



Transit Choices Meeting Summary

February 24, 2017
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Impact Hub Baltimore
10 E. North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Attendees:

Roxana Beyranvand, **Baltimore Collegetown Network**, Father Michael Bishop, **Bus Rider**, Robin Budish, **Transit Choices**, Luis Cardona, **Downtown Partnership of Baltimore**, Celeste Chavis, **Morgan State University**, Art Cohen, **b'more mobile**, Liz Cornish, **Bikemore**, Damon Crutchfield, **Maryland Institute College of Art**, Councilman Ryan Dorsey, **District 3**, Peter Duvall, **Strong City Baltimore**, Mark Edelson, **Goldman & Goldman, P.A.**, Kirby Fowler, **Downtown Partnership of Baltimore**, George Frazier, **Baltimore Bike Out**, Bobby Gross, Greg Hinchcliffe, **Bicycle Advocate**, Samuel Jordan, **Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition**, Jenny Klump, **Marketing and Design Strategist**, Jim Leanos, **Corporate Property Solutions**, Jackie MacMillan, **Bus Workgroup 14**, Hans Mayer, **Baltimore Transit Campaign**, Joe Nathanson, **Urban Information Associates**, Theo Ngongang, **AECOM**, Eric Norton, **Central Maryland Transportation Alliance**, Klaus Philipsen, **ArchPlan**, Pete Powell, **Lockhart Vaughan & Clayton Baker Trust Foundations**, Kevin Quinn, **MTA**, Michael Romeo, **Transdev**, Jimmy Rouse, **Transit Choices**, Sandy Sparks, **Charles Village Civic Association**, Kristin Speaker, **Charles Street Development Corporation**, Casy Stelitano, **Amalgamated Transit Union**, Raymond Talabis, **Cross Street Partners**, Yolanda Takesian, **Kittelson and Associates**, Raven Thompson, **Baltimore Development Corporation**

Moderator: Luis O. Cardona - Director, Economic Development at Downtown Partnership of Baltimore welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the attendees for coming. Luis then introduced the first guest speaker:

Casy Stelitano, Field Organizer – Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
Presentation: "**A People's Plan for Baltimore Transit**"

Presentation highlights:

1. Crises Confronting Baltimore Transit

- Transit investment hasn't focused on promoting **affordable housing**, driving **job creation**, or reducing **violence**
- Our city is paralyzed by **slow bus service** and lack of **service expansion** to those who need it
- The people of Baltimore never had a say in **BaltimoreLink**
- Our **deteriorating, unsafe rail system** desperately needs repair
- **Divestments** like Hogan's **Red Line cut** must be rolled back

2. Why is transit in Baltimore unreliable?

- Traffic Congestion
- Boarding Delay
 - Paying the Driver

- Dealing with Steps
- Intersection Delay
- Speed restrictions due to poor infrastructure maintenance
- Fleet too small
- Long routes
- Weak operational control

3. Why is transit in Baltimore unsafe?

- Persistent **rodent infestations** in stations expose passengers and workers to transmittable diseases
- **Flooding** of critical safety and operational equipment in stations
- **Faulty wiring** and **exposed conduits** in work and public areas that can lead to electrocution
- **Inoperable fire management systems**

4. What would true BRT in Baltimore Look Like?

- **Dedicated right-of-way**
 - Dedicated lanes in the middle of the road avoid conflicts with turning vehicles, deliveries, bicycles
- **Off-board fare collection**
 - Passengers buy a ticket at a vending machine. No delay paying the driver
- **All-door boarding**
 - Passengers can enter through all doors at once and step on at-level with the bus floor
- **Intersection treatments**
 - Transit signal priority and left turn restrictions to cars

5. Conclusion

- With true BRT infrastructure, we can improve bus frequency and eliminate the delays that leave bus riders stranded every day
- With dedicated funding for maintenance in our existing rail system, we can save lives and improve service quality for subway riders
- With investment in our existing rail system and a true BRT system, we can help:
 - connect Baltimoreans to job centers,
 - expand areas where affordable housing is viable,
 - reduce unemployment & unaffordability that contribute to violence
- With a plan drafted by transit workers and their allies, we can replace and improve BaltimoreLink in a way that actually serves the people of Baltimore

Additional Comments:

- Kevin Quinn, on behalf of the MTA acknowledged both Casey and the ATU for the great job they have done with the proposed Bus Rapid Transit system plan which the MTA supports. Kevin did question whether the investment of \$287 million included the utility cost.

Second Guest Speaker:

Kirby Fowler, President - the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.

Presentation: **“Sharing the Road (and Harbor): The Future of Transportation in Downtown Baltimore.”**

Presentation highlights:

- **DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP OF BALTIMORE (DPOB)**
 - Founded in 1984, DPOB is Baltimore’s oldest and largest business improvement district

