



Transit Choices Meeting Summary

August 21, 2018
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

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

Attendees:

Eunice Anderson (**Enoch Pratt Free Library**), Holly Arnold (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Mike Cross-Barnet (**Strong City Baltimore**), Al Barry (**AB Associates**), David Benn (**Quinn Evans**), Roxana Beyranvand (**Baltimore Collegetown**), Father Michael Bishop (**Public Transit Rider**), Mia Blom (**Office of Councilman Ryan Dorsey, District 3**), Renaud Brown (**Transit Advocate**), Robin Budish (**Transit Choices**), Luis Cardona (**Downtown Partnership of Baltimore**), Zach Chissell (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Art Cohen (**b'more mobile**), Ben Cohen (**Last Mile Solutions**), Liz Cornish (**Bikemore**), Ryan Dorsey (**Councilman, District 3**), Peter Duvall (**Strong City Baltimore**), Josh Greenfeld (**Maryland Building Industry Association**), Ethan Hasiuk (**Transit Advocate**), Kelly Franklin (**University of Maryland**), George Frazier (**Baltimore Bike Out**), Jennifer Gould (**Neighborhood Design Center**), Ann Gordon (**Bus Workgroup 14**), Taffy Gwitira (**Impact Hub Baltimore**), Avery Harmon (**Rails-to-Trails**), Greg Hinchcliffe (**Bicycle Advocate**), Seema Iyer (**University of Baltimore**), Lowell Larsson (**Transit Advocate**), Jim Leanos (**Corporate Property Solutions**), Emily Lewis (**Floura Teeter**), Brooke Lierman (**Delegate, District 46**), Kristen McGuire (**France Merrick Foundation**), Jackie MacMillan (**Bus Workgroup 14**), Monique Marshall (**Office of Councilman Leon Pinkett, District 7**), (Patrick McMahan (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Joe Nathason (**Urban Information Associates**), Megan Nolan (**McCormick Taylor**), Brian O'Malley (**Central Maryland Transportation Alliance**), Klaus Philipsen (**ArchPlan, Inc.**), Leon Pinkett (**Councilman, District 7**), Pete Powell (**Clayton Baker Trust**), Elizabeth Perriello Rice (**France Merrick Foundation**), Nan Rohrer (**Midtown Community Benefits District**), Michael Romeo (**Transdev**), Jimmy Rouse (**Transit Choices**), Sandy Sparks (**Charles Village Civic Association**), Kristin Speaker (**Charles Street Development Corporation**), Danielle Sweeney (**City Paper**), Jed Weeks (**Bikemore**)

Opening Remarks: Robin Budish, Director Transit Choices welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the attendees for coming. Ms. Budish then introduced the first guest speaker:

Leon F. Pinkett III, Councilman - District 7
Presentation: **Connect: Revisioning North Ave.**

Overview:

The majority of North Avenue is Route 1. A plan to revitalize the corridor isn't going to come from a west baltimore vision, central baltimore or an east baltimore vision but one vision that takes into consideration all of the communities along the corridor.

Presentation highlights: **REIMAGINING NORTH AVENUE**

- **Connect Community**
 - People
 - Places
 - Resources
- **Background**
 - North Avenue for much of Baltimore's history was the northern border of the city, thus the name.
 - Extending for 5 miles, it is one of the city's longest uninterrupted east west roadways stretching from Walbrook Junction in the west to Berea in the east.
- **NORTH AVENUE RISING – Current Plan**
 - Targeted streetscaping at specific intersections
 - Resurfacing of existing road bed
 - Challenge areas:
 - Targeted parking-adjacent bus lanes
 - Bike share stations at key intersections
 - "Parallel" bike boulevards
- **REIMAGINING NORTH AVENUE**
 - Anchor Institutions
 - Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse
 - Art and Technology
 - Public Private Partnerships
- **Big Jump Baltimore**
 - The Big Jump is a new path accessible by foot, bike, and mobility devices along Druid Park Lake Drive and 28th Street. It connects neighbors to jobs and recreation, and allows people who use wheelchairs to cross 83 safely and easily for the first time.
 - Project utilizes water-filled barriers for low-cost, temporary implementation. Designed to last through larger-scale corridor study beginning this year that will determine permanent configuration.
 - **Big Jump Block Party!** Sunday, August 26, 2018 from 2:00-6:00pm

Additional Comments:

