



## Transit Choices Meeting Summary

August 15, 2019  
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

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

### Attendees:

Holly Arnold (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Robin Budish (**Transit Choices**), Sue Carlin (**City Center Residents Association Board**), Colin Campbell (**Baltimore Sun**), Ben Cohen (**Last Mile Solutions**), Peter Duvall (**Strong City Baltimore**), James Gillece (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Jennifer Goold (**Neighborhood Design Center**), Taffy Gwitira (**Impact Hub Baltimore**), Molly Hayeslip (**Baltimore Collegetown**), Veronica McBeth (**Kittelson & Associates, Inc.**), Patrick McMahon (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Miss Joi (**Transit Rider**), Joe Nathanson (**Urban Information Associates**), Charles Penny (**Baltimore City DOT**), Klaus Philipsen (**ArchPlan, Inc.**), Kevin Quinn (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Nan Rohrer (**Midtown Community Benefits District**), Jimmy Rouse (**Transit Choices**), Sandy Sparks (**Baltimore Transit Campaign**), Kristin Speaker (**Charles Street Development Corporation**), Danielle Sweeney (**Central Maryland Transportation Alliance**), Raven Thompson (**Baltimore Development Corporation**), Mikah Zaslow, (**Baltimore City DOT**)

Guest Moderator: Susan Carlin | **City Center Residents Association Board** welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the attendees for coming. Susan then introduced the first guest speaker:

**Charles Penny**, Chief of Transit and Sustainable Transportation - Baltimore City Department of Transportation

Presentation: "**Charm City Circulator Informational Update**"

### Presentation highlights:

- **New Vendor - RMA Worldwide**
  - Errands Plus, Inc. dba RMA Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation has been in business for over 30 years and is headquartered in Rockville, Maryland. RMA employees 250 staff members and facilitate hundreds of thousands trips each year on six continents through its Chauffeured Service.
- **The current service coverage**
  - Four routes serving downtown and local neighborhoods
  - 18 bus fleet
  - Over 2.4M Passenger Trips (FY 2018)
- **Terms of New Contract and New Vendor (RMA Worldwide)**
  - Contract Terms: Three-Year Contract and Two (1) Year Renewals
  - Bus Purchase: DOT will purchase 12 new 40' transit style buses in 2 phases of 6. The first set of 6 will arrive in late fall of 2019.
  - Bus Rehab: Up to 1M Dollars has been set aside to rehab the existing city owned fleet to include: New Seats, Engine Replacement, Hybrid Battery, Body Repairs, and Paint.

- Re-Branding Campaign: In an effort to celebrate the up coming 10th Anniversary of the Circulator Service DOT will engage the public in a marketing campaign to rebrand the logo and slogan of the Circulator.
- **Challenges to CCC**
  - Bus Availability
  - Traffic Incidents
  - Aging Fleet
  - Maintenance
  - Operating Environment (Urban Core)
  - Budget Constraints
  - Competition
  - Land Use / Development
- **Future of the CCC**
  - Fully restore fleet of buses to 24.
  - Provide the amount of service specified at 10-15 Minute Headways.
  - Restore consistency in service and provide outstanding customer service.
  - Coordinate Transit Service Planning with other service providers in the area. MTA, University Shuttles, Shared Mobility.
- **Contact Information**  
 CCC Customer Service: 410-545-1956  
 Website: [charmcitycirculator.com](http://charmcitycirculator.com)  
 App: Charm City Circulator

Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
 417 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, MD 21202  
 410-396-3100

Facebook @baltimoretransportation Twitter @bmorecitydot

Additional Comments:

- Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) is committed to improving the Charm City Circulator (CCC) system by restoring the public's trust and confidence.
- Reliable, safe and consistent service are the main goals for the CCC. Safety remains the number one issue.
- BCDOT supports multi-modal transportation access - the CCC is just one piece of the pie.
- Integrating land use and transportation planning must include local decision makers in the planning process.
- BCDOT has established a strong collaborative working relationship with the MTA.
- Cost sharing measures are always being evaluated to bring funding and expenses into alignment.

