



Draft Meeting Minutes

Riders' Advisory Council

May 23, 2019

In Attendance:

Riders/Public

Astamay Curtis
Helen Sutusky
Cassandra Gilliam

Jeffrey Akers
Larry May
Mr. Jenkins

Partner Staff/ Commissioners

Jason Quan

RTA Staff

Andrew Johnson
Cristin Tolen
Stephanie Dittman
Cole McCarren
Kathy Harris

1. Approval of March 14, 2019 meeting minutes ¹

The January 10, 2019 meeting minutes were approved without any required edits.

2. Announcements

- Cristin Tolen provided an overview of the RAC, with representation from each county within the RTA service area, open for everyone for comments and participation.
- Bruce Gartner is the new Administrator for the Howard County Office of Transportation.
- **TDP Route and Service Change (May 5th)**

¹ Minute references are to the meeting audio recording; see link on the transitRTA.com/RAC website.

Jason Quan provided information on the new routes, effective May 5th. Input received from riders was positive, especially with the addition of Sunday service on several routes. It was noted that Route 409 was adjusted to accommodate rider usage needs. The last trip from Laurel to Elkridge was changed from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Routes will continue to be evaluated and tweaked as necessary.

Expansion routes to connect Ellicott City to Catonsville and also Clarksville and Maple Lawn/Fulton are future possibilities.

- **Phase 2, ADA/GPT Fare Increase (July 1, 2019)**

Phase 2 of the ADA/GPT fare increase will be effective July 1, 2019. ADA and GPT in Howard County will increase from \$3 to \$4 per ride. All fixed routes rates will remain the same.

- **New Paratransit Vehicles**

The County is researching additional paratransit vehicles with a different style for comfort and ease of smaller neighborhood access.

3. New Service issues/comments

The following new issues and concerns were raised:

Driver Issues

- 86 year old rider didn't have their ID and was denied free ride on fixed route service. However a 65 year old rider didn't show ID and refused to pay.

Drivers have been instructed to be equitable and consistent, therefore riders must show ID for the free ride program on fixed route. Andrew Johnson needs to be notified of the date, time and route, to address enforcement of policies with drivers.

General Issues

- Astamay Curtis is concerned that the information regarding the RAC meetings are not reaching the riders, evidenced by tonight's low attendance. She has requested that an email reminder is sent to previous meeting attendees. Astamay noted that a reminder for the RAC meeting was tweeted out earlier today and also listed on the RTA website.
- The RTA website needs to be more user friendly.
- Rider noted the safety latch was not properly secured and the rain was coming into the bus.
- RouteShout 2.0, all this time and effort for the program and it is always down

Cristin is working with the vendor to address the issues with the program. There are better solutions available. RouteShout 2.0 information is also available on our website.

- What is the standard procedure for notification to riders when a bus is down?
- Bus service was held today due to storm, no information was provided on Twitter, website or RouteShout 2.0 and the Call Center was backed up with calls.

An SOP needs to be developed/ revised to ensure better communication to riders during service interruptions.

- Drivers taking a break can cause riders to miss connecting bus and have to wait an additional hour
- A photo of a sign from a County Connector bus was provided to the RTA. An email was sent to the RTA. The RTA stated it was not a sign they produced. The sign continues to be posted in vehicles that are not ADA compliant. The 3 shuttles to BWI do not use their lifts to provide access to riders with walkers.

Cristin continues to work with Anne Arundel County and BWI Partnership to correct the violation. If necessary, the violation will be escalated to remove RTA from the scenario. It is a law to provide transportation to persons with a disability and it will be handled accordingly.

- When the bus is turned off at Columbia Mall riders cannot tell the destination of the bus

Cristin will look into a visual display for the interior of the bus, when the digital destination is turned off.

5 Additional vehicles to be added to the fleet

Cristin Tolen announced that two (2) fixed route vehicles are scheduled to arrive in the fall of 2019, and three (3) more in mid-2020.

25 Year Transportation Plan

- Cristin Tolen provided information on the Central Maryland Regional Transportation Commission and the 25 year transportation plan to address transportation in the Central Maryland region (Baltimore Co., Baltimore City, Harford, Howard and Anne Arundel counties). Fall 2020 a report will be drafted to address the broad range goals for county connectivity, fare products and reliability.

Rider requests

- Request to upload the fixed route bus stop and destination “cheat sheet” to the RTA website.
- Route 402 A/B provides service to the Columbia Medical Plan which is open until 8:00pm. Can there be a later bus time of departure?

The last trip on the 402 A/B was decided upon due to low ridership later in the day. Depending on available funding may look at expanding service time in the future.

- 403 Dorsey Circle, seniors live there, want access to shopping center. There is a hill incline to access the shopping center.

Andrew Johnson commented that the route timetables were done due to timing reasons.

Jason further commented that was also due to a safety issue. The stop is in front of the Giant. Route stops are placed in the safest place within shopping centers.

Rider complaints

- Route 406 requires a half mile walk to access Kaiser Permanente services. There are no sidewalks for safety

Jason Quan replied that when the study of the service was completed there was no public input regarding service to the stop at Kaiser Permanente. Adding this stop would require an additional bus due to an additional 5-8 minutes needed to provide service to the Kaiser facility.

- Patuxent Woods needs more frequent service provided back to Columbia Mall.
- Costco, need seated area for new stop moved to Target/Pier 1
- RouteShout 2.0, need alert for service interruptions, inclement weather and buses out of service or late arrival.
- In closing Astamay and attendees provided the following remarks:
 - Buses need to be marked with Route, for when digital signage is turned off
 - Electronic fare boxes

Cristin advised \$800,000 to 1 Million for entire fleet

- What reason is provided by the Call Center to riders when calling in for updates, due to RouteShout 2.0 not working?
- Only 1 bus advertised tonight's meeting
- The bus numbers are not listed on the new buses as a reference when calling in a complaint

4. RAC Logistics – Frequency of meetings, Next meeting, location

It was decided to hold the RAC meetings quarterly. The next meeting will be on September 12th, Location TBD by Howard County Office of Transportation.

Any issues, complaints or comments that occur before the next meeting should be submitted to the consumer@transitrt.com, via the RTA website.

Adjourned 7:50 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

Next Commission Meeting – Thursday, June 27, 2019, 1:00PM, RTA Administrative Office
RAC Meeting – Thursday, September 12, 2019, 6:00PM, Howard County Library Central Branch, Warfield Room (note date change, original meeting date was September 19th).

Acronyms

AAC	Anne Arundel County
ADA	Americans Disability Act
APC	Automatic Passenger Counter
GPT	General Paratransit
PGC	Prince George’s County
RAC	Riders’ Advisory Council
RTA	Regional Transportation Agency
CSR	Customer Service Representative