



## Transit Choices Meeting Summary

February 25, 2020  
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

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

### Attendees:

Holly Arnold (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Irene Bantigue (**Impact Hub Baltimore**), Father Michael Bishop (**Public Transit Rider**), Kirsten Brinlee (**Baltimore Collegetown**), Robin Budish (**Transit Choices**), Sue Carlin (**City Center Residents Association Board**), Art Cohen (**b'more mobile**), Sarah Coppola (**Transit Advocate**), Matthew DeSantis (Baltimore City Department of Transportation), William Dorfman (**Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.**), Ryan Dorsey (**Councilman, District 3**), Peter Duvall (**Strong City Baltimore**), Yinka Bode-George (**Maryland Philanthropy Network**), James Gillece (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Josh Greenfeld (**Maryland Builders**), Taffy Gwitira (**Impact Hub Baltimore**), Molly Hayeslip (**Baltimore Collegetown**), Samuel Jordan (**Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition**), Nancey Kinlin (**Transit Advocate**), Jeenly Louis (**Transit Advocate**), Patrick McMahon (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Mary Miller (**Mayoral Candidate**), Joe Nathanson (**Urban Information Associates**), Klaus Philipsen (**ArchPlan, Inc.**), John Renner (**Cross Street Partners**), Sandy Sparks (**Baltimore Transit Campaign**), Danielle Sweeney (**Central Maryland Transportation Alliance**), Yolanda Takesian (**Kittelsohn & Associates, Inc.**), Raven Thompson (**Baltimore Development Corporation**), Jed Weeks (**Bikemore**)

Guest Moderator: Josh Greenfeld | **Property Consulting, Inc.** welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the attendees for coming. Josh then introduced the first guest speaker:

**Holly Arnold**, MTA Deputy Administrator

Presentation: **"RTP Project Update: Synthesizing Analysis and Input to Produce a Draft Plan"**

### Presentation highlights: **Connecting Our Future – A Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland**

- **Project Update**
  - Synthesizing Analysis and Input to Produce the Draft Plan Study Area Extents
- **Presentation Outline**
  - RTP Background, Goals, & Objectives
  - Key Themes and Actions
  - Proposed Plan Format
  - Review Process & Next Steps
- **RTP Background & Approach**
  - Background: MDOT MTA is developing this 25-year plan to meet the transit needs of the Core Service Area, guided by Maryland Chapter 352 (2018).
  - Purpose: Develop a new Regional Transit Plan (RTP) for Central Maryland that will define public transportation goals over the next 25 years
  - Vision: Address traditional transit (buses and trains) as well as explore new mobility options and technology

- **Draft RTP Goals**
  - Improve connectivity and integration of existing and future transit services
  - Optimize existing transit services
  - Enhance fiscal sustainability
- **RTP Objectives** - The Regional Transit Plan is organized around six objectives, with specific strategies for each
  - Provide Faster, More Reliable Service
  - Grow Ridership
  - Increase Access to Jobs & Opportunities
  - Improve the Customer Experience
  - Be Equitable
  - Prepare for the Future
- **RTP Strategies** - The plan proposes many different recommendations, which have been grouped in to three basic strategies:
  - **Actions** are specific steps that RTP partner agencies can take in order to achieve the six objectives.
  - There are areas in the region that transit today but have a demonstrated need for smaller, localized, or express **Transit Network Improvements**.
  - The Regional Transit Plan has identified a collection of potential new **Regional Transit Corridors**
- **Strategies | Actions** - Provide Faster, More Reliable Service, Reintroduce limited-stop bus service where appropriate
  - **Implement targeted investments, such as:**
    - dedicated bus lanes
    - transit signal prioritization
    - traffic signal replacement and retiming
    - all-door boarding
    - off-board fare collection
  - Realign Light Rail tracks on Howard Street
  - Support Amtrak Replacement of Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel
- **Transit Network Improvements**
  - Expand or enhance current or previous investments.
  - Four types of Transit Network Improvements:
    - Expanded Existing or New Fixed-Route Service
    - Development of Small Area Plans or Shared Mobility or Microtransit Studies
    - Improvements to Existing Rail Corridors
    - Creation and Enhancement of Transit Hubs
- **Strategies | Regional Transit Corridors** - Corridors have been identified because they:
  - Demonstrate transit demand that justifies infrastructure, service, and/or technology improvements
  - Demonstrate demand supporting all-day frequent service
  - Have regional significance, often providing connectivity between different jurisdictions
  - Corridor identification and prioritization is the first step in the process
- **Draft Plan Review Process**
  - The Draft Plan released this spring for public comment
  - Available for review and comment online on an interactive website
  - Outreach events throughout the region
  - Commission meets in June to discuss comments and public input
  - **The Plan must be finalized prior to October 1, 2020**

Additional Comments:

- MDOT MTA is leading the development of a new Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland.
- The RTP is focused on corridors that could use added investment; specific modes of transit have not been identified.
- This plan will define public transportation goals for Central Maryland including Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Harford County, and Howard County.

- MDOT MTA is collaborating with a broad range of partners including a newly-formed Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan commission, local governments, other transit providers, and the public to develop this plan.
- Public Engagement:
  - The RTP project team hosts open houses to provide more in-depth opportunities for members of the public to participate in each phase of the RTP plan development. They also participate in pop-up events across the region, from early morning tables at transit stations to mid-day mall food courts and library movie nights. Pop-up events introduce people to the topics covered in the RTP and engage participants in hands-on activities to solicit their perspectives on regional transit.

