

## **PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 5, 2016  
Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
5:37 to 7:31 P.M.

### **MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 P.M. by PAC Chair, Mr. Greg Shafer.

#### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The PAC approved the [September 2016 meeting minutes](#).

#### **2. PRESENTATION: MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION MOBILITY PROGRAM**

Mr. Carl W. Parr, Jr., former Director of Mobility and now Chief Innovation Officer for the Maryland Transit Administration shared improvements to the customer service and operations since he began working at the [Mobility paratransit program](#) fifteen months ago.

Paratransit is a specialized transit service available to people who, because of a disability are functionally unable to get to a bus stop, wait unassisted at a stop or station or board or ride a bus or train by themselves. Customers use Mobility service in order to get to work, medical appointments, or participate in community life. MTA provides 1,000 trips per day on mobility service. The Mobility budget that is 1/8 of the overall MTA budget yet they only provide approximately 1/38 of MTA ridership. It costs approximately \$50 per ride to provide mobility paratransit service. The current fleet has 520 vehicles and 1,100 drivers (including contracted drivers).

MTA Administrator Paul Comfort is determined to improve transit service throughout the region. Mr. Parr highlighted steps MTA is taking to improve the program and access for people with disabilities:

- One of the first improvements made at MTA Mobility was to look at the number of riders needing lift equipped vehicles. Previously 100% of the vehicles were left equipped and yet many customers did not need the service. Now, a number of sedans without lift assist are being used, providing improved gas mileage and financial savings.
- Performance measures were established and analyzed. At the start of the process, on-time performance of drivers was below 80%. Now, all of the drivers are well above this range. See PowerPoint for chart. Call center performance was also analyzed and goals were set to have certain percentage of calls answered within the first three minutes. Now, 99% of calls are answered within five minutes. Recently, they reached 100% of calls answered for the first time.

- Reservations can be made one to seven days ahead of time online or by calling Mobility. All trips must be scheduled by 5 PM so that their system is able to schedule and match drivers with needed rides. Customers are able to schedule rides for regular treatment such as dialysis (18% of riders utilize paratransit for transportation to dialysis).
- On the topic of dialysis, Mr. Chris Costello talked about Locally Operated Transit providers (LOTs) difficulty with providing ongoing regular service to dialysis patients and the concern that many patients are scheduled for dialysis across town or far from their home when closer dialysis centers are available. Both Mr. Costello Mr. Parr agreed that this is a need that needs to be addressed in order to help improve quality-of-life your patience while streamlining costs.
- This MTA Call-a-Ride program provides customers with rides that need to be scheduled less than 24 hours in advance. The service, which provides approximately 2,000 trips per day, matches customers with contracted taxi companies in the area for \$3 per ride. While this is more expensive than the typical \$1.90 per ride it does provide helpful last minute transportation needs.
- MTA has worked to make a number of improvements to their application process following a lawsuit. Soon MTA will have a contracted organization oversee the application process, which will further be improved by providing the ability to file an application online.
- Mr. Parr indicated that many customers are reporting improved satisfaction through customer feedback phone number however MTA is also working on a satisfaction survey.
- Ms. Beth Wiseman shared that this service is so important as it helps many people not feel trapped in their home and allows them to be able to not only get to medical appointments but to work and participate in community life and important meeting such as these.
- Mr. Costello reported that many of the locally operated transit providers he works with report that working with paratransit customers is extremely rewarding as they're able to contribute by helping people with this important community need.
- Members asked about regional coordination between MTA and the LOTS. Mr. Parr reported that they are working to make improvements for customers who, for example, have to take one service to a county line and then transfer to MTA's mobility service. It was noted that Baltimore LINK will add an additional 18 miles to the regional transit system, however some other areas will lose service. He did not have information on the number of Mobility clients who would lose service, however MTA currently plans to provide these existing clients service for an undetermined number of years.
- Currently, MTA Mobility accepts payment for rides through the purchase of ticket books or cash. It is expected to be the first mode to use an updated MTA Charm Card payment system.

Mr. Schafer thanked Mr. Parr for this important presentation and invited extended an open invitation for him to return next year after he's worked to make improvements in other service areas of MTA. The PAC was very appreciative for the presentation and several members that use the service offered praise for improvement service and performance by MTA Mobility program.

