



Howard County Council Meeting

4/16/2018 7pm

1. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this program and thank you for the newly purchased buses and the incoming order of buses this fall. This is a major step in moving forward and improving the transit service in Howard County.
2. The next step forward would be restructuring the fare policy to be a more viable option. A major improvement here would be offer free Fixed Route service to seniors and ADA passengers thus alleviating some pressure from the Para-Transit service. These ideas have been proposed and now we move to a bigger step.
3. We currently have been able to make minor structural and time changes to many routes that have helped improve the system. However, what needs to take place is please "forgive my country or farmers basicness here" "throw all the stops and possible additional service into a 5 gallon bucket dump em' out on a table and start from scratch to sort out new and better alternatives to what is available now". Shorter routes, better connectivity, shorter headways with enhanced and extended service for longer service hours and greater weekend coverage. Which is what this TDP is structured to do.
4. I ask that you help us to better serve you and the constituents of Howard County and the region by approving and funding this TDP. Let's move into the future with a cohesive plan better suited for everyone. We want to Thank You Again for your continued support in helping us to better serve you.

Andrew Johnson, Assistant General Manager, andrewj@transitrtta.com



Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission

April 16, 2018

Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21045



RE: CR48-2018, The Central MD Transit Development Plan (TDP) for
Future Transit Development in Howard County

Dear Howard County Council members:

I am writing to request your support for the endorsement of CR48-2018, the Central MD Transit Development Plan (TDP).

I write to you as the Chair of the Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission. The Commission advances and promotes the interests of Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Prince George's County, and the City of Laurel in creating and maintaining efficient, effective, and coordinated regional transit in central Maryland, through services provided by the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA).

The TDP is a very important document for the future of transit in Howard County and the Central Maryland Region. The TDP proposes:

1. Performance and service improvements for the existing transit system.
2. An existing bus routes system reconfiguration and service expansions.
3. A vision for future route expansions.
4. Options to address the high cost and rising demand for demand-response services.

The Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission will review the detailed proposals as they go through the public hearing process prior to implementation.

These proposals will set the RTA on a solid footing to provide better and more efficient transit service over the next three to ten years. I urge you to endorse the Plan.

Sincerely,

Allen Cornell, Chairperson
Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission

Cc: Clive Graham

Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA)

8510 Corridor Road, Suite 110 • Savage, Maryland 20763 • Phone (301) 957-3600

Comments to the County Council CR48-2018, the Central MD Transit Development Plan,
April 16, 2018

Good evening Distinguished Councilmembers:

My name is Marlene Hendler and I am the Chairperson of the new Transit and Pedestrian Advisory Group (TPAG). Members of our group include representatives from, Howard County Public School System, Howard County Association of Community Services, the Commission on Aging, the Commission on Disability Issues, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Howard County Police Department and a distinguished member from the Howard County Council. The Office of Transportation provides staff support

Since the inception of this advisory group, we have met three times. During our meetings, we have accomplished a tremendous amount to include adopting by-laws and reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Transportation to include an overview of their key projects and work plan, the Transit Development Plan, and the Walk Howard Pedestrian Plan.

The first key project that we reviewed was the Transit Development Plan. As we are all so keenly aware, many bus routes have not been modified in many years. Additionally, the equipment is aging and prone to breakdowns. The transit plan not only addresses each of these issues but also seeks to improve reliability, increase frequency on many routes, and increase levels of service on weekends.

The second project we reviewed was the Walk Howard Pedestrian Plan. Similar to the transit plan in breadth of scope, the pedestrian plan seeks to improve walkability in our county. This includes connections to community and shopping centers, schools, parks, and businesses and to transit.

We are extremely encouraged with the work that we have seen and look forward to advising and informing the Office of Transportation on transportation matters from our respective organizations. We recognize that feedback we provide on policy issues and implementation of their master plans is vital to their direction in garnering feedback.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr. Clive and his team for their hard work, the County Council for your support, and County Executive Kittleman for his leadership in these extremely important quality of life initiatives.

