



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES
George Howard Building, Tyson Room
January 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Ed Stoloff
Othella Rogers; Gloria Berthold

Members Absent: Harts Brown

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording
Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:05 P.M.

1. Approval of December 18, 2007 Minutes.
The minutes for the abovementioned date were approved.
2. Announcements.
Ms. Filipczak stated the Ridership and On-time Performance Updates will be deferred to next month's meeting to allow more time for discussion of the Transit Development Plan.
3. Transit Development Plan.
Fred Fravel of KFH group introduced Reyes Barbosa and Jason Kwan. Mr. Fravel stated that the purpose of the Transit Development Plan was to look at the current transit system and to develop a plan to address unmet needs over the next five years. He presented an overview of data collected to date, including some indicators of potential latent demand. The floor was then opened to comments and suggestions from the public.

Maureen Bovello of Laurel stated that her son David Silverman takes the C Route from Laurel to Columbia Mall, but the ride is 1½ hours long. It is difficult to make a direct connection to the Mall.

Joyce Baer of Columbia stated that there isn't any bus from Columbia Mall to the lakefront. She suggested a shuttle service to cover that route. She also suggested more flexibility for dialysis trips.

In regard to half-hour service bus service, Jan Hansen suggested that the Columbia Medical Plan could be used more to travel to Chase-Brexton instead of taking the bus to Columbia Mall and waiting a half hour for the connection.

Mary McCollum suggested having commuter service into Baltimore City. Recounting her experiences, she stated that there is no mid-day service from Baltimore back to Howard County. She also stated that there is no bus service on holidays. Mr. Balsler stated that a grant application has been submitted to expand medical trips into Baltimore from three to five days per week.

Regarding medical trips, Bev Thomas of PAG stated that clients have to be ready for pick up too early and also have to wait a long time for a return trip. She reiterated that a better connection is needed from Laurel to Baltimore and there is no holiday service for seniors/disabled. She mentioned the bus stop on Snowden River Parkway near Lincoln Tech is dangerous. Ms. Thomas also stated that truck buses are unsafe, and suggested that some riders should be allowed to “try out” the buses before they are purchased.

Jan Hansen observed that there are fewer buses that go to the Ellicott City Senior Center than before.

Jim Aycock, a Circuit Court employee stated his concern regarding the elimination of service to the Circuit Courthouse. He stated that the Yellow Route only goes to the Government Offices stop near the District Court and he has to walk (at times in the street because there is no sidewalk) to the Circuit Court. Steve Mercer, another Circuit Court employee, read a letter on behalf of other employees and County residents who want the Circuit Court stop restored.

Maureen Bovello suggested that a position should be created to provide more personalized transit service and provide a way to “fast track” restoring the Circuit Court service.

Sarah Kessler stated that there should be bus service from Ellicott City to Fulton. She uses the paratransit service, and says she has to wait a long time to get home or has to call her mother (who has to leave work) to pick her up.

Regarding the bus stop on Harpers Farm Road, Delores James, a resident of Hickory Ridge, stated that the bus stop is in the wrong place and should be moved to the “Avenue.” Connie Brown, another Hickory Ridge resident, agreed. In regard to the bus stop at Freetown Road and Cedar Lane (toward King’s Contrivance), Ms. Brown stated that the stop is dangerous and there is no a sidewalk there.

Asta Mae Curtis of PAG stated that bus routes are not clearly marked on buses. Bev Thomas agreed. Connie Brown added that some bus shelters need updated schedules.

John Eberhard from the Commission on Aging suggested the use of taxis for medical trips in low density areas as a way to improve service.

Jan Hansen of PAG said that she would like to see “scheduling for paratransit trips under one umbrella.” She felt that with the current process, too many people are involved. Mary McCollum stated that there should be less duplication in scheduling.

Bev Thomas of PAG asked for buses with working heat and air conditioning.

Both Bev Thomas and Connie Brown addressed the issue of overcrowding on the Green Route. Ms. Thomas suggested that larger buses should be used. Ms. Brown said there should be more bus stop locations around Columbia Mall.

