

# Phase 2 Engagement Summaries

Three rounds of outreach and engagement activities were held over the course of the Transit Development Plan Update study. Each round corresponded to a key inflection point in the project. The second round of outreach and engagement began in August 2023 with a focus on gathering input from current riders and BARTA/RRTA stakeholders on the ways they use transit, reasons for riding, opinions on current service, and priorities for future service. The second round of outreach and engagement included the following elements:

- Two in-person public meetings held in Reading and Lancaster, and two virtual public meetings held via Microsoft Teams but focused on the BARTA and RRTA service areas, respectively.
- In-person focus-group meetings held with BARTA and RRTA stakeholders, respectively. Attendees included representatives from local planning departments, universities, and other city and county staff members.

The input collected in the second round of outreach and engagement helped inform the assessment of current service and the development of preliminary service improvement scenarios for BARTA and RRTA.

# 1. BARTA PUBLIC Meeting #2

## Summary

**August 22, 2023; 5:30pm – 7:00pm**

PARTICIPANTS: 42

### General Comments and Questions

- Based on the input you receive, will you revise the plan?
- The lack of information on Google Transit is a barrier to riding BARTA. It is difficult to find information about bus routes, bus stops, and schedule information to help plan a ride.
- The BARTA bus finder app is not reliable and is not always accurate in terms of areas that are served.
- The BARTA fare payment card does not work on all buses. The fare payment app also does not always work.
- On-time performance is an issue, especially on the weekends.
- Support for bus service 24 hours a day and more service on Sundays.
- The more you advertise, the more ridership you will get.
- Did the analysis consider missed trips due to driver shortages? Is the percentage of the missed trips known and documented?
- Concerns about the lack of communication, particularly with drivers. How were the drivers notified that this planning was being done? How were drivers made aware of the listening session? How many drivers provided input? The Union is interested in a meeting.

### Microtransit Comments and Questions

- Would microtransit be an option for different hours?
- How would microtransit zones be determined?
- Will microtransit vehicles be ADA accessible?
- Will microtransit take ridership away from paratransit?
- Would the fare for microtransit be the same as the BARTA fare? Could you use a BARTA fare card? Could you use cash?
- Concern that microtransit will take ridership and funding away from fixed route service.
- Concern that microtransit will be a contracted service and BARTA will pay a private company to operate the service.
- Concern that microtransit does not address the need for more drivers and more frequent service.
- Concern that microtransit will create a 2 or 3 seat ride for passengers.

## Route 1

- There is overcrowding on this route. More frequent service is needed, especially during later hours.

## Route 17

- Some participants said that the Jamestown area needs more transit service while others said there were no issues.
- Possibly add a traffic signal on Route 183 to support the bus turning movements.

## Route 4

- Sidewalks along 11<sup>th</sup> Street are in poor condition. Bus stops are not accessible.
- For the bus stop at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Douglas Street, trucks are regularly parking in the bus stop to provide deliveries to an adjacent business.

## Route 8

- Birdsboro area does not have good connections to the City of Reading. Need to offer more bus service and more frequent service. Need service on the weekends.
- Will the service be more frequent? Currently, there are significant gaps in the service, making it difficult to use transit.
- Why is the route called “Birdsboro” when it only goes to Wal-Mart?
- If you are already running fixed route service, why not just extend the route.

## Other Comments and Questions

- Where can a rider go to find out if a bus has been cancelled?
- When there is construction, there is no information for riders or drivers about changes in routes or stops.
- Support for increasing the salaries of bus operators, which might encourage drivers to work more hours.
- Concern about BARTA’s care for employees and support for higher pay for operators.
- Support for more security, monitoring, and cleaning of the bathrooms in the Transportation Center. Suggestion to consider taking down the partitions.

# 2. BARTA Stakeholder Meeting #2 Summary

August 22, 2023; 9am – 11am

PARTICIPANTS: 16

Table 8: BARTA STAKEHOLDER MEETING ATTENDEES (Not including SCTA and consultant team Staff)

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION
Edward	Granger	Abilities in Motion
Emily	Smedley	Berks County Community Foundation
Michael	Golembiewski	Berks County Planning Commission/RATS
Alan	Piper	Berks County Planning Commission/RATS
Kathleen	Stone	Berks County Re-entry
Lori	Stoudt	Berks County Re-entry
Noel	Acosta	City of Reading
Donna	Reed	City of Reading
Felix	Freytiz	City of Reading
Bethany	Ayers Fisher	City of Reading
Matt	Boyer	Commuter Services of Pennsylvania
Jeanne	Johnston	Cumru Township
Michael	Toledo	Hispanic Center of Reading and Berks County
Maria	Mitchell	RACC
Jack	Knockstead	Reading Housing Authority
Johanny	Cepeda-Freytiz	State Representative

## General Comments and Questions

- Public transportation is vital for safety, quality of life, and job creation/pathways to careers. Transportation impacts quality of life and opportunities. Safety is a significant concern of the Hispanic community.
  - Concerns about transportation before/after school, particularly at the Reading High School. Suggested moving the bus stop closer to 13<sup>th</sup> Street at Hampden Boulevard and Spring Street to disperse kids and help alleviate fighting/violence after school.
  - Access to jobs is important. For example, the casino in Morgantown is an employment center, but employees need to have their own transportation to work there.
  - The Hispanic Center is willing to host a meeting related to the TDP to assist with outreach to Hispanic community members.
- RACC students are using private taxis. Microtransit could be attractive for students. Transportation is a barrier to education. Cost is also important. Microtransit would give students more flexibility. RACC is willing to help to promote the survey.

- Is there an opportunity to provide a link to Pottstown?
  - Response noted that a connection to Pottstown is not included in either scenario. This could be a longer-term option.
- Does the plan include a link between BARTA/Reading and RRTA/Lancaster?
  - Response noted that a connection between BARTA and RRTA is not included in either scenario because it was not identified as having a high demand. This could be a longer-term option.
- Once decisions are made about changes for routes, there will be a need to educate communities on the options.
- The previous TDP included a concept of hubs outside of the downtown. Is this concept included in the TDP scenarios? In particular, Sinking Spring Borough has been supportive of the concept.
  - Response noted that the scenarios do include hubs, specifically to support connections between fixed route services and microtransit. Some may be like the previous TDP, but some are different. The potential hubs identified were based on potential destinations that people want to go, such as a grocery store. The scenarios do not include anything specific for a mobility hub in Sinking Spring, but it could be evaluated as part of the Route 14 options.
- Policy question related to transfers outside of the transit center.

## Microtransit Comments and Questions

- In Scenario 2 with larger microtransit zones, will more transit vehicles be needed?
  - Response noted that there are typically at least two vehicles per zone and sometimes there are increased fares for longer trips on microtransit.
- Does microtransit have to tie into fixed route?
  - Response noted that it depends on the transit agency. Some agencies have rules on how the zones are set up. Some zones have a connection to fixed route services, but some zones may be separate.
- Have there been studies on the financial side of microtransit? Is it more expensive?
  - Response noted that microtransit typically costs more, but it offers other benefits and it can be more effective than fixed route.
- Microtransit still must overcome typical challenges with transit. The public information and marketing are important.
- Will microtransit only be available within designated zones?
  - Response confirmed that microtransit would only be available in the designated zones.
- Today, seniors can ride some transit services for free. Will they be able to use microtransit and will it be free?
  - Response noted that that can be part of the fare structure. Also, some paratransit riders are earlier adopters for microtransit.

## Route 10

- Concerns about service to Brookline neighborhood and Oakbrook Homes.
- In Scenario 2, would it be possible to serve the new grocery store on Lancaster Avenue?

# Routes 17 and 18

- Concern about service to Jamestown Village and Glenside Apartments, including for people who may have mobility limitations.

# 3. RRTA Public Meeting #2

## Summary

August 23, 2023; 5:30pm – 7pm

PARTICIPANTS: 26

### General Comments and Questions

- What is the goal for this process? It should be to build ridership.
- How long does it take to implement these concepts?
- If it is not broken, it does not need to be fixed.
- Some of the changes are excellent.
- Many people think that the bus is not for everyone.
- Marketing and promotion are needed to get people to ride the bus.
- Lancaster has a growing senior community. With some promotion, you can get more seniors to ride the bus.
- A lot of the system seems to be focused on jobs and commercial centers. There is no service on Sunday mornings to church.
- Have there been any discussions about increasing funding for bus service in Lancaster?
- There is a big parking lot being developed on the north side of the Lancaster train station.
- Concerned about replacing fixed route with microtransit and having ridership decrease.
- Cannot do a complete outer loop, but maybe could link some of the boroughs with a fixed route.
- Can the ads be removed from the windows of buses?
- For bi-directional, sometimes it is difficult to get across the street.
- Concerns about route changes and longer distances to walk to stops and lack of pedestrian infrastructure to access stops. Lancaster Shopping Center was mentioned as an area that is not friendly for pedestrians.
- Is there consideration for adding bus lanes?
- Is there consideration for a connection to York?
- Is there consideration for access to the new Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center? Access is critical for public health.
- **Scenario 1**
  - Would microtransit be limited to those areas on the maps?
  - The hub and spoke system is frustrating. In Scenario 1, could there be a band of microtransit that connects the end of the lines?
- **Scenario 2**



- Scenario 2 appears to be disastrous.
- Does that mean the County routes do not exist?
- Has the fare structure been developed? Could you have a pass that allows transfers between microtransit and fixed route services?

## Microtransit Questions and Comments

- If I take microtransit, do I get picked up at my house? Where can I take it? Are there places to connect to fixed route services?
- In both scenarios, does microtransit only operate within the zone?
- For microtransit, are there goals regarding how long the wait would be? If someone is trying to plan ahead, is there a way to schedule it in advance?
- Is it similar to Access (paratransit) for non-disabled members of the community?
- Will every microtransit vehicle have a wheelchair lift?
- Will microtransit vehicles be able to carry bicycles?
- Would microtransit be initiated as a pilot? Could it be evaluated?

## Route 1

- Can you explain “bi-directional”?
- Would there still be service to the Lancaster General Women and Babies Hospital?
- Could you do Scenario 1 and 2?

## Route 4

- There is a need for the connection between the Shoppes at Belmont and the shopping center near Wal-Mart.

## Route 5

- Why are there multiple buses that go to the northern Wal-Mart?
- Does it serve the train station? Would it be more frequent than the existing Route 6?
- Will buses still serve Golden Triangle?

## Route 6

- It is great for getting to and from the train station.
- Will any other routes serve CareerLink? Access is not as good today.
- Will service be maintained to the park-n-ride?

## Route 12

- How will Grandview Heights be served?
- The revised route goes on Rutledge Avenue, which is a busier street and does not serve the apartment complex (Calvary Homes) or Lancaster Catholic High School.
- Even though it is not bi-directional now, it comes so frequently that it works.

## Route 15

- Why does the route deviate to Save-a-Lot? There is a large school behind Save-a-Lot.
- Willow Street is a growing area.

## Route 17 and 117

- Can you explain 117? Will it require a transfer? It will be a great way to access the rail trail.
- Is there consideration for a connection to York?
- Is there service to the industrial park?

# 4. RRTA Stakeholder Meeting #2 Summary

August 23, 2023; 9am – 11am

PARTICIPANTS: 19

Table 9: RRTA STAKEHOLDER MEETING ATTENDEES (Not including SCTA AND consultant team Staff)

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION
Douglas	Smith	City of Lancaster
Emma	Hamme	City of Lancaster
Byant	Heng	City of Lancaster
Stephen	Campbell	City of Lancaster
Cindy	McCormick	City of Lancaster
Matt	Boyer	Commuter Services
Diane	Garber	East Hempfield Township
Tara	Hitchens	East Lampeter Township
Ralph	Hutchison	East Lampeter Township
Nicole	Gonzalez	Elizabethtown College
Amanda	Dioszeghy	Eurofins
Katharine	DeSantis	Lancaster Chamber
Marshall	Snively	Lancaster City Alliance
Gary	Jones	Lancaster County Planning Department
Anthony	Vallone	Manheim Township
Nathan	Van Name	Manheim Township
Timothy	Bianchi	Thaddeus Stevens College
Hannah	Hoover	Water Street Mission / Health Services

## General Comments and Questions

- Was the Walnut Street Extension taken into consideration? It includes a new two-lane road from the U.S. 30/Walnut Street interchange to a roundabout intersection with an extended Ben Franklin Boulevard connecting to Greenfield Road.
- Can the potential hubs be shown on the maps?

## Microtransit Comments and Questions

- For microtransit, do trips have to connect to fixed route services?
  - Response noted that it works best if microtransit serves a mix of destinations including connections to fixed route services.
- What is the timing of the microtransit compared to fixed route services?
  - Response noted that detailed schedules have not been developed yet. SCTA/RRTA’s priority in developing service improvements is to serve existing riders (and areas).

- Was microtransit considered as a way to provide transit in off hours, such as late night?
  - Response noted that some communities do deploy microtransit to extend hours. For RRTA, extending hours would likely be a longer-term strategy due to additional costs.
- Support for microtransit, particularly in downtown. With microtransit, there is the ability to identify where there is demand for transit service.
  - Response noted that microtransit is often used to introduce a new service and can be transitioned to a fixed route service once travel patterns are developed.
- Can you provide both fixed route and microtransit as overlapping services?
- Is microtransit app based?
  - Response noted that it is app based, but calling in to schedule a trip is also typically an option.
- Microtransit provides opportunities for access to both new areas and new riders.
- When you present to the public, be sure to present that a microtransit service could be overwhelmed very quickly.
- Why is Millersville not served by microtransit, particularly in Scenario 2?
  - Response noted that the area can support fixed route service.

## Service in Downtown Lancaster

- Why is ridership low for the Route 6 (Downtown Lancaster Circulator)?
- Route 6 is not a circulator. Does the scope include evaluating whether there is a market for a circulator service downtown?
  - Response noted that the final report can document some of the challenges and current trends associated with circulator services.
- The bi-directional routes help to address some of the issues/challenges.
- Was there any thought of providing an east-west circulator (or wider loop) that would serve F&M and some senior housing areas?
- The downtown is growing, which may generate more demand for trips across town.
- Interested in attracting and serving choice riders.
- In Scenario 2, can you take a microtransit trip from the Lancaster – East Side zone to the Northern zone?
  - Response noted that this would require two transfers.

## Route 12

- Concern with losing fixed route service in Scenario 2. It is important to connect downtown to employment centers, including Eurofins.

## Route 15

- Willow Valley has their own transit service.

## Service in East Hempfield Area (Route 18)

- Is there is a reason that service was not provided to East Hempfield area, particularly in Scenario 1? Were previous requests for service forwarded and considered in the planning process?
- Is there service proposed to the new Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center located on State

Road at Harrisburg Pike?

- Response noted that it is not served in Scenario 1, but it is covered in the microtransit zone in Scenario 2.
- In Scenario 1, would it be possible to add a microtransit zone in the new Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center?

## Service to Elizabethtown (Route 118)

- How will Elizabethtown College be served?
  - Response noted that secondary hubs are envisioned with microtransit.

# 5. BARTA VIRTUAL PUBLIC Meeting #2 Summary

September 6, 2023; 5:30pm – 7:00pm

PARTICIPANTS: 16

## General Questions and Comments

- Maps online are not accessible for blind persons who use screen reading software. *(Response noted that the Route-by-Route Maps include text descriptions of the route.)*
- How long will surveys/route suggestions on website be available? *(Response noted the survey responses will be gathered through the end of September.)*
- Has the County Workforce Development Board participated in any conversations regarding these proposed routes? *(Response noted that Dan Fogarty was invited to the stakeholder meeting on 8/22/23, but did not attend.)*
- Has Walmart been made aware of the potential for their property to possibly become a default transfer station? Any idea if they would like or not like this?
- Any plans for either bus transportation or microtransit to service Morgantown area, including the hotel and casino?

## Microtransit Questions and Concerns

- For microtransit, what is the advance notice or time ahead to schedule a trip?
- How is microtransit the same or different from a ride share service, such as Uber or Lyft?