As chair of the TPAG I urge you to endorse the Transit Development Plan which sets out a framework for important improvements to transit in the County and in the region.

Marlene Hendler
Dolphins1964@comcast.net

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April 11, 2018

Howard County Council

Subject: Central Maryland Transit Development Plan
CR 48-2018

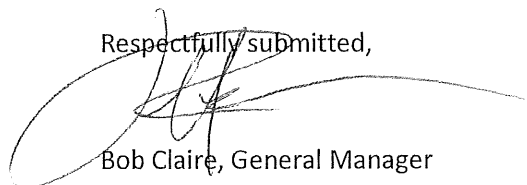
Dear Chairperson and Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the County's proposed Transit Development Plan.

Mobern Lighting has been manufacturing lighting fixtures in Howard County along the Route 1 corridor since 1957. We are a "second chance" employer which currently employs approximately 110 full-time employees many of whom rideshare or rely on public transportation to work. Some even walk long distances or bike to work. It is no secret that the key to sustainable commercial success within the Corridor, and preserving jobs in the County (especially for those with special needs, the homeless, ex-offenders, etc.), is getting people to and from work. There are many other businesses along the Corridor whose employees face the same employment challenges that those at Mobern face. Therefore, adequate public transportation at all times during day and from all parts of the County is vital to our business community.

For these reasons, we ask that you vote in favor of the Transit Development Plan and support its recommendations for improving transit service.

Respectfully submitted,



Bob Claire, General Manager

Testimony by Friends of Bridge Columbia

Re: the Transit Development Plan

Howard County Council

April 16, 2018

Good Evening, Members of the Council, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Fred Gottemoeller. I live at 5425 Vantage Point Road in Columbia and I am here tonight representing the Friends of Bridge Columbia.

First of all, we want to thank all of you for your support for improving the existing pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Route 29. The Geodesic Spiral now nearing completion is a major step forward. However, it is not enough. Bus transit has been an integral part of the Bridge Columbia proposal from the very beginning. That bridge location is ideally placed to create a bus shortcut between Downtown, Oakland Mills, Long Reach and all of the way to Gateway.

Howard County has talked for decades about wanting a sustainable transportation system that serves all residents, including those who prefer to get around without an automobile. This Transit Development Plan is, in our opinion, the first serious attempt to make that a reality. It focuses its first two years on the basics, rebuilding the bus fleet and reworking the bus routes into a sensible and efficient system. But it also includes a vision for the things that come next. For example, it envisions a high capacity bus corridor or Transitway from the Hospital and the Community College, through Downtown, Oakland Mills and Long reach all the way to Gateway, using Bridge Columbia as its lynchpin. That will help build the 21st century transportation system that Howard County deserves. That's why we urge you to approve this Transit Development Plan.

5475 Sleeping Dog Lane
Columbia, MD 21045
April 15, 2018

Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21045

RE: CR48-2018, The Central MD Transit Development Plan (TDP) for
Future Transit Development in Howard County

Dear Howard County Council members:

The TDP is needed in Howard County and I request your approval. It is a 602-page document that essentially lays out an approach for making transit capital investment. The current buses used in Howard are beyond their useful life and constantly breaking down. These buses will be replaced, and additional buses added over time to increase bus frequencies on major routes and at peak travel times.

I have attended several the public outreach meetings for the TDP as a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), Public Advisory Committee. We monitor public outreach for TDPs and the Maryland State Transportation Plan and Program and make recommendations to the BRTB.

As a former Director of Planning for the Federal Transit Administration, I realized early on that funding for transit is often at a disadvantage. Some 35 state constitutions only allow the use of state gasoline taxes for highways. While Maryland allows use of state gasoline taxes for transit thru a unified transportation fund, transit still competes with funding for roads, ports, etc. Locally, funding for transit competes with schools, fire, etc. in the Howard County Annual Budget. Not all needed funding can be provided by state and federal funds. Your endorsement of the TDP and the County Executive submission of the TDP provides an implicit long-term funding commitment for the transit dependent in Howard County - those with no cars, the disabled, and the expanding older adult demographic.

The Downtown Columbia Plan is predicated on high density Transit Oriented Development with a Transit Center as its centerpiece. It is imperative that the required funding noted in the TDP happens in subsequent County budgets so that the downtown is a transit to and not a drive to location.

Sincerely,

Paul L. Verchinski

cc. Clive Graham

Kelly McLaughlin – Testimony on Council Resolution 48-2018 (re: endorsement of the Central Maryland Transit Plan) at the April 16, 2018 legislative hearing.

Good evening Council Members. My name is Kelly McLaughlin. I live in Ellicott City, am a Howard County resident, and serve as the Executive Director for Bridges to Housing Stability (also known simply as “Bridges”), which is a nonprofit that serves Howard County’s homeless and low-income households with affordable housing solutions.

Many of you know that Bridges serves the homeless in Howard County who are referred to us through the County’s coordinated system of homeless services. We provide intensive case management and some financial assistance to those who are already homeless or who are at imminent risk of homelessness (facing eviction). However, Bridges also has programs that help low-income working households, those that are making between \$33,000 and \$66,000 a year, that aren’t homeless but need help locating affordable housing within the County. Through these affordable housing programs, Bridges provides low-income families with case management that helps them move towards self-sufficiency. It’s not a handout, but a hand-up, and what we have found through client case management is that one of the largest impediments to their ability to become completely self-sufficient is a lack of reliable transportation to and from work. A significant number of our clients do not own a vehicle or share one vehicle per household and rely on the public transit system. Three of our clients’ major complaints are (1) the lack of adequate routes to certain locations, (2) the long rides due to numerous local stops on a single route, and (3) the unreliable schedules.

As part of the County’s Board to Promote Self Sufficiency’s look at public transportation solutions, Bridges has engaged in discussions with other nonprofits and the Office of Transportation about ways to improve the efficiency of the transit system serving Howard County. It is for this reason that Bridges is here tonight, to endorse this Transit Plan. We believe this plan is a good, earnest beginning to improving the system’s routes to meet the real demands and needs of low-income riders, as well as improving reliability by investing in new transit vehicles.

As an affordable housing advocate and on behalf of the households we serve at Bridges, we are pleased that the Office of Transportation has been looking at the intersection of public transportation and affordable housing, and wish to show our support for the administration and staff by encouraging the Council to approve this resolution of endorsement.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

Respectfully,

Kelly McLaughlin



**Howard County Council
Public Hearing Testimony
April 16, 2017**

Council Resolution 48-2018: Central Maryland Transit Development Plan

Good evening. I am pleased to testify that ACS is supportive of the Central Maryland Transit Development Plan as stated in Council Resolution 48 “as a guide to future transit development” in the County and Region. As we all know, however, any Plan no matter how well conceived is only as good as its implementation. ACS, therefore, will be looking at the Executive’s FY 2019 Operating Budget proposal hoping it contains the \$1.3 million additional funding necessary to ensure that Phase 1-recommended service changes—including shorter routes, travel time reductions, half-hour headways on some routes and increases in weekend service—are indeed completed by this time next year. We also hope that funding priorities beyond 2019 are inclusive of the capital and operating funding that will be required to implement the Phase 2 recommendations. It is important to note that achieving important Phase 2 route expansions will be dependent upon Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County support, so proactively working with them will need to be an FY 2019 priority.

In July 2017 ACS offered testimony at one of the RTA’s public hearings to gather community input on the draft development plan. At that time, ACS commented on a few of the proposed route changes that would have a particular impact on county residents who must rely on bus service to get them to their jobs, medical appointments and day to day activities. A copy of that testimony is attached for your information.

