



Revised Transit Choices Meeting Summary

November 8, 2018
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

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

Attendees:

Father Michael Bishop (**Public Transit Rider**), Henry Bogdan (**Maryland Nonprofits**), Tony Bridges (**Delegate, District 41**), Jim Brown (**Rails to Trails**), Robin Budish (**Transit Choices**), Zach Chissell (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Art Cohen (**b'more mobile**), Ben Cohen (**Last Mile Solutions**), Damon Crutchfield (**Maryland Institute College of Art**), Matthew DeSantis (**Baltimore City DOT**), Ryan Dorsey (**Councilman, District 3**), Chris Firehock (**Center for Mobility Equity**), George Frazier (**Baltimore Bike Out**), Tony Green (**University of Maryland**), Josh Greenfeld (**Maryland Builders**), Taffy Gwitira (**Impact Hub Baltimore**), Don Halligan (**Baltimore Metropolitan Council**), Avery Harmon (**Rails to Trails**), Mike Heslin (**Lyft**), Greg Hinchcliffe (**Bicycle Advocate**), Robbyn Lewis (**Delegate, District 46**), Emily Lewis (**Floura Teeter**), Brooke Lierman (**Delegate, District 46**), Sam Lynch (**JP2 Architects**), Jackie MacMillan (**Bus Workgroup 14**), Kira Gardner-Marshall (**Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore**), Patrick McMahon (**Maryland Transit Administration**), Lindsey Mendelson (**Sierra Club**), Brian O'Malley (**Central Maryland Transportation Alliance**), Klaus Philipsen (**ArchPlan, Inc.**), Jimmy Rouse (**Transit Choices**), Renata Southard (**Transit Advocate**), Kristin Speaker (**Charles Street Development Corporation**), Danielle Sweeney (**Writer, Transit Advocate**), Raven Thompson (**Baltimore Development Corporation**), Josh Tulkin (**Sierra Club**), Jed Weeks (**Bikemore**), Meg Young (**Baltimore City DOT**), Mikah Zaslow, (**Baltimore City DOT**)

Guest Moderator: Raven Thompson, Economic Development Specialist with the Baltimore Development Corporation welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the attendees for coming. Raven then introduced the first guest speakers:

Brooke Lierman (Delegate, District 46)
Tony Bridges (Delegate Elect, District 41)
Josh Tulkin (Chapter Director, Sierra Club)
Brian O'Malley (President & CEO, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance)

Group Discussion: **Transit Funding bill from last session and thoughts on what the priorities at the state level should be going forward.**

- **Delegate Brooke Lierman, 46th district**
 - Several new county executives were recently elected who are expected to be more pro-transit than their predecessors, all of whom are members of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.
 - Mayor Catherine Pugh is the chair of the board of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

- The Maryland General Assembly approved legislation that would increase MTA funding. The legislation would require the governor to allocate minimum 4.4 percent increases in the MTA's \$1.6 billion operating budget for each of the three years starting in mid-2019. It also requires a capital infusion of \$29 million a year above current spending levels for those three years, money that could be used for the Baltimore subway or other MTA systems. Together that adds up to \$178 million for the agency. In addition to its funding provisions, the legislation also requires the MTA to:
 1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all of its capital assets — its Baltimore buses, MARC locomotives and the tracks and cars of its Metro and light rail systems.
 2. Develop a long-term plan for services in its “core service area” in the Baltimore region over the next 25 years.

- **Delegate Elect Tony Bridges, 41st district**
 - The 41st district is large and very diverse.
 - As a strong advocate for equitable public transit, Delegate Elect Bridges will push the state for better public transit both in the city and in the region.
 - Having a strong background in public transit, Delegate Elect Bridges was Chief of Staff at the MTA under former Administrator Robert Smith.
 - Currently, Delegate Elect Bridges works with the Student Outreach Resource Center (SOURCE) at Johns Hopkins University. SOURCE's mission is to engage the Johns Hopkins University health professional schools and Baltimore communities in mutually beneficial partnerships that promote health and social justice.
 - **Top Priorities:**
 1. Create a regional transit plan for the state with community engagement.
 2. Change the structure of the MTA (long term) by creating an authoritative entity for oversight purposes. This initiative will take a lot of heavy lifting over the next six months to study and to put a bill forward.

- **Josh Tulkin, MD Chapter Director, Sierra Club**
 - Sierra Club sees climate change as an existential threat to the world and to the country.
 - Reports have shown that transportation is the biggest source of pollution.
 - Transit is viewed as interconnected to equity and the economy.
 - Sierra Club is a 501.C.4 organization. They engage in a range of activities, from public education to lobbying to candidate endorsements.
 - **Top Priorities:**
 1. Create a bold and compelling vision for public transit within the next six months.
 2. Transportation climate initiative.
 3. Lift up the issue of transportation to the governor.

