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Page 1: Award Categories

Q1

Directions: Read the descriptions below and select a category for which you would like to make an award nomination.

Community Transportation System of the Year - Large System Defined as providing service in an urban area of more than 50,000 population AND/OR the agency receives 5307 funds. Typical CTAA membership demographics that would apply for this award include our small-urban and tribal transit members. Recognizes a community transportation system for:- Innovative and creative services in the community;- Being responsive to its customers' and community needs;- Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation;- Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals;- Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private;- Providing accessible transportation service;- Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

Page 2: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q2

Innovative and creative services in the community.

Transit Services of Frederick County viewed the pandemic as an opportunity to pause, reflect on service delivery, and make a meaningful plan to improve community engagement, service delivery, and boost team morale.

“Today is the day to try Transit” campaign is a fresh and energized new way to promote the locally operated transit system in Frederick County, Maryland through social media. An award-winning system for operations, Transit’s communications strategy relied for years on the status quo, formal government language and style, and very limited and sanitized interactions with the public. Transit’s reach to riders and community members was limited as a result, and the ability to engage with the community suffered. Projects such as service changes or expansions were advertised in challenging to understand and formal language, and programs such as rideshare didn’t strike a chord with the riding public because of the way these programs were presented.

When a staff transition occurred, new energy was put into outreach to our riders through low-cost approaches as a pilot program to demonstrate the importance of clear, easily accessible information to the riding public. The program was to eliminate “government-ese” formal language to create an engaging place where riders and community members alike could ask honest questions and get an actual answer. This campaign also sought to engage elected officials in a controlled environment, allowing them to advocate and share our information on our behalf through their social media channels which were often more targeted than ours.

Our recent communications efforts encouraged the opportunity for the public to engage in an easy, non-threatening way. For the first time at Transit, the curtain was pulled back and the mysterious and formal government processes were revealed. Discussions were had for the first time around common language used in transit operations, context on why it was challenging to place shelters, and frank feedback about how Transit works in our community (and, importantly, how it can be improved). The key to the success of this campaign was the ability to participate in dialogue, rather than simply directing someone to a website. This allowed Transit staff to collaboratively engage in improving our customer service. This required focus on the team’s part, reinforcing the critical notion that riders were the reason that our team exists. As a direct result of these initiatives, Transit was recognized as the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)’s Social Media and Marketing Award Winner (2023).

Elected officials coming onboard for the beginning of their terms are provided a “Welcome to Transit” introduction which includes a ride onboard a route in their district. This opportunity to directly engage onboard vehicles, while offering the chance to get to know areas and constituents, has been an enormous success for Transit and has allowed more knowledge of the system and its needs. Our elected officials now join us onboard with regularity and help us share information and resources with the community in a streamlined and effective way. As a direct result of these initiatives, Transit has been recognized by Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater for our contributions.

Q3

Being responsive to its customers' and community needs.

Transit Services, in addition to its Today is the Day to Try Transit campaign, kicked off a "You Spoke, We listened!" campaign designed to highlight and directly respond to the feedback raised during outreach to rural communities regarding transportation needs and opportunities for improvement.

How, where, and when people travel across Frederick County has changed significantly, and Transit Services of Frederick County is working to ensure we are nimble and responsive. Community organizations in rural parts of the County had advocated for years for expansion of options, but Transit was unable to accommodate. However, Transit took the opportunity to listen and learn, and was able to identify operational efficiencies within driver schedules. As a result, Transit expanded rural service on two routes, and for the first time, provided Saturday services to these areas. This expanded direct access to Mount St. Mary's University, income limited housing, Frederick Health facilities, and the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg. This also expanded direct access to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, income limited housing, Frederick Health facilities, the Appalachian Trail, and the Potomac River in Brunswick. Finally, this connected seasonal workers to all of the above.

Transit invites other organizations in, especially when service delivery falls short of community expectations. Historically, organizations on the east side of the City of Frederick asked for additional service, but the requests went ignored. In 2023, Transit leadership held a series of listening sessions with these groups, including the Board of Elections, Goodwill Industries, Family Partnership of Frederick County, and Platoon 22 Veterans Services to determine their needs and share opportunities to collaborate. As a direct result of these meetings, Transit re-routed the North Frederick Shuttle to serve these locations hourly from 8:45 am to 5:45 pm, the times that were directly informed by community feedback. In addition, Transit reconfigured another route to free up a driver, allowing the expansion of Saturday service.

Finally, Transit coordinated effectively with the Maryland Transit Administration to better align trip departures with regional transportation options, allowing our riders to seamlessly transfer to the MARC Train and Commuter Bus to continue onto Montgomery County and Washington DC.

As a direct result of these initiatives, Transit was recognized as the winner of the United Way of Frederick County's Advocate of the Year Award (2023).

Q4

Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation.

