROJECT**

Monica Haines and Glenn Robinson reported that Phase I of the BREJT Project wrapped up in December following a Community Dialogue. It was also noted that a proposal is currently being developed for Phase II. Plans for the second phase include follow-up with participants of Phase I, the development of a guide or toolkit, and the development of a process to evaluate and quantify concerns raised during Phase I.

### **REPORT ON THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE BRTB ON THE CREATION OF A “SINGLE-SOURCE” INFORMATION DIRECTORY**

Monica Haines reported that the recommendation was presented by Task Force member Dick Doran to the BRTB on Tuesday, August 24, 2004. From that, a subcommittee of several BRTB members, along with Dick Doran and Monica Haines was created. Since then, the subcommittee has met a number of times to review the recommendation, research possible solutions, and discuss available options.

Currently, the group is looking at the Multi-Modal Traveler Information System (MMTIS) project as a possible solution. One of the limitations on this is that there is currently no funding to specifically include transit and other travel options. Existing funding is only for integrating data that comes from cellular probes – i.e. highway travel in the region – and setting up the framework for this system. However, the organizers of MMTIS are very interested in ensuring that the system includes multi-modal information and they have been working to

both find additional funding, as well as bring MTA and other local transit providers (LOTs) to the table.

TETF members noted their high-level of concern that further funding will not be sought or made available and the system will not be multi-modal. They stressed their hope that the BRTB will provide an assurance that the MMTIS be multi-modal (including MTA and LOTs; bike, paratransit, etc), funding, and a timeline for implementation.

### **WORK GROUPS**

Due to time constraints, the group was unable to discuss the future focus of the workgroups. It was agreed that the group should take time at its next meeting to discuss the progress each group has made and brainstorm other areas of work they could each focus on.

### **NEXT STEPS AND WRAP UP**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting of the TETF was scheduled for April 14, 2005.