



Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan Commission Meeting

Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), Room 509

October 29, 2019

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Notes

Name	Title	Role
Ramond Robinson	Director of Transportation, Anne Arundel County	Anne Arundel County Executive's designee
Theo Ngongang	Deputy Director, Chief of Policy, Department of Transportation, Baltimore City	Baltimore City Mayor's designee
Elisabeth Sachs	Director of Government Reform & Strategic Initiatives, Baltimore County	Baltimore County Executive's designee, <i>Ex Officio RTP Commission Chair</i>
Bradley Killian	Director of Planning & Zoning, Harford County	Harford County Executive's designee
Sameer Sidh	Chief of Staff, Howard County	Howard County Executive's designee
Jim Shea	Chairman Emeritus, Venable LLP	Senate President's appointee
Gina Stewart	Executive Director, BWI Partnership	Governor's appointee
J.C. Hendrickson	Member, MDOT MTA MARC Riders Council	Governor's appointee
Katie Collins-Ihrke	Executive Director, Accessible Resources for Independence	Governor's appointee

Note: Elisabeth Sachs served as Chair of the Commission in Kirby Fowler's absence.

OPENING

Michael Kelly, Executive Director of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, opened the fifth RTP Commission meeting. Mr. Kelly introduced John Olszewski, the Baltimore County Executive, who delivered introductory remarks.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S WELCOME

John Olszewski, County Executive for Baltimore County, welcomed the Commission to Baltimore County and commended MDOT MTA for creating a regional transit plan for the

Central Maryland region. He noted that quality of life is one of Baltimore County's number one concerns; mobility is a key factor impacting residents' access to high quality jobs and time spent with their families. Baltimore County needs innovative transportation options to move people around the region and the RTP will establish a path forward and set priorities for necessary investments.

Mr. Olszewski highlighted key investment needs in Baltimore County:

- Improve the CountyRide transit system and broaden its reach
- Improve CountyRide service for seniors, who will constitute 25% of the Baltimore County population by next year
- Improve CountyRide's dispatching technology
- Explore integration of CountyRide and shared ride services such as Uber and Lyft
- Improve first- and last-mile connections
- Establish commuter hubs
- Invest in health and safety improvements, such as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

Mr. Olszewski noted that Baltimore County recently closed a transportation survey that had more than one thousand participants. The results of this survey will guide future transportation investments. The County is already making significant improvements to transportation by putting forward record funding for road resurfacing and traffic calming in the most recent County budget. Baltimore County also recently applied for federal funding to pilot a Towson Circulator bus and is exploring many new ideas, such as additional circulator routes, e-bikes, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Mr. Olszewski emphasized that without the Red Line in the region's immediate future, we need to find new, innovative ways to move people around the region more efficiently and reliably. Baltimore County is trying to do its part to improve transportation because residents' quality of life depends on it.

SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES REVIEW

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the September minutes.

MEETING SET-UP

Holly Arnold, MDOT MTA Deputy Administrator, explained the purpose and focus of this Commission meeting [**see slide deck**]. The RTP Project Team is in the second step of the "Propose" phase of the planning process, which focuses on understanding the transit

rider perspective. This Commission meeting explores the complete customer journey, strategies to improve customer experience, and explains the factors that make a location “transit-ready.” The Project Team used the Commission’s feedback from RTP Commission Meeting #4 to revise the list of corridors, took updated corridors to the public for feedback, and compiled data for each corridor on metrics related to the corridors’ transit readiness. The Project Team will send the Commissioners the raw data for each corridor and the methodology used to gather this data within the next two weeks. The corridors have not yet been prioritized, per the Commission’s request.

During the last Commission Meeting, the RTP Project Team challenged the Commissioners to take transit at least once. Today’s meeting uses Commissioners’ experiences using transit as a basis for conversation about what makes a location transit-ready and how the region’s transit experience can be improved.

The next RTP Commission meeting will focus on reviewing the goals of the RTP and prioritizing strategies.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Teddy Krolik, MDOT MTA Chief of Engagement, provided an update on the public outreach activities held for the RTP **[see slide deck]**. Since the last Commission meeting, the Project Team conducted open houses throughout the region to communicate with the public about the proposed Regional Transit Corridors, other network improvements, and first/last mile connections.

The RTP Project Team will continue to conduct outreach throughout the region during the next phases of plan development. The RTP Commissioners are encouraged to suggest locations for upcoming outreach events.

IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Phil LaCombe, RTP Project Staff, gave an interactive presentation on elements of the customer journey and strategies to improve customers’ experience using transit **[see slide deck]**. Mr. LaCombe solicited input from the Commissioners about their recent experiences on transit as they related to the seven characteristics of useful transportation defined by Jarrett Walker in the book *Human Transit*.

1. It takes me *where* I want to go.
2. It takes me *when* I want to go.
3. It’s a good use of my *time*.
4. It’s a good use of my *money*.

5. It *respects* me.
6. I can *trust* it.
7. It gives me *freedom* to change my plans.

Mr. LaCombe asked the Commissioners a series of questions about their transit experiences:

- A. How does the mode you use most often to travel around the region compare to these seven characteristics?
 - a. Mr. Hendrickson, who represents the MARC Riders Council, commented that the MARC meets five of the seven characteristics. In Mr. Hendrickson's opinion, the two characteristics that MARC does not meet are "It takes me where I want to go" and "It gives me the freedom to change my plans." He noted that when he lived on the east side of Baltimore City, he did not have convenient access to a MARC station. Additionally, low-frequency schedules during off-peak hours did not give him the freedom to change plans.
 - b. Ms. Collins-Ihrke commented that she hears many comments from the disability community about paratransit. When looking at the seven characteristics of useful transit, paratransit usually takes people *where* they want to go, but does not always succeed in taking people *when* they want to go. The cost of paratransit is reasonable for most, but can be difficult for some riders, since individuals with disabilities often have challenges finding employment. Customers' paratransit experiences often lack respect from operators and customer service representatives, and this is something that Ms. Collins-Ihrke urged the Project Team to pay attention to. Ms. Collins-Ihrke noted that she has also received mixed responses from the disability community about their ability to trust paratransit, as many have experienced late and missed trips. Paratransit also requires a reservation at least 24 hours in advance, which does not afford riders the ability to change plans.
 - c. Mr. Ngongang commented that he uses transit during the day to get to meetings in Baltimore City, but sees that transit in Baltimore City is mainly used by non-choice riders who do not have the option of taking a car. He noted that transit should be promoted more to encourage everybody to use it instead of driving.
 - d. Mr. Sidh commented that lack of accessibility to a transit stop is a major reason why many people do not use it. While Metro and MARC are good modes, he would be required to drive to get to a station, which is a barrier to use. Initial accessibility to meaningful transit is a major issue.

- e. Mr. Robinson noted that transit frequency and accessibility affects whether a mode meets the seven characteristics. In many locations in Anne Arundel County, all seven characteristics are met. However, in other locations with lower frequency or lack of accessibility for individuals with disabilities, using transit would not be a viable option for many residents.

Mr. LaCombe guided the Commission through the six steps of the customer journey and asked about their experiences with each.

1. **Planning a transit trip:** What tools did you use and what factors went into the planning process?
 - a. Mr. Hendrickson uses Google Maps to help him plan his driving route to the MARC station and uses a paper MARC schedule to identify train times.
 - b. Mr. Robinson uses the Transit App, which shows bus arrival times in real time and provides information about additional mode choices, such as Uber and e-scooters.
 - c. Mr. LaCombe added that comprehensive, timely information helps people travel with confidence. Denver's RTD transit system collaborated with Uber to integrate transit and Uber into a single app. These kinds of systems can potentially shift people from one mode to another, depending on what is available.
 - d. Ms. Collins-Ihrke noted that while apps and tech have value, there is a section of the population that largely does not have access to these technologies. While our society is moving towards technology, we need to keep in mind that we need to have other ways for people who don't have data on their cell phones to access information about transit. The disability community is a population that is reliant on transit and many still have phones without touch screens.
 - e. Mr. LaCombe agreed that many of the transportation innovations today are tech-oriented and not everyone has access. We need to think about innovations that are both tech and non-tech.
 - f. Ms. Sachs added that for many senior citizens, technology can be a deterrent if it is too complicated. Regardless of people's access to technology, if they aren't comfortable with using the technology for transit, it will lead them to drive because it is more familiar to them.
 - g. Mr. LaCombe noted that in terms of integrating technology and simplifying the experience of using multiple modes of transportation, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is the goal. The idea of an advanced MaaS platform is to put every transportation mode into a single monthly subscription, like a

household bill, that covers all trips, regardless of mode. There are three levels of MaaS. MDOT MTA has achieved level 1, which is an information platform that shows multiple modes of transportation.

