

Workgroup on the Reorganization of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)

Meeting #3 Minutes

1. Attendance:
 1. MTA Administrator Holly Arnold
 2. Delegate Mark Edelson, House Appropriations Committee
 3. Mike Kelly, Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB)
 4. Delegate Marc Korman, Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
 5. Jon Laria, Chair, Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC)
 6. Wesley “Wes” Mitchell, MTA Rider
 7. Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Assistant Secretary Dianna Rosborough, on behalf of Acting Secretary Samantha Biddle
 8. Sameer Sidh, MTA Rider, Chair
2. Call to Order
 1. Chair Sidh called the meeting to order.
 2. Chair Sidh made a motion to approve the minutes for meeting two. Delegate Edelson provided a second. **The minutes were approved unanimously.**
 3. Chair Sidh provided an update on the meeting schedule. The next meeting is scheduled for October 30th at 9:30am in the MDOT Secretary’s Office located in Hanover, MD. The meeting five date is still being scheduled but is tentatively set for November 20th at 1:00pm.
 4. Delegate Edelson acknowledged that public input would be good before moving to the Interim Report.
 5. Chair Sidh introduced the Public Policy Participation for approval to the Workgroup. Chair Sidh made a motion to approve the policy. Delegate Korman provided a second. **The policy was approved, effective 10/9/2025.**
3. Briefings
 1. Ms. Minilla Malhorta, Deputy Administrator and Chief Administrative Officer, MTA – MTA Workforce Considerations Presentation
 - i. Ms. Malhorta provided an overview of MTA’s workforce and its collective bargaining agreements.
 - ii. Chair Sidh asked if there was a direct collective bargaining agreement (CBA) relationship between the contracted services – like MARC and Mobility – at the MTA directly. Ms. Malhorta stated no, outside of certain call center operations for mobility services.

- iii. Chair Sidh noted that MTA has its own Procurement Office. He asked if MTA could provide additional context involved in the contract final selection and review process with the Secretary's Office (TSO). Ms. Malhorta noted that a full procurement packet is provided to MDOT before it is sent to the Board of Public Works.
- iv. Mr. Mitchell asked that with the agreement terms expiring in 2026 for some CBAs, if the renewal process could be described. Ms. Malhorta noted that the process would start in earnest now in fall 2025. Mr. Mitchell followed up asking if the agreement terms will be the same. Ms. Malhorta responded noting that the last period was a 4-year term. Mr. Mitchell noted that the term is in fact subject to negotiation.
- v. Delegate Edelson asked how MTA's procurement is different than other modes at MDOT. Ms. Malhorta noted that MDOT review components are similar, however she stated that MTA's contracts tend to be large dollar and complex triggering BPW review. Ms. Arnold also noted that other MDOT modes have certain delegated contract authority. Delegate Korman asked if there was dollar amount threshold. **Mr. Laria asked if the volume of SHA contracts that are exempt from BPW could be shared with the Workgroup.**
- vi. Mr. Mitchell asked if salaries are set by MDOT's salary structure. Ms. Malhorta noted that compensation is set at MDOT level for Transportation Service Human Resources (TSHR) subject individuals, however the CBAs themselves govern the salary structure for unionized workforces. Ms. Arnold noted that MTA's unionized salary rates are generally in line with national transit salary rates.
- vii. Chair Sidh asked about administrative support on statewide and Baltimore services. For example, Human Resources or procurement, do those offices correspond to a specific MTA mode. Ms. Malhorta noted that those functions are not limited to a specific MTA mode or region. Ms. Arnold noted for example that contract officers work on healthcare contracts as well as MARC ones. Ms. Malhorta noted that cross training is very important to the success and resiliency of MTA.
- viii. Mr. Laria asked if the CBAs are assignable. Ms. Arnold noted that for certain CBAs, state law prevents assignability and cautioned that any changes should be well thought out. Mr. Laria noted that there is a certain cost-benefit to all potential decisions in front of the Workgroup. What does reopening these contracts mean?
- ix. Delegate Korman asked about the federal 13(c) requirements. Ms. Malhorta noted that MTA would have to ensure compliance with any potential structure or mode changes. Delegate Korman noted that the point of 13(c) was to ensure that transit workforces remained unionized. In Maryland at the state-level, he did not believe there was a current desire to change that.