Ms Berthold commented on the residential growth in the US1 Corridor, particularly in Elkridge.

Mr. Stolof stated that General Growth Properties has its own transit consultant. It was suggested that we should invite GGP to talk to the Board at a future meeting.

Bev Thomas commented that Howard Transit is not part of the Downtown Columbia Revitalization plan.

Jason Kwan of KFH explained Howard Transit's proposed connections to the Penn Line, referencing the Baltimore Regional Rail Plan and the extension of the Washington Metro Green Line.

Ms. Vogel commented that the community is interested in rail connections to Washington and Baltimore.

Joyce Behr stated the difficulty in making connections to Annapolis.

Laura Breeder referenced her positive experiences in using paratransit services to go to Howard Community College. The service helps lots of kids with disabilities that will never drive, including her daughter.

6. Adjournment.

Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **February 26, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**



2-19-08

Carl Balsler,
Executive Secretary

date



2-19-08

Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

date



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES
George Howard Building, Tyson Room
February 26, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Gloria Berthold

Members Absent: Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Harts Brown; Othella Rogers; Don Eames; Ed Stoloff;

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:05 P.M.

1. Approval of January 22, 2007 Minutes.
The minutes for the abovementioned date were deferred due to lack of a quorum.
2. Announcements.
Mr. Balsler introduced Renee Robertson, the new Rideshare Coordinator, to the Board. Previously, Ms. Robertson was the Rideshare Coordinator for Baltimore City. Gary Sightler was promoted within DPZ and will be handling more grants and requests for proposals.
3. Ridership Update.
Joe Gann reported that in December, ridership increased to 63,275 for fixed route service, but decreased to 58,110 in January. For paratransit, ridership numbers in December increased slightly to 9,151 and to 9,316 in January. Tom Driscoll of First Transit explained that there may be errors in the paratransit data due to misreading of manifests and will be corrected shortly.
4. On Time Performance Update.
As a correction to the handout, the Gold route does not operate on the weekends. Early departures decreased in December, late departures during the mid-day increased. Early departure numbers leveled off in January. Two wheelchair lifts failed in December; three wheelchair lifts failed in January. To date, CTC does not have industry standards for wheelchair inspections. Five accidents occurred in December; one occurred in January. In December, ten vehicle breakdowns occurred for fixed route service, while one breakdown occurred in paratransit. In January, seven vehicle breakdowns occurred with fixed route service, while ten vehicle breakdowns occurred with paratransit service.

Regarding Paratransit trip completion, 90% of all trips were complete with 5% no shows, and 5% late cancellations. There was an 82% on-time performance for HT Ride.

With 10,726 requests for information from December 10, 2007 through February 19, 2008, 2,599 requests were for Howard Transit information, 2,407 requests for scheduling data, and 18 requests for ridership data. Sixteen complaints came into the Customer Service Center for Connect-A-Ride; seven complaints were for Howard Transit and nine

complaints were for other information. In response to Ms. Filipczak's question regarding written complaints, Mr. Ambrose stated that written complaints are not documented in this information. A small percentage of email complaints come into the Customer Service Center.

5. State Performance Measurements.

Joe Gann reported that there was an upward trend in passengers per mile (particularly on the Green Route) as the service changes started to mature. An upward trend was also seen in passengers per hour. Verifying that the data is gathered from the overall daily reports, Ms. Filipczak observed that the abovementioned statistics showed a huge increase, yet the daily ridership does not show an increase. Mr. Gann clarified that the data is only through December. There is an overall increase in farebox recovery in the system, particularly on the Green Route. Costs per mile have decreased between the first and second quarter. He added that as more people use the system, farebox revenue will increase, and the system will become less expensive to operate on a per mile basis. Cost per passenger also decreased.

In response to Ms. Filipczak's question as to whether anyone at MTA looks at the system data, Mr. Ambrose stated that CTC submits performance data, which is a requirement under State grant submissions. Mr. Balsler added that MTA has said that they are going to reconsider the measures and thresholds, but the County has not heard when that would occur. He surmises that the new state administration is still "getting their feet wet"—figuring things out.

