

Maryland Transit Update

Summer 2020

RTAP



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Maryland Department of Transportation / Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)
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and

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Inside this issue:

Letter from the President	2
From the Executive Director	2
How CARES Act Funding is Supporting Transit in Maryland	3
MTA Office of Local Transit Support Regional Planners	3
How COVID-19 Has Changed TDM Strategies	4
MTA Launches Intercity Bus Study	6
A Bus Stop Improvement Veteran Shares Tips	7
Federal Updates	8
National RTAP Photo Contest	9
N-CATT Site Launched	9
Local Public & Specialized Transportation News:	
Baltimore County	9
St. Mary's County	9
Frederick County	10
Harford County	11
Montgomery County	12
BWI Business Partnership	15
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	15
Associate Member Spotlight:	
Routematch (with Cecil Transit)	16
Colonial	17
Legislative Update	17
Transit Bookshelf and Toolbox	18
About RTAP and TAM	18
Calendar of Learning Opportunities	19

2020 CONFERENCE
goes **virtual**



TAM's 2020 Virtual Conference will be held on September 15-17. These three days will include sessions sponsored by MDOT MTA, panel discussions led by industry experts, our general membership meeting, the 2020 Excellence Awards, and other useful information for your organization. Registration and attendance will be FREE to all TAM members! Check [TAMINC.org/conference](https://www.taminc.org/conference) for more information.

Letter from the President



As we keep a close watch on the pandemic and carefully reopen across Maryland, we must remain diligent in our efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Public transportation has undergone unparalleled changes since March. Fixed routes and demand response services were suspended, yet offices worked diligently to put a reopening plan in place. Once Governor Hogan allowed public transportation to resume, transit looked

different from one region to the next, but one thing remained the same: the dedication to serving the community while keeping riders, drivers, office associates, and their families safe.

Keeping health and safety in the forefront, the Transportation Association of Maryland made the hard decision to cancel the Annual Conference, which was to be held in September at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville. To adapt to a more virtual climate, TAM will hold a series of webinars on such topics as managing employees working remotely (teleworking do's and don'ts), adapting fixed route systems to the "new normal" (mobility as a service), and effectively sourcing PPE and cleaning supplies. We are currently accepting additional submissions; more information can be found [here](#). This webinar series will culminate with a virtual General Meeting in September, where board elections will take place online.

The Transportation of Maryland recently conducted a survey of PPE needs and results showed that cleaning wipes were the most widespread shortage, followed by disinfectant spray and hand sanitizer. Across the board, it was not an issue of funding, but rather the difficulty in procuring and receiving the items. This is where creativity and relationship building came into play. Transit agencies across the state uniquely strategized to obtain personal protective equipment and ensure the safe reopening of services; read on to see what has been happening within transit offices and on the road in Maryland.

In these uncertain times the hard work and dedication of public and specialized transportation professionals truly is a shining light. I would personally like to thank each and every one involved for making Maryland's transportation system stand out as we embark upon the next phase of our journey. I would also encourage everyone to take a moment of silence as we remember those we have lost along the way.

Stay safe and well,

Gary R. Blazinsky
President, Transportation Association of Maryland



From the Executive Director

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept through our state and upended our industry, it has brought home to me as never before how much of our ability to continue to operate in this challenging new environment is due to the extraordinary contributions of the unsung heroes that keep moving community transportation forward.

TAM has always striven to recognize these individuals as well as the organizations that exemplify the traits that embody excellence in all its forms: a dedication to customer service, a commitment to safety, a desire to grow, and an ability to innovate to improve service. While we cannot gather in person this year to celebrate our nominees, we are determined to continue to recognize excellence during our upcoming virtual conference in September.

We encourage all of our members to consider nominations in the following categories:

- Driver of the Year
- Outstanding Leadership
- Unsung Transit Employee
- Outstanding Community Agency
- Outstanding Transit System
- COVID-19 Essential Award
- COVID-19 Innovation Award



**Nomination
Deadline:
Aug. 21**

Both of the (newly introduced) COVID-19 awards are intended to recognize transit professionals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty during this emergency as well as those who have demonstrated a unique capacity to innovate in the face of crisis. We feel this is a special opportunity for you to recognize the incredible contributions of your people during this time.

Our 2019 awards were given to the following persons and organizations:

Driver of the Year: Charles Tasco, TransIT Services of Frederick County

Outstanding Community Agency: Partners in Care

Outstanding Transit System: Harford Transit LINK

Outstanding Leadership: Nancy Norris, TransIT Services of Frederick County

Unsung Transit Employee: Julie Feather, Garrett Transit

Please visit www.taminc.org/awards to review these categories and submit your nominations using our simple online nomination form.

Please stay safe... and thank you for your support!

John Duklewski

Executive Director, TAM

How CARES Act Funding Is Supporting Transit in Maryland

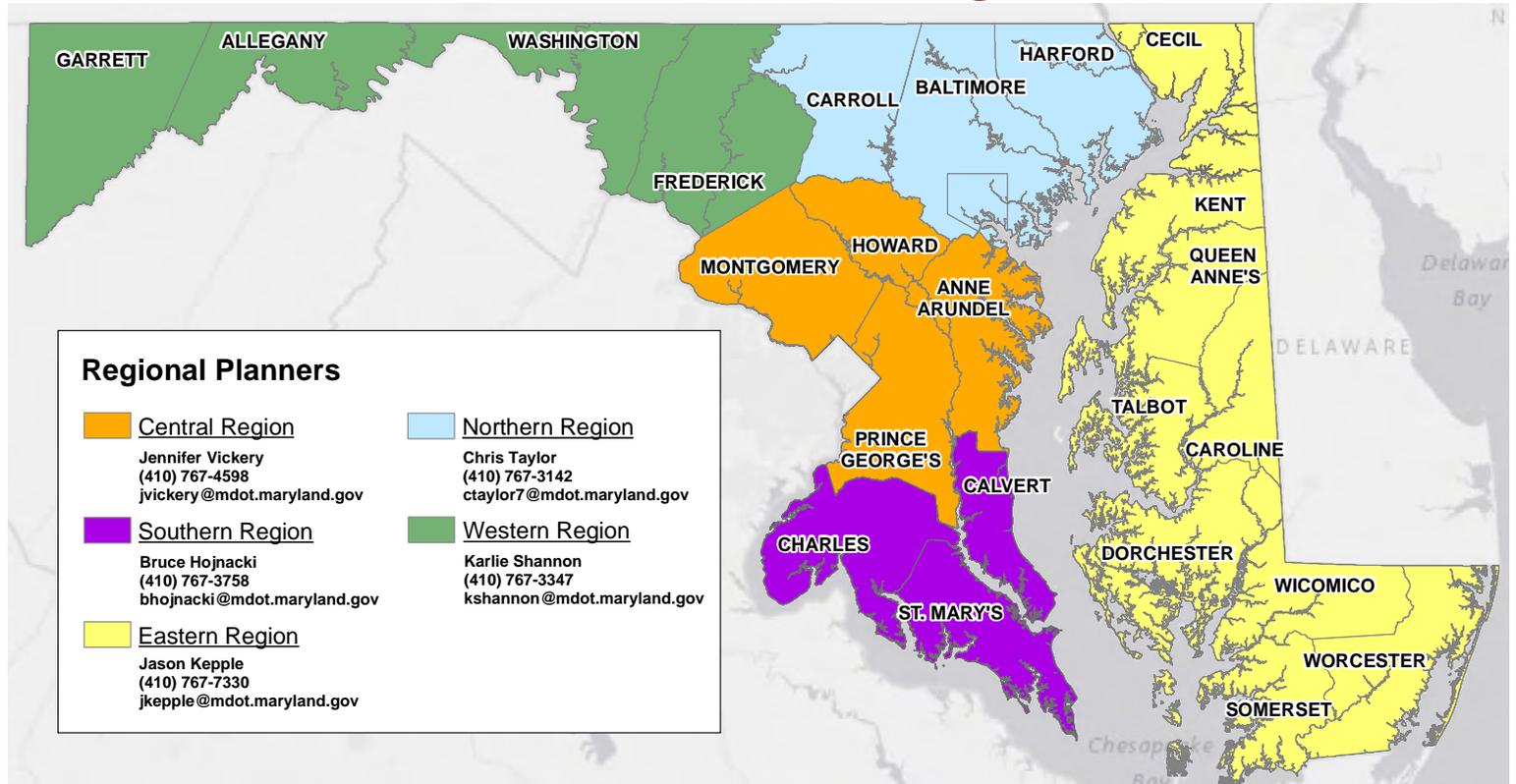
COVID-19 response efforts of the Maryland Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) were reported in the [May 2020 special edition of this newsletter](#). For the current issue, several LOTS shared updated information on how they are using or plan to use funding authorized under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Signed into law on March 27, 2020, the CARES Act provides funding to transit agencies through U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In Maryland, FTA CARES Act funding allocations include \$19,184,735 for Section 5311 and 5340 (Growing States) combined, and \$636,000 under the Appalachian Development Public Transportation Assistance Program, totaling \$19,820,735 for rural areas in Maryland. Additionally, there are urbanized area formula allocations. The following LOTS noted the impact of CARES Act funding in their systems:

- Baltimore County reports that the County-Ride program was hit hard by COVID-19 and CARES Act funding is a life line. This resource will help pay operating costs accrued in recent months and will offset expenses related to the COVID-19 response. They plan to maintain ridership safety with thorough preparation and prevention.
- Calvert County intends to use the CARES Act funding to supplement the County's local overmatch amount. They are running full transit service.
- Cecil County plans on utilizing the CARES Act funding for the local overmatch necessary for operations. Additionally, Cecil Transit will procure and install acrylic glass driver barriers on all revenue vehicles to provide further COVID-19 protection for both employees and passengers.

