



MTA STAKEHOLDER WORK GROUP



MTA Stakeholder Work Group Meeting #4

Focusing on Workforce and Customer Needs and Priorities in the Region

On Monday, September 28, 2015, the Secretary's Office (TSO) and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) held the fourth meeting of several Transit Stakeholder Work Group meetings at the Humanim, Inc. Headquarters on the second floor in The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building located at 1701 N. Gay Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

The fourth meeting was intended to focus on outlining the transit needs and expectations of transit users in the Baltimore Region. With Jim Ports, Deputy Secretary of Transportation for Operations, as the Chairman, attendees included bus, paratransit and rail transit users as well as elected officials and representatives from State agencies. The meeting aimed to provide transit users with a summary of the key themes discussed in previous stakeholder meetings, and determined how a list of potential transit objectives should be prioritized based on input from transit users. The meeting also served as a reminder that MDOT will develop a Transit Performance Improvement Plan by October 1, 2015, as outlined in the FY 2015 Joint Chairmen's Report on the budget.

The following businesses and organizations were in attendance:

- The Secretary's Office (TSO) of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Johns Hopkins University
- Maryland General Assembly Representatives, including:
 - Delegate Brooke Lierman
 - Delegate Cory McCray
- Bikemore
- Baltimore Development Corporation
- CH2M Hill
- Office of the Baltimore City Mayor
- Baltimore Electric Rail Society
- Vehicles for Change

Deputy Secretary Ports opened the meeting, stressing the importance of providing safe, efficient and reliable transit services in the Baltimore Region and across Maryland with world-class customer service. He noted that we have developed this MTA Stakeholder Work Group in response to legislation introduced during the 2015 session of the General Assembly, as well as FY 2015 Operating Budget Language aimed at improving transit services. The goal of these Stakeholder Work Group meetings is to conduct outreach and seek input on the transit service needs of the business community and transit users in the region in order to identify opportunities to improve transit services. We want to ensure that the concerns and recommendations of the MTA stakeholders are heard, understood and implemented where feasible and appropriate.

Deputy Secretary Ports introduced Sam Minnitte, Vice President of Planning, Environment & Traffic in the Northeast US for Parsons Brinckerhoff, who has helped to facilitate these Stakeholder Work Group Meetings. Jim Knighton, Chief of Staff for MTA, then gave a presentation, which provided an overview of the MTA transit services in the region, including a brief history, overview and ridership of the various modes of transit in the region: bus, Metro Subway, Light Rail, MARC, Commuter Bus and Mobility.

There were no questions regarding the presentation.

Next, Sam Minnitte opened up the floor to any of the attendees who had questions or comments about the current state of MTA's bus service and/or the Transit Performance Improvement Plan that is due to be released on October 1, 2015. The following summary highlights the key focus areas identified by the Stakeholder Work Group.

Key Themes:

Quality of Transit Facilities

- Maintenance and infrastructure at metro stations is poor; Penn North in particular
- Lack of adequate security at particular bus stops and transit facilities
- Improve directional train arrival messages at light rail stations

Quality of Transit Service

- Improve the coordination between bus routes at transfer points and along shared route segments
- Service is too limited despite overcrowding on buses, overcrowding due to school kids
- Several bus routes that run along Fayette Street/the Red Line alignment (13, 23, 26, & 40 QuickBus) are often unreliable
- Wait times for some bus routes can be nearly an hour long
- Increase the frequency of buses to prevent overcrowding
- Bus performance needs to be improved; too many late buses
- Bus performance needs to be improved; some buses skip stops despite not being full
- Single-tracking negatively impacts bus service

Effective Communication of MTA News, Policies and Outreach Efforts

- Schedules and route materials at stations should have a much more consistent and reliable update schedule
- Inadequate advertising for MTA meetings
- Advertising should be done on more forms of media
- Improve social media responses to user complaints
- Too many canned responses when transit users attempt to interact with MTA social media presence
- Improve advertisements for Charm Card sales locations
- Improve public education on Charm Card uses and interoperability
- Improve outreach efforts
- Make the process for small businesses to provide Charm Cards for their employees easier

Service Improvements

- Improve midday and late night bus scheduling
- Consider extending the time for the last scheduled bus
- Consider extending the time for the last scheduled train
- Start weekend light rail service earlier

Overall System Interoperability

- Improve the coordination between different modes of transit
- Improve existing coordination efforts with private bus services
- Increase coordination efforts with more private bus services
- Improve coordination with major event venues

It is clear in the discussion that there are a lot of competing interests for transit service in the region and while there is plenty room for improvement, it is not possible to service all employers and residents in a door-to-door fashion. Some attendees also relayed concerns over funding and lack of service at all times needed.

While this is the last MTA Stakeholder Work Group for the purpose of the October 1 Transit Performance Improvement Plan, it is the intent of MDOT to reach out to the these MTA stakeholders again in the future. MDOT greatly appreciates all of the time, energy and input provided by all stakeholders, and aims to track performance and implement improvements immediately.