6. TDP Follow-up and Update.

Ray Ambrose reported that since last month's listening session, there was a meeting with various community organizations and the consultant. On February 4, KFH met with the Howard County Office on Aging and Senior Center site directors to get their input. CTC and County Staff will attend the Transportation Advocates meeting on March 11 to discuss the state of Howard Transit. In addition, a separate meeting or worksession will be scheduled with the Board and KFH. Mr. Ambrose added that the consultants hope to wrap up the listening sessions by the end of March.

The Paratransit survey has been distributed but the response rate has been low. Direct mail distribution will begin in March. In response to Ms. Filipczak's question as to whether the Low Vision group and the Ellicott City Senior Center have seen the survey, Jan Hansen of PAG stated "no".

7. Other Business.

Tom Driscoll, General Manager of First Transit, gave an update of the maintenance and operations of the fleet.

Ellicott City resident George Jordan commented on problems with the wheelchair lifts. Mr. Jordan explained that, at times, he is waiting over an hour for another bus to pick him up. In response to Ms. Filipczak's question to what we do when this problem occurs, Victor Jimenez, Fixed Route Manager of First Transit explained to the Board that the driver contacts the dispatcher to get another vehicle to the rider to take the person to his/her destination. Responding to Ms. Berthold's question as to whether the drivers communicate to the dispatcher the actions they have taken, Mr. Jordan stated the driver does communicate with him. Ms. Filipczak thanked Mr. Jordan for his comment.

Joyce Behr mentioned a variety of issues she has observed while riding Howard Transit--including new drivers who are unfamiliar with bus routes to missed trips. Mr. Ambrose mentioned that First Transit has someone stationed at Columbia Mall to monitor buses and assist riders. When asked how that person may be identified by Ms. Berthold, Mr. Ambrose stated that the person is dressed in a First Transit uniform. Tom Driscoll also responded to Ms. Behr's comments. In response to Ms. Berthold's question on how Ms. Behr and Mr. Jordan arrived at the meeting, Ms. Behr stated that PAG arranged for her pick up on HT Ride. Mr. Jordan used his wheelchair. Ms. Berthold stated that she is an entrepreneur and if she received customer complaints such as these, she would be penalized and wondered how long she would be in business. Mr. Ambrose stated that money is withheld each time a trip is missed, to which Ms. Berthold responded that it may not be enough.

8. Adjournment.

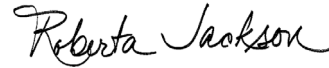
Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:55 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **April 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**



Carl Balsler,
Executive Secretary

3-17-08

date



Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

3-17-08

date



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES
George Howard Building, Tyson Room
March 25, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Othella Rogers; Don Eames; Ed Stoloff

Members Absent: Gloria Berthold; Harts Brown;

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:05 P.M.

1. Approval of January 22 and February 26, 2008 Minutes.
The minutes for the abovementioned dates were approved.
2. Announcements.
Mr. Balsler announced that Gary Sightler will be leaving DPZ to accept a position in the Office of Purchasing. Mr. Balsler also announced that the County was awarded funds from the Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program to purchase an additional vehicle that would expand medical trips into Baltimore City from three days a week to five days a week.
3. Ridership Update.
Ray Ambrose reported that adjustments were made to the ridership numbers reported in the February meeting.

In February, Howard Transit Fixed Route service had a 9.6% increase in ridership. Paratransit ridership increased 18.7%. Average daily ridership increases especially on Saturday and Sunday. The routes that have shown the heaviest ridership are the Silver Route, the Green Route and the Brown Route. In response to Ms. Vogel's concern regarding the Yellow Express, Mr. Ambrose stated that there have been more demands to expand the Yellow Route to include the Circuit Court.

4. On Time Performance and Customer Service Updates.
Joe Gann reported the on-time performance numbers by route for February.