2. **Accessing a transit stop:** Lack of access to transit can be a major barrier to use. How did your most recent transit trip perform on access?

- a. Mr. Hendrickson noted that car is the only option to get to the MARC station from his house, since it would be too dangerous to ride a bicycle down Route 1.
- b. Mr. Ngongang commented that he walks to the transit stop from his house or work and access is fairly easy. However, the transit stops often do not have amenities to give the stops a sense of place and comfort. Many stops only have a sign and often have large congregations of people surrounding them, which can make some people feel uncomfortable using the stop. In downtown Baltimore, most curbs are ADA accessible and the City has made progress towards making all sidewalks accessible.
- c. Ms. Collins-Ihrke added that accessibility is a significant issue for the disabled community and a barrier to using fixed-route transit. Additionally, if it snows, many riders with disabilities cannot access transit at all.
- d. Mr. LaCombe added that crossing busy streets with multiple lanes and crossing buttons that are hard to access presents an additional barrier. Portland performed a pedestrian network analysis of the bus network and found high-opportunity places for partners to make investments to allow people will all levels of ability to access transit.

3. **Waiting for transit:** On your last transit trip, did you know you were waiting in the right place or have a place to sit?

- a. Ms. Collins-Ihrke commented that she had to ask several people where she was going on her most recent trip on the train from BWI and was concerned about going in the wrong direction. There also were not enough benches or shelters.
- b. Mr. LaCombe noted that MDOT MTA recently scored all bus stops based on several factors, considering the experiences of different types of customers. One tool that can help bring predictability to the experience of waiting for transit is real-time information. MDOT MTA has real-time information, but not all transit providers in the region offer this data. Where real-time information is unavailable, customers who rely on an infrequent

bus who have no information about the bus being late have no opportunity to make other plans. This is an important part of equity.

- c. Mr. LaCombe added that reliable service is another important factor. Did the bus or train arrive when expected?
 - d. Mr. Robinson noted that when he took the light rail, his train was late and, as a result, there was a mad dash to get onto the train and he was pushed. There was also no shelter, so he waited under a tree in the rain. This is an everyday experience for many people.
 - e. Mr. Ngongang agreed that reliability is a clear challenge and part of the reason why people who depend on transit have problems with getting to work on time. Thirty percent of Baltimore City's population does not own a car and relies on transit, yet they cannot predict how often they will be on time to work because of the unreliability of our transit systems.
 - f. Mr. LaCombe explained that many factors are involved in reliability, including having vehicles and infrastructure in a state of good repair, good scheduling software, operator recruitment and retention, dispatch and supervisor staffing, automatic vehicle location systems. MDOT MTA has started using real-time information to build transit schedules, which helps to ensure that schedules reflect real traffic conditions.
 - g. Mr. Robinson added that transit frequency is a factor in reliability as well. If riders know that there will be another bus in 10 minutes, they are not as impacted by a bus that doesn't show up. However, if the next bus is in an hour, the lack of reliability is a much bigger issue.
4. **Paying transit fares:** How did you pay for your transit trip?
- a. Mr. Robinson noted that he used a ticket vending machine.
 - b. Mr. Ngongang added that Charm Cards and the app are both convenient options.
 - c. Mr. LaCombe explained that customers have more options than ever for paying fares, and new technologies also improve the efficiency of transit operations. Minneapolis-St. Paul uses a single reloadable smart card for both cities and the five connecting locally-operated transit systems. There are also new options such as wearable, contactless payment that remove the challenge of having to take a card out of a bag or wallet, which is being piloted in Pittsburgh and Los Angeles.

- d. Ms. Arnold noted that New York City also an open payment system where riders can use Apple Pay, Google Pay, credit, and debit cards when they enter the subway or bus instead of having to tap a transit card.
 - e. Mr. LaCombe pointed out that MDOT MTA and Annapolis Transit are the only two systems in the region with electronic smart card payment systems. MDOT MTA and Harford Transit LINK are the only two with mobile ticketing. Another equity factor to consider is that not everyone has access to a smart phone, bank account, credit card or debit card. On BaltimoreLink buses, 22% of trips are made by people who do not have access to debit or credit card and need to pay in cash.
 - f. Mr. Robinson asked about a mechanism for regional fare policy. Instead of individual locally-operated transit systems, will there be a regional fare payment option? This is one of the biggest barriers in the system.
 - g. Mr. LaCombe said that there have been conversations about all transit systems in the region joining the CharmCard and SmartTrip system, but the capital costs were too high. With new technology, the costs have changed and the landscape has shifted. Coordination on fare collection should be a part of the RTP.
5. **Riding transit:** Which amenities would improve the experience of riding transit?
- a. Mr. LaCombe explained that many amenities can improve the experience of riding transit and make it more accessible, safe, reliable, clean, and comfortable. Minneapolis-St. Paul's transit system has displays showing the next stops and transfer points.
 - b. Mr. Ngongang commented that it is hard to press the "next stop" button on the bus when the vehicle is crowded and thinking about ways to solve this problem would be helpful to riders.
 - c. Mr. Hendrickson commented that the MARC does not use the same doors for boarding and alighting at every stop and it is not clear to new riders which doors will be used. Improving communication with the public about this would be helpful. MARC could also improve its process of releasing the stairs for the MARC car doors when they arrive at Union Station to allow passengers to get off the train more quickly.

6. Making transfers

- a. Ms. Collins-Ihrke commented that it is very challenging to travel between the Anne Arundel County and Annapolis service areas because of the transfers. Many people do not attempt to make the trip on transit because it is so hard to make these transfers. Many people have other barriers and adding systemic barriers on top of that makes the experience unbelievably difficult.
- b. Ms. Arnold noted that signage is an important factor in making transfers simpler. For example, the transfer between a bus and the Metro at Mondawmin Mall was challenging because the station does not have clear signage directing people from the bus bays to the Metro station.
- c. Mr. LaCombe shared a best practice from Houston, which has 21 Transfer Centers throughout the service area. These Transfer Centers offer bus-to-rail and bus-to-bus transfers and are mobility hubs for all types of transportation.
- d. Mr. Sidh asked if there are any studies evaluating building new transfer centers and ridership. If trip involves a transfer, people might choose not to use transit. In the Houston example, how did the new transfer centers impact ridership?
- e. Ms. Arnold said that the Project Team would provide research on this question.
- f. Mr. Ngongang noted that MDOT MTA is looking at locations in downtown Baltimore where a transfer hub might be viable. This will improve the customer experience by helping to simplify the process of transferring to a new bus. Those who have other transportation options might choose not to take transit if it involves a transfer, but for those with no other options, they must make the transfer and we want it to be as easy and clear to the public as possible. Baltimore City is happy to collaborate with MDOT MTA on this.
- g. Mr. LaCombe added that BMC is doing a study to look at all modes and connections that make sense to users. He presented a chart showing the transfer policies between transit systems within the Central Maryland region. The chart shows a lack of coordination between the transit systems in the region on transfer fare policies.
- h. Ms. Arnold noted that this chart speaks to Mr. Robinson's point that coordinated fare policy could be useful.
- i. Mr. Robinson added that these transfer fare policies would be good to see on a map.

- j. Ms. Sachs asked if it would be better to go directly to Mobility as a Service (MaaS) to address the problem of uncoordinated fare policies or streamline fare policies until MaaS is implemented.
- k. Mr. LaCombe answered that there is no perfect solution. Many regions have tackled this issue by using one fare payment method. One disadvantage to this is that cost-conscious riders must still think about the costs of using each system. There are also solutions such as an agreement between jurisdictions to allow free transfers, but this may also lead to revenue losses in some jurisdictions.
- l. Ms. Arnold noted that MDOT MTA would like to recommend a strategy in the RTP to establish a work group to identify a common fare policy.
- m. Mr. LaCombe touched on new mobility solutions, such as electric mopeds and microtransit. Microtransit is of interest in many parts of the country, but has proven to have high per-trip costs and challenges with providing wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Based on the experiences of other cities and regions that have tested microtransit, it would be best to start with a pilot program to see if it would work in this context.
- n. Mr. Ngongang noted that cost will always be an issue with microtransit and TNC programs, and when this cost is transferred to the rider it defeats the purpose of transit.
- o. Mr. LaCombe agreed that cost is a major issue with TNC partnerships, but it is important to touch on TNCs because many jurisdictions are being contacted by Uber and Lyft. One of the problems with TNCs is that they do not have economies of scale, so when ridership increases, there is no decrease in per-trip cost. Additional barriers include insurance, child seats, inability to use federal funding, and drug/alcohol testing. There are many pilots underway that will provide the data needed to assess a TNC option.
- p. Mr. Robinson commented that Anne Arundel County has piloted a TNC program in a three-zone system to replace a bus route. They created their own demand-response service to transport people to transit stops. It is working a lot better than how the fixed-route service was working.