- Councilman Pinkett acknowledged and thanked Councilman Ryan Dorsey for his leadership in transportation advocacy.
- We need serious investment in the North Avenue corridor. There is a lack of connectivity in our city; people, places and resources.
- North Avenue is critical to changing equity. It should have the same level of respect for and be equal to the amount of resources that have been spent on other projects such as Charles Street. Specifically;
 - North Avenue - 5 miles, received 27 million for the project.
 - Charles Street (29th street to University Parkway) – 5 blocks, received 25 million for the project.
- We need to make certain that the people who need transportation have access to it.
- Although the city is providing incentives to get food retailers along the North Avenue corridor, we need to remain proactive and put significant resources behind it.
- It is important to provide for a stream of money to ensure North Avenue's success beyond the 27 million that the project has received. *You can't paint a house with one gallon of paint.*
- Councilman Pinkett and Ken Ulman (former Howard county executive) and to whom the University of Maryland recruited to transform College Park, took a tour of North Avenue. Councilman Pinkett plans to convene a meeting with local university presidents and Mr. Ulman to share a vision for North Avenue and to solicit feedback.

Second Guest Speaker:

Brian O'Malley, President & CEO – Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Presentation: **Are We Better Off?: A look at BaltimoreLink and where we go from here**

Overview:

Assessing BaltimoreLink's Promises One Year Later.

Presentation highlights: **Are We Better Off? A Look at BaltimoreLink and Where We Go From Here**

- The relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community, said Nathaniel Hendren, a Harvard economist and one of the researchers on the study
- **What Does it Mean to Have Great Transportation?**
 - A well-functioning transportation system is important for workers, their employers and the area's economy.
- **What is being done to address this?**
 - Until 2015, the MTA was working on the Red Line and a re-design on of the bus network (BNIP).
 - In June 2015 the Red Line was cancelled.
 - In October 2015 BaltimoreLink was announced.
 - Improving access to jobs, reliability, speed and the frequency of transit were key promises.
- **Are We Better Off? The Five Basics**
 - Access
 - Reliability
 - Speed
 - Frequency
 - Walkability
- **Did BaltimoreLink Deliver?** In a Nutshell BaltimoreLink was:
 - Overpromised
 - Flat funded
 - Not a gamechanger for riders
- **To improve:**
 - Transparency and open data
 - Prioritize transit
 - Focus on frequency
 - Reverse MTA budget cuts
 - Produce an excellent transit plan
- **Transportation 101**
 - 7 weeks
 - 21 hours
 - Turning concerned citizens into effective advocates
 - **Next series: October 4 – November 15, Thursdays 6-9 PM**

Additional Comments:

- Transportation deeply affects our lives. It must address the following:
 - Access
 - Reliability
 - Speed
 - Frequency
 - Walkability
- The MTA needs both operating and capital funding. Instead of getting cut more deeply, the agency needs to be adequately funded.
- With the one year anniversary of BaltimoreLink, it is easier to make improvements from this point forward. The MTA has a dedicated and committed staff to ensure its success.
- Transparency of data is key to building trust.
- Delegate Brooke Lierman stated that transit advocates can be the most effective in the next 18 months by attending transit planning meetings and having input on how the transit plan is being created and adopted.

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

Other Business:

- Jimmy Rouse, a Founding Member of Transit Choices acknowledged the informative and interesting presentations by Councilman Leon Pinkett and Brian O'Malley. He also thanked the meeting attendees for their participation and ongoing support. Mr. Rouse provided the following update:
 - **Upcoming Meetings:**
 - **Director Michelle Pourciau**, CityDOT - August 23, 2018
 - ❖ Charm City Circulator
 - ❖ Bird (Dockless Scooter Company) and LimeBike (Dockless Bike Provider)
 - ❖ Water Taxi
 - ❖ Complete Streets
 - ❖ North Avenue Rising
 - **Secretary Pete Rahn**, MDOT – August 27, 2018
 - ❖ BaltimoreLink
 - **American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Grant Submitted July 5, 2018**
 - ❖ Transit Choices proposes a social media driven, grassroots campaign to educate Baltimore residents on the *Hanover Street Bridge Multimodal Corridor Project* and ask residents to write to the Maryland Department of Transportation in support of state funding for the project.
 - **Delegate Brooke Lierman** will be invited to an upcoming meeting in the fall to facilitate a discussion about the Transit Funding bill from last session. Attendees will be given the opportunity to share their thoughts on what the priorities at the state level should be.
 - **City Fire Code Legislation** is on Mayor Catherine Pugh's desk for signature.