Ms. Vogel suggested that the current Wheelchair Inspection Report should be renamed Wheelchair Lift Report. Because of recurrent problems with wheel chair lifts, it was suggested that perhaps the County should acquire more low-floor vehicles. Mr. Ambrose indicated that there are seven low vehicles out of a current fixed route fleet of 27 vehicles. As the County replaces obsolete vehicles, at least some will be low-floor buses.

Two accidents plus two failed wheelchair lift inspections occurred in February.

Systemwide, there were nine vehicle breakdowns. In response to Ms. Vogel's question if the nature of the breakdown were due to wheelchair lift failures or other vehicle problems, Ms. Ambrose responded "probably both." Wheelchair lift failures are the most common reason a vehicle is pulled out of service.

HT Ride trip completions decreased to 89%. The specs for the phone system are in progress, and CTC hopes to have the phone system in place by this summer.

The percentage total for the February HT Ride Trip Completion Report was incorrect. On time performance for HT Ride dropped.

Paratransit rider Mary McCullum expressed her frustration regarding the early pickups for medical appointments into Baltimore City. She also mentioned that the buses were smelly and leaking and the seatbelts did not work, particularly on Bus 71. Bob Dones of First Transit stated that previously there was one driver making the run into Baltimore City, but now the run has been split to better cover appointments. Mr. Balser reiterated the information regarding the CMAQ award which facilitated this service improvement.

Mr. Gann gave the Customer Service report. In response to Ms. Vogel's question, SCOTS stands for the South County Transit System, a CTC program in partnership with the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services that is similar to Howard County's Work on Wheels Program.

Ms. Vogel commented that she has received comments from people at the senior centers that are not documented by CTC. Ron Skotz of CTC mentioned that CTC has a Paratransit Coordinator and a new Customer Service Manager that will be able to provide the quality assurance/customer service for both the fixed route and paratransit systems.

Commenting that CTC is nine months into the contract with First Transit, Mr. Eames suggested a report on the need for vehicle replacement progress. Mr. Balser stated that when First Transit started, they encountered a lot of problems, including vehicle breakdowns. Replacing vehicles will reduce the number of breakdowns. Mr. Ambrose added that Howard Transit will shortly take delivery of three small buses. Mr. Balser congratulated CTC for their effort of getting the buses quickly.

Mr. Balser added that an update on vehicle replacement would be provided at either the April or May meeting, once more is known about the FY09 Budget.

5. TDP Update.

Ray Ambrose reported that a preliminary draft is estimated to come out in summer 2008.

6. Other Business.

Ellicott City resident George Jordan commented on problems with wheelchair lifts, particularly on Buses 67 and 71. Mr. Ambrose stated that he will suggest that a low floor bus be used on the route until the lift on Bus 67 is fixed.

County resident Dale Snyder stated that drivers should use manual controls when the lift doesn't work properly. She commented that most of the drivers transferred from the previous transit operator, Veolia, and some riders are still used to Veolia's policies and



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES
George Howard Building, Tyson Room
April 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Othella Rogers; Don Eames; Gloria Berthold

Members Absent: Ed Stolloff; Harts Brown;

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:04 P.M.

1. Approval of March 25, 2008 Minutes.
Carol Filipczak stated that the date of the next meeting should be April 22, not March 25. The minutes were approved.

2. Announcements.
Mr. Balsler announced that Ed Stolloff's wife was in a recent car accident. She is doing fine. The nomination of officers for FY09 will be featured at the May PTB Meeting. Elections will take place in June. Mr. Balsler mentioned that, in theory, Don Eames' last board meeting will be in May. However, the bylaws state that a member may stay on until a replacement is found. Mr. Balsler stated that the County is looking for a replacement for Mr. Eames.

Ms. Filipczak stated that General Growth Properties will present concepts on traffic patterns and transportation in their plan for downtown Columbia, May 7 at the Speer Center. She also stated that the next Transportation Advocates meeting is May 13, featuring a presentation on the proposed plan for downtown Columbia.

3. Public Comments.
Kathryn Lear reiterated her request for the hours of the Red Route to be extended. Ms. Filipczak stated that her request will be considered by the consultant preparing the Transit Development Plan.