There are two specific elements of the Transit Development Plan that ACS finds disappointing. One is that there are not yet specific strategies to improve mobility services. Finding less costly yet reliable mobility service improvements are critical to supporting seniors and persons with disabilities in our community. We trust, as the Plan states, that discussions with the affected communities will indeed begin this Spring and Summer and that perhaps by this time next year appropriate strategies will have been developed.

It is also disappointing to read in the TPA that development of the Downtown Columbia Transit Center may be eight-to-ten years in the future. A significant proportion of the new affordable housing units called for in the Downtown Columbia Development Plan are tied to a new Transit Center. Waiting ten years for this housing will only deepen the already immense affordable housing supply and demand gap.

Despite the disappointments and concerns about implementation, ACS applauds this important set of enhancements that will provide a strong foundation for further progress in ensuring all Howard County households have transit access to local and regional employment, human services, shopping and family activity opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Eng
Jackie Eng, Chairperson
ACS Public Policy Committee

Attached: “Proposed RTA Service Enhancements,” ACS Public Hearing Testimony, July 25, 2017



**Proposed RTA Service Enhancements
Public Hearing Testimony
July 25, 2017**

Good evening. The Association of Community Services, represents over 100 nonprofit organizations serving economically and physically vulnerable Howard County households. I am please to testify that, with a few exceptions, ACS is supportive of the proposed Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) service enhancements. We particularly appreciate the addition of bus shelters as new routes are put in place and current routes reworked. The shift away from buses negotiating through parking lots while relocating bus stops to still enable safe rider access to retail and residential properties is a creative solution to increasing route efficiencies.

We do ask consideration of the following comments.

- ACS strongly objects to the elimination of the 501/Silver Route extension to Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport. This extension not only provides airport access to flyers, but more importantly to airport corridor workers—access to these well paying jobs are critical to many Howard County households. The MTA Route 75-Baltimore route link from Anne Arundel Mills to BWI is not a good alternative as there appears to be no timing coordination between the routes (of particular concern for use by early morning and late evening shift workers), thereby adding yet more waiting and travel time to an already long commute. We therefore strongly encourage Howard County to ensure regional or local funding for this critical Route 501 extension.
- We certainly applaud the re-routing of Route 503/E to enable access to the Nonprofit Collaborative, the Food Bank and the emerging County Human Services Campus. We wonder, however, how this new routing can be tied into servicing the Stanford Road-located Health Department and Social Security Office? Both of these agencies are critical to low income households and part of the County's human services network.
- The proposed new 409B route, particularly with its extended weekday and Saturday hours, will provide essential service to individuals seeking access to the new and existing community services located in Laurel. We urge, however, your continued work to ensure that pedestrians can safely cross and walk along Route 1 to get to the bus stops. We know that the Guilford Road and Route 1 intersection is a particular challenge and appreciate that you continue to seek a solution.
- On the 405/Yellow route, will an expanded median be included at the Rt. 40 and North Chatham Road intersection? We view this as critical to ensuring the safety of all riders, but particularly those seniors, people who are physically challenged and others who may not be able to cross busy Rt. 40 within a single stoplight cycle. The issue of where the bus can stop and allow safe loading and unloading on the eastern side of Route 40 also needs further consideration.
- We appreciate the commitment to help ensure uninterrupted service to the Long Reach community during redevelopment of the Village Center.

- We encourage good communication to help current 407/Brown Route users understand how to adjust to its elimination.

One last point that is not specific to the proposed RTA enhancements, but that we think is important to future planning. We understand that installation of equipment to measure ridership on all bus routes is recognized as an important goal but remains unfunded and on the drawing board. In the meantime, we would like to suggest that use of community manpower can provide an option for gathering a set of preliminary ridership data. ACS would appreciate the opportunity to talk with Transportation Board members and Office of Transportation staff about our concept.