- **Brian O'Malley, President & CEO, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance (CMTA)**
 - CMTA is affiliated with the Baltimore Community Foundation.
 - CMTA is a 501.C.3 organization. They engage in policy advocacy, and their singular focus is to be a catalyst for improving the region's transportation.
 - Improving transportation, growing the economy, and creating a healthier environment remain top priorities for the organization.
 - **Top Priorities:**
 1. Work with Get Maryland Moving partners to draft a Maryland transit plan.
 2. Watchdog the MTA to ensure transparency through publishing data about performance, support funding for the agency, and continue to make the agency accountable.
 3. Continue Transportation 101 classes in which participants meet to learn from local experts and leaders, meet other interested citizens and ultimately put what they learn into action. Since its inception, 100 alumni have completed the program.

Open Discussion:

- New initiatives in the immediate and long term could include 1) the role of the legislature in the transportation process, 2) new oversight committee for transportation, 3) give the legislature more opportunities for oversight.
- The regional transportation plan needs to be more than lines on a map. It should also include all transit modalities.
- The MTA led initiative will have an advisory board, and public engagement to help spread the word.
- The new Central Maryland Regional Transportation Plan will be made in 18 months and will have a 30 year view. The plan will include buses, trains and innovative modes of transit.
- The transportation trust fund is pretty well expended. Over the next four we need to be creative and find more revenue for transportation.
- The next four years is on us to step up, hold government accountable and demand better public transit.

Second Guest Speaker:

Ryan Dorsey, Councilman, District 3

Presentation: "**Complete Streets - Legislation Update and How you can advocate**"

- Council Bill 17-0102
 - A Complete Streets law would improve safety, reduce congestion, and improve conditions for those who already walk, bike, and take transit. The law also promotes racial equity/environmental justice, by not prioritizing needs of suburban commuters by car over those of city commuters by transit, bikes, or walking.
 - Councilman Dorsey acknowledged Bikemore and Ben Groff for their strong partnerships both in researching and drafting the legislation. There were five iterations before it was introduced as a politically palatable bill.
 - The goal of the Complete Streets bill was to be strong and to address equity, prioritizing people's needs and to build a more equitable community.
 - There is much work to be done on the city level, such as prioritizing the money to where it needs to go.
 - Of the 270 million in the Baltimore City General Fund, 200 million is going to transportation. Almost no funding is going to advance and promote transit alternatives.
 - Complete Streets is moving us in the right direction, however, community engagement is a key component to ensure equity.
 - Advocacy needs to happen at the local level.
 - The bill is on Mayor Pugh's desk for signature. Once signed, it will enact a 13 month long process which requires regular monthly check-ins, reporting to land use committee/city council.
 - The first goal is to publish a draft community engagement plan 2 months out.
 - **Complete Streets 3rd Reader:**
<https://baltimore.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6704280&GUID=30C47F9C-E518-496A-AA73-D129CAC54F5A>

Open Discussion:

- The Complete Streets bill is unique and different from others in the country because it creates a street design framework and an equity framework. The goal is to overcome disparity and focus on equity.
- There will be mechanisms in the Complete Streets bill that will determine in what order the Complete Streets ordinance will occur.
- In an effort to articulate transportation priorities, the city council can coalesce and agree on better ways to spend transportation dollars.

Other Business:

- Jimmy Rouse, on behalf of Transit Choices acknowledged and thanked all of the guest speakers for their informative and interesting presentations. He also thanked the meeting attendees for their participation and valuable input. The Transit Choices meetings are designed to be an important forum for the exchange of ideas and information regarding public transit.
- Transit Choices has formed electronic (email) committees to examine the following topics relative to public transit. Each committee will have a designated moderator, and be given specific goals/objectives to achieve:
 - The next round of BaltimoreLink improvements
 - Charm City Circulator & the Water Taxi
 - Regulations for Dockless Scooters & Bikes
 - Future Mobility - Preparing for Autonomous Vehicles
 - North Avenue Rising
 - Regional Transportation Plan to include Modern Streetcars
 - Funding & Governance
- MDOT MTA Administrator Kevin Quinn has accepted an invitation to speak at the December 2018 (date to be determined) Transit Choices meeting.
- Bus Work Group 14 will host the following event:
Forum on Public Transportation
Monday, December 10, 2018
6:00pm-7:30pm
Waverly Library, 400 E. 33rd Street
Baltimore, 21218
Representatives of MTA will attend to answer questions, share information, and listen to feedback from the community about bus, light rail, and Metro service. All welcome.