- Charles County has been paying their contractor for additional cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE), plus premium pay for drivers and essential personnel. The county is also making up the difference for paratransit drivers who fall short of their 40 hour guarantee per their collective bargaining agreement.
- Frederick County did not use CARES Act funding in FY20, but in FY21 and beyond, plans to use their apportionment to replace cuts in state funding from MDOT MTA, replacing passenger fares they would normally be collecting, and installing driver barriers across the fleet.
- Howard County is planning on using CARES Act funding for PPE, cleaning supplies, driver barriers, offsetting lost farebox revenues, increased operating costs from nightly disinfecting of the revenue fleet and operations facility, and local overmatch expenses.
- Shore Transit Division of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland has equipped its drivers with cleaning supplies and PPE, and enclosed the driver's area in plastic or Plexiglas. Some staff were allowed to stay on salary while working in other positions temporarily to avoid layoffs. Shore Transit closed the terminal to the public to protect staff, but placed a portable latrine in the area for people waiting for the bus.

FTA CARES Act funding is available to support operating, capital and other expenses incurred beginning on January 20, 2020. More information is available on the FTA website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/cares-act>; LOTS should contact their MTA Regional Planner (see below).

MTA Office of Local Transit Support Regional Planners



How COVID-19 Has Changed TDM Strategies

Information compiled by Nancy Huggins, KEH Group, assigned to the MDOT MTA Office of Local Transit Support

The spring of 2020 certainly has been unprecedented times for the transportation industry including the airlines, maritime and public transport. One area of the transportation sector that has also been greatly affected is Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

In general terms, TDM provides strategies that increase the overall efficiency of a transportation system by encouraging shifting trips from single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) to non-SOV modes such as transit, carpooling, vanpooling, telework, flex schedules, etc.

In the State of Maryland, TDM specialists and rideshare coordinators provide a valuable service by working with CommuterChoice Maryland to provide important information to not only commuters, but employers as well. These specialists have robust marketing programs to promote multimodal options, work with and educate employers and their workforces on commute options and coordinating ride-matching services through Commuter Connections, a service of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

During the 2020 pandemic, there has been a shift of the mode of transportation – from the kitchen to the den to the dining room to the sofa for work. TDM specialists and rideshare coordinators have provided information to employers, employees and commuters, mostly on the subject of teleworking (also known as working remotely or working from home).

Due to the growing concern within the TDM community that we may see a significant shift to SOV when millions of employees return to work, the Association of Commuter Transportation and the Center for TDM have conducted a nationwide survey of commuters to collect feedback on how COVID-19 may impact the mode split of commuters returning to worksites. The report will be published during the summer.

So the question remains – how will this change the commute shed? Here is the outlook from several TDM specialists.

Thomasine Johnson, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, Office of Transportation

COVID-19 has affected professional and personal lives across the world. Transit systems across the nation have encountered decreases in ridership and revenue loss. The impact COVID-19 has had on the transportation demand management industry has resulted into a new norm. The pandemic has affected employer outreach programs and alternative commuting options. During this pandemic many businesses transitioned to telework or ceased operations. This has become a challenge for

TAMAs to communicate with employers and encourage alternative commuting. The current situation has caused vanpools and carpools to lose passengers or to terminate. Many carpool and vanpool owners have voiced their concerns about the future existence of these commuting options post COVID-19. As Maryland begins to reopen and set a new norm for business and transit services there are obstacles for transit demand management. The decreased participation in vanpool and carpool programs will result in the increase of single occupancy vehicles without adequate parking. Due to financial impact of COVID-19, some employers may reduce staff which will result in the decrease of TDM employer programs. Although COVID-19 has vastly impacted the transportation industry, it has opened a path for TDM to revamp and tailor programs to the current needs of commuters and employers.

Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County Transit

For public transportation (such as MARC, commuter bus, Metro, and local transit) there could be a struggle to gain ridership as commuters will not know who they are coming in contact with and what protocols are in place to keep vehicles cleaned. Vanpools and carpools may increase as people begin to return to work and have the familiarity with whom they are riding. Employer outreach may focus more on telework and flex scheduling now that there is a familiarity of employees working remotely. The overall challenge will be people transitioning to the SOV, causing an increase in traffic and travel time within the region.

George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, only 7% of American employers offered telework, but with the increase in working remotely over the last several months there has been an increase of 30% to 40%; it is possible that this could become the norm. The MDOT MTA commuter buses are running on a limited schedule with only 10% ridership. When people begin to return to the workforce, it is possible that there would be a slight increase in ridership with the buses, carpoolers and vanpools. Commute with Enterprise, a company that specializes in vanpooling, has 340 vanpools in the region with 230 suspended during COVID-19. Going forward, TDM specialists will need to know the market to be able to promote their programs with a clear message in a safe manner.

Tammy Walters, Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Transit Bureau

COVID-19 has definitely changed TDM in Baltimore. The agency is adapting to a new normal and it is not certain if this norm is for a season or for the long haul. As many *(continued on next page)*



How COVID-19 Has Changed TDM Strategies *(continued from previous page)*

know, TDM is about promoting all forms of transportation as a way to get in and around Baltimore City. Once COVID-19 struck, the Baltimore DOT had to make sure that essential workers were still being serviced, while continuing to suggest that other commuters stay home. Telework became the new normal for many, so Baltimore City TDM specialists promoted the benefits of working remotely. With this pandemic, Baltimore City began a campaign called “Stay at Home Hero.” This allowed the city to highlight how the daily commuters were doing their part by staying home and working remotely. To find a balance, TDM specialists created and shared information on how to safely commute by bus, light rail, scooters, bikes, metro, walking, etc. While still learning how to navigate these societal changes, the team hopes that their goals will continue to align with the new world order.

CommuterChoice Maryland

With so many of Maryland employees working at home, MDOT’s CommuterChoice Maryland program (<http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Commuter/Commuting>) wanted to provide inspiration and knowledge from other Maryland businesses and their lessons learned regarding telework. A webinar series was developed in May where leaders in the Maryland business community provided insight on their best practices, lessons learned, and how they adjusted to a new work culture during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Session 1: A Small Business Owner's Reflection on Teleworking During COVID-19

During Session 1, Ms. Odessa Phillip, P.E., President and CEO of Assedo Consulting, LLC, of Maryland, shared how her business continued to be successful during the COVID-19 Pandemic with staff working remotely. Ms. Phillip provided insight on the importance of having a collaborative company culture. Their business was able to make decisions quickly and pivot into a remote work environment by having a good structure in place and a good communication strategy. Assedo was able to make necessary internal pivots, like “determining a message and strategy,” and external pivots, such as how to “adjust communication with clients and to remember to be compassionate.”

Session 2: Shifting the Paradigm to Remote Work

During Session 2, Ms. Bonnie Grassi, Director of Human Resources of the Retina Group of Washington, an ophthalmology medical practice in Maryland, discussed how they quickly prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic with remote

work. Like many Maryland businesses, working remotely every day presented new and uncharted waters. Ms. Grassi provided insight on how they quickly put together a remote work policy and agreement, and how they implemented and managed this new policy through the pandemic. Ms. Grassi shared that she received positive feedback from managers, who were previously not in favor of telework, and now report that productivity has improved.

Session 3: A Regional Perspective on Remote Work

During Session 3, Mr. Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Transportation Operations Programs at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, provided a regional perspective on remote work during COVID-19 and how many will continue with remote work post-COVID-19. During this session, Mr. Ramfos shared information on commuting trends from the State of the Commute survey. This included valuable information on remote work, commuter behaviors and patterns, resources available, and remote work trends for post COVID-19.

Session 4: A Work-Life Balance Program

During session 4, Ms. Peggy Yusko, Director of Benefits/Wellness for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), based in Frederick, Maryland, discussed the benefits and success of their work-life balance program. She discussed the importance of manager buy-in and of conducting a work-life balance survey. Over 80% of their survey respondents are either very satisfied or satisfied with their current work schedule. She also discussed the importance of maintaining strong communications and conducting team building activities.

For a complete list of Maryland’s TDM Specialists/Rideshare Coordinators, please visit: <http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Commuter/ccm/rideshare-contacts>.

Additional Resources for Commuting and the COVID-19 Pandemic

[CommuterChoiceMaryland.com](http://www.commuterconnections.org/covid19-commuting/): Telework Tips, Commuting Webinars, Commuter information, Employer Information, Maryland Commuter Tax Benefits, and more

Commuter Connections Commute with Confidence: COVID-19 Commuting Tips & Resources (<https://www.commuterconnections.org/covid19-commuting/>), and information on telework, ridesharing, employers, park and ride lots, etc.

Association for Commuter Transportation (actweb.org): information on commuting trends, updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reports (<https://www.actweb.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3506>)

Federal Transit Administration: COVID-19 Resource Tool for Public Transportation (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/safety/fta-covid-19-resource-tool>)

FTA’s COVID-19 Website (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/coronavirus>)



MTA Launches Intercity Bus Study *By Fred Fravel, KFH Group*

MTA has begun a study of Maryland's intercity bus service needs, updating a previous study that is now a decade old. Many people do not know that MTA uses Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311(f) rural intercity bus funding to support two routes in Maryland that were started as a result of the last study. The purpose of this update is to inventory Maryland's existing intercity bus services, identify gaps in service or unmet needs, review the state's use of Section 5311(f) for intercity bus service, and see if there are potential options to develop a statewide network that would serve more riders.

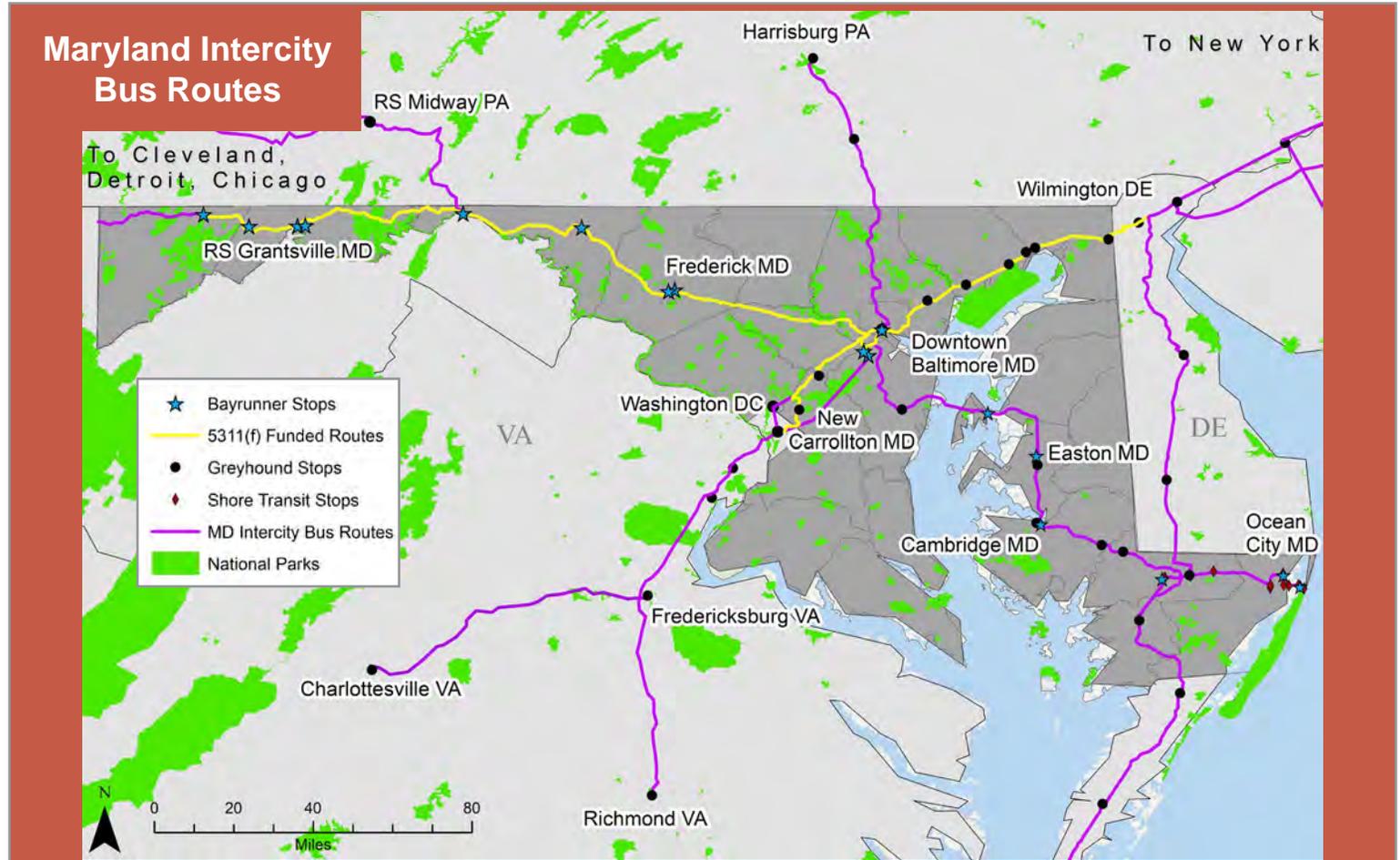
Section 5311(f) provides for federal transit assistance to support intercity bus service in rural areas. Intercity bus services are defined by FTA as regularly scheduled bus service for the general public operating with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, with the capability of carrying baggage and making meaningful connections to intercity bus service to more distant points. This is the type of service provided by firms such as Greyhound. These funds cannot be used for commuter service.

Bayrunner Shuttle's service from Grantsville to Baltimore is one route funded by MTA. It makes stops in Cumberland, Hancock, Hagerstown, Frederick, BWI and the Baltimore Greyhound station. The other route funded under this program is Greyhound's daily round-trip from Washington, D.C. to Wilmington, Delaware. It makes stops in College Park, Laurel, Baltimore, White Marsh, Edgewood, Aberdeen, Havre de Grace,

Perryville, Northeast, and Elkton. Both of these routes were identified as unmet service needs in the previous study.

But these routes are only part of the intercity network serving Maryland – the rest of which has been operated with no subsidy or assistance. Bayrunner Shuttle also links Baltimore with Ocean City. Greyhound has many schedules from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore and points north with some services making stops in suburban locations. Going west, Greyhound connects Washington and Baltimore with Frederick on services going to Pittsburgh and the Midwest. To the east, Greyhound also has a route from Baltimore (with a connection from Washington) to Salisbury, where it connects with north-south Greyhound service from Philadelphia to Norfolk and with Shore Transit service to Ocean City. One feature of this network is that the ticketing for Bayrunner and Greyhound is interlined, so a passenger can see the Bayrunner services on the Greyhound website and buy a ticket there. Bayrunner is also an Amtrak Thruway carrier, so its schedules and joint ticketing with Amtrak are available through Amtrak's website and ticketing system. In addition, there is service provided by Megabus and Flixbus, primarily between Washington, Baltimore and points north or south. The map below presents this network.

We will be forming a study advisory committee to get input about existing intercity services and needs to connect across the state. If you have any thoughts or would like to participate, let us know. Contact [Fred Fravel](#) or [Joel Eisenfeld](#) at KFH Group, or [Jeannie Fazio](#) or [Bruce Hojnacki](#) at MTA.



A Bus Stop Improvement Veteran Shares Tips

By Beth Hamby with Lee Winestone, KFH Group (all photos and tips by Lee Winestone)

For the past 17 years, Lee Winestone of KFH Group has served as Montgomery County's bus stop coordinator, ensuring that needed improvements identified in the county's bus stop improvement program were constructed correctly. He oversaw the construction and installation of more than 3,600 bus stop improvements during his tenure, working with several County employees (including planners and staff who were responsible for shelters and signs).

Lee began this work following the County's adoption of its first bus stop improvement plan in 2003. Developed by KFH Group for Montgomery County, the initial plan involved inventorying and assessing all bus stops in the county and providing criteria for prioritizing the improvements, resulting in an organized plan for more cost efficient installation. The County then contracted with KFH Group for Lee's services to help with the implementation of the plan. The original contract was for three years; subsequent options and contracts were awarded until the program was completed at the end of FY 2020.

When installation of improvements began, the County focused first on roadway corridors. This approach provided for lower unit costs. Montgomery County prioritized high ridership corridors and stops first. Sometimes, Lee noted, it was necessary to address a particular stop at the request of an elected official. Later in the program, lower-ridership stops at locations spread around the county were addressed. For the corridor work, the County contracted with a larger company on a unit cost basis. For individual stop improvements, including out in the rural areas of the county, smaller contractors were engaged who provided estimates for the cost to improve each bus stop.

Before the contractor began construction work on each location, Lee met with them on site to go over the design and specifications and discuss what needed to be done. He did the design

Tips for a Successful Bus Stop Improvement Program

1. Have a good system for prioritizing bus stop improvements. Prioritizing improvements along corridors allows for more cost efficient installation.
2. Talk with your contractor about what is needed and the ADA requirements. Make sure they understand what it is they need to construct. For more complicated improvements, tap into the expertise of an engineer.
3. It's important to keep an eye on your construction contractors. Check their work and make sure the finished work and the invoice matches the specifications for each job, including measurements for ADA compliance. During construction, check on how they set up the construction site, for example the number of barrels and cones placed (which impacts the cost of the job).
4. Develop a good bus stop database and maintain it—not only the data in it but also the software. You'll need ongoing information technology support to keep it functioning well. Before your IT person leaves their position, it is important that they train someone else to maintain the database.