CORRIDOR TRANSIT READINESS

David Miller, RTP Project Team, gave a presentation on Corridor Transit Readiness [**see slide deck**]. Transit readiness refers to the degree to which a Regional Transit Corridor is currently supportive of transit, examining the transit experience from door to door. This includes land use, development diversity/density, and access.

Mr. Miller lead a discussion focused on Commissioners' experiences of their complete transit trip.

- a. Ms. Collins-Ihrke commented that the closest bus stop to her neighborhood does not have sidewalks leading to the stop, so it would be dangerous to travel there from her house.
- b. Ms. Sachs commented that transit availability is mostly geared toward the hours of the business day and is less reliable outside of these hours.
- c. Mr. Miller added that many people might be deterred from using transit because they would not be able to catch a bus back home later in the evening or on the weekend.
- a. Mr. Robinson asked whether there is ever a situation in which transit investment comes first and development follows.
- b. Mr. Miller responded that transit and development investment can occur simultaneously through a process called integrated planning. Integrated planning involves planning land use, development, site selection and transit all at the same time. Toronto's BRT system is growing with development and BRT investments simultaneously.
- c. Mr. Shea noted that a new corridor- the Maryland Route 100 corridor- was added to the map.

Mr. Miller asked the Commission which strategies and characteristics they consider the most important for our region to be more transit-friendly.

- a. Mr. Shea commented that the elimination of the Red Line also took away the opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD) that was planned around the light rail stations and would have been a huge benefit to West Baltimore. He asked what else would go with a corridor in West Baltimore to make it a fantastic corridor.
- b. Mr. Miller responded that one option would be to look at a sub-area within a corridor and the policies surrounding housing, redevelopment, investment in stops and customer journey elements in the sub-area. The Charlotte and Denver examples show how residents and businesses can join together using an integrated approach to development. However, it could take up to a decade for this kind of transformation.
- c. Mr. Shea asked how far we are from having a project that incorporates all these elements in West Baltimore.
- d. Mr. Miller noted that one possibility is a small area transit plan that incorporates transit, vacant spaces, zoning and businesses and looks at more than just a corridor.

- e. Ms. Arnold added that the next steps for the RTP Corridors is to prioritize them and identify which to act on first for implementation.
- f. Mr. Killian commented that one of the next steps should be a market analysis. It is not possible to prioritize a corridor that has potential unless a market analysis has been performed. How would we prioritize a corridor before we know if it has potential?
- g. Ms. Arnold noted that the scope of this project would not include a full market analysis on all thirty corridors but that would follow in future studies. The Project Team will be prioritizing based on factors such as land use, zoning, presence of activity centers.
- h. Mr. Killian commented that Harford County is not dense, but does offer high density to developers, who do not develop to the maximum density. There is a disconnect between the theory and reality of pro-density policies leading to dense places.
- i. Ms. Sachs expressed concern over prioritizing corridors based on transit readiness. Some areas in the region experience underinvestment and if transit readiness is an overwhelming factor, this could be a problem for a lot of the corridors.
- j. Ms. Arnold noted that transit readiness is only one of sixteen factors that have not been weighted.
- k. Mr. Killian asked whether MDOT MTA is confident that MDOT MTA's system has the amenities and conditions to improve the customer experience.
- l. Ms. Arnold responded that MDOT MTA wants to integrate new strategies to improve the customer experience because the system doesn't necessarily have everything it needs right now. Elements like integrated fare payment and sidewalks to access stops need to be improved. The feasibility study needs to identify what would make certain stops and stations more successful.
- m. Mr. Shea commented that we do not know how effective our current transit system is and where we lack amenities or how long commute times are. Without this data, we cannot make informed recommendations.
- n. Mr. Miller agreed that we need to look at the existing transit. Most stops probably don't have the level of amenities they need. That's a fact of transit systems everywhere.
- o. Ms. Arnold added that a lot of studies and initiatives are already happening. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council did the study of transfers and how stops that are co-located can be improved. This can be integrated into the RTP. MDOT MTA recently developed bus stop guidelines and is working with the City of Baltimore to

prioritize which stops to improve and which stops get shelters. The Transit Priority Initiative identified specific corridors where speeds are slow.

- p. Mr. Shea asked if the Project Team could send these plans to the Commission.
- q. Ms. Arnold noted that all the plans are on the MDOT MTA website and the Project Team will send links to the Bus Stop Design Guidelines, BMC work, and Transit Priority Initiative.
- r. Mr. Robinson asked if the Project Team could identify areas for more detailed transit area plans.
- s. Mr. Sidh asked for clarification on whether transit readiness was a factor in the initial selection of the thirty corridors.
- t. Mr. Miller explained that the corridors were selected using market analysis factors such as density, market demand and travel factors. The selected corridors will now be evaluated based on several metrics that get to transit readiness, and transit readiness is one of twenty factors that will be used in prioritizing the corridors.
- u. Mr. Sidh asked if identifying potential TOD sites will be part of the RTP process.
- v. Mr. Miller responded that this will be part of the process.
- w. Mr. Ngongang noted that there are many areas in Baltimore City that are zoned for TOD and “TOD-ready”, but have not seen development. Having the policies in place for TOD does not lead immediately to TOD, especially in Baltimore City.
- x. Mr. Miller agreed that the region needs to identify the disconnect between existing transit/TOD zones and lack of business interest and identify incentives for developers to build there.
- y. Mr. Shea added that a major factor in the lack of development around light rail is the ineffectiveness of light rail. MDOT MTA has two rail systems that do not connect and are not the robust infrastructure that we need. Assessing our current infrastructure is a big part of what we need to make this plan.
- z. Ms. Arnold noted that MDOT MTA is working with the Maryland Department of Planning on integrating the existing TOD plan with the RTP and can share the TOD tool MDP developed with the Commission.
- aa. Mr. Robinson commented that the most important thing for our region to be more transit friendly is to add more transit.
- bb. Ms. Stewart encouraged the Project Team to look at major employment centers for TOD development to allow employees to walk to work.

Ms. Arnold reminded the Commission that the Project Team would send the data on the corridors in the next two weeks, which will help to establish the baseline and guide the

start of the evaluation process of where the region needs more transit. This will guide the discussions at the next RTP Commission Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Simon Taylor, RTP Project Team, led the Public Comment session.

- A. Lindsey Mendleson, Transportation Representative of Maryland Sierra Club: Ms. Mendleson commented that the Get Maryland Moving coalition recently sent comments on the prioritization methodology and draft corridors to the RTP Commissioners and MDOT MTA. Ms. Mendleson would like to discuss these comments and meet with Holly Arnold. The Sierra Club suggested adding additional draft goals, including integrating transit fare systems across the region, promoting TOD, growing ridership, and advancing equitable access to jobs. The RTP draft goals do not mention increasing the number of family-supporting jobs that are in the MDOT MTA system for transit operators or decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Governor Hogan has moved forward with seven other states and DC on the Transportation and Climate Initiative to fund strategies to reduce greenhouse gases by hundreds of millions of metric tons annually. These are substantial investments. Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) coordinated with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and other agencies on a draft plan that includes 50% electric bus replacement by 2030. The MD Sierra Club encourages this goal to be stronger than 50%. RTP should look to establish a goal of 100% electric bus replacement by 2035. Given the high rate of asthma among Baltimore City high school students and other impacts of vehicle emissions, we need a concrete goal for electric vehicle bus replacement. The RTP goals should also correspond with the goals stated in the the Maryland Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act draft plan. Ms. Mendleson also noted that the corridor map that was presented in the Commission meeting and on the open house pop-up boards was very small and difficult to see. She has not received email about RTP Commission meetings and has only received emails about the open houses.
- B. Eric Norton, Director of Policy and Programs, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance: Mr. Norton reminded the Commission and attendees that while we think about new corridors and a vision for the future, MDOT MTA's capital budget is being cut from last CTP to current CTP by hundreds of millions of dollars. He asked the Commissioners to press delegations to fight for more funding for MDOT MTA. The Capital Needs Inventory shows the minimum needs for basic safety and state of good repair for assets we currently have. We need to close that gap. Escalators are out at Metro stations, light rail experiences delays almost daily, and there was an electrical fire at the Johns Hopkins metro stop last week. We need to take care of what we have to build strong vision for the future. Transit readiness is a hard discussion to have and we are grappling with chicken and egg problem. The land

use piece is tough and takes years. Mr. Norton encouraged the Commission to push for changes at the local level, particularly with the allocation of street space. Local governments own most of their roads and can dedicate space for buses, walking and biking. A bus with 30 people should not have to sit behind car with one person in it. MDOT MTA needs the Commissioners' help to make room for buses on the streets.