***[Presentation: [Investing in the Future of Maryland: Highlights of Recent Changes at MTA Mobility](#)]***

### 3. DISCUSSION: PAC AND TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Mr. Eric Norton and Ms. Lindsey Bishop reported that several PAC members informally met to explore ways in which the PAC can learn more about and address environmental justice / transportation equity issues in the region. The group came about after Ms. Haines Benkhedda gave the [presentation on environmental justice and transportation equity](#) earlier this year. The idea behind a potential PAC subcommittee would be to provide an avenue for the PAC to consider transportation equity, one of three core components of the PAC mission (in addition to public involvement and policy/plan feedback). Since the PAC doesn't currently have a subcommittee focused on transportation equity, establishing a committee of members who are versed in the topic and can use an equity lens to review plans, policies, and projects may be useful.

A first draft outline of mission and activities for a PAC Transportation Equity subcommittee was circulated for PAC member consideration. Highlights of discussion include:

- Establishing the subcommittee as an ad-hoc subcommittee would allow the opportunity for the PAC to evaluate the level of interest in such a committee and explore potential activities.
- Members discussed pros and cons of having a subcommittee that would focus on equity issues. Concerns were raised that the subcommittee members would be tasked with the full responsibility of considering such matters when an equity lens should be utilized by all members and integrated into policy and public involvement discussions. One member pointed out that this could provide an opportunity for the PAC to be ahead of the curve and raise important issues for BRTB consideration. Others pointed out that having an ad hoc committee provides a monthly reminder on the agenda of the need to consider equity issue throughout the planning process.
- The PAC bylaws offer the opportunity to establish an ad hoc committee without changing the bylaws. Should the PAC wish to establish the committee formally, propose changes may be submitted to the BRTB.
- Is there sufficient interest among the membership? Are members willing to leave the other committees to serve on an equity committee? A number of members recommended the subcommittee not meet at the same time as the Policy/Public Involvement subcommittees to allow for some of those members to participate in the equity committee.

Next Steps: Ms. Bishop agreed to distribute an updated version via the PAC Google Group for member feedback and further discussion. Members requested another presentation on the topic of transportation equity. While no formal action was taken at this meeting, the PAC will continue discussing in future.

***[Handout: DRAFT Mission and activities for PAC Ad Hoc Transportation Equity Subcommittee]***

### 4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS & ACTION ITEMS

Subcommittee Chairs presented the following subcommittee reports and action items:

- **Public Involvement** – Ms. Beth Wiseman reported that the committee met to discuss comments submitted during the 2016 certification process. The subcommittee recommended

that staff extend an invitation to the individuals who submitted comments #2, 4, 8, and 14 to apply to serve on the PAC.

Members noted a sense of hopelessness that public comments made don't actually make a difference. The subcommittee members brainstormed ideas to address this. Ideas included: BMC staff work more closely with organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, local nonprofits, other transportation agencies, etc. to solicit input and get the involvement of the organizations in the BRTBs process; Grow the Press Release list; Extend invitations to individuals who submit comments to join the press release mailing list and/or serve on the PAC.

The subcommittee reiterated the importance of the BRTB to respond to all comments submitted by the public during the 2016 Certification process.

- **Policy and Legislation Subcommittee** – Mr. Darren Hughes reported that the subcommittee met to learn more about and evaluate the North Avenue Rising TIP amendment. He went on to share highlights of the [presentation by staff from Maryland Transit Administration \(MTA\) and the City of Baltimore on the North Avenue Rising project](#).

The PAC requested future updates on the project, including opportunities for public involvement. They also suggested a clear division of responsibilities between MTA and the city of Baltimore city in order to most effectively coordinate various existing and potential investment and community development opportunities.

Following discussion, the PAC voted to approve PAC Resolution #2016-10, offering strong support for the project, with a recommendation that MTA and Baltimore City hire local residents. Specifically, the PAC stated it sees the project “as a great investment along traditionally underserved neighborhoods within Baltimore City and commends MDOT on its attention to detail and commitment to community engagement in developing such a socially equitable plan. In this vein, the PAC would like to see a committed effort during the planning of these projects to pursue use of local labor and explore options for utilizing programs that retrain workers. These efforts would help ensure Baltimore City communities maximize the positive impacts of North Avenue Rising.”

***[Handout: PAC Resolution #2016-10 - TIP Amendment - North Avenue Rising]***

- **Membership** – Mr. Shafer reminded the PAC that the BRTB is seeking new members to fill vacancies on the PAC, starting in January 2017. Applications are welcome through November 30 and members are particularly needed from Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, Howard and Queen Anne’s counties. Mr. Shafer asked all PAC members to think about potential applicants and share [flyers and PAC applications](#) in the community or through their personal and professional networks.

In addition, the five members (Terraine Arnold, Kevin Engler, David Fitzpatrick, Ben Gilardi, and Beth Wiseman) that have terms that are ending in December should notify Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda by November 2 if they’d like to request an additional 3-year term of service.

