



Meeting Minutes

Riders' Advisory Council February 13, 2020

In Attendance:

Riders / Public

Connie Baien
Linda Carothers
Astamay Curtis
Philip Dulany
Marlene Hendler
Jacquie Sentell
Duretha Smith

RTA Staff

Andrew Johnson
Cole McCarren
Cristin Tolen

Partner Staff / Commissioners

Bruce Gartner
Jason Quan

1. Approval of November 14, 2019 meeting minutes

The November 14, 2019 meeting minutes were approved after a short discussion about mobility call queue and whether or not it is possible for rides to be approved if a customer is on hold after, but placed the call before, mobility booking cutoff time. Cristin will check on this. No edits were made to the minutes.

2. RTA Announcements

- Upcoming service change on March 8th
 - Timepoints are being adjusted/removed to improve on-time performance and various stops are being added / moved for better service clarity.
 - Route 404 is undergoing a change so as to not service Hickory Ridge Village Center twice within 7 minutes, instead will speed up service and simplify the service in the center – back to being all on one side of the road (nearside to shops, no more waiting in flower beds/grass)
- Improved bus identifier flipbooks

- Installed on buses this past month and in full service – no more taped signs that show which bus is which when the destination sign gets powered off
- Feedback from Philip: they are hard to see when they're on mobility vehicles
- Andrew and Cristin talked through that vehicle numbers 200 through 204 don't have illuminator signs and will look in to visibility issues raised here
- Real-time data on 3rd party apps
 - Cole gave rundown of RTAs new philosophy on real-time data on people unfamiliar with what is being worked on behind the scenes – will go live next month
- Real-time data via SMS and IVR
 - Cristin showed picture of new stop ID decals being placed on all stops in the system, target completion date is end of March 2020
- Day pass update
 - Andrew discussed the new cardstock day passes that went live last month
- New shelters
 - Jason discussed the new solar lighting, low profile, ADA bus shelters that are going live at Columbia Mall this year
- Update on Laurel bus hub
 - Cristin brought the dirt/mud issue to Laurel partners this past month
 - Linda followed up and asked if they can replace the glass back to the shelter down there that broke
 - Cristin will bring this to the City of Laurel

3. RAC Announcements

- Cole will begin giving week-before reminders and get everyone all dates for 2020 RAC meetings
- Cole will look back at previous attendee lists and see who can be added to the current distribution list
- Andrew will handle the issue of notifications about RAC meetings not making it to buses, since multiple members did not see the flyer that was created for this meeting
- Astamay raised the idea that RAC attendance may have decreased since service has become more reliable
- Cristin raised the idea that the council can always act as a good source of feedback on new initiatives the RTA is working on
- Jacquie brought up the idea of comment cards, but group discussed that there are already many ways to reach RTA staff with complaints/compliments
- Applications will be forwarded on to all in attendance tonight, we have just two applications in at this time

4. Public Comment

- Linda thanked the RTA for everything that the RTA is doing currently to make the agency better
- Linda asked for a list of current initiatives the RTA is working on that have not been discussed up to this point tonight
 - Cristin brought up a future website redesign, clearer phone menu / quicker access to customer service, advocating for new buses, automatic stop annunciators on fixed-route, and fare payment options on mobile phones.
- Linda brought up that on some buses, the pull-cords for stop requests are not working
 - Cristin brought up that bus cleanliness is also an issue the agency is addressing, and that pull-cords would be included as a line item for a fleetwide inventory of items to address
 - Marlene brought up issues with wheelchair pullcord features
- Bruce brought up the agency's and county's push toward serving students more – working with school districts, and may be waiving student pass fees in the future
- Connie had feedback on the Cedar Ln / Freetown Rd stop on the 404 and asked for improvements to be made there
- Astamay received feedback from mobility customer who wants a “watch your head” type of warning on vehicles with low ceiling
- Astamay asked about results of free fare program during holidays
 - Howard County partners advised that December ridership was higher than November, which is unusual, but there is no significant increase that can be completely attributed to free ride program
 - Free ride program was very well received from customers though, and lots of qualitative stories and anecdotal evidence of goodwill made the program be viewed as a success
- Marlene brought up that she saw a passenger that was frustrated and did not understand that they did not have to pay
- Astamay brought up that Roxann Ford and Alaine Andrews passed away
- Jacquie brought up issues and complaints about mobility card expiration and not being notified and that a driver was inappropriately speaking to Jacquie about the issue
 - Andrew said he personally has addressed this issue with the driver
 - Cristin brought up that expiration notices have been backed up and that RTA is addressing this, too
- Jacquie brought up that the 407 and 503 drivers did not communicate with each other when she told the 407 driver to ask the 503 in front of them to hold over 10 seconds at Owen Brown
 - Andrew stated there is a reasonable expectation for this to happen and that if Jacquie can document what day and time these issues happen, they can be addressed
- Jacquie brought up potentially improving the Walmart stop in Ellicott City
 - Jason said that he has personally brought this up to Walmart staff and that the managers there don't want anything done, has been making it difficult to make improvements there even at no cost to the Walmart
- Jacquie brought up the stop at Guilford Rd past Oakland Mills and whether or not the stop there on the 503 can be moved from the gravel

- Linda inquired about funding for PGC routes and what has to be done for more funding to be put on routes there
 - Specifically inquired about the 302 and 502
 - Cristin advised there is a meeting with Anne Arundel County the week after this meeting and the 502 will be addressed then, too
 - RTA staff will get Linda contact information for requested PGC contacts
- Marlene and Astamay talked about paratransit IDs and inquired whether or not they require a fixed-route ID if they have a paratransit ID – they are correct

5. Adjournment

Future Meeting Dates:

Next Commission Meeting –

Tuesday, March 24th, 2020, 1:00PM, RTA Administrative Office

Next RAC Meeting –

Thursday, May 14th, 2020, 6:00PM, *location TBD*

Acronyms

AAC	Anne Arundel County
PGC	Prince George's County
RTA	Regional Transportation Agency
RAC	Riders Advisory Council
TDP	Transit Development Plan