- C. Anna Ellis, Get Maryland Moving: Ms. Ellis commented that any projects coming out of this plan will take several years of improvements, but the region needs some improvements now. Getting people out of cars is essential and cannot wait for long-term projects. Short-term strategies that should be implemented right away include: 1) Transit signal priority (TSP) for light rail on Howard street; 2) Bring back the QuickBus (limited-stop bus), which had much better travel times and reliability than the color-coded buses we have now; 3) Improve light rail reliability. The transit app helps for buses, but there are still problems with inaccurate information from the app. Real-time information should also be provided for light rail and subway. While it is important to look at long term projects, these are some ways to improve transit in the near term.

NEXT STEPS

Ms. Arnold concluded the meeting with an overview of next steps in the RTP process.

- The team will review all open house feedback from the public and draft strategic actions
- Small group meetings are scheduled for November 13-21 to present corridor data, prioritization methodology, and draft strategic actions
- The next RTP Commission meeting is December 13 in the Benton Building in Baltimore City. It will focus on corridor prioritization and strategic actions
- In April, the Project Team will present a draft plan and will make revisions following public outreach in the spring
- The RTP will be finalized in September 2020 to meet the October 1st legislative deadline

REGIONAL TRANSIT PLAN FOR CENTRAL MARYLAND
SMALL GROUP MEETING # 1
NOVEMBER 13, 2019
MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

Name	Role
Bruce Gartner	Administrator, Howard County Office of Transportation
Theo Ngongang	RTP Commissioner, Baltimore City Mayor's Designee
Elisabeth Sachs	RTP Commissioner, Baltimore County Executive's Designee
James Shea	RTP Commissioner, Senate President's appointee
Holly Arnold	RTP Project Team
Oluseyi Olugbenle	RTP Project Team
Sandy Brennan	RTP Project Team
David Miller	RTP Project Team

Purpose of Meeting: The RTP Project Team held three small group meetings to gain feedback from the Commissioners on the list of corridors, corridor evaluation measures, corridor prioritization and draft strategic actions.

Materials:

- Results of Evaluation Measures by Corridor
- Corridor Prioritization (Draft)
- Potential Transit Priority Improvements by Corridor
- Other Transit Network Improvements
- Strategic Actions for the Region

LIST OF CORRIDORS AND CORRIDOR EVALUATION MEASURES

(Reference "Results of Evaluation Measures by Corridor")

List of Corridors

- **Sachs:** The two priority destinations for Baltimore County are Towson and Sparrow's Point. The corridor list only includes one corridor to Sparrow's Point/ Tradepoint Atlantic. We need to look at connections from all over the county to this growing employment center.
- **Project Team:** Because Tradepoint Atlantic is still developing, its job growth might not be incorporated into the BMC model, which served as a basis for our corridor identification. BMC will update its growth model every five years and the way we address Tradepoint Atlantic will change. One issue with Tradepoint Atlantic is that is because it is located on a peninsula, transit service would all have to go over one road. The idea is not to run every

corridor out all the way to Tradepoint Atlantic, but rather to build a network that would allow connections from all over the region to the corridor connecting to Tradepoint Atlantic.

- **Sachs:** The concern about corridors in general is that the plan is going to be so corridor-reliant that it eclipses other priorities and needs. The plan needs to spread people all around the region and not only the traditional places like Port Covington.
- **Gartner:** One concern with the corridors as currently shown is that they are segmented through Halethorpe. We should look at combining these corridors, rather than truncating them into two (Corridors 21 and 23).
- **Project Team:** These were divided into two because the corridors are based on origin-destination pairs. These two corridors also have different level of service needs, character and conditions. The exact boundaries of these corridors would be assessed in a feasibility study, which would assess the entire area's opportunities and limitations.

Evaluation Measure 3: Future Jobs

- **Sachs:** How old is the model's data on future jobs?
- **Project Team:** BMC's data is 18 months to two years old.

Evaluation Measure 5: Supportive Zoning

- **Shea:** The corridor from Morgan State University to Port Covington has 50% supportive land use and 85% supportive zoning (represented as green and yellow). Is yellow or green counted as transit-supportive?
- **Project Team:** Green and yellow in the diagram are both considered transit-supportive.
- **Shea:** This seems overly broad and the difference between these categories is important. The category as it is currently structured lumps everything over 30 jobs or people per acre as high density. Downtown Baltimore has 1000 jobs or people per acre, but is put in the same category with areas that only have 30. It would be helpful to know the breakdown between green and yellow categories and to consider creating a "very high density" / "ultra-dense" category.
- **Project Team:** The density helped to guide the level of service we recommended. Although it wouldn't change the outcome, we could add a category for very high density. We will split the density profile to show the difference between "high" and "very high" densities.

Evaluation Measure 6: Growth Area

- **Ngongang:** This measure looks only at state incentive programs. Are there any local programs in addition to the state incentive programs that have been missed?
- **Project Team:** The next measure looks at "other existing plans", which reflect what the local jurisdictions are envisioning, including TOD plans, small area plans, comprehensive plans, and bike/pedestrian. All corridors on the list had a "yes" for this metric.

Evaluation Measure 8: Transfer Potential

- **Gartner:** This measure looks at the number of transit routes the corridor connects with. Did you create categories to reflect low, medium and high scores or create a cumulative score for number of connecting transit lines?
- **Shea:** It would help to see what the range is on the scores. The number of connecting transit routes might not capture what we're looking for, which is the network value of several routes. There are many routes with plenty of transit connections that do not get people where they want to go. The Commissioners will think about whether there are other helpful factors to measure network value.
- **Project Team:** The alternatives analysis and feasibility studies will be the time to look deeper at how the surrounding transit service works with the corridor to create a stronger network.

Evaluation Measure 9: Improve Service

- **Shea:** Does this metric look at all transit modes or only bus?
- **Project Team:** This includes all transit modes. However, MARC, Light Rail, and Metro are on existing corridors, so we did not see these modes on the proposed corridors.

Evaluation Measures 12-15: Minority Access, Low-Income Access, Zero Car Access, Senior Access, Disabled Access

- **Shea:** In reference to the equity measures – It would potentially be helpful to have an absolute number of disadvantaged people along the corridor along with the percentage.

Evaluation Measure 16: Long Work Commutes

- **Shea:** I am delighted that we have a travel time measure.
- **Gartner:** Most of the results of this measure are in the 17-24% range. It would be helpful to see those commutes are longer than the regional average, but still in the urbanized area.

CORRIDOR PRIORITIZATION

(Reference “Corridor Prioritization (Draft)”)

Prioritizing Corridors into High/Medium/Low Priority

- **Project Team:** We are assigning each corridor a priority as high/medium/low, rather than ranking them from first to last. Looking at the map, green represents high priority, purple is medium priority, blue is low priority and orange represents existing corridors. The bubbles are “other network improvements”.
- **Ngongang:** The east-west and north-south connections look good.
- **Shea:** Getting across the city is one thing, but getting to jobs is another thing. The east-west route and north-west corridors create a network that makes it easier to get to jobs in the northern area. There is not much of a north-east connection, however.