Tools of the Trade: Used for Siting and Reviewing Bus Stop Improvements



From left to right: measuring wheel, spray paint marking wand, level, digital camera

work for the improvements, sometimes with the assistance of a county engineer or an engineering contractor for more complicated projects (construction into the side of a hill or requiring a retaining wall, for example). For some sites, the construction company shared their expertise (for example, advising when a pipe culvert was necessary). After work began, Lee was out in the field each day, checking on the construction and verifying that it complied with project specifications and ADA standards, including measuring the slope and cross slope of the concrete.

He was also responsible for updating the data for each improved bus stop in the county's bus stop database, including photos and measurements. Originally a database developed by KFH Group as part of the 2003 plan was used. Several years later, a County information technology staff member developed a new cloud-based database that could be used to prepare work orders for the contractors, enter cost data for the improvements, and generate summary reports.

Lee and a former colleague at the County developed a couple of bus stop design innovations early in the program. One was to install a 6-inch curb around the back of a bus stop to serve as a barrier to prevent grass from growing onto the landing area, and also to prevent someone in a wheelchair from rolling off into the grass. The other innovation, called a knee wall, is an 18-inch wall around a bus stop to provide not only a barrier but also seating. A key feature of the knee wall is the appearing of a stone facing, formed out of concrete using a mold. This facing, in addition to being more attractive than smooth concrete, is graffiti-resistant.

After the first few knee walls were installed, the roughness of the seat was identified as a concern (specifically for fabric of clothing worn by passengers waiting at the bus stop). Lee and his colleague found a creative solution: working with a local art school to develop (continued on next page)

Federal Updates

CCAM Issues Federal Fund Braiding Guide, Cost-Sharing Policy Statement

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) published a [CCAM Federal Fund Braiding Guide](#). Federal fund braiding for local match, also referred to as federal fund braiding, allows grant recipients to use funds from one federal program to meet the match requirements of another. Section 200.306(b) of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, prohibits federal fund braiding for local match “except where the federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other federal programs.” CCAM members examined 61 programs of the [130 federal programs](#) that may provide funding for human service transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and/or individuals of low income. Based on the input from each participating agency, this guide defines federal fund braiding for local match and program eligibility to enable federal agencies and federal grant recipients to more effectively manage federal funds and coordinate human service transportation.

CCAM also issued a [policy statement that recommends transportation cost-sharing to encourage greater state and local funding coordination](#). Fully coordinating transportation through vehicle and ride sharing for Medicaid, aging, and other human service transportation trips can result in a 10-percent increase in passengers per hour, which can create significant cost savings for federal, state, and local agencies. Cost-sharing arrangements include both vehicle and ride sharing as well as federal fund braiding for local match across programs. The statement calls out the Medicaid nonemergency medical transportation and the Veterans Health Administration’s Highly Rural Transportation Grants program as examples where cost-sharing could be used.

FTA worked with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) to develop a [COVID-19 Recovery Vendor List for Public Transportation](#). This list provides links to vendors of face masks and shields, chemical disinfectants, operator barriers, signs and decals, testing kits, and other products that help transit agencies reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect employees and passengers. Available on both [APTA’s](#) and [CTAA’s](#) websites, with a link on [FTA’s COVID-19 website](#), it will be updated biweekly.

FTA Hosts COVID-19 Recovery Listening Sessions Starting July 31

Through the end of the year, FTA will host a series of listening sessions for the transit community to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange of ideas and practices during recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency. Each session will feature a panel of transit industry professionals describing practices used by their agencies and answering questions submitted by participants. FTA will host the following six sessions:

July 31, 2020: Supporting the Health, Safety, and Confidence of Transit Riders

August 2020: Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

September 2020: Managing Vehicles and Facilities in a New Service Environment

October 2020: Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

November 2020: Value-Added Services for Public Transportation as Communities Recover

December 2020: Understanding and Addressing Changing Rider Needs

Dates for the August - December sessions will be announced soon. FTA will send registration email notifications in advance of each session, and post recordings of each to [FTA’s website](#).

A Bus Stop Improvement Veteran Shares Tips *(continued from previous page)*

Bus Stop Siting Criteria Used by Lee

- Safe pedestrian access and waiting area that can be made ADA compliant
- Close to intersections with controlled crossings or crosswalks
- Close to trip generators
- Sight lines for buses to see passengers and stopped vehicles
- Lighting to illuminate stop
- Buses must be able to get flush with curb for both front and rear door
- Pair bus stops on either side of street
- Avoid right turn lanes

mosaics that provided a smoother seating surface on the knee wall. High school students in a summer art program designed the mosaics, some of which were installed for decorative purposes at ground level.

Right: Knee wall with a mosaic designed by student of a local art school

It is no accident that Lee Winestone brought an artistic touch to his work on the Montgomery County bus stop improvement program. He is himself an artist. Now that the bus stop improvement is complete, Lee is enjoying spending more time in the studio, while still working for KFH Group.



Transitioning in Baltimore County



Baltimore County expanded its transportation role in the Department of Public Works (DPW) this year. In January, D'Andrea Walker (from Prince George's County) joined the Public Works team as the Department's first Deputy Director of Transportation, pulling together related operations within the Department (i.e., traffic engineering, transportation planning, highways, and engineering design) in order to spearhead a transportation renaissance in Baltimore County. Then, as the year got under way, Deputy Director Walker and her team assumed operation of the County Ride program (previously under the Department of

Aging) in order to bring a truly centralized coordination to the County's transit picture.

County Ride, a 40-year-old program, currently provides transportation to more than 40,000 County residents – primarily seniors, individuals with disabilities, and rural citizens. With a fleet of 25 vehicles, 21 drivers and a staff of eight, the organization moved to DPW in the spring to join other transportation initiatives.

"Transportation is now under one umbrella with a centralized mission," said Ms. Walker, adding, "County Ride is now a piece of our strategic approach to encourage public transportation, to reduce traffic, to eliminate gridlock and to save time." In conjunction with other initiatives such as the Towson Circulator (a small bus service currently in development), County Ride and DPW will take people to work, school, and shopping. Ultimately the approach will remake the evolving suburban culture in the metropolitan area. "It's adding up to a sustainable future," said Ms. Walker.

"Public transportation is a problem we can no longer kick down the road," she noted. "Baltimore County is looking at every individual need and is tailoring a transportation system that serves everyone. Bringing County Ride into Baltimore County's Department of Public Works and coordinating it with new, transportation initiatives is just the beginning.

Jacque Fournier Retires from STS

On August 1, Jacqueline "Jacque" Fournier retired, completing her 30-year career with St. Mary's Transit System (STS). Ms. Fournier started working at STS in 1991. At that time, STS was a service of the St. Mary's County Department on Aging, with vehicles operating public transportation for four hours mid-day in between morning and afternoon Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP) services. At that time STS consisted of two office staff and two drivers. Today, under Ms. Fournier's leadership, the STS system has grown to 25 vehicles, 42 drivers, and seven other positions, now within the Department of Public Works.



Ms. Fournier has been active in TAM throughout her STS career. She served on the TAM Board as both Vice President for two terms and Secretary for two terms, stepping down in 2008. The excellence of STS and individual drivers has been recognized by TAM, which awarded STS the Best Fixed Route System in 2002. STS drivers have received TAM Driver of the Year awards (including Jack Williams in 2018) and in 2017, STS received the TAM Community Engagement award.

Ms. Fournier expressed appreciation for the many training opportunities available through TAM and Maryland RTAP over the years, as well as Certified Community Transportation Manager (CCTM) certification which she had held for many years.

Congratulations are also in order for Will Hall, who became the Acting STS Supervisor on July 24.

National RTAP Photo Contest

National RTAP is hosting a "Rural Transit Heroes" photo contest. Do you know someone who has gone above and beyond to make sure their passengers travel safely and comfortably in all situations? An individual who has spurred innovations to help rural and tribal transit agencies overcome challenges and find new solutions? A person who has helped provide essential transportation or delivery of vital resources during the COVID-19 pandemic? Somebody who



has played a leadership role in curbing human trafficking, addressing the opioid crisis, or helping other vulnerable populations through transit? Submit photos to National RTAP by Aug. 20 to be considered for this year's contest. [Instructions are on the photo contest web page.](#)

N-CATT Site Launched

The website for the National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT) was recently launched. N-CATT is a new technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with the FTA. N-CATT's mission is to provide small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies with practical, replicable resources that help them apply technological solutions and innovations. The website n-catt.org provides a



Tech University, the latest news on transit technology, webinars, fact sheets, technical assistance, and more.

TransIT Services of Frederick County

TransIT Welcomes a New Director



On June 30, Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner announced the promotion and appointment of Roman Steichen as the Transportation Services Division Director. Mr. Steichen has served as Acting Director since February when former Director Nancy Norris retired. He came to Frederick County TransIT in 2018 as Deputy Director. In that role, he oversaw contract management, grant and budget administration, and professional staff. He also served as the chief safety officer, ensuring the division met all federal safety standards.

Prior to joining Frederick County Government, Mr. Steichen was Transportation Manager for Johns Hopkins University. At JHU, he was involved in innovative projects such as a collaboration with Lyft, implementation of compressed natural gas (CNG) powered vehicles into the campus fleet, and a partnership with Tesla that included installation of free electric car charging stations.

Mr. Steichen began his transportation career as a bus driver and dispatcher with the University of Maryland's Department of Transportation Services, where he went on to become Senior Transit Operations Supervisor. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland, University College.

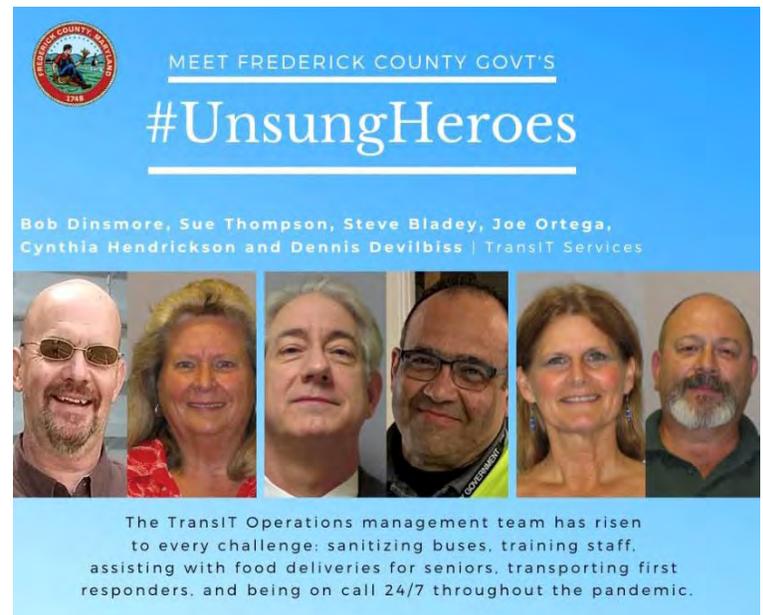
His predecessor, Nancy Norris, retired on February 28th after nearly 20 years of County service at TransIT. Ms. Norris was very involved in TAM, serving on the Board of Directors. She received the 2019 TAM award for Outstanding Leadership.

TransIT Takes Delivery of Three Electric Buses

In late June, TransIT took delivery of three U.S.-built battery-electric K7M buses from BYD, replacing the three oldest diesel buses in the fleet. The three new buses join a BYD K7M delivered to TransIT in the fall of 2019. Learn more about the new buses at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izGmajGROO8>.

TransIT Operations Management Staff Were Recognized as Unsung Heroes

TransIT's Operations management team was recognized by Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner as Unsung Heroes in the fight against COVID-19. Stating on Twitter that Bob Dinsmore, Sue Thompson, Steve Bladey, Joe Ortega, Cynthia Hendrickson, and Dennis Devil are heroes, Gardner noted that this dedicated team rose to every challenge, including sanitizing buses, training staff, assisting with food deliveries for seniors, transporting first responders, and being on call 24/7 throughout the pandemic.



New Providers Join TransIT's Taxi Access Program

TransIT's Taxi Access Program (TAP) added three additional providers to its program in early 2020. The new providers are all local Frederick companies. With the additions, the TAP program has four providers available to customers: Agniman Transportation, Bowie Transportation, Taxi Fiesta, and Xpress Ride. Taxi Fiesta has Spanish-speaking dispatchers and drivers. Both Bowie Transportation and Xpress Ride have an ADA-compliant wheelchair accessible vehicle.

TransIT's Taxi Access Program provides TransIT-plus customers with an additional transportation option to use 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year. TransIT-plus customers become eligible to utilize the TAP program after three months of active usage of TransIT-plus or by attempting to schedule TransIT-plus trips. Eligible users can receive an allotment of taxi fare per month based on two zones in Frederick County. Zone A users (zip codes 21701, 21702, 21703) are eligible to receive \$60 in taxi fare per month for \$10. All other zip codes are Zone B and those residents are eligible to receive \$120 in taxi fare per month for \$20. TAP customers have the option to pay their monthly fare in two installments, up to twice a month. The program has been in existence since December 2015.

Harford Transit LINK Innovates in Response to COVID-19

A shutdown of Harford County's public transit system because of a worldwide pandemic has meant a hard look at ways to keep staff and passengers safe and healthy once service resumed.

Harford Transit LINK looked locally and nationally for the best cleaning and personal protective equipment and, in addition to finding products in Harford County and out of state, created a product from within their ranks.

"This is an opportunity to be resourceful and use our existing relationships and partnerships to fill the gaps and meet our needs," Harford Transit Link Administrative Supervisor Jodi Glock said. "You can't be afraid to think outside the box."

Harford County found a product in Florida to clean and disinfect the more than 30 buses in the county's transit fleet. The size of a suitcase, the portable system fogs and sanitizes a space in about an hour. It can also be used to clean the transit office. The company that makes the product, however, wasn't licensed to do business in Maryland.



Because a comparable disinfecting system couldn't be found locally, Ms. Glock worked with the Harford County Department of Procurement to get the company registered, and then bought two of its machines.

With a vendor approved to do business in Maryland, other agencies looking to buy the equipment will have one less stumbling block if they are using grant funding or funds with specific restrictions. At least one other agency in Harford County is interested in purchasing a unit and possibly sharing it with another, to split the cost.

Much closer to home, Harford Transit found a way to protect its bus drivers with an idea from Harford Transit management and one of its contracted vehicle maintenance employees.

The "Sandmeier Shield," named after the agency's lead technician, Michael Sandmeier, is a polycarbonate, floor-to-ceiling shield made with spring-loaded hinges and a magnetic pull latch so the driver can get in and out easily.

Ms. Glock couldn't find a barrier suitable for Harford's fleet, so she turned to Harford Transit LINK's managers and shop, where together with Sandmeier they used a piece of cardboard to mock up a shield specifically for Harford's buses.

Ms. Glock contacted a local glass company, which cleaned up some of the edges, tweaked the measurements, and made a prototype to be tested with high quality hardware.

After successfully testing the barrier, Harford Transit bought one for each of its demand response vehicles and each barrier bears a sticker with the product name.

Ms. Glock encourages other agencies to see if they can tap into the creativity of their own employees who know what the needs are.

"We had no idea if we had someone who could help us, but it turns out we certainly did," Ms. Glock said. "And Mike was so eager to assist and excited to do this. He said he just wanted to make sure everybody was safe."

Harford Transit also kept it local when buying hand sanitizer, which became scarce in the early stages of the pandemic.



A local distillery switched its operation from making whiskey to making sanitizer, and Harford Transit bought a small batch of its first products.

Harford's second order was larger, and the hand sanitizer is being used on all of the buses so passengers can disinfect when they board.

"The company really helped us out, and they wanted to, because they know public transit and they know the value of what we're doing," Ms. Glock said.

Staying local when possible is a tremendous benefit.

"We can't do this alone. You can do so much with a great partnership," Ms. Glock said. "If we have the ability to help our local citizens and businesses, we should be taking advantage of that. If we keep it local, we can keep our community viable."

Harford Transit LINK's demand response service has resumed for existing customers, and recently expanded to help the regular fixed route passengers on a first come, first served basis. Fixed route service remains suspended. Passengers will be required to wear a mask when using public transportation. For more information about Harford Transit LINK, visit www.harfordtransitlink.org.



Local Public & Specialized Transportation News

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

Safety Measures in a COVID-19 World

As much as possible, MCDOT has followed CDC guidelines for transit agencies.

Step 1: Restricted routes to destinations for essential and critical infrastructure workers.

Step 2: Implemented process to maintain social distancing between transit riders and employees.

Step 3: Enhanced cleaning of bus interior, exterior, filtration and ventilation systems.

Specific steps implemented included:

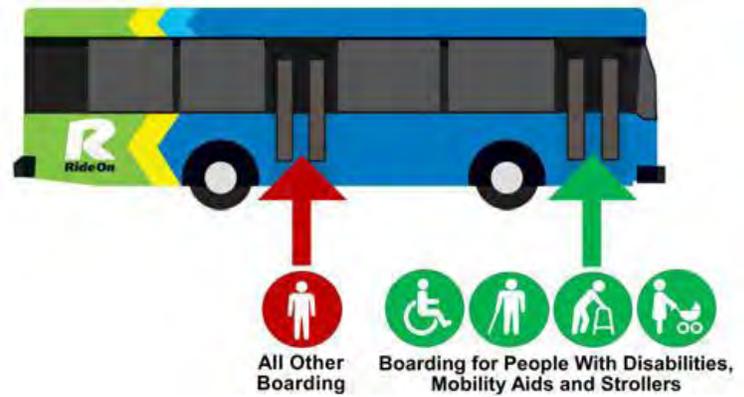
- Provided non-essential and high-risk employees telework and other options to eliminate travel to workplaces.
- Established and maintained communication with State and local health officials to determine current mitigation levels in the communities served.
- Followed CDC's guidance on what bus transit operators, rail transit operators, transit maintenance workers, and transit station workers need to know about COVID-19.
- Assigned workers at high risk of severe illness duties that minimize their contact with passengers and other employees, and/or offered them paid administrative leave.
- Conducted worksite hazard assessments to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies, and followed the strategies.

Promoted healthy hygiene practices:

- Enforced everyday preventive actions. Provided employees with appropriate personal protective equipment (masks and gloves) as necessary and as available.
- Communicated with the public about the importance of hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes, and using cloth face coverings. Posted signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19: properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.
- Ensured adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors for employees and bus passengers. Distributed masks to riders who did not have masks.

Intensified cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation:

- Nightly cleaning of all buses with a hospital grade anti-viral cleaning agent.
- Cleaned and disinfected frequently touched surfaces at least daily or between use as feasible.
- Cleaned and disinfected the operator area between shifts.
- Avoided using or sharing items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected, such as disposable transit maps and timetables – made them available electronically.



- Used gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash and wash hands afterwards.
- Nightly cleaning of filters and ventilation systems - ensure they operate efficiently and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible such as by opening windows and doors.

Promoting social distancing:

- Instituted measures to separate or create distance of at least six feet between all bus occupants to the extent possible:
 - Asking bus riders to enter and exit the bus through rear doors, while allowing exceptions for persons with disabilities, and installing plastic chains to cordon off the front section of the bus for operator safety
 - Reducing maximum occupancy of buses, increasing bus service frequency on crowded routes, as appropriate
 - Installing physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions on transit vehicles is planned
- Closed communal spaces such as the pool table area in break rooms; staggered use and clean/disinfect in between uses.
- Trained all employees in safety and preventive measures.

Checking for signs and symptoms:

- Conducting daily health checks including temperature screening of all bus operators and road coordinators
- Encouraging staff who are sick to inform their supervisors and stay at home.

When employees become sick:

- Immediately sent home employees with symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Informed those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
- Established procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a healthcare facility.
- Notified local health officials, staff, and customers (if possible) immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality consistent with applicable federal and state privacy laws.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

Service Planning for Success during COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, MCDOT implemented five service changes in four months. Normally, service changes occur every four months. The objectives were to safely comply with state and county stay-at-home orders and adequately serve essential personnel. On March 18, 2020, MCDOT implemented its Essential Services plan, reducing regular Ride On service from 79 routes to 35 routes, including suspension of the Flex microtransit service. Residents were asked to avoid all unnecessary travel, whether by transit or other transportation, to support the efforts to reduce spread of the COVID-19 virus. Ride On was the first transit system to suspend fare collection and implement rear door boarding to further protect riders and bus operators.

With each service change, riders were encouraged to visit the Ride On Essential Plus webpage for detailed information at montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/essential-plan.html. This page includes a link to an interactive GIS map so riders can track the movement of buses by route and their proximity to essential services, such as healthcare, pharmacies, groceries, banks, and food distribution sites.



On April 16, MCDOT made face coverings mandatory on all Ride On buses. The directive followed guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the FTA. In accordance with Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's executive order, public transportation users must wear face coverings during the COVID-19 health crisis. MCDOT strongly encourages Ride On travelers to come prepared with a personal face covering. Customers who do not comply will be advised of the requirement and may be directed not to board the vehicle, or to exit the vehicle. MCDOT recognizes there may be times when riders may not be aware of requirements for face coverings or may forget to bring one. To address those situations, Ride On started to outfit some buses with a limited supply of individually wrapped face coverings.

MCDOT continues to move forward in restoring and rethinking services during the health crisis. On August 2nd, all 79 routes will be placed back in service, with shorter spans of service and less frequency of service on lower ridership routes, while

increasing frequency on higher ridership routes to allow for social distancing.

Ridership dropped 78% in April but rebounded with 8-10% increases in service in May and June. With significantly increased teleworking among riders, MCDOT may not get back to normal ridership, but a COVID Recovery Outreach Plan is under development to communicate safety protocols to ensure the safety of riders and employees, active participation in phased reopening of the County, the value of public transportation and to encourage riders to use the service.

This marketing plan will be executed using advertising on bus exteriors and interiors, bus shelters, websites, social media channels, radio, ethnic newspapers and television. MCDOT plans to engage the major stakeholders in our community: service centers, recreation centers, libraries, older adults, veterans, public schools, individuals with disabilities, employers and people who live or work in the County. Our major themes are: safety, connectivity, partnership/empathy and hope. The campaign is projected to last up to 12 months or as needed.

High Riser Awards: Recognizing the Exceptional Employees

Each week during the County's response to the COVID-19 health crisis, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and Chief Administrative Officer Andrew Kleine recognize County employees who are "High Risers" -- those who have risen to the challenge of the COVID-19 health crisis after facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles and transforming them into attainable realities.



Alan Watts, Andre Lucas, and James Ryan

Three Ride On depot chiefs, Allan Watts, Andre Lucas and James Ryan, were recognized for establishing Ride On depot COVID-19 procedures, protocols and operations to better protect employees and residents. They have worked tirelessly to protect passengers and bus operators and supervised the special training operators have received on new safety procedures, and were recognized for their determination, resilience and willingness to provide exceptional work. The three depot chiefs created clear safety messages and systematically developed a distribution process for cleaning products, hand sanitizer and protective equipment for employees. They used their excellent

Local Public & Specialized Transportation News

communication skills to closely collaborate with MCDOT leadership, their teams and the Municipal and County Government Employees Organization shop stewards.

Ride On's Nicholson Court Depot team was recognized for keeping Montgomery County's transportation system moving to provide a necessary public service. This team has shown great flexibility and has been instrumental in ensuring that transit is still available for the residents who are most in need of the service. The hard work and dedication from the operators, coordinators and mechanics at the depot were recognized.

MCDOT's Division of Transit Services Project Manager Tanya Nichols was recognized for her exceptional work assisting MCDOT in securing transit emergency relief aid from the federal government. Her excellent work with MCDOT partners, internal stakeholders and department senior leadership has helped lessen the extreme operational and financial impacts of the health crisis on Ride On.

Ride On Chief for Planning & Implementation Phil McLaughlin was recognized for rising to the challenge of the COVID-19

health crisis and going above and beyond to assist County residents and businesses. Starting in mid-March, McLaughlin led his team in making multiple adjustments to Ride On schedules to meet changing service needs as stay at home orders were implemented statewide. Putting in long hours, his team developed new schedules that prioritized Equity Emphasis Areas and essential services, and adjusted the underlying work and fleet assignments needed to support them. McLaughlin's team adapted communications tools and implemented new operating models to meet the changing needs of public transportation as response to the public health crisis evolved.

MCDOT Provided Bottled Water, Cooling Center Buses during Heat Wave

During the heat wave in July, all MCDOT Ride On buses had bottles of water available for customers. MCDOT also made available multiple buses for cooling as needed for crowds at the cooling centers and as well during Fire Rescue events and emergencies.

In memoriam



Michael Miller

Michael Miller, who helped manage the Ride On bus fleet for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), has passed away from complications of the COVID-19 virus. Mr. Miller is the first County employee whose death is attributed to the pandemic virus. He passed away on the evening of April 15.

Mr. Miller, 60, was a member of the MCDOT Transit Services Division based in the Silver Spring/Bethesda Depot. He had worked for the County since 2011.

"I'm very sorry to report the death of our first County employee due to COVID-19," said County Executive Marc Elrich. "The loss of a valued County employee is hard on everyone, especially during these difficult times."

"Mike worked hard every day to make sure buses left the depot in good condition, and on time, to serve the residents of Montgomery County," said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. "All of his co-workers in the Silver Spring/Bethesda Depot and the Department of Transportation are mourning the loss of a great friend and colleague."

MCDOT Depot Chief Andre Lucas said: "He was particularly appreciated for his infectious smile and caring personality, his dedication to his fellow co-workers and his job duties. He was much appreciated for his willingness to go above and beyond at any moment to get the job done."

Mr. Miller is survived by his wife, Donna, and their children.

BWI Business Partnership Responds to COVID-19

The BWI Business Partnership is a non-profit organization whose mission includes advocacy for strong transportation policy and initiatives that benefit both the workforce and businesses in the BWI region. In line with this mission, The Partnership operates the County Connector Shuttle, a free shuttle fully funded by the Anne Arundel County Local Development Council established to connect workforce and jobseekers to the County's economic powerhouses: Live! Casino & Hotel, Arundel Mills Mall, and the BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Like many public transportation managers in the country, the BWI Business Partnership was deeply impacted by the COVID-19 health pandemic. It tackled the issues brought on by the pandemic using a two-pronged approach: a) helping to mitigate the risk to users of public transportation, and b) focusing on bus operator safety. The Partnership implemented several safety measures to help protect the health and safety of passengers. Enhanced cleaning protocols were put in place which include daily interior cleaning including disinfection of "high-touch" surfaces such as the seats and handlebars, full exterior and interior detailing every two weeks, and the usage of disinfectant air spray to mitigate any airborne threats during breaks when there are no passengers on-board. Passengers are also advised to follow CDC, State and County guidelines with regard to face coverings while on public transit. Unlike other public transit systems that reduced services, The Partnership implemented the Express Shuttle system whereby the shuttles were operating more frequently, cutting wait times by 20 to 30 minutes, and reducing crowding by taping off every other seat so that riders can practice social distancing while inside the shuttles.



On the other side of the equation, The Partnership focused its efforts on bus operator safety. It tapped a local company, Allogram, which pivoted from its usual business of creating trophies, awards, plaques and promotional items to customized thick acrylic barriers. The driver safety barriers were retrofitted in the County Connector shuttles to help reduce contact between bus operators and the riders. The

other added benefit of the driver safety barriers is to help protect the drivers from threats of physical attack or hostile interactions.

Gina Stewart, Executive Director of The Partnership emphasized, "Even before the pandemic, The Partnership already recognized the integral role of public transportation to the delivery of essential services. Now, more than ever, out-of-the-box thinking and creative solutions will pave the way to how we navigate the new normal. We hope that our initiatives help make public transportation safer for the people who rely on it."

Cecil Transit Awarded \$536K Pilot Grant To Assist Recovery Community

The Cecil County Department of Community Services, through its Cecil Transit Division, has been awarded a \$563,000 Integrated Mobility Innovation Mobility on Demand pilot grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration to provide mobility on demand services to individuals in the recovery community.

Titled "Cecil Transit's Roadway to Recovery: Driving Transformational Change and Removing Barriers for the Recovery Community," the initiative addresses Cecil County's growing addiction support needs by removing transportation barriers for the recovery community. This transformational project seeks to partner with recovery houses in the community in an effort to break down transportation barriers and increase mobility options. This project will increase accessibility options for residents in recovery houses using a smart phone application developed through a partnership with RouteMatch Inc., which will provide curb-to-curb transportation, maximize ride-share opportunities and/or connect participants to fixed route services when applicable. This innovative model will provide mobility on demand services for individuals in recovery and enable them to access employment, medical, treatment, support and other social services.

"I am both pleased and proud of our staff in the Department of Community Services and, specifically, the Cecil Transit division, to have been awarded this innovative grant that will support prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives throughout Cecil County," said County Executive Alan McCarthy. "Defeating the opioid crisis in our community remains one of my major priorities and this grant funding to provide transportation resources adds another element in our fight against this debilitating epidemic."

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's George Clark Interviewed on Teleworking

In June, The Enterprise newspaper interviewed George Clark, Transportation Demand Management Specialist with Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The interview focused on telecommuting in the age of COVID-19. In the article, Mr. Clark discussed how employer perspectives on telework are shifting as a result of the pandemic and the realization that many workers can be productive while working at home. He noted the unknowns in how this will impact the economy and demand for office space. He also discussed recent changes in the region in commuting by vanpool, carpool, and bus, including precautions taken by vanpool companies and transit systems to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition to The Enterprise, the interview article was published in two other papers in the region.

Cecil Transit: Transforming Communities and Transit

By Drew Zoller, Routematch

A Region in Transition

Like many rural and small urban systems, Cecil Transit serves a highly dispersed population with diverse needs. Although based in and largely funded by Maryland, the agency also serves and receives some funding from Delaware. At its inception, Cecil Transit provided only demand response service to seniors. "Our ridership used to be mostly for shopping, trips to the doctor, or social trips," said Suzanne Kalmbacher, Cecil Transit Chief. "But we also have a lot of low-income population pockets in the county as well as areas of geographic isolation, and those areas do not have access to a lot of resources."

The agency began looking for ways to help citizens in these areas take advantage of the emerging employment opportunities, and broaden service beyond seniors. With the agency's expanded vision, it evaluated the overall needs of the community, with a focus on connecting residential areas with the semi-industrial zones where employment was growing. In addition, medical and educational needs were also becoming reliable drivers of demand. For example, when a local college opened a second campus in another part of the region, it wanted a way to transport students between the two.

These new and overlapping needs led to the creation of new routes connecting many of the small cities that the agency serves, including Newark, DE (home of the University of Delaware), Perryville, MD (home of numerous corporate distribution hubs), and others. New fixed route service was added and made available to everyone in the community, and additional routes have since been added. "Today, a large amount of our riders use our service for transportation for work," Suzanne said.

A key to evolving its service and identifying valuable new routes has been Cecil Transit's access to accurate and up-to-date information on rider utilization and transit performance. The agency has relied on Routematch software for scheduling since 2014, and it has been important in how the agency operates its expanding network of services. But perhaps even more important has been Routematch's role in helping the agency determine how service routes should be defined. For this, Suzanne has relied on the software's capabilities in data analysis and reporting.

Driving Decisions with Data

Suzanne remembers her early days at the agency, speaking with customers over the phone and scheduling their rides manually. Access to reliable data for route planning was hard to imagine, and initial software implementation focused on automated scheduling and dispatching tools. As Cecil Transit modernized its processes, it expanded its use of software tools to become even more efficient. Today Suzanne says Routematch software improves how the agency identifies and optimizes service routes, including where stops should be initiated or eliminated. "We know where we have retail establishments, major employment providers, medical facilities, and the software shows us what types of boardings we have at each location over time."

This article is excerpted from a longer case study that can be found at: <https://www.routematch.com/client-stories/transforming-communities-cecil-transit/>

Routematch is a TAM Associate Member and sponsor. Inclusion of this article in this newsletter does not constitute product endorsement by MDOT MTA or the Maryland RTAP.



Cecil Transit had recently been operating a lengthy route that served a major area workplace and had an unsatisfactory 60% on-time performance. "We knew we needed to fix it, and do something drastic," she said. Routematch software provided access to Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) playback. "Being able to watch our fixed route vehicles move through their stops is great," said Cecil Transit Coordinator Jonathan Creamer. "And having access to General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) export is also really helpful for monitoring performance and ridership." Operating data showed that many riders were on the bus for its entire two-hour loop, since the bus only went in one direction. "The data we got from Routematch led to the creation of a cross-county route," Suzanne said.

Suzanne sees other benefits to having visibility to this route-level information, and a principal one is its impact on local decision-makers. "It helps me to communicate the need for certain routes to our Department Director and other County leaders," she said. "When people ask me why buses aren't full, we can respond with data that shows how much they are full." We can also show how many people are being transported and the growth of ridership over the years." Other advantages include facilitating the agency's reporting responsibilities and streamlining the process of applying for grants.

Looking Ahead

Like virtually all agencies, Cecil Transit is facing new challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. The agency had experienced its strongest annual growth in several years in 2019, and had been expecting strong growth in 2020 as well. Suzanne thinks some basic transit functions of her agency will become more challenging and require new flexibility. To meet social distancing requirements, she converted a fixed route bus line into demand response service. And the agency's use of Routematch's payment service, RMPay, has expanded its following in her community. "RMPay streamlines things a lot for us and we have a core group that has really latched onto it." By eliminating the need for currency transactions, she suspects it will gain additional users. Suzanne said she expects the overall demands on transit to increase, but she is confident that her agency has the right tools and team to meet the new requirements. "Routematch is a great partner," she said. "They're always willing to roll up their sleeves and get into the weeds with us. Having worked together for many years, I know they really care about my community and are committed to making transit work for everyone here."

Hybrid Transit Vehicles: The Key to Immediate Sustainability Impact

By Don Combs, Colonial

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on every aspect of our lives. Those of us in the transit industry have certainly felt its effects, and we will for quite some time. But there are several key takeaways from what we've learned thus far:

1. The transit industry is full of brave and selfless front-line heroes who deserve the accolades being showered on that community right now.
2. The sudden shutdown in transportation that occurred at the beginning of the pandemic demonstrated how significantly our driving choices affect the environment, as CO2 levels plummeted and major city skylines became clearly visible for the first time in years.
3. We don't need to return to our "same old" vehicle choices when we emerge from the pandemic - in fact, we have an opportunity to improve our transportation choices in a way that helps our environment in the long term moving forward.

While commercial and municipal transit fleets have recognized electrification as a major part of their sustainability strategy, there are still significant challenges (including high capital cost, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of product options) that are keeping fleets from moving forward with large numbers of battery electric vehicles (BEVs). As a result, demand for hybrid electric (HEV) fleet options has never been higher. These readily available solutions are available as upfit options to provide immediate fuel economy and sustainability value while overcoming the most pressing challenges of their all-electric counterparts.

Hybrid fleet advantages include no charging infrastructure required, reduced capital and operating costs, readily available vehicles and applications, no driver or maintenance team training, and immediate progress toward sustainability goals. If you have sustainability goals to meet, there's no reason to wait for all-electric transit vehicles to become available and for the infrastructure to catch up with the demand for greener products. Hybrids are available, effective and affordable for transit companies looking to make an impact right away.

Colonial is a full-service provider of transportation solutions in the mid-Atlantic, and is an advocate for sustainability and environmental responsibility in the vehicles offered and the ways in which the company operates. Colonial is a long-standing Sales and Installation Partner for XL Fleet, the leading producer of hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric drive solutions for class 2-6 transit vehicles. Contact Colonial at 800-GO-BY-BUS today or visit online at <http://colonialbus.com/>.