2. Mr. Mike Kelly, BRTB, BMC Governance Studies Presentation

- i. Chair Sidh observed that the slides noted that MTA governance is a bit of anomaly nationally. He asked how many of the organizations that BMC looked at nationally were an authority structure or within a state agency. Mr. Kelly noted that it was roughly a 50/50% split. Mr. Laria noted that the primary difference is the ability to independently raise revenue, Mr. Sidh noted that, that was exactly what he was trying to get at.
- ii. Mr. Laria noted that the first bill to create the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission did have budget authority originally, but it was negotiated out.
- iii. Mr. Korman asked how the BRTC is working. Mr. Kelly noted that the BRTC is working well overall and has been an effective advocate for MTA funding. However, the current dynamic does not allow for the input that an authority would have, by comparison. Mr. Laria noted that BRTC has made a difference in calling attention to key issues, but at the end of the day, it does not have ultimate authority over budget or staff. Mr. Korman stated that there is obviously a limit on your powers, however can the BRTC work, structurally, to compel information, especially if there were a more hostile one to transit in general. Mr. Laria noted that a more hostile Administration could hurt progress made to date. The Red Line decision, for example, BRTC could not have stopped that decision.
- iv. Mr. Korman noted that for WMATA, the local governments in Northern Virginia paid for an infill station at Potomac Yards. He asked if that model is what BMC's reports suggest, governance and revenue. Mr. Kelly stated yes.
- v. Delegate Edelson asked if the group today decided to move forward on a state-Regional Transit Authority (RTA) model could a high-level overview be provided on what would need to occur. Mr. Kelly stated the first objective would be that it would not disrupt the current operations of the MTA. Then it is a question of legislation and form. Mr. Kelly said it could take the form of a governance board with certain budget powers or executive oversight powers, for example.
- vi. Delegate Edelson asked if MTA's current structure holding it back from providing great service in Baltimore. Hypothetically, could a board just be created for Baltimore-area services. Mr. Kelly responded stating that the initial legislation propose the BRTC be structured that exact way.
- vii. Delegate Edelson noted that while the Workgroup's charge is not revenue, it is impossible to just ignore that question. The Transportation Trust Fund cannot support two major transit systems that both want to grow as currently structured. Mr. Kelly stated that a state-controlled RTA would create more parity in our regions and could help advance the local revenue discussion. Mr. Laria stated that he did not intend to target WMATA, but a state-controlled RTA is not really parity with WMATA.
- viii. Chair Sidh noted that there seems to be a consensus on governance reform and improvements within the Workgroup. Mr. Laria noted that

governance is important, but it is hard to divorce it from revenue. Chair Sidh noted that when contemplating an adjusted governance model, it will not wall off revenue discussions from occurring.

- ix. Delegate Korman just wanted to point out that WMATA also does not have dedicated and sustainable revenue sources. Mr. Kelly clarified that he only intended to point out its board structure, not revenues.
- x. Mr. Mitchell asked if there are also other authority structures, outside of transit, that the Workgroup could evaluate. Mr. Kelly noted that within MDOT there are diverse structures. But looking around the country, there is not one-size-fits-all approach.
- xi. Delegate Edelson noted that one of the difficulties that he has is that, when it comes to MTA's budget, it is hard to ultimately know where the dollars go. And that is a structural issue. He asked if a state-controlled RTA would assist in this structural problem. Mr. Kelly stated that an empowered board would be able to assist.
- xii. Mr. Mitchell asked would a state-controlled RTA structure assist in predictable funding for planning. Mr. Kelly noted that there has been legislative mechanisms to provide funding for specific purposes in the past.

- 3. Ms. Holly Arnold, MTA, Meeting Two Follow-up Presentation
 - i. No questions from the Workgroup.

4. Other Business

- 1. Chair Sidh moved to other business.
- 2. Chair Sidh introduced to the Workgroup a question of what problem(s) it is attempting to solve. He stated that Mr. Kelly's chart, which shows the growth of transit expansion in the Washington-area versus the Baltimore region, is one given that the Baltimore-area has not realized a real expansion project in 30+ years. Chair Sidh proposed that the Workgroup should propose governance reform to ensure the Baltimore region is in greater control of transit expansion proposals. He said key questions to answer would be, should the BRTC be enhanced, what is the membership of this board, and what are its responsibilities.
- 3. Delegate Edelson stated that the problem to solve in his mind is that despite strong staff at MDOT and MTA, we are still far from the system that we need for the Baltimore region. And a significant piece of that is due to the structure of the MTA. He stated that it is not a capital-region vs Baltimore discussion. He stated that part of the problem statement should be how we prevent a decision like the cancellation of the Red Line project from happening again, which includes local representation at the table.
- 4. Chair Sidh also noted the legislation notes for a study of the creation of a statewide transit service and asked Delegate Korman if he could provide some of his legislative intent.
 - i. Delegate Korman noted that MARC service, in a recent Trains Magazine article, received an F-grade for inefficient costs and ridership not fully

recovering from the pandemic. He noted the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) received a B-grade. Delegate Korman stated that he thinks the MARC service is not living up to its potential.

5. Delegate Edelson noted that meeting four could be an opportunity to discuss solutions and a way forward.
 6. Chair Sidh noted that ATU Local 1300 provided the Workgroup with a memo and it is available in the meeting materials packet.
5. Adjournment.
1. Chair Sidh moved to adjourn the meeting. Delegate Edelson provided a second.
There was no discussion and the motion to adjourn carried unanimously.