George Jordan requested that the hours on the Yellow Route be increased during the week and the addition of Sunday hours. In response to Ms. Filipczak's question, Mr. Jordan stated that the wheelchair lifts have been working most of the time, however some drivers have had difficulty securing the wheelchair. Mr. Balsler stated that problems with the wheelchair lifts are largely due to the age of the vehicles. He referenced that the County Executive's proposed FY09 Budget is under review by the County Council and that 14 vehicles to be purchased are included in the Budget. Anyone interested in testifying to the Council is invited to do so. The Board and Transportation Advocates have agreed to submit testimony.

4. Ridership Update.

In March, Howard Transit Fixed Route ridership continued to increase. Projected April numbers are trending upward.

In response to Ms. Vogel's question regarding the incompleteness of the paratransit data, Mr. Ambrose stated that monthly reports come in late from the non-profit agencies which are funded through the County. Those agencies are Humanim, ARC of Howard County, Athelas and Wintergrowth.

5. On Time Performance and Customer Service Updates.

Joe Gann reported the on-time performance numbers by route for March, a new breakdown as requested at the last meeting. In response to Ms. Vogel's question on resolving the lateness issues, Mr. Ambrose stated that lateness is due in part to the increase in ridership. Field monitors will take a closer look at the Blue and the Orange routes. Mr. Gann added that the Transportation Development Plan will look at this issue.

Ms. Berthold suggested congratulating the drivers of the two routes that are consistently on-time. Tom Driscoll of First Transit stated that individual drivers are routinely recognized for exemplary performance.

Systemwide, three wheelchair lifts failed and nine breakdowns occurred in March. No accidents were reported. Mr. Driscoll stated that wheelchair lifts are inspected weekly. First Transit road supervisors who are stationed at Arundel Mills Mall, Laurel Mall and Columbia Mall, cycle the wheelchair lifts and sign off that they have physically inspected them.

Ms. Vogel requested data verifying that the vehicle breakdowns are occurring with the older buses. This data helps when developing supporting testimony and lobbying for purchasing new buses. In response to Mr. Eames' observation of the decrease in miles on the systemwide accident report, Mr. Ambrose stated that he will check the data from November to March.

HT Ride Trip completion finished at 86%, with 7% no shows and 8% cancellations in March. Year to date, HT Ride shows a 90% trip completion ratio. Ms. Vogel mentioned an incident whereby a bus did not show up to pick up riders to come to an event at the Florence Bain Senior Center. CTC will check into the situation. It was suggested that a fourth category should be added to the HT Ride Productivity Trip Completion report to reflect "Bus No Shows" or "Missed Trips".

The Board indicated that the Customer Service charts are confusing. CTC will consider tables or bar charts to see if the presentation is more understandable than it was with pie charts. The Customer Service Call Center received 4,861 requests for information, including 834 requests for Howard Transit and 1,571 requests for Connect-A-Ride.

6. Vehicle Replacement.

Ray Ambrose reported on the bus replacement schedule.

7. Paratransit Survey.
Mr. Ambrose reported that 440 responses were received to date. CTC will report on the results in the future once the data is tabulated.
8. TDP Update.
Ray Ambrose reported that a listening session with the Low Vision Group is scheduled. Concern was expressed that because hybrid vehicles are silent when the electric motor is operating, they present a potential hazard to the visually impaired. It was suggested that there should be a marketing campaign to address this issue.
9. Other Business.
None
10. Adjournment.
Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:28 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **May 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**

Carl Balsler

5-16-08

Carl Balsler,
Executive Secretary

date

Roberta Jackson

5-16-08

Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

date



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES

George Howard Building, Tyson Room

May 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Ed Stoloff; Don Eames

Members Absent: Othella Rogers; Harts Brown; Gloria Berthold

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:04 P.M.

1. Approval of April 22, 2008 Minutes.

The minutes were approved with an abstention by Mr. Stoloff.

2. Announcements.

Mr. Balsler announced that the County participated in the regional Bike to Work Day event. Over a hundred people pre-registered for the event. However, due to inclement weather, only about forty people attended.