- **Sachs:** A lot of the east-west connections are purple (medium priority), with a few green corridors. This goes back to the segmented approach we discussed. This is an opportunity to be clear that we need a connection to UMBC.
- **Project Team:** UMBC is identified as a major destination area. Note that the RTP will have a prioritized list of corridors, but this doesn't prevent a county from making a corridor their highest priority and putting it in their budget. This is only meant to identify what the framework is for the transit network in the next 25 years.
- **Shea:** Requested that the RTP Project Team send the spreadsheet and maps to the Commissioners.
- **Ngongang:** The Sparrow's Point corridor should be elevated to high priority.
- **Sachs:** Another wave of employment is coming into Sparrow's Point. Gotham Greens is an example of the second wave of new employers in the area.
- **Project Team:** We will recommend a small area plan at Sparrow's Point because it is very important in the long term. We can also move it to high priority.
- **Gartner:** Since the transit lines outside of the region were not counted, such as WMATA, the connecting transit routes in some corridors are undercounted. Corridor 27 is an example of one that might be higher priority if WMATA routes were included.
- **Project Team:** Which corridor would be bumped down from high to medium if we elevate another corridor to high-priority? There are two high-priority corridors going north-south to Towson. Would we want to have both corridors high priority? Corridor 8 between Towson and Port Covington will have a lot of growth and connects to the east and west sides of Baltimore, which explains its high priority. We could also look at elevating Corridor 18 to high.
- **Shea:** We will have to look closer at the data and map before making recommendations.
- **Project Team:** The Commissioners are encouraged to take a close look at the data and consider recommendations for the December meeting.
- **Gartner:** If we think of any recommendations, we can communicate them to the other Commissioners between now and the December meeting.

TRANSIT PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER TRANSIT NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

(Reference "Potential Transit Priority Improvements by Corridor" And "Other Transit Network Improvements")

- **Project Team:** This list of transit priority improvements only includes improvements to make transit service more reliable and improve the speed of transit service. Some corridors have every improvement checked and that is because it is best practice for the type of service we are envisioning in the corridor. Others have fewer improvements checked because factors such as land use, density, existing routes do not warrant the type of improvement.
- **Shea:** This is a very valuable document. Queue jumps are low-hanging fruit that can be done quickly.
- **Project Team:** San Francisco and Seattle have implemented a lot of transit priority improvements, including queue jumps, off-board fare and all door boarding. All-door boarding was found to generate the best time savings.



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- **Gartner:** A commuter bus issue we have noticed for those who use the bus-on-shoulder design is that travel times are greatly increasing because of potholes in the shoulder on Route 29.
- **Project Team:** Studies have shown that rider perception of travel time is cut in half on bus-on-shoulder service, even if the bus is not traveling very fast. The continual movement is a major factor. Another study showed that even if a queue jump improves reliability and travel time by just a small percentage, riders seeing the bus moving ahead of other vehicles improves their perception of the service. Business access lanes are another option.
- **Shea:** Some of these things can be done on existing transit, such as Light Rail.
- **Ngongang:** Baltimore City has implemented transit signal priority (TSP) on Light Rail and we are currently improving seventeen traffic signals. TSP technology has been on Light Rail since the early 2000s. MDOT MTA and BCDOT are working together to make improvements to the system at stations and on vehicles.
- **Project Team:** MDOT MTA's Transit Priority Initiative is also looking at changing the signal timing in some intersections, which might not necessarily need TSP. In the past, engineers have looked to maximize the number of cars going through the intersection in every phase, but now have started to look more at maximizing the number of *people* getting through the intersection, which prioritizes buses and looks to coordinate signals with transit.
- **Sachs:** In reference to the minimum span and frequency of service per corridor, what is the need for both frequency and span?
- **Project Team:** This was based on all existing conditions analysis, including level of demand, transit supportive densities, transit market, all-day demand propensity and job that would likely lead people to travel during off-peak hours.
- **Sachs:** Is there a layer of data to understand the nature of employers by industry type and the hours of workers? This would get to another level of the nature of the work and frequency of getting to and from work.
- **Project Team:** This also gets to the type of job. We looked at Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data on sector code and made assumptions based on the type of service needed.
- **Sachs:** Sector codes would be able to show things like shift work.
- **Project Team:** We could re-send all-day and peak transit propensities to the Commissioners.
- **Ngongang:** Do most of the MTA buses run 24 hours per day? The level of service between 3:00 AM and 5:00 AM is low.
- **Project Team:** The core trunks and CityLink buses run 22 to 24 hours per day, but in the overnight the headways are 30-60 minutes. This is typical of all large metropolitan systems. Our frequent transit network's level of service is better than most other agencies.

DRAFT STRATEGIES

(Reference “Strategic Actions for the Region”)

- **Project Team:** This Strategic Actions document shows 13 overall themes and by mode. The themes were developed internally through cornerstone plans and through the two rounds of public outreach. They also came out of conversations with transit operators in July. We included the universe of all actions and then grouped them together under themes. We are continuing to refine these draft strategic actions and are open to suggestions on organization.

Theme 1: Improve the Customer Experience

- **Ngongang:** Under C, “Improve stations and stops by adding shelters, benches, lighting, and passenger information”, ensure that bike parking is included. We should also think about micromobility considerations.

Theme 3: Improve the Transfer Experience

- **Ngongang:** Coordinating schedules between regional transit providers is a very important one.

Theme 4: Streamline Trip Planning and Fare Payment

- **Project Team:** Strategy A, “Establish fare structures that are simple to understand,” was a comment from many of operators.
- **Sachs:** Does “integrated fare payment” mean mobile app or on paper? We need to make this clearer because it is government’s responsibility to make that more accessible.

Theme 5: Improve Transit Accessibility

- **Ngongang:** We should distinguish between the two meanings of accessibility – improving everybody’s access to transit and helping people with disabilities to access transit.

Theme 6: Consider Equity in Transit Planning and Service Provision

- **Shea:** How would B, “Actively pursue partnerships with non-profit and philanthropic organizations to ensure access to transit for their constituents,” work?
- **Project Team:** This refers to partnerships with non-profits to make sure that constituents have up-to-date information. For example, a lot of social services organizations have out-of-date information.
- **Sachs:** A lot of human services organizations also recognize that transportation is a major issue for people getting to jobs and services.
- **Ngongang:** Environmental justice is already regulated by Title VI. We should make this strategy stronger.

Theme 7: Integrate Environmental Sustainability Principles and Practices into Transit Planning and Service Provision

- **Project Team:** We still need feedback from other transit providers (e.g., the LOTS) on these strategies.
- **Ngongang:** Has MDOT MTA considered smaller vehicles during off-peak hours? This could improve sustainability.
- **Project Team:** Smaller vehicles would require a vehicle yard twice the size and different maintenance requirements. Bus fleets are purchased based on peak hour vehicle requirements. Microtransit is something we're discussing as a possibility, but it is much more complicated than it appears.
- **Sachs:** Baltimore County is looking at microtransit because it does not require operators to have a CDL, which lowers costs.

Theme 9: Integrate Fiscal Sustainability Principles and Pursue New Funding Sources

- **Shea:** What are the circumstances under which public-private partnerships work for transit?
- **Project Team:** For the Purple Line, the biggest reason for P3 is to transfer the risk. Ridership must be high, and the project must be simple enough that firms will bid on the project and make money.
- **Ngongang:** It is hard to convince local governments that transit is key. It is a hard sell for the private sector to invest in transit because they do not see anything in it for them.
- **Project Team:** P3 projects could also be partnerships with electric bus providers for electric buses, in which the company maintains the vehicles to a certain level and the risk is transferred to them.

Theme 10: Pursue New Partnerships

- **Sachs:** We need to make sure to provide context to public-private partnerships when communicating with the public because this could become a flashpoint when it is not intended to be that way.
- **Project Team:** Coordination with military and Federal institutions, such as Aberdeen and Fort Meade is another important partnership.
- **Ngongang:** A partnership with employers to move away from subsidizing parking is another potential, but is very politically challenging.

Theme 13: Prepare the Transit Workforce for the Future

- **Project Team:** Transit is becoming more technology-focused and takes a lot of capacity and skill to implement correctly. Many of the locally-operated transit systems (LOTS) are facing this challenge.
- **Ngongang:** One good example of this is the Charm City Circulator. BCDOT is asking the operating company to implement new technology and it is a small provider, so they are pushing back. Activities such as passenger counting and maintenance reporting should be upgraded to current technology.

Light RailLink

- **Project Team:** MDOT MTA is already in the process of replacing TSP on Light Rail vehicles and talking with BCDOT about signals. If there are any additional stations to add to the list of transit-oriented development (TOD) sites, Commissioners should send them to the Project Team.

MARC

- **Sachs:** Parking in Halethorpe is over capacity. Halethorpe should be added to the list of TOD around MARC stations.
- **Ngongang:** What would be required to make West Baltimore MARC station ADA accessible?
- **Project Team:** Prior cost estimates were \$20 million.