- Employs 75+ clean sweep ambassadors and tourist guides
- Provides economic development, marketing, and parks management (Preston Gardens, Center Plaza, Hopkins Plaza)
- **CHARM CITY CIRCULATOR – FUNDING**
 - Founded in 2009, DPOB advocated for an increase in taxes paid by parkers in structured parking garages and lots to fund Circulator
 - **\$6M** annual funding stream
 - **83%** of this parking tax is derived from areas served by the three original lines of the Charm City Circulator (Purple, Green, and Orange routes).
- **CHARM CITY CIRCULATOR – RIDERSHIP**
 - **55%** of riders are **minorities**
 - **45%** of riders are Caucasian, **34%** are African American
 - **31%** of riders have household incomes under \$25,000
 - **50%** of riders have household incomes under \$45,000
 - **15 million+** total riders since 2010
- **CHARM CITY CIRCULATOR – CHALLENGES**
 - If overall system is extended too far without additional funds, popularity could be harmed
 - Longer routes without additional vehicles will extend wait times
 - **New funding is needed to keep current system afloat**
- **MTA – BaltimoreLINK**
 - **Downtown Baltimore is the region’s key job center and efficient bus service is essential for economic health**
 - **Promote strategic bus stop placement to support healthy retail corridors**
 - **Support uniform livery for buses but oppose bus wrapping (advertising)**
 - **Promoted BaltimoreLINK at DPOB events**
- **BALTIMORE BIKE SHARE**
 - Assisted in location siting and procuring sponsors
 - Sponsored the creation of the **Downtown Baltimore Access Pass**, providing an 80% discount on monthly passes for low-income riders
 - Encourage other businesses and civic groups to contribute to funding pot
- **DOWNTOWN BICYCLE NETWORK**
 - Support the expansion of the system within downtown and into surrounding neighborhoods
 - Supported the **Maryland Avenue Cycle Track**, helping to resolve disputes and reduce opposition
 - Participate on the Mayor’s Bicycle Advisory Commission
 - Install bike parking across downtown on behalf of small businesses
- **WATER TAXI**
 - Support one cohesive, rebranded system versus current Harbor Commuter/Water Taxi differentiation
 - Support new Inner Harbor terminal
 - Advocates for Locust Point → Harborplace route
 - Potential Access Pass for low-income residents
- **RIDESHARE**
 - Repeatedly met with Zipcar to convince them to open in Baltimore, providing demographic and other data to encourage their entering the market
 - Have supported legislation to prevent barriers to employment with Uber and Lyft
- **MARC/AMTRAK**
 - Led efforts to create and fund Baltimore welcome sign
 - Opposed evening MARC cuts by proposed by O’Malley administration

- Support redevelopment of Amtrak Penn Station and surrounding neighborhoods
- **PEDESTRIAN ACCESS**
 - Consistently advocate for improved crosswalks and sidewalks
 - Supported **Block the Box** initiative
 - Advocated to procure more traffic enforcement officers for downtown
 - Advocate for overall increased enforcement
- **CONCLUSION**
 - Downtown transportation must be **safe for all users**, particularly as more people choose to live in the urban core
 - Will continue to advocate for a **complete streets** approach to transportation policy downtown

Discussion Summary: Meeting attendees were given the opportunity at the conclusion of both presentations, to share their feedback and to provide suggestions, ideas and concerns with the guest speakers.

Other Business:

- Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance (CMTA)
 - The CMTA is now accepting applications for its Transportation 101 workshops! Transportation 101 is a 7-week class in which participants meet to learn from local experts and leaders, meet other interested residents and ultimately put what they learn into action. Transportation 101 is modeled after the Denver Transit Alliance Citizens' Academy that has been in operation for over 10 years and boasts over 800 graduates. The Transportation Alliance believes that engaged and informed citizens are integral to building the region's transportation future. Classes are held from 6pm-9pm every Wednesday from April 26 to June 7 at the UM Bio Park (801 W Baltimore St, Baltimore, MD 21201) and include dinner. Candidates may apply through April 5 here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe_1zquDU5mKjGG_PRIImisHBAfslrDYPqm_xLQQBWDW_jluOPw/viewform
 - Get Maryland Moving is spearheading legislation to repeal the Farebox Recovery Mandate. Currently, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is mandated by state law to recover 35% of its operations cost through revenues from transit fares. This mandate is counterproductive and limits MTA's ability to properly invest in improving the transit system. Attendees were encouraged to email their delegates and ask them to support legislation (HB 271), which has been approved by two committees and is headed for a vote from the full House of Delegates next week.
- Jimmy Rouse, Founding Member Transit Choices
 - The purpose of Transit Choices is to increase the dialogue and communication regarding what is going on in the transit arena.
 - The BaltimoreLink Ad hoc committee will meet again on March 23, 2017. Kevin Quinn, (Director, Office of Planning and Programming with the MTA) and his colleagues will be attending the meeting to provide a detailed update on **BaltimoreLink: Less than 100 Days Away!** Topics for discussion will include:
 - Summary of public hearing process and comments received
 - Overview of significant changes from Draft 1.3 to FINAL plan
 - New Schedule Design
 - Capital Project Updates
 - Update on Public education March 20-June 18th (and beyond)

Jimmy complimented Bus Workgroup #14, under Mary Pat Clarke for submitting a well thought-out response to the MTA's Third Revision of the draft BaltimoreLink Plan. He also

reiterated that Transit Choices remains committed to making sure the plan is the best system it can be.

- On February 21, 2017, Jimmy had a very productive meeting with Jim Smith, Chief of Strategic Alliances (Mayor's Office) to discuss the new "Transit Vision" brochure created by Transit Choices. The Mayor's Transportation Transition committee produced a report in which it established key priorities and initiatives, many of which came from the Transit Vision brochure. Given that Baltimore City needs and deserves quality public transit, one priority for the Mayor is to focus on sections of the city that are underserved by transit, and work on better connections to jobs, schools and healthcare.
- Greg Hinchcliffe announced that Caitlin Doolin, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner will be relocating to North Carolina and has resigned her position at the Baltimore City Department of Transportation. Greg acknowledged Caitlin for her great years of service.

Robin Budish, Director Transit Choices acknowledged and thanked the following:

- All attendees for their and time and participation
- Impact Hub Baltimore for providing meeting space