



## Meeting Minutes

### Riders' Advisory Council September 6, 2018

#### In Attendance:

	<b>Riders/Public</b>	<b>Partner Staff/ Commissioners</b>
Astamay Curtis	Charles Franklin	Clive Graham
Jorge Tirigall	Cassandra Gilliam	Jason Quan
Duretha Smith	Roxann Ford	Mike Dyer
Laneca Duggins	Eric Miller	Nathan Grace
Shellie Chambers	Julie Roehm	<b>RTA Staff</b>
Dick Adams		Cristin Tolen
		Andrew Johnson
		Victor Jimenez

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#### **Introductions and Background (minute 12:20<sup>1</sup>)**

Clive Graham opened the meeting outlining the purpose and background of the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC).

Clive provided some background and history on the Passengers Advisory Group (PAG). Problems with transit service in the 1990s led to the creation of the PAG which has met consistently since then, consisting solely with riders from Howard County. Astamay Curtis has chaired the PAG for 8 years. Victor has provided staff support.

In 2014, the Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) was formed as the regional service provider in Central Maryland. A regional system should have a regional passenger advisory group. The RAC is intended to fill the role of the PAG but with more of a regional perspective and provide

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<sup>1</sup> Minute references are to the meeting audio recording; see link on the RTA web site  
<http://www.transitrt.com/RAC/>

grassroots input on ideas, issues, and concerns about the RTA transit service. The PAG was officially dissolved in 2017, though meetings are continuing pending how the RAC develops.

Clive referred to pages in the agenda packet describing the intended role of the RAC; an organization chart, references to the RAC in the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission's bylaws, and an RAC Summary. Clive said the RAC should also create its own bylaws at some point.

### **RAC Way Forward Discussion (minute 27:50)**

There were concerns that there was no rider representation at the meeting from Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, or the City of Laurel. Mike Dyer said that he and Nathan Grace has visited bus stops and other venues to try to recruit riders to be on the RAC.

Clive Graham recommended moving on with meetings even if participants come only from Howard County. He recommended continuing to reach out to Anne Arundel County and Prince George's County at least in the short term. He hoped that once the RAC had momentum, there would be broader participation. He is more interested in having a functional group than checking a participation box that group exists.

Astamay said she hopes that the RAC will act in same way as PAG, to report issues riders are having to RTA.

#### *Participation/membership*

Many ideas were put forth to increase participation:

- Ensuring information on buses is accessible and easy to see / identify; the pouches that are used on the buses are not effective.
- Different means of outreach are needed: seniors do not tend to use social media to get information.
- Provide information/handouts at libraries, senior and community centers.
- Providing information on RTA phone prompt.
- Display information on header boards inside of buses.

### **RAC Logistics (minute 55:14)**

#### *Transportation*

Concerns were expressed about transportation to the meetings. Meetings are open to the public and people should have the opportunity to come to meetings to speak.

Would the RTA provide mobility rides to meetings? Clive said that further discussion was needed; recently RTA has only provided mobility rides for public hearings.

#### *Location*

Where should RAC meetings be held?

The North Laurel Community Center was suggested as a potential meeting location since it is served by the 409B and 503 and has a direct connection from Columbia Mall and the Laurel Towne Centre.

The Bain Center was also suggested as a potential meeting location since it is served by the 401 and located within a 15 minute window from the Transfer Center at Columbia Mall.

The RTA Administration Office was also cited as a meeting location since it is centrally located for Anne Arundel, Howard, Northern Prince George's Counties and the City of Laurel.

There was discussion about varying the locations of the meeting versus keeping it at the same location. A show of hands vote was taken by the riders that were in attendance and it was a unanimous decision to hold the meetings at one consistent location.

Cristin said she would work with Jason to identify a location for the next meeting.

### *Frequency*

Clive suggested the RAC meet monthly at the outset but might scale back to bimonthly in the future.

### *Officers*

Astamay Curtis was nominated to be the Chairperson. Astamay accepted on a temporary basis pending the future of the RAC.

## **Service Issues, Concerns, and Comments (minute 1:15)**

A lengthy discussion ensued.

1. Need more stops; the RTA should ask riders where they want stops.
2. Jorge Tirigall said he can use the 405 one way to get to the Miller library but can't make the return trip because there is no sidewalk.
3. The 405/Yellow route should go to further west to Bethany lane.
4. Roxann Ford asked about using old fare media after September 30. Cristin said the RTA could do an exchange for new media.
5. In response to questions Victor explained the ID card policy/procedures.
6. One attendee's son rides RTA Mobility but RTA Mobility has only one stop at Columbia Mall which makes it inconvenient for Mobility riders; can there be more mobility stops at the Mall?

Victor and Andrew stated that multiple Mobility stops at the Mall is not safe and makes it difficult for drivers to find the rider; Having more than one stop at the Mall may confuse some Mobility riders with some getting lost or unintentionally waiting at the wrong stop.

Victor said he would investigate the Mall's guidelines and restrictions.

7. Dick Adams said the new tickets are not numbered and the ticket stub is not perforated making it difficult to tear.
8. Buses are not arriving at their scheduled pick-up time; concerned with how trips are scheduled – for example, riders on medical trips to Baltimore are all given the same pick-up time and same return time.
9. Roxann described an incident when her pick up time was 5:00 but she got picked up at 5:40. She sat in the heat for the whole time. The driver had to pick up another rider and then headed the wrong direction for Roxann’s pick up; the driver didn’t know until last minute would have two wheelchairs. Her conclusion is that there are big problems with the scheduling.
10. Can there be adjustments to be better schedule medical shuttle trips to Baltimore. Riders are all given same pick up time regardless of where they are being picked up from.
11. Drivers are not stopping at each stop; riders may be waiting by the stop under a tree or other shade to shield from the sun or weather.
12. Some drivers still reference the routes by the colors
13. Complaints filed with RTA does not seem to be given to the appropriate personnel
14. Operators do not have name tags and sometimes give false identification numbers
15. Laneca Duggins said that operators require strollers to be collapsed before boarding the bus – this is not required in Baltimore. She added that many drivers are rude and do not understand customer service; she has had bad experiences that she described in detail.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Next RAC Meeting – Thursday October 18, North Laurel Community Center

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