Carroll County Transit Development Plan

Progress Update

July 11, 2019

What is Transit Development Plan (TDP)

- Serves as a guide for public transit services over the next five years.
- Provides a roadmap for implementing service and organizational improvements, including potential service expansion.
- Elements of the plan include:
  - Identifying public and specialized transportation needs within the service area;
  - Analyzing the performance of existing transit services;
  - Analyzing the organizational structure; and
  - Recommending implementation plan including a 5-year budget.
- Required as a condition of grant funding assistance from the Maryland Transit Administration.

Summary of TDP Tasks

1. Initiate Project and On-Going Management
✓ 2. Introduction and Background – Tech Memo #1 (May 2019)
✓ 3. Review of Existing Services – Tech Memo #2 (May 2019)
✓ 4. Issues and Opportunities - Transit Needs Analysis –Tech Memo #3 (May 2019)
✓ 5. Service and Organizational Alternatives – Tech Memo #4 (July 2019)
6. Preparation of the Plan - Draft and Final Versions. The TDP will need to be adopted by the Board of Carroll County Commissioners.

Stakeholder Input

- There is a need for out-of-county service.
- There is a need for longer service hours (both earlier and later in the day).
- Additional service is needed on Saturdays.
- More frequent service is needed for the Trailblazer routes.
- There are additional areas that should be served with Trailblazer routes, such as the MVA.
- The concept of workforce shuttles should be explored.
- The demand-response service is cost-prohibitive for some users and agencies.
- The travel time is too long on the Trailblazer routes.
- Additional capacity is needed for the demand-response program.
- Additional demand among people with developmental disabilities is likely to occur as programs move to community employment.
- More college passes are desired, as well as a revised timeline for purchase.
- Real-time transit information would be useful.
- Additional marketing of what is available is needed.

Customer Input

Customer Survey Highlights

- 122 survey participants
- Survey participants were frequent riders – over 77% use the service at least 3-4 days per week.
- Most popular trip purposes were: medical; work; social/recreational; and school.
- Without Carroll Transit, almost 35% of the survey participants indicated that they would not make the trip.
- Riders had the highest level of satisfaction with the drivers.
- Top three desired service improvements: 1) service later in the evening (49.6%); 2) additional Saturday service (42.6%); and 3) service on Sundays (35.7%)

Public Input

Community Survey Highlights – 436 participants

- **Service improvements that could impact decision to ride:**
  - Better availability near home/work/school (45.4%)
  - More frequent service (27.5%)
  - Service outside the county limits (27%)
  - I would not ride, I prefer to drive (36%)
- **Awareness of Carroll Transit Services**
  - 37.9% were aware of services and had an overall positive impression of them.
  - 24.5% were aware of services and had an overall negative impression of them.
  - 37.7% were not aware of Carroll Transit's services.
- **Public Comments**
  - 222 comments. 60 requested better service and/or connections to the Baltimore area; 50 specifically mentioned that no additional transit services are needed, particularly to out-of-county destinations.
  - Comment topics were varied: specific service ideas and complaints; compliments; requests for additional services and marketing; and sentiments that no additional transit services are needed in Carroll County.

Employer Input

Employer Survey Highlights

- 19 participants representing 5,414 employees
- 54% indicated they were aware of transportation concerns from employers.
- **Transportation concerns**
  - Difficulty arriving to work on time in the morning
  - Lack of Uber availability
  - Inconsistent carpooling
  - Unreliable public transportation
  - Lack of connections for out-of-county employees (specifically from the Owings Mills Metro station).
- **Suggestions and Comments**
  - Expanded public transportation
  - Greater availability of Uber/Lyft
  - Reliable transportation options will help attract more workers and make the hiring process less cumbersome.

Alternatives Currently Under Discussion by Transit Advisory Council (TAC)

- **Trailblazer Route Adjustments** – to improve travel time, route productivity, and respond to customer requests
- **Extended Hours and Days of Service on the Trailblazers** – in response to survey results
  - Earlier in the morning, later in the afternoon, close the mid-day gap
  - Additional Saturday service
  - Sunday service
- **Limited Out of County Service** – in response to stakeholder, rider, and public surveys

Alternatives Currently Under Discussion by Transit Advisory Council (TAC)

- **Demand Response Changes** – Shifting demand to Trailblazers. Qualifying riders based on disability status and requiring those within ¾ mile of the Trailblazer routes to use them if they are able. This will serve to re-direct resources from the demand-response program to the Trailblazer program to make desired improvements.

- **Mobility Management and Marketing**
  - Mobility Management Position
  - Information Station at BERC

- **Ride-Sharing Application** – publicly supported Uber-style service for trips that are not cost effective to be provided by the public system.

Alternatives Currently Under Discussion by Transit Advisory Council (TAC)

- **Infrastructure Improvements**
  - Bus stops and shelters
  - Transit hub

- **Technology Improvements**
  - Smartphone Application and Electronic Fareboxes
  - Real-Time Transit Information

- **In-House versus Contracted Operations**
  - Refining cost data with County staff

Next Steps

- Refine alternatives based on input from TAC, County Commissioners, and other stakeholders.

- Decide which options should be included in TDP.

- Prepare Draft TDP for review and comment.

- Prepare Final TDP for TAC and Commissioner Approval.