Mr. Shafer also reminded members that a call for nominations for 2017 PAC Chairs is set for the November meeting, with elections at the December meeting.

#### 4. REPORT ON RECENT AND UPCOMING BRTB MEETINGS

The September BRTB meeting was cancelled. The October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting includes action on the North Avenue TIP Amendment. Minutes and a calendar of recent and upcoming BRTB meetings are online at [baltometro.org](http://baltometro.org).

#### 5. OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. Shafer shared [an article in the Howard County Times about a public meeting on the Centennial Lane road redesign project](#) in Ellicott City. The article reported that there remained great concern among the 100+ members of the public in attendance that concerns over parking, bicycle access to Centennial Park, and safe school crossing have not been addressed with the updated plan.

The PAC expressed concerns that though the basic public meeting requirements may have been satisfied, the public meeting staff appear to have listened and left without a clear process or plan to respond or incorporate public comments and remaining concerns. This appears to have led to a negative perception of the transportation planning process. The PAC encourages the BRTB members to do what they can to follow up on the remaining concerns on this project.

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 P.M.

#### ATTENDANCE

##### **Members**

Lindsey Bishop – Resident, Baltimore City

*Attended by phone*

Chris Costello – Transportation Association of Maryland

Michael Davis – Resident, Carroll County

*Proxy designated by: Michael Bishop*

Kevin Engler – Partners In Care

David Fitzpatrick – Resident, Baltimore City

Benjamin Gilardi – Resident, Baltimore City

Darin Hughes – Resident, Baltimore City

Paul Kowzan III – Broadway Area Business Association

Mark Lotz – Resident, Harford County

Eric Norton – Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Rita Ossiander – Resident, Baltimore County

*Proxy designated by: Angela Jones*

Greg Shafer – Resident, Howard County

Beth Wiseman – Baltimore County Association of Senior Citizens Organizations

##### **Staff and Guests**

Monica B. Haines Benkhedda – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)

Don Halligan – BMC

Carl Parr – Maryland Transit Administration

**DRAFT**

## **Mission and activities for PAC Ad Hoc Transportation Equity Subcommittee**

The Ad-Hoc Transportation Equity Subcommittee will consist of at least five voting members and will function as subcommittee to review regionally significant land use and transportation issues, plans and programs, including the Unified Work Plan, the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Public Participation Plan.

This committee will focus on reviewing regional transportation plans and programs through the lens of equity and environmental justice so as to advocate for the development and implementation of policies and plans that address the crucial role of transportation in providing access to opportunity, schools and health care for minority, vulnerable and low-income populations. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Support the capacity of the PAC to apply the lens of equity and environmental justice to public participation efforts and transportation investments, policies and plans through relationship-building with transportation equity groups and coordination of presentation and speakers.
- Examine the impact on minority, vulnerable and low-income populations of proposed and current policies, projects, and programs in terms of increased transportation options, reduced isolation, improved affordability and increased access.
- Review measurable outcomes and if those outcomes represent transportation equity for minority, vulnerable and low-income populations.

### **Discussion questions**

- What more do you need to know about transportation equity?
- What would be some of strengths of an Equity Subcommittee?
- What would be some of the challenges of such a Subcommittee?
- What resources/buy-in would be needed?
- What kinds of goals or activities would you suggest if you agree with this idea?

**A RESOLUTION REGARDING  
AN AMENDMENT TO THE  
BALTIMORE REGION FY 2017-2020 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)  
BY THE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)  
OF THE BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD (BRTB)**

**WHEREAS**, the BRTB, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region responsible for transportation planning and policy making for the Baltimore region; and

**WHEREAS**, the PAC serves as an advisory body to the BRTB, charged with providing independent, region oriented citizen advice to the BRTB on issues related to the development of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan (BRTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and amendments that affect the region's conformity with federal air quality requirements, the public involvement process, regionally significant land use issues, and other regional transportation-related issues, as appropriate, promotes public awareness and participation in the regional transportation planning process and promotes equity in the regional transportation planning process; and

**WHEREAS**, the PAC has discussed the following FY 2017 – 2020 TIP Amendment:

- North Avenue Rising (TIP ID # 42-1702-09)

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the PAC strongly supports this amendment with the following comment:

- The PAC sees this as a great investment along traditionally underserved neighborhoods within Baltimore City and commends MDOT on its attention to detail and commitment to community engagement in developing such a socially equitable plan. In this vein, the PAC would like to see a committed effort during the planning of these projects to pursue use of local labor and explore options for utilizing programs that retrain workers. These efforts would help ensure Baltimore City communities maximize the positive impacts of North Avenue Rising.

Submitted by:



Gregory H. Shafer  
Chairman, BRTB Public Advisory Committee