Transit collaborates with local nonprofit and human services transportation partners, including the Scott Key Center, which provides transportation and support for developmentally disabled adults in the community. During a vehicle shortage, Transit and SKC shared a vehicle to assist one another. In addition, representatives from local 5310 funded agencies participate on Transit's Transportation Services Advisory Council. Transit also supports a work-based learning experience intern with disabilities to share the experience of working for the agency and building confidence on the system. Transit assists other County agencies and private organizations during emergency situations, assisting with transport of passengers when vehicle crashes or breakdowns occur. Transit also supports local first responders, providing evacuation assistance and transport for the Department of Fire and Rescue Services as well as the Department of Emergency Management.

Transit provides significant resources for travel training for community members regardless of disability, and has worked directly with organizations that support people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers to ensure they are aware of transportation services and options in the area. Transit provides these services at no charge and assists federal 5310 and intercity recipients with travel training and wheelchair securement training at our facility. Effective coordination with public and special services transportation in our community ensures safer, more streamlined processes, providing additional opportunities for riders.

Transit's Paratransit Operations Supervisor Madelyn Hayward participated in the 2023-4 Cohort of the Emerging Leaders Academy.

Q5

Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals.

Community organizations were distrustful of Transit due to historical issues – inability to reach staff to resolve problems, a lack of care exhibited by staff, and a general disdain exhibited by those making the planning decisions. New leadership undertook an intensive listening campaign to determine how to build trust, generate engagement, and boost morale for existing team members. The community was invited in for difficult conversations and Transit was willing to find ways to work together to resolve issues. In many cases, small changes were able to address longstanding concerns.

The key to the success of these efforts was the ability to participate in dialogue, rather than simply directing someone to a website or a form. Transit staff, including operators and dispatchers, collaboratively engaged in improving our customer service and directly providing service on the phones, at stops, and onboard our vehicles. This required focus on the team's part, reinforcing the critical notion that riders were the reason that our team exists.

Transit continues to find opportunities to gather people together in informal settings, including at multiple public meetings and open house events, as well as having staff ride the buses and provide outreach directly at our largest transfer facility. This on-the-ground ambassador effort has paid extraordinary dividends, building our rapport with our riders and our operators. We also continue to piggyback on other County and municipal outreach opportunities, allowing us to reach new people in new ways. In addition, the expansion of rural service significantly contributes to the accomplishment of community goals as defined in locally adopted plans, and meeting needs.

As a direct result of these initiatives, Transit's Deputy Director Jaime McKay was recognized as the winner of the Young Professionals In Transportation – International Changemakers in Transportation Award (2023) and the WTS Baltimore Woman of the Year Award (2023).

Q6

Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private.

Transit Services has actively pivoted from operating on an island to engaging the community at large, including other County divisions, local municipalities' staff and elected officials, riders and potential riders, and nonprofit and civic organizations. Transit has representation on the Ride United Network, a program of the United Way that supports transportation options for ALICE (asset-limited, income-constrained, employed) households in Frederick County. Transit also participates in the City of Frederick's Parking Advisory Committee. Transit has representation on the Board of Directors for the Transportation Association of Maryland, or TAM, allowing our agencies further collaboration on training.

Transit shares transportation information for organizations and events Countywide, showing prospective riders that there are options that work for them. Because you can't ride what you can't see, Transit has focused efforts on ensuring that both static and real-time GTFS information are available and accurate for anyone considering riding the bus. In 2023, Transit undertook an intensive effort to update and revive its inaccurate and outdated GTFS and provide real-time tracking for riders. As a direct result of these initiatives, Transit's Data Management Analyst Stephen Bladey was recognized as the winner of the Tech Frederick Techies Unsung Heroes Award (2023).

Transit has also made a deliberate effort to reach people in underserved communities, specifically ALICE, rural, and non-English speaking. Especially in areas along our high-ridership corridors and in rural communities, having information readily available and posted in both English and Spanish is critical to access. The sharing of bilingual Transit information as part of the advertising of local community events, especially those providing resources to these populations, has become part and parcel of the County's approach to providing communications moving forward.

Transit has also created partnerships with organizations that reflect the diversity and strength of our community, including the United Way, Golden Mile Alliance, Asian American Center, Centro Hispano, and others to share information and build community buy-in. Transit has made it a priority to staff our team with community members, including in direct outreach roles. Transit has built a team reflective of the community we serve and has the distinct honor of being the most diverse Division in Frederick County Government. For our efforts to celebrate diversity and partnerships, Fixed Route Operations Supervisor Bill Johnson and Deputy Director Jaime McKay were recognized as Frederick County's Top 50 Empowered Leaders (2023).

Q7

Providing accessible transportation service.

Providing accessible transportation service is an obligation and a duty that Transit Services takes very seriously. As such, Transit developed and is implementing an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) project called "Better Bus Stops and Transfer Facilities" to upgrade accessibility at stops and adjacent to stops along the path of travel, install accessible landing pads at stops, and create public-private partnerships for the installation of benches and shelters at stops. Transit has installed new panels in ten existing shelters, five new shelters, ten benches, and made over 60 stops physically accessible. These accessibility improvements have impacted more than 20% of Transit's stops systemwide.

In May 2023, Transit launched our Adopt-a-Stop Program. Initially launched with a single organization based on Fort Detrick, the program has now expanded to seven stops that span the system. This allows us to work with community partners to identify accessibility considerations throughout our system, whether in the path of travel to a stop or with materials online.

Transit is also engaging more effectively in the community, both in-person and through digital content. In sharing information about how the ramps and lifts work, to demonstrating in person at facilities, to sharing details with other County Divisions, to ensuring the presence of WCAG compliant websites and fully accessible presentations, graphics, and materials, Transit continues to demonstrate our value and commitment to accessibility to our riders and potential riders in new and innovative ways.

Q8

Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

While our paratransit service, Transit-plus, is an effective, accessible demand-response paratransit service for older adults and people with disabilities, operating weekdays from 8 am until 4 pm, demand continues to outpace supply. Frederick County is the fastest growing county in Maryland, and also has the highest population of adults 60+. To better serve our riders and provide transportation alternatives that meet the needs of a wide range of the community, Transit has implemented a Taxi Access Program that is funded through 5307 and builds upon the foundation of the Transit-plus service. This program has become more expensive in recent years due to taxicab commission increases, and instead of passing the buck to users, Transit responded in kind by ensuring rider impact was minimized. When the rates increased, Transit added additional subsidy to TAP users to allow them to continue service uninterrupted. Transit is a member of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Commuter Connections program. Commuter Connections offers an online computerized ridematching service and offer free carpool and vanpool matching to Frederick County commuters. Transit also promotes regional mass transit by providing information on commuter bus and rail service operating in the Frederick area, BayRunner Shuttle, and Greyhound intercity bus. Transit also promotes parking management, telecommuting, flex scheduling, HOV, and other regional transportation alternatives to commuters. Transit also sponsors a Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP), designed to encourage the start-up of new vanpools in Frederick County through funding of a limited number of unoccupied seats. Within the City of Frederick, Transit serves on the Mayor's Parking and Mobility Advisory Committee to help businesses find alternative commuting solutions for their employees and visitors alike.

Transit also plans and hosts Bike to Work Day for our region, has bike racks on the front of every bus, and supports training of bus drivers alongside bicycle advocates to ensure safe operations on the roads. Transit participates in community events to demonstrate proper bike rack usage and coordinates with local law enforcement entities at the City and the County to show drivers and cyclists proper road sharing techniques in the congested downtown area.

Page 3: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q9

Respondent skipped this question

Innovative and creative services in the community.

Q10

Respondent skipped this question

Being responsive to its customers' and community needs.

Q11

Respondent skipped this question

Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation.

Q12

Respondent skipped this question

Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals.

Q13

Respondent skipped this question

Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private.

Q14

Respondent skipped this question

Providing accessible transportation service.

Q15

Respondent skipped this question

Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

Page 4: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q16

Respondent skipped this question

Have demonstrated an extensive history of community engagement;

Q17

Respondent skipped this question

Have created long-standing partnerships with other stakeholders that allow its residents to flourish.

Page 5: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q18

Respondent skipped this question

Providing creative, effective and continuing training and technical assistance programs.

Q19

Respondent skipped this question

Using new concepts, strategies, procedures and policies to provide support to local transit systems.

Q20

Respondent skipped this question

Communicating local transit systems' concerns and issues at the state and national level.

Q21

Respondent skipped this question

Advocating for public and community transportation at the state and local level.

Page 6: Why Is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q22

Respondent skipped this question

A record that reflects ongoing and exceptional growth in contribution to the profession and increased levels of leadership, responsibility and sphere of impact

Q23

Respondent skipped this question

A recent track-record in the transit field reflects a strong career trajectory with the possibility of forward advancement and potential for appointment at the highest levels of the profession

Page 7: Why Is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q24

Respondent skipped this question

Go that extra mile time and time again, encapsulating the spirit and professionalism of the workplace and the community transportation industry.

Q25

Respondent skipped this question

Exudes the spirit and professionalism of community transportation at its best

Q26

Respondent skipped this question

This award can include nominations from any of an agency's frontline positions (examples include drivers, dispatchers, etc.)

Page 8: Tell Us About Your Nominee

Q27

Name

Jaime McKay, CCTM, CSSO, TDM-CP, submitting on behalf of Transit Services of Frederick County

Q28

Title

Deputy Director

Q29

Organization

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Q30

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Page 9: Tell us about yourself: who is submitting this nomination?

Q33

Name

Jaime McKay, CCTM, CSSO, TDM-CP

Q34

Title

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