**Second Guest Speaker:**

**Patrick J. McMahon**, AICP, Maryland Environmental Service - Maryland Transit Administration  
 Presentation: **"North Avenue Rising: An Update"**

Presentation highlights: Project Overview

- **Project Schedule**
  - Design work was completed in November 2018. Construction is starting in Summer 2019 and will continue through Fall 2021
- **Project Goal**
  - To support economic revitalization along North Avenue through increased mobility and to broaden access for residents to economic opportunity throughout Baltimore by:
    - Targeting investments in high-impact locations.
    - Building upon existing community plans and projects.
    - Coordinating with community and economic development efforts.

- **Project Elements**
  - Dedicated Bus Lanes
  - Enhanced Bus Stops
  - Streetscaping
  - Bike Facilities
  - Roadway Renovations
  - Rail Improvements
- **Construction Timeline**
  - Construction on several segments of North Avenue Rising will start in Summer 2019 and all construction will be completed before Winter 2021.
- **Leveraging the Investment**
  - **Transit Choices North Avenue Work Group**
  - **Leveraging Investment in Neighborhood Corridors (LINCS)**
    - Pennsylvania Avenue/North Avenue
    - Greenmount Avenue
    - East North Avenue
  - **21st Century Schools/INSPIRE**
  - **West Baltimore Gateway 2030**
  - **Development Projects**
    - Walbrook Mill
    - Madison Park North
    - Roberta's House
    - Broadway East CDC
    - Southern Baptist CDC

Additional Comments:

- North Avenue has not received the investment it deserves. It is a very important corridor for the both the MTA and the city.
- The main goal of the North Avenue Rising project is to support the economic revitalization of the corridor,
- The State of Maryland and Baltimore City won funding for the North Avenue Rising project from the US Department of Transportation through the TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) program. The total project budget for North Avenue Rising is \$27.3 million.
- A main challenge of the construction phase short term, is informing the public about the impacts along the corridor. Construction is often a fluid process affected by varying factors.
- For more information on the North Avenue Rising project please visit:  
<https://northavenuerising.com/>

**Other Business:**

Jimmy Rouse, on behalf of Transit Choices acknowledged and thanked both guest speakers for their interesting presentations. He also thanked the meeting attendees for their continued interest and participation. The Transit Choices meetings provide an important forum for the exchange of ideas and information regarding public transit in Baltimore.

- The BaltimoreLink Bus Rider Survey project conducted by OpinionWorks based in Annapolis, Maryland has concluded. The 25 question survey was designed to gather feedback from Baltimore City bus riders about their experience with the BaltimoreLink Bus system. Overall, there were 800 respondents to the survey. Transit Choices will provide recommendations to the MTA based on the data collected.

- The Transit Choices North Avenue Rising standing committee organized a Stakeholders meeting on June 27, 2019. The turnout was enormous. Councilmen Leon Pinkett and Robert Stokes will lead the charge to leverage North Avenue Rising's transportation investment for equitable development along the Corridor. A Transit Oriented Development plan for North Avenue can provide the investment tools we need to realize long held visions for a vibrant and thriving corridor.
- Jimmy Rouse recently met with MDOT Secretary Pete Rahn to have an open and collaborative discussion about the development of a Regional Transit Plan (RTP) that promotes a multi-modal transit system for both the region and Baltimore City. Secretary Rahn was very supportive of the RTP process.
- Upcoming Transit Choices meetings will include the following presentations:
  - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update – Holly Arnold, Director of Planning and Programming at MTA.
  - Lexington Market Redevelopment - Thibault Manekin, Seawall Development
  - Amtrak Penn Station Redevelopment – Michael Beatty, Beatty Development
- Penn Station Partners led by Beatty Development and Cross Street Partners held a Baltimore Penn Station Vision Plan Framework Meeting on August 13, 2019. The event was very well attended and gave meeting attendees the opportunity to learn more about the Penn Station redevelopment plans.
- Jimmy Rouse and Robin Budish plan to meet with new BCDOT director, Steven Sharkey to introduce the Transit Choices coalition and discuss its mission.
- Transit Choices has applied to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for a local coalition grant. The project for which the organization is seeking funding is a public education campaign around MDOT MTA's Transit Priority Initiative. If awarded, the project will help MDOT MTA build community support and political will to work with the City of Baltimore and other local jurisdictions to improve bus service, traffic safety, and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure through transit prioritizing treatments.