Ms. Balsler also mentioned that the June 24 meeting will be the last official meeting for Board Member Don Eames.

3. Public Comments.

Kathryn Lear expressed her appreciation for Howard Transit. She also commented on recent incidents where drivers left stops early. Mr. Balsler stated this was not acceptable and the County will investigate.

Sherry Thomas introduced herself as the new Chair of the Commission on Disabilities.

4. Nomination of Officers.

Sharonlee Vogel nominated Carol Filipczak to remain as Chair of the Board. Carol Filipczak nominated Sharonlee Vogel to remain as Vice-Chair of the Board. Mr. Stoloff mentioned that his term on the Board will end in 2009.

5. Ridership Update.

Ray Ambrose reported that April fixed route ridership increased by 22% over April 2007. Paratransit ridership was estimated to increase by 10%. Ms. Vogel suggested that the current fiscal year's numbers should be highlighted in the report as opposed to the previous year's data. In response to Mr. Eames' comments regarding the impact of high gas prices, Mr. Ambrose stated that Howard Transit ridership does not appear to be affected so far. Sunday ridership increased in April. Ridership on every route (with exception of the Silver route) increased. Ms. Vogel asked Joe Gann to highlight the FY'08 figures on the average daily ridership report.

6. On Time Performance and Customer Service Updates.
Joe Gann reported that April “was not a banner month” for on-time performance. Lateness occurred mostly during the midday and the afternoon peak time. The Orange and Blue Routes showed significant early departures. In response to Ms. Vogel’s question regarding resolving early departures, Mr. Gann stated that some schedules are difficult to adjust because routes are so long that they may arrive at the hub late. Ms. Filipczak stated that the lateness issue for the Orange Route may be due to a scheduling problem. The issue of lateness and early departures as well as scheduling issues will be addressed more comprehensively in the Transit Development Plan.

Ms. Filipczak mentioned that the Proposed Budget that was submitted to the County Council did not include the AVL system, despite the fact that the Board’s letter to the County Executive said the system will help to improve on-time performance. Mr. Balsler stated that the County will extend the existing AVL contract for another two years. Mr. Balsler also stated that the 14 diesel/electric hybrid buses proposed in the budget were approved. The operating budget was pared down from what staff and the Board recommended, but was then adopted without change by the County Council.

Ron Skotz reported that 29 wheelchair lift inspection occurred in April; all passed. Three accidents occurred, classified as minor damage with no fatalities. Systemwide, eleven breakdowns occurred. Ten breakdowns occurred on the older buses and one breakdown occurred with a newer vehicle.

One hundred ten complaints were recorded by the Customer Service Call Center, with the majority of the complaints about paratransit service. Ten compliments were received by the Call Center—an even split between Howard Transit and Connect-A-Ride.

7. Paratransit Survey.
Sharon Smith highlighted the results of the preliminary data of the paratransit survey.
8. Other Business.
None
9. Adjournment.
Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:25 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **June 24, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**



5-29-08

Carl Balsler,
Executive Secretary

date



5-29-08

Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

date



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES
George Howard Building, Tyson Room
June 24, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Othella Rogers;

Members Absent: Harts Brown; Gloria Berthold, Ed Stoloff; Don Eames

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:02 P.M.

1. Approval of May 27, 2008 Minutes.
The minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum.
2. Announcements.
Mr. Balsler announced that the County Executive's Town Hall Meeting will be Thursday, June 26 at the Glenwood Senior Center at 7:00pm.

Ms. Filipczak stated that private conversations should not be held during the meeting due to the acoustics in the room.

3. Public Comments.
No public comments were given.
4. Election of Officers.
Due to lack of a quorum, the election of officers for the FY2009 term was tabled until the next meeting.
5. Ridership Update.
Ray Ambrose reported that total ridership for fixed route and paratransit systemwide was 82,476, an 11.5% increase over last year at this time. In response to numerous inquiries as to whether there has been a spike in ridership due to the rising gas prices, Mr. Balsler indicated that there seems to be. There has also been a higher usage of the County's park and ride lots.

