



MINUTES

Joint Meeting of the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission and the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium

June 6, 2024

Ron Skotz called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Present were:

Commission Members:

Ron Skotz (Chair)
Christene Wells (Vice Chair)
Michael Dyer
Samuel Snead

Commissioners Not Present:

Judith Davis
Claudia Barber
Ron Hartman
Bader Alfadhli

Staff:

Jason Quan, RTA
Cole McCarren, RTA
Preston Reed, RTA
Ryan Mayers, RTA
Shawn O'Meara, RTA
Trey Dickerson, Howard County
Carrie Anderson-Watters, Howard County
Dylan Gerrity, Howard County
Vic Weissberg, Prince George's County
Brandon Brown, Prince George's County
Kevin Thorton, Prince George's County

1. Welcome – Ron Skotz

- No public comments.
- Minutes from March 26 and May 21, 2024 meetings were approved.
- FY2025 Budget recommended, noting a \$1.5M increase in operator personnel costs due to the new CBA. Future pay increases for operators are set at 4%.

2. GM Report – Jason Quan

- Human Resources
 - ◇ Focus on hiring drivers with CDLs, aided by salary competitiveness from the new CBA (\$26.21/hour by Oct 2024).
 - ◇ Vacancy rate is 10%, significantly lower than previous years.
- Operations / Service
 - ◇ Fixed-route ridership projected to hit >800,000 annual trips, up from 712,000 last year.
 - ◇ Paratransit ridership expected to reach >75,000 trips.
 - ◇ Key growth contributors include route restructuring (Routes 302, 405), network expansion (Route 505), and factors like free fares for students.

- ◇ On-time performance at ~80%. Efforts to reduce early departures by upgrading tablets and by using new navigation tech.
- ◇ Across fixed-route and paratransit modes, RTA is projected to have 900,000+ annual trips completed by end of FY 2024
- Maintenance
 - ◇ Higher road calls this year due to mechanical failures in new buses.
 - ◇ RTA is actively working to reduce this number and collaborating closely with the manufacturer and distributor.
- Planning and Outreach
 - ◇ RTA Support for Mead & Hunt and Howard County: RTA recently provided ridership and bus stop data to consultant agency Mead & Hunt and Howard County to support their ongoing service area study.
 - ◇ Mobile Ticketing Validation System Live: RTA's mobile ticket validation hardware is now fully operational. The system provides an audible signal confirming successful ticket validation, eliminating the need for visual confirmation by operators. This streamlined process improves operational efficiency and accuracy, with nearly 8,000 tickets validated to date. Both operators and passengers have responded positively to the new system.
 - ◇ Collaboration with Howard County on Travel Training Program: RTA is partnering with the Howard County Office of Aging and Independence to develop a Travel Training Program, led by Ryan Mayers, Planning and Special Projects Manager. This initiative offers personalized training for older adults and students, enhancing their ability to use public transit safely and independently. The program builds on a previous non-profit effort in Howard County, with RTA now exploring funding opportunities.
 - ◇ Route Modifications for Improved Efficiency: In response to ridership trends, RTA plans to modify Route 405 in July, reducing its operation to one bus and realigning stops to better serve demand. Park View Apartments, where ridership was negligible, was removed from the route, while ADA paratransit service remains available at Heartlands Senior Living Center. Additionally, Route 406 will be discontinued due to historical productivity issues, with key stops now integrated into Route 408, which will add ten new stops.
 - ◇ RTA Drivers Compete in National Rodeo: Two RTA drivers recently participated in the TAM Rodeo and advanced to the national competition in West Palm Beach, Florida. While they did not place, the experience broadened their perspective on the transit industry and inspired them to compete again next year. Their enthusiasm has positively impacted morale, and they are eager to apply lessons learned for future competitions.
 - ◇ Participation in Howard County's Bike-to-Work Week: RTA actively supported Howard County's Bike-to-Work Week in May, participating in an in-person event at Color Burst Park in Downtown Columbia. RTA also partnered with the Downtown

Columbia Partnership to raise awareness of transit options available to local businesses and their employees.

- ◇ Advertising Initiatives: RTA continues its advertising efforts through prominent placements, including in the County Beacon, at three kiosks in Columbia Mall, and in three MVA locations across the region.
- ◇ 10th Anniversary and Employee Appreciation Celebration: RTA will celebrate its 10th anniversary on July 20th at the 8800 facility, from 2 PM to 6 PM. The event, which will be combined with the annual Employee Appreciation Day, will feature games, activities, and refreshments, including ice cream and extra cookies. Invitations have been extended to local officials, community members, and CMTMC members, with Howard County Executive Ball expected to attend. Staff, partners, family, and friends are encouraged to join in the festivities.
- Safety
 - ◇ Last quarter, RTA experienced 5 preventable accidents and 10 non-preventable incidents.
 - ◇ Most of the preventable accidents were side swipes, often due to impatience. RTA emphasizes patience and awareness during training.
 - ◇ Non-preventable incidents included rear-end collisions, sideswipes, and backing incidents. Fortunately, one T-boned event resulted in no injuries.
 - ◇ DriveCam system in use to improve safety, with positive recent trends in incident reduction.

3. RAC Update & Minutes – Ryan Mayers

- At RTA's recent RAC meeting, technology updates and service changes were discussed. Although attendance was lower than at the March meeting, the discussion remained productive. RTA introduced Vice Chairperson Susan Majek, a seasoned rider who brings valuable insights to the group. Moving forward, RTA plans to implement a marketing strategy to increase attendance and encourage participation from both RAC members and the public.

4. Next Commission Meetings

- RTA's next CMTMC meeting is planned for September 24th at the Central Library in downtown Columbia. If that venue is unavailable, alternative locations will be explored. The goal is to secure a more accessible location for public attendees given changes to RTA's 8510 facility.
- **Next Commission Meeting:** September 24, 2024, 1:00 PM

5. Adjournment

- ◇ The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Next Regular Commission Meeting – Tuesday, September 24th, 1:00 PM
RAC Meeting – (meetings.transitRTA.com/RAC)

Acronyms & Meanings

CMTMC	Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission and the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium
RAC	Riders Advisory Council
RTA	Regional Transportation Agency
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
TAM	Transportation Association of Maryland
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ENC	ElDorado National-California
MTA	Maryland Transit Authority
MVA	Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration