



# Howard County Office of Transportation

## Recent & Near-Term Initiatives

Spring 2023

# Office of Transportation: Responsibilities and Accomplishments – FY 2024

## Responsibilities: Program Areas

### ❖ ***Regional and Comprehensive Planning***

- Managing Planning Studies Funded by MPO
- MDOT and SHA Corridor Studies and Priority Projects
- Roadway Safety Plan and Monitoring Coordination

### ❖ ***Bike and Pedestrian Program***

- Development and Implementation of Masterplans
- Community Engagement on Planning Projects
- E-scooter Permit Program

### ❖ ***Transit Operations, Coordination and Oversight***

- Grant Management and Reporting for Operations, Bus Replacements and Bus Stops
- Service monitoring and improvement

## Current Year/Next Year Accomplishments

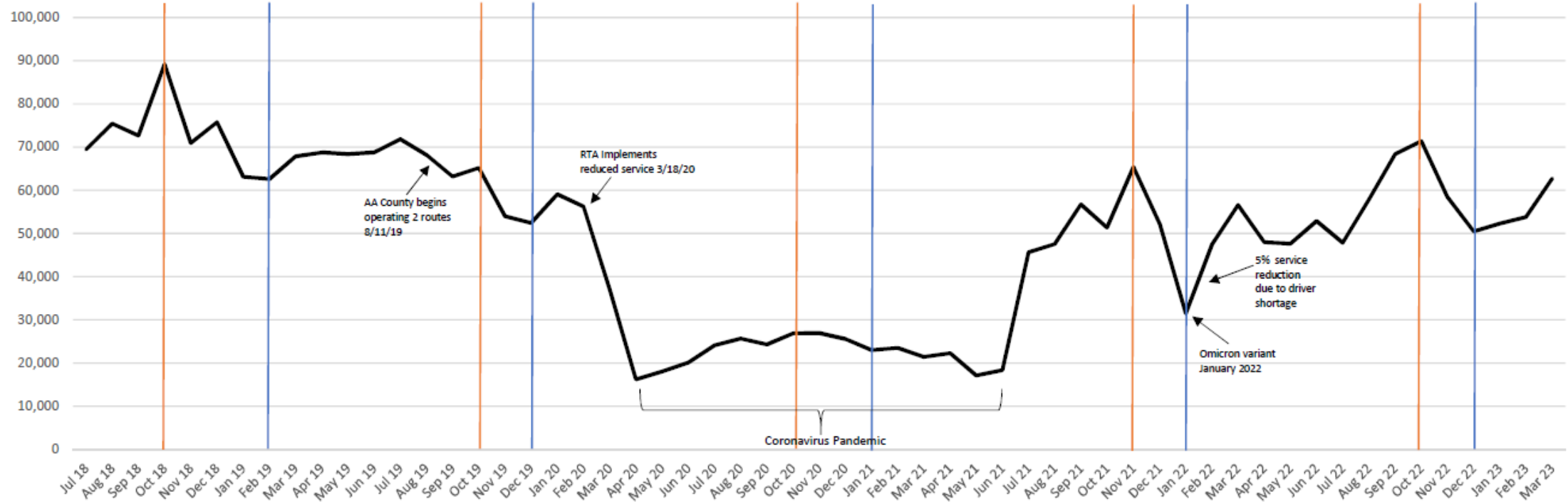
- Award Next Transit Management Contract for RTA
- Eliminate Unfunded Bus Replacement Backlog for RTA
- Update Complete Streets related Land Use and Subdivision Regulations and initiate Transportation Master Plan
- Update County 5 -Year Transit Development Plan
- Deploy Bus Technology Improvements
- Secure Grant funding to continue US 1 Safety Improvements
- Implement Recommendations from US 1 Small Area Transit Plan by piloting on-demand transit service with State grant and enhancing Rte 409 Service for Elkrige

# Improving Transit in the RTA Service Area

- **Ridership Trends**
- **Fleet Reliability/Replacement Buses**
- **Workforce**
- **Service Modifications and Expansion**
- **Technology/Customer Service Improvements**
- **Planning for New Services and Service Improvements**

# RTA Ridership FY19 – FY 23

Monthly Fixed-Route Ridership  
July 2018 - March 2023



Fall ridership peak  
Winter ridership dip

RTA Monthly Ridership has returned to pre-pandemic levels of over 60,000

# Fleet Reliability / Replacement Buses

## FY 20 - FY 29 Revenue Vehicle Replacement Plan

Vehicle Types	Current Fleet	Vehicle Replacements Ordered, Received, and Planned										Proposed Fleet
		FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23*	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	
Heavy and medium-duty buses	38	8	3	2	8	4	4	4	4	3	3	43
Light-duty cutaways	21			9	2	5						16
Sedans	8	4	2		2							8
Vans	5						5					5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>72</b>

\* current year

### Notes:

- 11 medium duty buses (ordered FY 20 & 21) delivered Spring 2023
- 6 sedans (ordered FY 20 & 21) delivered Summer 2022
- 2 medium duty buses (ordered FY 22) to be delivered Fall 2023
- FY 23 order for 10 medium & light duty buses to be placed 5/19/23, when MTA procurement opens
- 2 sedans (ordered FY 23) to be delivered Fall 2023

Ordered and received

Ordered but not yet received

To be ordered

# RTA Workforce Retention & Recruitment



December 2021: Driver hiring and retention efforts included increased salaries , signing and retention bonuses.

In-house CDL Driver training and testing program was implemented to enlarge pool of candidates.

Improved working conditions (see picture)

Since January 2022, 63 drivers have been hired. 86% of operator positions have been filled.

# Service Modifications & Expansion

## Free Fares for Howard Community College, High School and Middle School Students (Fall '22)

### Improvements to Laurel Service – IMPLEMENTED WINTER '22 – '23

- 301 provides service to Main Street Laurel and South Laurel Drive communities
- 302 has a unified route pattern serving Greenbelt, Beltsville, Muirkirk and Laurel 7 days/week
- 502 extends service further south to Contee Road & west to Laurel Lakes.

### Expanding Service along US 40 – TO BE IMPLEMENTED SUMMER '23

- 405 to become circulator service in Ellicott City, expanding westward to Pine Orchard Lane & connecting with the new 505 at Walmart on N. Ridge Rd.
- 505 will connect Columbia and Ellicott City and provide expanded service east to Catonsville to provide a new transfer to the LocalLink 77 and CityLink Purple

### Expanding Service to serve Elkridge – TO BE IMPLEMENTED SUMMER '24

- 409 enhancement to either extend to Halethorpe and Lansdowne or otherwise improve service along the US 1 Corridor (public comment will be sought).

**Evaluating RTA Routes Serving Public High Schools** - to adjust schedules where possible with existing fleet and staffing and determine cost of highest priority enhancements

# Technology/Customer Service Improvements



- RTA has partnered with Hopthru, which provides Automated Passenger Count (APC) processing for National Transit Database (NTD) validation and certification
- No more triennial Passenger Mile Sampling surveys!
- Hopthru also provides detailed ridership analysis to improve service planning
- RTA is procuring an automated bus stop annunciator system with partner Waysine
- The system will utilize the established GTFS-RF
- The GTFS-RF will automatically update eliminating the need for manual updates.

# Technology/Customer Service Improvements

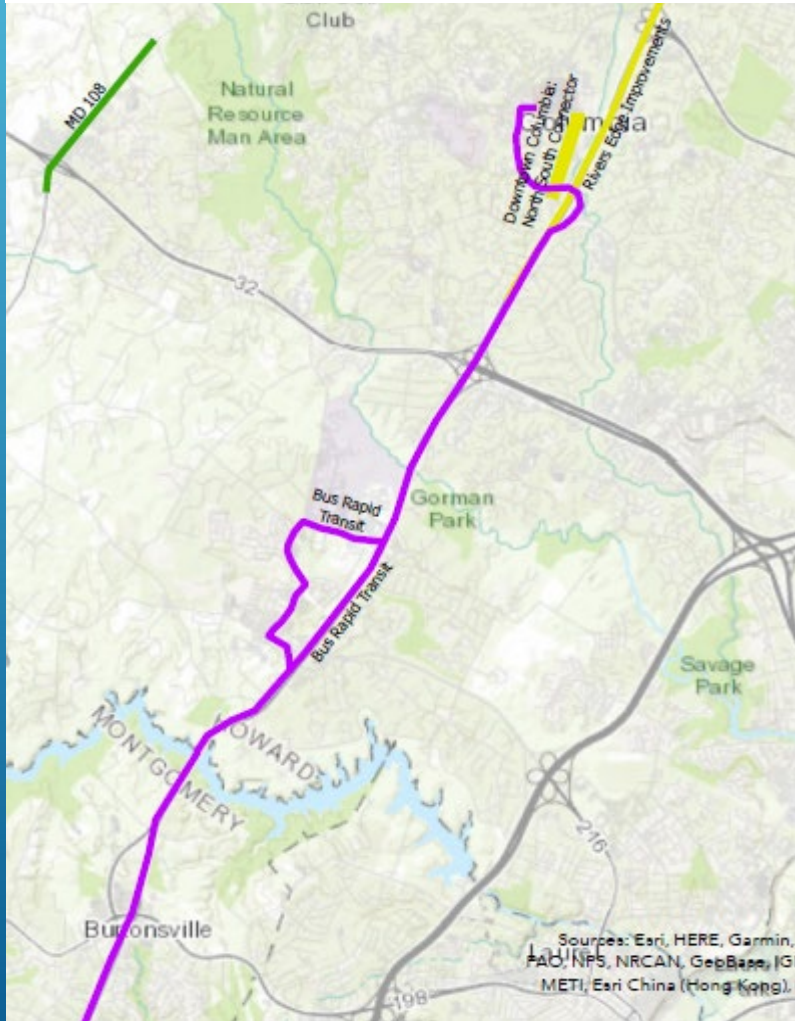


The image shows a composite of three screenshots from the RTA mobile application. The leftmost screenshot is the home screen, featuring a map and a "Where to?" search bar. Below the search bar, there are three route options: 404 (Hickory Ridge Village Center, 7 minutes), 401 (Clary's Forest, 8 minutes), and 503 (Towne Centre Laurel, 3 minutes). A "BUY TICKET" button is visible at the bottom. A dashed arrow points from this screenshot to the middle screenshot with the text: "Home screen will now include a 'ticketing bar'". The middle screenshot shows the "Fare type" section with a "General" option (Full price without discount) and a list of "Available fares": "1-Way / 90 Minute Pass" for \$2.00, "Day Pass" for \$5.00, and "Monthly Pass" for \$40.00. A dashed arrow points from this screenshot to the rightmost screenshot with the text: "Riders can easily browse all the passes available for purchase". The rightmost screenshot shows a digital ticket display with the RTA logo, "Current Time 3:09:34 PM", "2 Tickets", and "1-Way / 90 Minute Pass" which "Expires Sep 17, 4:24 PM". A dashed arrow points from this screenshot to the text: "Tickets display with security features, riders simply show their phone to operator".

On-board fare validators will improve RTA's fare collection method. By Summer 2023, RTA's new touchless fare validators will be installed in all fixed route vehicles improving the efficiency of boarding for passengers and decreasing dwell time at bus stops.

# Planning and Grant Funding for New Services

## US 29 Corridor in Howard & Montgomery Counties



## FY 2024- FY2025 Grant Supported Initiatives

### Bus Rapid Transit



- Extending current Montgomery County FLASH service north from Burtonsville to Columbia
- 4 buses & 3 new stops
- Peak hour service
- Anticipated start date – FY 26

### On-Demand Micro-Transit



- Pilot program to be funded with a combination of local \$ and State grant funds
- Will serve the US 1 Corridor
- 3 vehicles operating per day
- Anticipated start date – FY 24

# Planning for New Services/Service Improvements

Regional Transportation Agency  
of Central Maryland

## Transit Development Plan

Central Maryland Transportation  
and Mobility Commission  
Multimodal Transportation Board

Informational Presentation  
December 13, 2022



Project Tasks	2022				2023					
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1 Initiate the Plan		TM								
2 Existing Conditions				TM						
3 Community Outreach						TM				
4 System Alternatives							TM			
5 Develop Conceptual Plan									TM	
6 Draft & Final Plan										F



- New Fixed Routes
- Increased Frequency
- Customer Service Improvements
- Mobility/Paratransit Improvements
- Zero Emission Fleet Transition Considerations
- Bus Stop Improvements

TDP to be submitted to Council for Adoption in Fall 2023