Paratransit

- **Ngongang:** Who is the audience for travel training? We should clarify what this means.
- **Project Team:** This would be for all paratransit systems in the region to show customers with disabilities or seniors how to use fixed-route transit. For example, travel training helps seniors learn the transit system as they age out of driving. Otherwise, they would be reliant on paratransit. Transit is more flexible than paratransit and this would help people understand how to use it.

Action Items for Small Group Meeting 1:

- Share the maps and spreadsheet with all Commission members
- Split the density profile in the “Supportive Land Use” measure to show the difference between “high” and “very high” densities
- Re-send all-day and peak transit propensities to the Commissioners
- Add Halethorpe to the list of TOD around MARC stations
- Clarify the meaning of travel training

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SMALL GROUP MEETING # 2
NOVEMBER 20, 2019
MEETING NOTES

Name	Role
Kirby Fowler	RTP Commissioner, Speaker of the House's Appointee
Ramond Robinson	RTP Commissioner, Anne Arundel County Executive's Designee
J.C. Hendrickson	RTP Commissioner, MDOT MTA MARC Rider's Council
Holly Arnold	RTP Project Team
Oluseyi Olugbenle	RTP Project Team
Sandy Brennan	RTP Project Team
David Miller	RTP Project Team

LIST OF CORRIDORS AND CORRIDOR EVALUATION MEASURES

(Reference "Results of Evaluation Measures by Corridor")

Evaluation Measure 2: Existing Jobs

- Per the request in the previous meeting, this version of the spreadsheet breaks out density into "high density" and "moderate density" scores.
- **Robinson:** Did the Project Team use Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data from 2015 or 2017?
- **Project Team:** 2015. This dataset is used in the BMC model, and the Project Team wanted the data to be consistent. The 2017 data was also just released recently.

Evaluation Measure 5: Supportive Zoning

- **Robinson:** Zoning varies based on how long the corridor is.
- **Project Team:** Yes, the Project Team erred on assigning the zoning as "would be transit-supportive" vs. "wouldn't be transit supportive". For example, an industrial zone might be transit-supportive, so it was put in the "maybe transit-supportive" category. Where zoning was clearly rural, it was categorized as not transit-supportive.
- **Hendrickson:** Did the Project Team make a note if one factor made a significant impact on one of the scores? For example, if one of the routes' scores dropped significantly because of land use, will we note that? We should make sure that information is highlighted so people understand why certain corridors were not prioritized.
- **Fowler:** What impact would there be if the start and end of the route were very dense, but the middle was low-density?

- **Project Team:** It would depend on how much of the route is transit supportive. A corridor with low-density, few jobs and residences along the entire corridor would not be a good candidate for high-frequency, 24-hour transit service.
- **Robinson:** Corridor 2 is a good example of a corridor that connects two important destinations, but does not have high scores for zoning and land use.

Evaluation Measure 6: Growth Area

- **Robinson:** Is the half-mile buffer the only area you used for growth area? What about growth areas close to the half-mile that did not make it into this buffer?
- **Project Team:** A half-mile is the distance people will walk to transit. If a growth area is a mile out, would it have an impact on transit?
- **Robinson:** A growth area or enterprise area may impact a wider range.
- **Project Team:** Modes like micromobility and shuttles could make those areas accessible. We wouldn't get into that analysis until the feasibility study, though. Because we are looking at 30 corridors across the region, a half-mile buffer is a good proxy.

Evaluation Measure 8: Transfer Potential

- **Hendrickson:** Does this measure look at existing transit routes or potential routes?
- **Project Team:** Only existing routes are included. It considers transfer potential created by intersecting routes.
- **Robinson:** Potential transit service that is included in counties' TDPs should be added to this metric to show how the new corridors will connect to planned transit.
- **Miller:** It is tricky to add "potential" transit because it would be a web of judgment calls on which transit projects are likely to be implemented. Would we include transit projects that are included in a transportation plan or projects that are already funded? It is hard to tell which projects will be realized.
- **Robinson:** Adding them would create a more comprehensive view of existing transit.
- **Hendrickson:** Mode matters a lot. Should we weight more expensive fixed route service differently?
- **Project Team:** It is risky to assign weighted points to certain modes. We have not assigned modes to these corridors yet.
- **Robinson:** Ranking the corridors denotes the potential of the corridors receiving transit service and improvements, but all the corridors should have the same potential. Because this is a plan, we should figure out what our needs are and then figure out how to pay for them.

Evaluation Measure 9: Improve Service

- **Robinson:** Why is this measure not reported as "yes" or "no"?
- **Project Team:** Providing the number of routes which could be improved shows the magnitude of the impact that the improvement would provide.

Evaluation Measure 10: Population Access

- In response to the Commissioners' request at the first Small Group Meeting, the Project Team added the absolute number of residents in the corridor to the spreadsheet, in addition to the population normalized by mile.

Evaluation Measures 16: Long Work Commutes

- **Robinson:** Did you use BMC's travel demand model for this analysis?
- **Project Team:** We used the same ACS data as the BMC model.

CORRIDOR PRIORITIZATION

(Reference "Corridor Prioritization (Draft)")

Prioritizing Corridors into High/Medium/Low Priority

- **Fowler:** For the prioritization, did all measures have the same weight?
- **Project Team:** Yes, all measures were equal. In the first meeting, the Commissioners agreed that Corridor 18 should move from medium to high. However, we did not have agreement on which green corridors would become purple.
- **Fowler:** We could have more than 10 green corridors.
- **Project Team:** We would like to have 10 corridors in each category (short-term (green), medium-term (purple), long-term (blue)) but we are open to changing if needed.
- **Fowler:** It shouldn't be a problem if we end up having a different number in each category.
- **Robinson:** Were there any projects that were regional in nature or cross-jurisdictional? Maybe those projects should have a bonus.
- **Project Team:** We originally had a measure of crossing jurisdictional lines in the prioritization methodology, but the Commission decided to remove that measure. The reasoning for this was that people do not see jurisdictional lines.
- **Robinson:** The corridors seem to be concentrated in the northern portion of the region.
- **Project Team:** The data show that those areas are most supportive of transit at this time based on land use, density, population and transit network factors.
- **Fowler:** How were these corridors originally selected?
- **Project Team:** Origin-destination pairs and transit propensity.
- **Hendrickson:** It is hard to orient where these corridors are in on the map without the roadway network.
- **Fowler:** The yellow lines on the map are only rail. Why weren't other transit services represented on the map?
- **Project Team:** The dark lines represent the existing high-frequency bus network.
- **Robinson:** These corridors appear to just be adding service to corridors that already have transit service today.
- **Project Team:** These corridors have demonstrated a need for additional transit infrastructure which is what we are required to include in the plan per the legislation.
- **Robinson:** The need for transit is universal.
- **Project Team:** We recognize that all these corridors have a need for transit, but some are ready to implement transit immediately, while others still need additional work before they



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are ready for high-frequency transit service. The goal is to have transit on all these corridors. The network improvements chart shows additional transit priority improvements that would allow transit to be stronger on the corridor, decrease passenger travel time and increase reliability

- **Commissioners:** What were the scores for Corridors 2, 3, 4, 21?
- **Project Team:** Corridor 2 ranked 18th; Corridor 3 ranked 24th; Corridor 4 ranked 29th; Corridor 21 ranked 31st. The top four corridors by score were 13 (West Baltimore to Downtown), 17 (West Baltimore to Hopkins Bayview), 20 (North Ave), 19 (State Center to Bayview).
- **Hendrickson:** I would have thought that Corridor 21 would be higher based on population and job growth along the corridor.
- **Project Team:** Corridor 21 might have been scored low because of the zoning. Currently the land use/ density is only 1%, but the actual zoning that could be transit supportive is 58%. Density could be there, but development has not yet come in. Corridor 30 performed slightly better on density because of the airport.
- **Fowler:** What counted against Corridor 2?
- **Project Team:** It is less dense than other urban areas. Transit-supportive zoning is there, but not the current density.
- **Robinson:** We should consider elevating Corridors 3 and 4.
- **Project Team:** Corridors 3 and 4 do not appear to be immediately ready for transit infrastructure. We are using this exercise to identify the corridors and infrastructure to invest in. We agree that these corridors need service, but they would be long-term corridors that would initially see local service or express service. Each corridor will have an individual strategy for improvements to get them ready for high-frequency transit service. A good example is the current CityLink Red to Towson, which already has high-frequency bus service and the buses are packed. We could run a BRT-like service on this corridor and it would be used, whereas a similar service in the southern corridor likely would not have the same usage. If we have \$10 million, it would be better to put BRT service on the heavily-used Towson route.
- **Fowler:** Due to the progressing development at Port Covington and lack of existing transit infrastructure, this corridor (2) should be elevated to near-term. The Hanover Bridge will be packed to Port Covington unless a bus lane with high-frequency service is added. However, would not vote to have other green corridors removed from the list. If any, Corridor 14 looks like the lowest priority of the greens because a Metro line runs parallel. It might be better to improve connections to Metro, rather than adding new transit service next to it.
- **Project Team:** We can maximize existing investments by providing local connections to Metro, rather than putting in new service on Corridor 14.
- **Commissioners:** Surprised that Corridors 21, 26 and 30 are not higher.
- **Project Team:** These corridors could have express commuter bus or similar service, since they have low density in the middle of the corridors. Send comments and feedback by the end of the month. We will send the maps once we have consensus on the changes.
- **Fowler:** The map sent to the public should include all existing bus routes so they do not think that MDOT MTA is cutting their service.