Second Guest Speaker:

**Councilman Ryan Dorsey** - Baltimore's 3rd District and Chairman of the Baltimore City Council's Transportation Committee

Presentation: **“Region-Centered, People-Centered: A Near-Term Transportation Vision For Baltimore City”** (<http://bit.ly/dorseytransportationplan>)

Presentation highlights:

- **Key Recommendations**
  - Citywide transportation demand management policy (TDM)
  - More staff for BCDOT
  - Transportation equity framework
  - Design and build Baltimore BRT and Bus Priority Network
  - Add 15 miles of dedicated bus lanes by 2022
  - Complete Separate Bike Lane Plan, Baltimore Greenway Trail
  - Plan for B&P Tunnel replacement, removal of I-83 and US-40 viaduct
  - Income-based fine/fare payment
  - Governance and funding
- **What The Transportation Status Quo Means for Baltimore**
  - Increased Congestion
  - Economic and Social Exclusion
  - Safety and Health Impacts
- **Building Blocks for Better Transportation**
  - Reduce single-occupant vehicle trips
  - Rebuilding and Modernizing Baltimore City DOT
  - Equity in Policy, Engagement, and Investment
  - Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Transit Service
  - Modernizing Infrastructure, Implementing Complete Streets
  - Equitable Transit-Oriented Development and Transit-Supportive Policies
  - Developing a Governance and Funding Strategy
- **Reducing Single-Occupant Vehicle Trips**
  - Set a goal to reduce from 60% to 45% by 2030 (San Francisco is at 34.4%)
  - Adopt a citywide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy
  - As a major employer, City government can lead on TDM
  - Fare-free/reduced fare transit
- **Rebuild and Modernize BCDOT**
  - Meet BCDOT's Staffing Needs
  - Fully Implement Baltimore Complete Streets
  - More Cost Effective Operations
  - Complete a Comprehensive Transportation Plan
  - Implement Data-Driven Analysis and Performance Monitoring
- **Equity in Policy, Engagement, and Investment**
  - Community Engagement

- Assessing the Impact of Policy Changes with an Equity Framework
- Equitable Investment in Areas of Greatest Need
- Fare Decriminalization
- **Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Transit Service**
  - Baltimore BRT and Bus Priority Network
  - Set transit service goals
  - Better regional connections
- **Modernize Infrastructure, Implement Complete Streets**
  - Low-cost, high-impact treatments
  - Repaving and reconstructing Baltimore's streets
  - Major capital projects: B&P Tunnel, US-40, I-83
  - Focus on local trips and last-mile solutions
  - Equitable expansion of camera programs
  - Partnering with DPW to meet mutual goals
- **Equitable TOD and Transit Supportive Policies**
  - Reviewing Baltimore City parking, zoning, land-use and other policies
  - Formulate land use and transportation policy together
  - Equitable Development
- **Developing a Governance and Funding Strategy**
  - Increasing City investment in transportation via a Transportation Enterprise Fund
  - Exploring options for a regional transit authority or other new governance model
- **Baltimore City Transportation Budget**
  - \$200 million per year to operate BCDOT
  - \$100 million per year in capital projects (FY2020)
  - Major funding sources
    - General Funds (including fines, taxes, and fees)
    - State Highway User Revenues
    - Federal funds
- **Transportation Enterprise Fund**
  - Could raise \$50m per year for BCDOT by restricting General Funds
  - In FY 2018 there were \$165 million in transportation related General Funds, but only \$115 million came to BCDOT
  - Major Sources
    - Highway User Revenues
    - Camera revenues
    - Taxi Excise Tax

Additional Comments:

- Transportation is access to opportunity; the city needs to increase mobility options for all.
- Baltimore City's transportation system does not meet the needs of all its residents. It lacks connections and options for an economically thriving, equitable, and environmentally-sustainable region.
- We must elevate transportation as an issue of central importance to the health, safety, and wellness of all people.
- Baltimore City is the heart of the region and must be a leader on transportation. If we are not leading on transportation, our regional transportation system will never reach its full potential.
- We Can Start Delivering Real Benefits Now - *But Baltimore City Must Lead.*

**Other Business:**

Robin Budish, on behalf of Transit Choices acknowledged and thanked both guest speakers for their interesting and informative presentations. She also thanked the meeting attendees for their

continued interest and active participation. The Transit Choices meetings provide an important forum for the exchange of ideas and information regarding public transit in Baltimore.

### Update

- Transit Choices has launched its digital advocacy campaign to support MDOT-MTA's Transit Priority Initiative. While still in the midst of the campaign, the digital education phase has been completed and meetings have been scheduled with Baltimore City Council members to raise awareness and garner support.
- Jimmy Rouse and Robin Budish met with Baltimore City DOT Director, Steve Sharkey. They discussed working collaboratively on goals of mutual interest to improve public transit in Baltimore. Director Sharkey agreed to speak at an upcoming Transit Choices meeting in March/April 2020.
- A meeting has been scheduled with new MDOT Secretary, Gregory Slater on April 20, 2020. Mr. Rouse and Ms. Budish will share the work Transit Choices is doing in the public transit arena and learn more about MDOT's transit interests and priorities.
- Invitations have been extended to Baltimore City Mayoral Candidates to share their respective visions for improving and expanding public transit options in Baltimore.
- Transit Choices standing committees: "Water Transit", "Streetcars for Baltimore's Future" and "Charm City Circulator" will provide updates at the next Transit Choices meeting.

Thank you.