

Maryland Transit Administration's InReach Program

Between 2016 and 2017, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) commenced a massive redesign of Baltimore's bus network. The plan, known as *BaltimoreLink*, included improved multimodal connections, service realignments, and updated wayfinding signage for transit veterans and new users. One of the cornerstones of the system redesign was the development of a feedback program known as "InReach", which provides communication between drivers, maintenance staff, and management. The goal of the InReach program was to address lapses in communication amongst MTA policymakers and service operators. Prior to the service redesign, MTA staff conducted workshops at each of the four bus service divisions in the city. MTA recognized that the previous method of eliciting feedback from bus operators was not adequately capturing *all* operators. The result was a charette-style open feedback forum for operators to voice concerns, and work with management to offer solutions.

In order to solicit feedback from operators, MTA staff distributed comment boxes at each of the four divisions. Although initial reactions were mixed, with many operators believing their concerns would be ignored, MTA sought to change that perception. During outreach events, operator comments were displayed on boards to highlight what was changed due to the feedback received. The InReach program has also addressed issues with the agency's scheduling system, which was a major point of contention for service operators. Bus drivers found that the previous scheduling system did not accurately reflect the time it took the operators to reach a stop. Drivers were constantly arriving early or late to scheduled stops, creating conflict between customers and their break time. As a result, MTA spearheaded the creation of a "scheduling committee" to oversee conflicts and amendments to the current schedule. Like other facets of the InReach program, the scheduling committee solicits input from operators.