

# RTA Monthly Report

SEPTEMBER 2017



**Joint Meeting  
Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission and  
RTA Partners Coordination Meeting**

1:00 p.m. October 24, 2017

8510 Corridor Road, Suite 110, Savage, MD

**AGENDA**

	Welcome	Clive Graham, Administrator, Howard County
A	Review of September Minutes	Clive Graham
B	Memorandum of Understanding, Commission Bylaws.	Clive Graham
C	September 2017 Financial Report	Suzanne Brown, Director of Finance
D	Statistical Snapshot Report	Mark Pritchard GM, RTA
E	GM Report/Staff Updates	Mark Pritchard GM, RTA
F	FY 2019 Budget Summary of Service Proposals Presentation of preliminary draft budget; Questions from RTA	Clive Graham, Suzanne Brown
G	Transit Development Plan Update	Clive Graham
H	Other Business	
	Adjournment	



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RTA Partners Agenda  
Item A  
10/24/17

**Topic: Review of the September Minutes**

(Clive Graham will provide a verbal review)

**Requested Action**

Provide input and ask questions of staff.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item B  
10/24/17

**Topic: Memorandum of Understanding, Commission Bylaws**

(Clive Graham will provide a verbal update)

**Requested Action**

Provide input and ask questions of staff.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item C  
10/24/17

**Topic: September 2017 Financial Report**

(Suzanne Brown will provide a verbal update)

**Requested Action**

Hear a report and ask questions of staff.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item D  
10/24/17

**Topic: Statistical Snapshot Report**

(Mark Pritchard will provide a verbal review)

**Requested Action**

Hear a report and ask questions of staff.

**Topic: General Manager Report / Staff Updates**

Five (5) new employees began training in October including 3 operators plus one technician and one service lane employee. In the past RTA has scheduled one training class each month. Two training classes will be held in October, November and December in order to fill vacant operator positions.

The planned service changes on 501- Silver, 405- Yellow, and the service additions on 409B and 504 went well with a minimum amount of customer confusion.

Two of the three electric buses from BYD placed in service in July continue to operate reliably with some issues and problems. One of the three electric buses has been down since mid- September while the manufacturer develops and ships a new left rear motor. It is expected to be received the week of October 23. Being a new manufacturer with not that many vehicles in service, the problem of part and component availability is compounded the fact that there is not enough standardization. RTA is finding that some components were designed and created specifically for these vehicles and do not exist on other BYD vehicles operated elsewhere in the U.S.

All twelve (12) body on chassis Ford vehicles assembled by Coach and Equipment, Inc. of Penn Yann, NY finally arrived by early October. One of the vehicles had to be returned to the manufacturer because of mechanical problems. Four (4) of the units are being used exclusively on the Route 504 connecting the two MARC stations. The funding for the vehicles and the service has been supplied by MTA as part of the Link program. The additional eight (8) vehicles although designed for paratransit use will be used for fixed route service in order to replace the same number of 2010 International vehicles that have numerous problems including body/structural damages, frequent road failure for mechanical reasons, and excessive exhaust.

Staff and Teamsters Local 570 had several negotiating sessions in order to complete a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which expired on September 30, 2017. The CBA has been extended which is a common practice. Much of the focus of the negotiations has been to implement a progression wage scale for bus operators. In the past, company and union have negotiated increases in wages, but never a scale by which prospective and current employees would know how much their wage could increase each year of service and what the top pay is. The transit agencies in the area in which RTA competes for bus operators all have a wage progression in their labor agreements and it has made it more difficult in attracting and retaining bus operators since RTA does not have a wage progression scale.

Efforts begun previously to shift the focus of maintenance toward greater emphasis on preventing problems before they occur continued this month. Technician staff conducting preventive maintenance inspections (PMIs) have been retrained on how to conduct PMIs along with more supervisory review to insure they are completed correctly. Looking at road failures and comparing the mileage at which they occurred with when the last PMI was completed is being looked at regularly. As of October 16, AGM Andrew

Johnson is assisting in the maintenance department to better insure that preventive maintenance is more thoroughly being implemented and that there is greater accountability on the maintenance floor for properly completing repairs.

