



## Draft Meeting Minutes

### Riders' Advisory Council November 14, 2019

#### In Attendance:

##### Riders / Public

Linda Carothers  
Astamay Curtis  
Larry May  
Jacquie Sontell

##### RTA Staff

Andrew Johnson  
Cole McCarren  
Cristin Tolen

##### Partner Staff / Commissioners

Bruce Gartner  
Jason Quan

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#### 1. Approval of September 12, 2019 meeting minutes <sup>1</sup>

The September 12, 2019 meeting minutes were approved without any required edits.

#### 2. Announcements

- Recent Service change on November 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Dobbin Center stop consolidation on routes 402A/B, 408, and 501. Operators now enter Dobbin Center through the southern entrance and loop around before servicing the stop on the right before exiting. Walks from this bus stop to the Walmart are no longer than the walk from the previous stop in the middle of the parking lot, but now can take place entirely on a sidewalk.
  - Route 302 began going to Greenbelt Metro 7 days a week, and discontinued service to College Park, since Purple Line construction is ramping up, and increased service to Greenbelt can include the Greenbelt Plaza shopping center 6 days a week for more consistently understood schedules.

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<sup>1</sup> Minute references are to the meeting audio recording; see link on the [transitRTA.com/RAC](http://transitRTA.com/RAC) website.

- Route 301 began an alignment straight past the UM Laurel medical center, as construction is starting there this winter. Buses remain on Van Dusen Road to turn left on to Contee, serving the current WMATA stops there.
- Timepoints were adjusted to improve on-time performance and various stops were added and moved on nearly all routes.
- New ENC's for fixed-route service
  - Going out this month
  - Andrew Johnson specified he'd like to see one of these new vehicles on the 501, and one of them on the 414.
  - GM reiterated that there are 41 different fixed-route vehicles within the RTA fleet
  - One of our electric buses is going back to California to be fixed directly by the vendor
  - Our wireless charging pad was tweaked at Columbia Mall, but it still is only charging the electric buses 2-3% per charge. Currently we are switching out these vehicles mid-day.
- Customer Service Initiatives
  - Flipbooks with big bold print and route numbers to be stuck in windows of vehicles – should be rolling out within the next month so that passengers can determine what buses are what even with a powered off destination sign.
  - Stop IDs are going up on fixed-route signage and when this project is complete, riders will be able to text the 5-digit ID and get live bus arrival predictions for that stop.

### **3. Draft RAC Bylaws and Application**

- Updated RAC Bylaws document was shared with changes discussed at the last RAC meeting
- The RAC approved the new bylaws and applications for the RAC were brought up to attendees – if we don't get more people to participate, people will simply serve as at-large members

### **4. Public Comment**

- The RAC Chair asked if the new transit vans can have arm rests installed
  - Andrew Johnson said we will look in to it, and that they didn't come with them
- An attendee expressed her appreciation for free senior rides on fixed-route, and explained that it impacted her decision to move and stay within the RTA service region
- An attendee asked what the RTA expects to be the impacts from the Purple Line
  - Cristin Tolen explained that with the move from College Park on the 302, no RTA services foresee any major impacts on our service, unless our partners in Prince George's County have services in mind for us to run

- An attendee asked if there are plans to address frequencies on route 502 on the weekends
  - Cristin Tolen expressed that anything with our 502 schedule is strictly due to funding constraints from Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties.
  - Andrew Johnson added that we tightened up the schedule in August to add 6 trips on the PM side of the 502 schedule with our current resources.
- An attendee brought up concerns with the 302 printed schedule being out of date in a vehicle she rode in, and that the Routsouth 2.0 interface is confusing
  - Cristin Tolen stated that we will look in to what happened with the schedule replacement on route 302 and that we are undergoing a pilot with a new vendor that will allow realtime bus information to show up in apps other than Routsouth 2.0
- An attendee brought up whether the new day passes were being distributed yet
  - Andrew Johnson explained that a safety protocol is in the works and needs to be better developed before they go live
- An attendee brought up the new Twitter-based service alerts feed and how some service alerts language requires a follow up tweet but one is never posted, and suggested we need to work on this
- An attendee brought up our phone system and how it is unclear and often forwards to no one answering at night
  - RTA staff clarified that phones should always forward to dispatch when the call center is closed, and that we will look more in to cleaning up the call system
- An attendee asked if we can install more landing areas in the dirt at Towne Centre Laurel bus hub
  - Jason Quan suggested that the public contact the City of Laurel or Prince George's County for this, since Howard County or the RTA would not have the right of way to do this
- An attendee expressed concern over the visibility of some 409 stops on US-1
- Another attendee brought up concerns over the phone system and asked whether it would be feasible to honor paratransit ride requests if a caller enters the queue before 5 pm.
- An attendee asked if there is any expansion for 409 and 503 service planned
  - Jason Quan explained that funding limitations dictate possible expansions but that a TDP phase 2 is in the works in the coming years that might include expanding existing services in the system
- An attendee expressed that RTA staff and the Commissioners ought to ride on the buses more
- An attendee asked about stop improvements and how they move forward
  - Jason Quan explained that the county tries to improve about 40-50 stops a year and that ridership, need, and right-of-way dictates the order that these improvements happen

## 5. Adjournment

### Future Meeting Dates:

Next Commission Meeting –

Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 1:00PM, RTA Administrative Office

Next RAC Meeting –

Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 6:00PM, Howard County Central Library, Warfield Room

### Acronyms

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