## Service to Mohnton (Routes 11 and 12)

- Plant manager at Pladis (11 Main Street, Mohnton) concerned about access for employees to work. *(Response noted that Scenario 2 – Route 12 would continue service to this location.)*
- Concern about the Mohnton area being without a bus route (in the case that Route 11 is changed or eliminated and Scenario 2 - Route 12 is not chosen). Many residents in the area rely on public transit service to access jobs and resources.
- Concern that Route 12 would disconnect Mohnton from the surrounding community because it will remove access to the Governor Mifflin School Campus and Giant grocery store.
- Is there demand for service to the Highlands since higher-income residents have access to either their own cars or shuttle services provided by the Highlands?

## Route 20

- Would Route 20 end at the Redner's or Ashley Furniture?

# 6. RRTA VIRTUAL PUBLIC Meeting #2 Summary

September 7, 2023; 5:30pm – 7:00pm

PARTICIPANTS: 17

## General Comments and Questions

- Frequency of service and hours of service is very important, especially for low-income, minority, and immigrant communities.
- Support and request for service to Adamstown and Denver, particularly to serve the factories around the Turnpike and 222. There is no service to this area shown in either scenario.
- Concern that a bus route was eliminated in favor of a city route. Concern about reaching Lancaster with no service between the microtransit border and city routes.

## Microtransit Comments and Questions

- Has there been any discussion of microtransit in outer boroughs? Has there been any discussions about an outer bus loop?
- Do you have a clear outline for when microtransit may transition to a fixed route service?
- How will people know about the RRTA microtransit service?
- How is microtransit similar/different from a rider share service, such as Uber or Lyft?
- What is the potential fare for microtransit?
- Has a tiered price approach been considered to allow for more fixed routes, while allowing for the flexibility of microtransit regions? (Could include connections between microtransit zones for an additional fee.) Could there be a price differential for microtransit?
- Will microtransit vehicles be ADA accessible?
- Will bikes be allowed on the microtransit vehicles?
- Would there be a pilot of microtransit to assess feasibility before committing to this type of model? (For example, starting with microtransit service in one borough.)
- Is there a city/county that already has microtransit service and RRTA could learn from?
- Is it expected to have Sunday service for microtransit in areas that fixed routes do not run on a Sunday?
- If frequency and hours of operation for microtransit are similar to fixed route, it will continue to be a challenge to serve lower income people who work at early or late jobs.
- In Scenario 1, can you request access from one microtransit zone to another microtransit zone without switching vehicles?
- In Scenario 2, how will a Lancaster City resident to get out to a region only served by microtransit?

- For Scenario 2 and the more expansive microtransit zone, would there be a capital cost to purchase the vehicles?
- How will Amish riders who don't have a cell phone access microtransit service? This is particularly a concern for Route 12 in Scenario 2.
- RRTA should advocate for regulation of rideshare services to formalize where they can stop for passengers in the urban environments, and on the county level, ask for a fee per trip for all private rideshares equal to a regular RRTA fare to help bolster the funds for public transport. Bus stops should double as the required urban pickup areas for rideshare instead of any address.
- Support for microtransit, but concern that there are a lot of benefits to the fixed route service that microtransit isn't able to provide. There are lower density suburbs/rural areas with very congested arterials (like Marietta Avenue.) That increases traffic, but also impacts public health through rider activity, air quality, climate impacts, etc.

## Route 7

- There is a development being built on Charles Road near St. Joes that may shift your perspective on serving density for Route 7.

## Route 10 and Route 110

- What are the differences in Scenario 1 and 2 for the Route 10/110?

## Route 11

- How will service to Ephrata Area Rehab Services (EARS), located at 300 W Chestnut St #101, Ephrata, be affected by Scenario 1 or 2 on Route 11?

## Route 12

- Support for the new route 12.

## Route 15

- Service in southern part of Lancaster is very important.
- There is a need to provide more frequent service in the South Prince Street area. The existing Route 15 does not have enough frequency to provide service for mothers and children to WIC and CAP. For those that are pregnant or have small kids, it's the only route that goes close enough to the WIC office for Lancaster. There were previous discussions about extending the current Route 6 to provide more service.

## Route 17 and 18

- Is there a reason Mount Joy and Landisville weren't considered for localized microtransit, especially considering the new Penn State location on Harrisburg Pike?

## Millersville

- There appear to be three separate routes servicing Millersville. Can you provide some additional information about the decision to retain those redundancies in the Millersville area? *(Response noted that two of the routes are subsidized by Millersville University.)*