In closing, ACS applauds this important set of enhancements that provide a strong foundation for further progress in ensuring all Howard County households have transportation access to local and regional employment, human services, shopping and family activity opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Driessen

Joan Driessen, Executive Director

**Testimony in support of the Transportation Development Plan
submitted to the members of the Howard County Council
April 16, 2018**

Good evening, my name is Ande Kolp and I reside at 3432 Shady Lane, Glenwood MD. I am a 23 year resident of Howard County. I have lived in Columbia and Ellicott City and currently reside in Glenwood. I am the executive director of The Arc Maryland, the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and I currently serve as chairperson for the Howard County Commission on Disabilities. Transportation is a frequent topic of discussion in our group.

In the short time I have this evening, I want to be clear that I support the acceptance of this Transportation Development Plan as an initial first step in increasing transportation and access to people with disabilities.

As indicated in the plan, there is more work to be done to fully understand the needs of people who access paratransit and to develop a plan for paratransit to ensure its sustainability in the county. It is well-documented through the plan that paratransit is unsustainable in its current form. Although some alternatives to improve the service were presented at public meetings, there was insufficient time for a detailed engagement with the public that would be necessary to fully assess the options. (6-2) This concern is illuminated in the plan document as well as a recommendation that this will be an area that requires additional exploration.

Additionally the current restrictions on the uses of General Paratransit Services present a barrier for many. Currently General Paratransit Services can only be accessed for trips to medical and social service appointments and agencies, senior centers, employment and colleges for people with disabilities. Meanwhile, Maryland is in the middle of a significant transition in the ways in which we must deliver Home and Community-Based Medicaid waiver services. We must become compliant with the CMS HCBS Final Settings rule by 2022. The Final Rule requires states to ensure that individuals served in Medicaid home and community-based programs have access to the benefits of community living and have full

opportunity to be integrated in their communities, or risk loss of federal funding for services. People with disabilities will need increased access to affordable and reliable transportation to community activities in addition to medical appointments and employment as less of their time is spent in segregated settings such as sheltered workshops in the county. The restriction on General Paratransit Trip purposes should be lifted or at least expanded to include access to community recreational settings such as libraries and Recreation and Parks activities.

Recommendations in the plan to incentivize the use of general paratransit and regular bus ridership are excellent ones, specifically recommendation 4 and recommendation 6 which call for providing rider education and travel training for people with disabilities and seniors, and the use of taxi vouchers or subsidies in lieu of providing RTA trips. Both of these suggestions should help individuals with disabilities reduce their reliance on paratransit/door to door services, ultimately reducing costs to the system while improving independence, community access and employment outcomes for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ande Kolp



Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA)

Howard County Council Meeting (Transit Development Plan, TDP)

Date: April 16, 2018

RE: Testimony from Cristin Tolen, General Manager, 410-796-6589

8510 Corridor Road, Suite 110 • Savage, MD 20763 • Phone (301) 957-3600 • Fax (443) 285-0050

Testimony:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland, I (we) fully support the current Central Maryland Transit Development Plan for the following reasons:

In July of 2014, RTA inherited two legacy route systems, Howard Transit and Connect-a-Ride. Two highly antiquated route systems posed the organization with a great deal of inefficiencies and operational challenges including 13 different style buses at or beyond their useful life. Currently, service routes run mainly on 60 minute frequencies providing riders with connection challenges in and outside the RTA service area. Restructuring routes to 30 minute frequencies would make the system more efficient offering riders a realistic transportation choice instead of a mode of last resort. Connections to jobs and vital services would increase economic activity. Better infrastructure would increase connect ability with other local services; MTA local, Commuter Bus services, Light Rail, MARC and WMATA. Restructured and more efficient routes would allow greater mobility options for transit dependent populations while cutting back on the county's rising paratransit costs. Ongoing capital investments would provide the opportunity to replace old buses, increasing the reliability of on-time performance while decreasing maintenance and repair costs.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide support for the Howard County TDP.