DRAFT STRATEGIES

(Reference “Strategic Actions for the Region”)

Theme 2: Promote Safety and Security

- **Hendrickson:** Have assaults on transit operators been a problem?
- **Project Team:** Yes, especially on buses. This is a big focus for our police. Reducing assaults is important for retaining operators in the workforce. These are CDL drivers who would have other options that would not require interacting with customers.
- **Fowler:** What solutions have other systems enacted?
- **Project Team:** Other systems like WMATA have internal cameras and screens showing live images on the vehicle. Crime decreased significantly when people saw they were being monitored actively.
- **Robinson:** There is also federal legislation looking at increasing the punishment for assault on operators.
- **Hendrickson:** CCTV on buses and trains can also supplement police presence.
- **Project Team:** All MDOT MTA’s vehicles currently have cameras installed, except MARC trains. The stations do not all have cameras. On a regional scale, expanding the use of cameras on vehicles in all transit systems is a good goal.
- **Fowler:** We must be honest about the safety of our transit system and the fact that we do have safety concerns at bus stops and stations. Here we say that we are the safest transit system in the country, but many people still face safety concerns getting to the bus or train. If the problem is not stated honestly, it is hard to come up with solutions. We should add a strategy to research safety at stops and stations.

Theme 2: Coordinate Fare Transfer Policies

- **Robinson:** “Coordinate fare transfer policies” should be first on the list of strategies.
- **Project Team:** We will list “Improve the Transfer Experience” before “Promote Safety and Security.”

Theme 5: Improve Transit Accessibility

- **Robinson:** Transit accessibility needs to be a regional theme and jurisdictions need to provide support behind the strategic actions. The Department of Public Works needs to be engaged in this strategy because they build and construct sidewalks.

Theme 7: Integrate Environmental Sustainability Principles and Practices into Transit Planning and Service Provision

- **Robinson:** Why do we want to decrease operators’ water usage?
- **Project Team:** This will be changed to specify that water use reduction is intended for the *facility’s* use of water and vehicle washing.
- **Hendrickson:** Does the goal to replace 50% of MDOT MTA’s current fleet with energy efficient vehicles also refer to rail cars? Electric rail vehicles are not very reliable.
- **Project Team:** We will specify that we are aiming for the bus fleet to be 50% energy efficient.

- **Robinson:** Should this include all bus service in the region?
- **Project Team:** Maryland does not have a state-wide goal to replace 50% of the fleet with energy-efficient vehicles. This might not be a goal for all the LOTS.
- **Robinson:** Move Anne Arundel has a goal to replace the fleet with energy efficient vehicles.

Theme 12: Prepare for Emerging and Future Technology

- **Fowler:** A lot of cities are coordinating drop-off areas for Amazon and other deliveries, which causes a lot of congestion and unnecessary trips. Where would a strategy related to this issue fit?
- **Project Team:** Curbside management practices and policies are included in the strategies.
- **Fowler:** We should try to reorganize these strategies and state in the beginning of the document how the strategies were generated.

Bus: Improve Bus Speed and Reliability

- **Hendrickson:** We should provide more explanation for the Yield to the Bus legislation in the document.

Bus: Grow Bus Ridership

- **Fowler:** For the state of good repair item, we should acknowledge that wrapping buses is bad for riders. People should be able to see in and out of the buses. Bus wraps make buses seem unsafe because you cannot see what is going on inside. With our perception issues in Baltimore, it would be good to call that out.
- **Project Team:** We can add this under Crime. Law enforcement also does not like the wrap and window tinting.
- **Robinson:** How will we grow ridership through a downtown regional hub?
- **Project Team:** The intention is to better accommodate people coming into downtown through a regional transit hub. We could change the wording to “regional facilities, including a downtown Baltimore transfer facility.”

Light RailLink: Improve Light RailLink Speed and Reliability

- **Fowler:** How many car accidents have there been with light rail on Howard St?
- **Project Team:** Just under 100 over the past three years. We are discussing with the City now if it is possible to eliminate left turns in front of light rail and repaint the markings.
- **Robinson:** Add BWI Business Park to light rail TOD list.

MARC: Improve Rail Speed and Reliability

- **Hendrickson:** Add a Dorsey-Halethorpe connection between Penn and Camden MARC lines. Also add a strategy to reduce pedestrian strikes in non-passenger areas, such as near Odenton.

Paratransit: Improve the Customer Experience

- **Robinson:** We need to improve capacity of regional paratransit systems to sustain existing and growing ridership on paratransit.
- **Fowler:** Improve trip scheduling and grouping rides on paratransit.
- **Project Team:** Leverage technology to increase efficiency of paratransit using TNCs.

Action Items for Small Group Meeting 2:

- See if it is possible to add all existing bus routes to the map of corridors that will be shared with the public.
- Add explanation of where strategies originated to *Strategies* document.
- Provide additional explanation to the strategy for “Yield to the Bus” legislation.
- Add strategies:
 - Research safety at stops and stations.
 - Acknowledge the public safety concerns associated with bus wraps that obstruct visibility into buses.
 - Light Rail TOD site at BWI Business Park.
 - Dorsey-Halethorpe connection between Penn and Camden MARC lines.
 - Reduce pedestrian strikes in non-passenger areas, such as near Odenton.
 - Improve capacity of regional paratransit systems to sustain existing and growing paratransit ridership.
 - Improve trip scheduling and grouping rides on paratransit.

REGIONAL TRANSIT PLAN FOR CENTRAL MARYLAND
SMALL GROUP MEETING # 3
NOVEMBER 21, 2019
MEETING NOTES

Name	Role
Katie Collins-Ihrke	RTP Commissioner, Governor's Appointee
Linda Greene	RTP Commissioner, Governor's Appointee
Bradley Killian	RTP Commissioner, Harford County Executive's Designee
Sameer Sidh	RTP Commissioner, Howard County Executive's Designee
Gina Stewart	RTP Commissioner, Governor's Appointee
Holly Arnold	RTP Project Team
Oluseyi Olugbenle	RTP Project Team
Sandy Brennan	RTP Project Team
David Miller	RTP Project Team

LIST OF CORRIDORS AND CORRIDOR EVALUATION MEASURES

(Reference "Results of Evaluation Measures by Corridor")

- **Killian:** Route 40 in Harford County is far from being ready for transit, and we don't advocate for transit ourselves, so we don't expect you to add it. A lot of people in the county don't want transit. With ETL expansion, plenty of people do park and ride and there is a need for that, but a lot of this travel is not during peak hours. There are people who use the trains and we don't do enough to help them do that.
- **Project Team:** We should include a strategy to improve Aberdeen MARC service.

Evaluation Measure 2: Existing Jobs

- **Greene:** Looking at locations with 30 jobs per acre as "high" skews the results towards urban areas and penalizes suburban corridors. Sometimes corridors connect two high-density places but have countryside in the middle. We shouldn't only value population in the middle of the corridor because it downgrades corridors with high-density population and job centers on either end of the corridor.
- **Project Team:** A corridor with many nodes and density along the entire length would justify more investment because it serves more people throughout the corridor. The corridor needs to show a real need for transit infrastructure investment, not just a commuter bus. As a region, we want to accomplish connections to employment centers and education centers and invest in places where there is transit need throughout the corridor.