Colonial is a TAM Associate Member and sponsor of TAM events. Inclusion of this article in this newsletter does not constitute product endorsement by MDOT MTA or the Maryland RTAP.

Zero Emission Vehicles May Create Both Opportunity and Challenge for Public Transportation In Maryland

By Chris Costello, Public Sector Consulting Group

During the truncated 2020 General Assembly session, **HB 432 Maryland Transit Administration - Conversion to Zero-Emission Buses (Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act)** was introduced and it passed the House of Delegates. It is impossible to know whether it would have been enacted because the session abruptly ended on March 18th, which left insufficient time for the Senate to hear the bill.

This legislation prohibited the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) from entering into a contract to purchase buses for its State transit bus fleet that are not zero-emission buses, as defined by the bill, beginning in fiscal year 2022. Simply put, MTA was required to purchase ONLY zero-emission buses.

The original bill was amended in committee to exclude vehicles operated by a "locally operated transit system (LOTS)."

The Maryland Transportation Trust Fund balance is insufficient to meet the added requirements that such a conversion would have required, estimated to be at least \$20.6 million annually beginning in FY 2023. That cost would not include the charging equipment, training of numerous personnel, re-tooling, and retrofit of garages.

It seems hard to understand how Maryland could hope to transition its entire fleet to zero-emission technology within 10 to 15 years without a significant, sustained funding commitment. Maryland's transportation funding is precarious and would not be sufficient to undertake such a bold expenditure without sustained federal subsidy, which is not anticipated.

Mercifully, the LOTS were exempted from the legislation; however, it was only a reprieve, not a pardon. The legislators fully intended that LOTS would eventually be required to purchase these vehicles.

That is not to say that zero-emission vehicles are not to be desired. Frederick County received two electric buses that were funded by the Federal Transit Administration and the Maryland Energy Administration's Smart Energy program. As time goes on, such vehicles may be provided to other organizations and in some areas of the state, zero-emission vehicles will be preferable; however, the schedule dictated by HB 432 should not have passed in 2020 because the logistical and fiscal constraints were unsustainable.

This bill did **NOT** fail. It will be back next session and while LOTS may be excluded, they are not held harmless. Should it pass next session and take effect, the funding needed to implement it may impact the funding for all public transportation and would in some way diminish the funds available to local transit operations.

Transit Bookshelf & Toolbox

New & Interesting Free Resources



National RTAP

New and recently updated resources offered by the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) (www.nationalrtap.org) include:

- Essential Spanish for Rural Transit
- Fundamental Financial Management for Rural Transit Providers
- Updated ADA Toolkit
- National RTAP Wheelchair Securement Topic Guide (updated June 2020)
- Best Practices Spotlight Article on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
- Headstart Transportation Technical Brief
- Tools that Connect: Online Trip Planners and GTFS Builder Technical Brief (updated)
- Transit and Human Trafficking eLearning
- Intercity Bus Transportation Technical Brief

Archived recordings of recent webinars can be streamed through <http://nationalrtap.org/Webinars>, including:

- ADA Toolkit Update, presented 6/30/20
- Vehicle Specifications, presented 5/13/20

Transcripts of recent peer discussions can be downloaded from <http://www.nationalrtap.org/Technical-Assistance/Peer-Roundtables-and-Chats>, including:

- Rural Transit Day Twitter Chat, held 7/16/20
- Young Professionals in Transportation Happy Hour with National RTAP, held 5/21/20
- State RTAP Manager Panel Discussion - COVID-19 Focus, held 4/23/20

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

- [CCAM Federal Fund Braiding Guide](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Resource Tool for Public Transportation](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions from FTA Grantees Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (frequently updated)

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA):

- [Mini Virtual EXPO recordings](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources & News web page](#) (frequently updated)

American Public Transportation Association (APTA):

- [Public Transit Response to Coronavirus or COVID-19 web page](#) (frequently updated)
- [Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance](#)
- [Transit Agency Racial Equity Statements](#)

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)

- [Integrating Emergency Management and Mobility Management](#)
- [The Role of Transportation in Addressing Social Isolation in Older Adults](#)

Transportation Research Board (TRB)

Recent releases from the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), downloadable through <https://www.nap.edu/author/TCRP/transportation-research-board/transit-cooperative-research-program>

- TCRP Pre-publication Draft Report 219: Guidebook for Deploying Zero-Emission Transit Buses
- TCRP Pre-publication Draft Report 218: Characteristics and Elements of Non-Punitive Employee Safety Reporting Systems for Public Transportation
- TCRP Pre-publication Draft Report 215: Minutes Matter: A Bus Transit Service Reliability Guidebook
- TCRP Report 213: Data Sharing Guidance for Public Transit Agencies - Now and in the Future

Other Organizations

CDC: [Mass Transit Decision Tool: Public Health Considerations for Reopening Mass Transit During the COVID-19](#)

New technical assistance center: [National Center for Applied Transit Technology \(N-CATT\)](#)

About Maryland RTAP and TAM



The Maryland Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) is a program of MDOT MTA Office of Local Transit Support. Maryland

RTAP provides the following types of assistance targeted at Maryland rural and small urban public transit providers: training classes and materials, scholarships to assist with costs of attending training away from home, a lending library of training and resource materials, and dissemination of information on training opportunities and other issues of interest to community transit providers in Maryland. For more information about Maryland RTAP, contact Jeannie Fazio at 410-767-3781 or jfazio1@mdot.maryland.gov.



The Transportation Association of Maryland, Inc. (TAM) is a statewide professional organization committed to improving mobility and economic opportunity for all of Maryland's citizens. TAM's mission is to strengthen community transportation in Maryland through advocacy and professional development. Transportation services provided by TAM members link people to community resources and promote business, tourism, and economic development. For more information about TAM's member services and RTAP library, visit the website at www.taminc.org, or call 410-553-4245. TAM is located at 939 Elkridge Landing Road, Suite 195, Linthicum, MD 21090.

Calendar of Transit Learning Opportunities & Events

All of the events listed below are online. Click on the event URL for time and more information.

Date:	Title:	Presented by	Learn more and register here:
Aug. 4	5 Generations in the Workplace	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=80652
Aug. 4	Electric Vehicles for Transit	N-CATT	https://n-catt.org/events/webinar-electric-vehicles-for-transit/
Aug. 5	Inclusive Mobility: Enabling the Participation of Older Adults and People with Disabilities	NADTC	https://www.nadtc.org/event/inclusive-mobility-enabling-the-participation-of-older-adults-and-people-with-disabilities/
Aug. 6	Essential Spanish for Rural Transit Webinar	National RTAP	https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/9016187070575674892
Aug. 6	All Reporters - NTD Reporting Fundamentals	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=80634
Aug. 6	Metro Leadership Academy: Developing the Next Generation of Transportation Infrastructure Leaders	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=80650
Aug. 11	Making It Memorable: Online Trainings that Stick	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=80669
Aug. 12-13	2020 Mobility & Rail NOW! conference	APTA	https://www.apta.com/conferences-events/mobility-and-rail-now/
Aug. 13	NADTC Brown Bag Webinar Series – Session 4	NADTC	https://www.nadtc.org/event/nadtc-brown-bag-webinar-series-session-4/
Aug. 13	TCRP Research Report 199: Transit Technical Training, Volumes 1 and 2: Guide to Applying Best Practices and Sharing Resources and Overcoming Barriers to Implementing Best and Innovative Training	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=75307
Aug. 18	Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology for Transit	N-CATT	https://n-catt.org/events/webinar-hydrogen-fuel-cell-technology-for-transit/
Aug. 18	Public Transit Ridership Trends	TRB	http://www.trb.org/main/blurbs/180975.aspx
Aug. 20	New Financial Management Training Introductory Webinar	National RTAP	https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IQkvOCsFThSO3ul6QKt28w
Aug. 20	APTA, CDC and NIOSH (open to APTA members only)	APTA	https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/aptau/learning-and-development/webinars/special-webinars/
Aug. 25	TCRP Research Report 219: Guidebook ofr Deploying Zero-Emission Transit Buses	NTI	https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=80651
Sep. 16	Autonomous Vehicle Pilots and Beyond	N-CATT	https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_85NEreLkQNaBrjJh5TEhRw
Sep. 15-17	TAM Virtual Conference 2020 See page 1 and visit the TAM website for more information.	TAM	https://www.taminc.org/conference



Key to calendar acronyms:

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
NADTC	National Aging and Disability Transportation Center
N-CATT	National Center for Applied Transit Technology
NTD	National Transit Database
NTI	National Transit Institute
RTAP	Rural Transit Assistance Program
TAM	Transportation Association of Maryland
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TRB	Transportation Research Board

Coming soon:

TAM's New Webinar Series

TAM is seeking presenters/speakers on transit-related topics, especially those dealing with the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to share best practices and lessons learned from across Maryland. We are looking to hold at least one webinar per month, available to our members to attend free of charge. For more information, visit the TAM website at <https://www.taminc.org/tam-webinar-series>. Look for these and other upcoming learning opportunities at <https://www.taminc.org/training>.