Average daily ridership was just under 2,900 riders per day on the fixed route system. Ridership on every route has increased, with weekend numbers also rising. For clarification, Mr. Ambrose stated that there is overcrowding or "standing room only" on some routes at certain times of the day, particularly on the Green Route.

6. On Time Performance and Customer Service Updates.
Joe Gann reported that in May, Howard Transit was on time 85% of the time, with 12% late arrivals and 3% early departures. In response to the issue raised last month regarding early departures on the Orange and Blue Routes, Mr. Ambrose stated that some corrections were made to the data for the Blue Route. The Orange Route had a 10% early

departure. Mr. Gann added that the Brown, Silver and the Yellow Routes continue to run tight schedules. In response to Ms. Vogel's question, the Orange Route travels to Hickory Ridge to Kings Contrivance via Atholton. Ms. Vogel stated that there are plenty of places for drivers to pull off the road and wait. Mr. Gann agreed.

Forty wheelchair lifts passed inspection and no accidents occurred in May. There were 21 breakdowns that occurred systemwide. For clarification, the majority of the breakdowns were on the older vehicles, while two newer vehicles also had issues.

HT Ride had an 82% trip completion rate; five percent were no shows; five percent were late cancellations and eight percent were advanced cancels. Mr. Gann stated that he is still working on adding the missed trip data to the report, hopefully by the next meeting.

HT Ride was 81% on-time in May. Fifteen percent of the trips were late and 6 percent of the trips were early.

The Customer Service Call Center received 8,640 calls in May. The majority of the calls were for Connect-A-Ride schedule information. Fifty-six percent of the calls received for Howard Transit were for schedule information.

7. TDP Findings and Alternatives.

Fred Fravel of KFH Group gave an overview of the findings and alternatives to date of the Transportation Development Plan process based upon various listening sessions and public meetings that took place in the County. A draft of the interim report will be available at area libraries and senior centers as well as online at www.howardcountymd.gov. Ms. Vogel stated that it would have been helpful if the Board had received the draft prior to the meeting in order to be better prepared with questions. Mr. Balsler apologized indicating that production problems had caused a delay in getting the report out.

In response to Jan Hanson's question regarding tracking and/or the evaluation of the contractor's performance in regard to scheduling paratransit trips, Mr. Fravel stated that First Transit has a tracking system in place. KFH has been involved in some paratransit studies where the paratransit software was being used, trip logs were sampled and recommendations developed for procedures and policies. They offered to do the same for Howard Transit.

Comments on the report will be accepted up to and including the July 22 Board meeting. Comments should be sent to KFH Group at ffravel@kfhgroup.com, with copies to Carl Balsler and/or Ben Pickar at Howard County or Ray Ambrose at CTC. Mr. Balsler suggested that there should be more than one meeting to discuss the report. The County will put out a press release requesting comments. KFH will present a more refined set of alternatives at the next meeting.

8. Other Business.

None

9. Adjournment.

Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:22 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **July 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**

Carl Balser

July 15, 2008

Carl Balser,
Executive Secretary

date

Roberta Jackson

July 15, 2008

Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

date



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BOARD MINUTES

George Howard Building, Tyson Room

September 23, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Filipczak, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice Chair; Othella Rogers; Gloria Berthold Larkin, Ed Stolloff

Members Absent: Harts Brown;

Staff Present: Carl Balsler, Executive Secretary; Roberta Jackson, Recording Secretary

The Public Transportation Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Filipczak at 7:03 P.M.

1. Approval of June 24, 2008 and July 22 Minutes.

The minutes of the June 24 and July 22 board meetings were approved.

2. Announcements.

Mr. Balsler announced personnel changes in the Transportation Division. Roberta Jackson is the new Commuter Assistance Coordinator and will focus on ridesharing and transit marketing. Lisa Hill, formerly of the Director's office, was promoted to Planning Specialist II, focusing on grants and acquisitions. Mr. Balsler explained that due to current budget constraints, any positions that are vacant are not automatically filled. The position must be justified. Both Ms. Jackson's and Ms. Hill's former positions remain vacant for the time being, which has them working two jobs. The Division remains understaffed.