Evaluation Measure 4: Supportive Land Use

- **Killian:** Could this set a bias against suburban counties where commuters drive to a transit stop?
- **Greene:** The Park & Ride in Severna Park, for example. We are not counting Park & Ride riders?
- **Project Team:** No, because the service we are envisioning for the near-term corridors is every 10 minutes in peak period, 24 hours per day. Corridors that rank lower would be considered for commuter service or enhanced express bus. This is not to say they wouldn't need service in the future. Each corridor will have recommendations for what they can do.
- **Greene:** Are these corridors denoting specific roads? The road from Glen Burnie to Annapolis experiences high traffic, so this should be a priority for new transit.
- **Project Team:** High traffic does not mean that transit would succeed. A commuter bus might be a good option there, but there are few stops in between that would warrant high-frequency transit service.

Evaluation Measure 16: Long Work Commutes

- **Killian:** Because this metric only looks at the people living within a half mile of the corridor, it undercounts the number of people with long commutes who would benefit from the new transit service who might drive to the stop or station.
- **Project Team:** This is a proxy and might be imprecise, but research shows that distance of transit outside of half mile decreases likelihood of using transit.

CORRIDOR PRIORITIZATION

(Reference "Corridor Prioritization (Draft)")

Prioritizing Corridors into High/Medium/Low Priority

- **Sidh:** Thinking of corridors to bump up or down, Ellicott City to Silver Spring would be one to elevate.
- **Greene:** BWI to Laurel, with stops at National Business Park could serve a large employer. We should be serving NSA and Fort Meade with some transit. This should move to at least a mid-term. Anne Arundel also wants to better serve Laurel because of TOD and the race track.
- **Project Team:** Another thing to remember about suburban areas is that we have areas for transit network improvements and other areas that are not corridors where we need to improve transit service.
- **Greene:** Will we have more detailed studies later in the process?
- **Project Team:** Because of the timeline of the plan, we do not have time to do detailed service plans, but we will recommend that small area transit studies be conducted. Once the plan is published, Anne Arundel County would perform the small area plan for Fort Meade and implement the recommendations.
- **Greene:** Only including Fort Meade as a recommended small area plan is a big omission. The Commander issued a call for action to improve Fort Meade and allow travel from Pasadena to Fort Meade in less than two hours.



- **Project Team:** The small area plans might be more important than the corridors.
- **Stewart:** The early opportunity zones are mostly in Baltimore City. It would be nice to have at least one from every county so every county feels like they are represented.
- **Project Team:** Two corridors were bumped up so they would represent other counties.
- **Killian:** All the areas have as a strategy study increasing level of service. Why wasn't that translated to the map that shows these corridors should be improved with existing service? One of Harford County's transit priorities is to get transit from the north and hopefully have SEPTA extend and have better service from the north. When you have the plan, corridors will be a component of the plan with multiple corridors, but we want comfort that the strategies will have equal standing as corridors in the final plan.
- **Project Team:** Yes, the strategies should have equal or higher importance than the corridors.
- **Greene:** We would like to see the priority letters that went to MDOT to see what the counties are looking at and how they fit into the priorities in the corridors.
- **Project Team:** We already factored the priority letters into the evaluation but can send them separately to the Commissioners. Howard County's US 29 is the only transit corridor in the priority letters.
- **Killian:** It is a concern for more suburban and rural counties that the corridors are standing out as the most important part of the plan, but they only represent areas that need high frequency service. Legislators will look at the map and prioritize the corridors over the strategies. This allows counties like Harford to have lower priority.
- **Project Team:** We could write the plan to place less emphasis on the corridors.
- **Stewart:** Can we move Corridor 24 up to green? We have so many people at NSA and will continue to grow. Pasadena also has a critical need for transportation to Fort Meade/NSA.
- **Project Team:** We used to have service to the base, but cut it because ridership was low. This issue isn't unique to Fort Meade. We gave Fort Meade extra attention in analysis, and we found that people are coming from everywhere. This is hard to serve efficiently and effectively with transit. If we focus on corridors to these destinations, will have a very long process that serves very few people in the end. We need a plan specific for the base and users to get people to it and move people around once on the base. It is better to focus on solutions other than corridors for this area. Fort Meade does not have sidewalks and people need cars to move from one building to another, so if they use transit to get to the base itself, they have no way of getting around once inside. We met with NSA and Fort Meade to get feedback and start talking about these things. Maybe we can also add a strategy to support military facilities under the Economic Opportunity theme.
- **Commissioners:** Move Corridors 8, 13 and 24 to purple; Corridors 2, 18, 27 to green.

DRAFT STRATEGIES

(Reference "Strategic Actions for the Region")

Theme 5: Improve Transit Accessibility

- **Collins-Ihrke:** We need to make everything ADA accessible. Let's remove "to the maximum extent feasible." Also, scooters that people leave on the sidewalk are a

challenge for those who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Add a strategy to coordinate with jurisdictions to enforce scooters out of the travel area of sidewalks. Also add coordination with Local Centers for Independent Living to identify transit needs in the region.

Theme 8: Promote Prosperity and Economic Opportunity

- **Greene:** Add partnerships with Department of Commerce to work on transit for emerging employment centers.
- **Project Team:** Partner with or coordinate with Department of Commerce to anticipate where growth will occur.
- **Greene:** When development occurs at the local level, maximize funds for public transit and consider developer contributions to transit and roads.
- **Project Team:** The contribution should include amenities for transit, such as shelters. BMC is looking at all development practices and where improvements to policies and practices can occur.
- **Stewart:** Add military installations, such as Aberdeen.

Theme 10: Pursue New Partnerships

- **Greene:** Add military partnerships and partnerships with medical facilities.
- **Collins-Ihrke:** Another strategy is to identify opportunities for funding and partnerships to meet the growing needs of individuals with disabilities.

Theme 12: Prepare for Emerging and Future Technology

- **Greene:** We should promote shuttles.
- **Project Team:** Shared mobility also includes shuttles. The plan will be very graphical and will include descriptions of what everything means.

Theme 13: Prepare the Transit Workforce for the Future

- **Collins-Ihrke:** Add disability sensitivity training for paratransit operators and staff. Paratransit operators should also know how to handle conflicts between customers, such as one customer not wanting another to bring their service animal onto the paratransit vehicle.

Metro SubwayLink: Grow Metro SubwayLink Ridership

- **Project Team:** We should also add station enhancements for Metro and Light Rail.
- **Stewart:** The Commissioners would be interested in seeing what comes out of the Metro Ridership Task Force.
- **Collins-Ihrke:** All stations have some ADA accessibility problem (including Light Rail). All stations must be ADA accessible.

MARC: Grow MARC Ridership

- **Greene:** Add BWI to the strategy to “close the gap” in regional rail service.
- **Killian:** We should also add Edgewood and Aberdeen.

- **Project Team:** Some of the strategies for MARC can be tightened and combined. The one thing we don't have is additional MARC service north, so we can add additional service. We can also add a strategy to add service on the Camden Line.

Paratransit

- **Collins-Ihrke:** We should figure out why people with disabilities are not taking fixed-route transit and instead going to paratransit.
- **Project Team:** We could also add a strategy to start a campaign to help people understand why fixed-route is more flexible to them. We could survey paratransit riders and start a plan for improving fixed route ridership for those with disabilities. Important factors are safety, security, ease of use, and lack of bench at bus stops.
- **Stewart:** A lot of people are fearful of using bus and light rail. We could add something about making passengers feel safer on these modes.
- **Collins-Ihrke:** Wayfinding improvements and improved signage could also make it easier to find stops and stations.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- **Killian:** The Project Team could consider nesting the goals under three broad themes, such as People, Planet and Prosperity. You could also put the corridors under one of these themes so they are considered equal to the other strategies.

Action Items for Small Group Meeting 3:

- Send priority letters to Commissioners.
- Move Corridors 8, 13 and 24 to purple.
- Move Corridors 2, 18, 27 to green.
- Consider nesting strategies under broader themes, with corridors included as a strategy within one of the themes.
- Add strategies:
 - Improve Aberdeen MARC service.
 - Coordinate with jurisdictions to enforce scooters out of the travel area of sidewalks.
 - Coordinate with Local Centers for Independent Living to identify transit needs in the region.
 - Partner with Department of Commerce to anticipate where growth will occur.
 - Consider developer contributions to transit service and amenities for transit.
 - Coordinate with military installations, such as Aberdeen.
 - Coordinate disability sensitivity for paratransit operators and customer service staff.
 - Enhance Metro and Light Rail stations.
 - Add BWI to strategy to “close the gap” in regional rail service.
 - Add service on the Camden Line.
 - Provide additional northbound MARC service.



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- Coordinate a campaign to help paratransit riders understand why fixed-route transit is more flexible.
- Improve wayfinding and signage leading to stops and stations.
- Remove “to the maximum extent feasible” from strategy for ADA improvements.