## **Operations Update**

Route Match training for the fixed route system included a test of the new RouteShout program. The test showed additional assistance was needed from customer service to insure timely service updates could be manually logged into the system.

Specific route training was provided for new routes 409B and 504. Operators were fully prepared for the October 1<sup>st</sup> start up.

Bus availability improved slightly for September. There were 12 service failures with no availability and paratransit vehicles were used on 27 routes. Supervisors covered 5 routes for driver absences.

September Safety numbers:

PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS: 2

NON PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS: 3

PREVENTABLE CLIENT ACCIDENTS: 0

NON PREVENTABLE CLIENT ACCIDENTS: 0

WORK COMP (EE Injury): 1

The September Safety monthly meeting focused on Passenger Care and the organization met the Drug and Alcohol Random quota for the compliance program.

The September training class for new operators produced 2 new fixed route operators and 1 mechanic.

## **Communications / Marketing**

Branding/Website

- Bus Rider announcements were posted on all buses regarding new routes and bus stop changes for the October 1<sup>st</sup> schedules. New schedules are hosted on the website. All 16 route schedules have been printed, posted on the buses and mailed to over 52 locations in all jurisdictions. Current inventory is in stock. All future route changes require a 120 day implementation time frame. Routes need to be fully approved, paddles completed by day 90 to create files, load to web and mobile, drill new poles and add/remove signage from stops and communicate changes to riders 30 days in advance. This requirement when reduced jeopardizes communication efforts resulting in uninformed riders and customer complaints.
- Bus Rider communications are complete for the RouteShout 2.0 App which will allow Riders the ability to access real time bus information. This will be a grass root,

soft launch effort as we are learning a new software and want to insure the product and bus information showing on a mobile device is close to 95% accurate. A series of outreach activities at hub locations will kick off the launch with pocket size instruction cards, flyers, and interior bus signage, email blasts to community organizations, website announcement, social media postings and teaser print ads. As the effort grows, operators will wear t-shirts announcing RouteShout followed by bus shelter sticker, and possibly radio. As mobile launch numbers increase, our ability to communicate directly to the rider increases which in turn will cut down on customer service calls to the 1-800 number. Launch date is set for November 5<sup>th</sup>.

- A new website platform is in development by Firefly including a mobile application. Discussions of overdue design deadlines were discussed with the vendor and are being addressed.

#### Marketing/Advertising Support

- Baltimore Sun Media Group print and digital campaign continues. The focus is on hiring CDL Drivers, driving customer traffic to our website to increase ridership and brand awareness, promoting RouteShout App 2.0, Route 504 and 409B. The digital campaign is targeting key zip codes throughout our jurisdictions and messaging is in English, Spanish and Korean.
- Advertising ran to promote the new Route 504 service to NBP, Savage and Odenton MARC station, Reece Road Gate at Ft. Meade and Piney Orchard. 130,000 post it notes were featured on front page copies of the Baltimore Sun/Howard Co. section, The Capital, Columbia Flyer, Howard County Times, Laurel Leader and Soundoff.
- Promotional display posters were created for new routes 409B and 504. 504 posters were shipped to main stop locations; National Business Park business lobbies, kiosk centers at both MARC train stations and public libraries. Route 409B posters were sent to Laurel Community Center, Food Center, Mobern Electric and Leola Day Resource Center.

#### Outreach/ Advertising Revenue

- On October 18<sup>th</sup> the RTA participated in a Sustainability Fair at Howard Community College to promote the Electric Bus project and talk about the new RouteShout 2.0 app.
- Bus advertising for the month produced **\$9,634.80**.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item F  
10/24/17

**Topic: FY 2019 Budget, Summary of Service Proposals, Presentation of preliminary draft budget; Questions from RTA**

(Clive Graham and Suzanne Brown will provide a verbal update)

**Requested Action**

Hear a review, provide input and ask questions.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item G  
10/24/17

**Topic: Transit Development Plan Update**

(Clive Graham will provide a verbal update)

**Requested Action**

Hear a review, provide input and ask questions of staff.

RTA Partners Agenda  
Item H  
10/24/17

**Topic: Other Business**

**Requested Action**

Share additional points of discussion.