Ms. Filipczak announced the Transportation Advocates meeting on Thursday, September 25 at 7:45am and on Thursday October 25, Secretary Porcari and Howard County elected officials will meet in the Banneker Room regarding the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

3. Public Comments.

Jan Hanson complimented Victor Jimenez on his performance as Paratransit Manager. Kathryn Lear commented that on her way to the meeting, the driver of the bus she was riding left the bus unattended for 20 minutes. CTC will investigate. Marlene Henrow of PAG commented on her difficulty in scheduling trips on the weekends. Sharon Smith responded that when these type of problems occur, contact CTC. Ron Skotz stated that the customer call center is open from 8am-4pm on Saturdays. Ms. Filipczak verified that during off hours calls are automatically transferred from the 800 number to First Transit. The discussion regarding the routing of customer service calls continued with comments from Jan Hanson and Mary McCollum.

4. Ridership Update.

Ray Ambrose reported that total ridership for July systemwide was 94,301, a 25.9% increase; and in August, total ridership systemwide was 93,904, a 20.9% increase.

Average daily ridership for July was 3,354 riders per day on the fixed route system. Ridership on every route has increased, with weekend numbers rising. Average daily

ridership in August dropped slightly with 3,274 riders. The Green, Silver and Red routes continue to maintain high averages during the week.

In response to Ms. Filipczak's questions whether CTC knows the number of standees on the Green route, Mr. Ambrose stated that CTC gets general ridership sampling data, but they focus on trip by trip information. Information regarding standees is anecdotal.

5. On Time Performance and Customer Service Updates.

Joe Gann reported that CTC is working on improving the system's on-time performance by decreasing the number of early departures. CTC analyzed the data received from NextBus and realized that there are discrepancies in the data. The data indicated that from two to fourteen percent of the early departures occur within the first minute of the scheduled departure time.

Ron Skotz reported the all thirty-two wheelchair lifts passed inspection in both July and August. One accident occurred in July. No accidents occurred in August. Systemwide, twenty-eight breakdowns occurred in July; sixteen breakdowns occurred in August. In response to Ms. McCollum's question regarding procedures when a driver is involved in an accident, Mr. Driscoll responded that it is First Transit's policy for the driver to receive additional training. In addition, the driver must demonstrate that he/she can operate the vehicle safely. Mr. Driscoll also explained the policy and procedures in place when a driver is not at fault.

Mr. Gann reported that 79% of the paratransit trips were completed in July, with 91% of the trips on time. In August, 81% of the paratransit trips were completed with 90% of the trips on time. Ms. Vogel expressed her concern regarding early arrivals on paratransit trips. She stated that early arrivals on paratransit trips are as bad (if not worse) than early arrivals on fixed route trips. She suggested renaming the category "early-waited" instead of "early arrivals."

In July, 5,327 total calls were received in the Customer Call Center. Howard Transit scheduling and trip planning attributed for 38% of the total calls received. In August, 6,427 total calls were received by the Customer Call Center. Howard Transit scheduling and trip planning attributed for 41% of the total calls received.

Based on the handouts, Joe Gann gave an overview of the state performance measurements.

6. Service Enhancements

Ray Ambrose reported that effective October 6, the following changes will occur:

- Green Route – half-hour frequency am and pm peaks
- Red and Brown Routes - later service
 - 11pm departure from Columbia Mall to Long Reach
 - Return trip to Columbia from Owen Brown (10pm departure); 11pm departure to Owen Brown
- Gold Route – Saturday service with 2 hour frequency

Mr. Ambrose added that the restructure of the Blue Route and creation of an additional midday route is being explored.

7. Other Business.

None

8. Adjournment.

Ms. Filipczak adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:50 p.m. The next Public Transportation Board meeting is scheduled for **October 28, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Tyson Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD.**

Carl Balsler

12-5-08

Carl Balsler
Executive Secretary

date

Roberta Jackson

12-5-08

Roberta Jackson
Recording Secretary

date