



Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore Region

BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**MINUTES OF THE 196th MEETING OF
THE BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

November 25, 2008

9:00 A.M.

DRAFT

EMPOWERED MEMBERS

Jon Arason, Director
City of Annapolis Department of Planning & Zoning

Carl Balsler, Chief (Chair)
Division of Transportation Planning
Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning

Jeff Drinkwater (for Jamie Kendrick, Deputy Director)
Baltimore City Department of Transportation

Diane Franks
Air Quality Planning Division
Maryland Department of the Environment
(Non-voting member)

Harvey Gold, Senior Transportation Planner
Anne Arundel County Office of Planning & Zoning

Emery Hines, Manager
Transportation Planning
Baltimore County Department of Public Works

Frank Johnson, Legislative Director (Vice Chair)
Carroll County Government

Tony McClune, Deputy Director
Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning

Mike Nixon (for Don Halligan, Director)
Office of Planning & Capital Programming
Maryland Department of Transportation

2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD, 21224 • Phone 410-732-0500 • Facsimile 410-732-8248

Members: City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, Howard County, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of the Environment (Non-Voting), Maryland Department of Planning (Non-Voting)

OTHERS PRESENT

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Ray Ambrose, Corridor Transportation Corporation (CTC)
Regina Aris, BMC
Harvey S. Bloom, BMC
Victor Bonaparte, BMC
Dunbar Brooks, BMC
Tyson Byrne, BMC
Ben Cohen, BWI Business Partnership
Edward K. Cohen, Transit Riders Action Council
Jeff Drinkwater, Baltimore City Department of Planning
Joan Gorsuch, BMC
Robert Hellauer, Greater Baltimore Committee
Victor Henry, BMC
Lenny Howard, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
Robert Keith, Fells Point Association
Steve King, State Highway Administration (SHA)
Larry Klimovitz, BMC
Keith Kucharek, SHA
Phyllis & John Lansing, Baltimore County League of Women Voters
Joseph Madison, MTA
Becky Mangus, CTC
Jody McCullough, BMC
Theo Ngongang, Maryland Department of Transportation
Brian O'Malley, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Sara Tomlinson, BMC
Russ Ulrich, BMC

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 A.M. by the Chair, Mr. Carl Balser.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2008 Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) meeting was made by Mr. Balser. A motion was made by Mr. Emery Hines to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Frank Johnson. The minutes were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY:

Mr. Edward K. Cohen, speaking as a private citizen, noted that due to the recent maintenance issues involving Light Rail vehicles, buses are pulled off their regular routes to shuttle Light Rail passengers to their destinations, thus leaving many bus riders stranded. According to Mr. Cohen, without overtime available to Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) employees, there are not enough buses in operation. He also noted that over the years, there has been shrinkage of the MTA fleet. Mr. Cohen also commented on the proposed reductions to commuter bus service and the "lower than average ridership" reason for their termination. People need to get to work and many do not have another way to get there except by public transportation. Some,

according to Mr. Cohen, are willing to pay higher fares. Mr. Cohen said that MTA capital projects should be postponed to free resources for operations. He noted that the MTA Citizens Advisory Committee issued a hierarchy of how spending should be prioritized. At the top of the list was maintaining existing service routes at adequate levels. Capital projects were at the bottom of the list.

REPORT FROM CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Ms. Regina Aris, on behalf of the Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), said that the CAC met on November 5th and members discussed the proposed service reductions to MARC and commuter buses recently announced by the MTA. Reports were given by the following subcommittees: Membership, Public Involvement, and Policy & Legislation. A slate of officers will be voted on at the December 3rd CAC meeting. Under public involvement, there was a discussion to recommend that the BRTB hold meetings in the evenings and at locations other than the offices of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC). In addition, members discussed the BRTB meeting of the elected officials on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 scheduled at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Jon Arason asked if the Board had a role in the announcement of service cuts to commuter bus routes. A discussion followed. Mr. Mike Nixon said that he would ask someone from MTA to come and address the BRTB's concerns. Mr. Balsler suggested the BRTB send a letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), asking them to defer acting on the proposed cuts while local jurisdictions explore alternatives to cutting all of the runs on targeted routes. Mr. Bloom asked Mr. Nixon if the BRTB could be briefed by MTA by the second week of December, giving the Board ample time to write a letter (by the January initiation date) that would note outstanding concerns. Mr. Jeff Drinkwater suggested that MTA be available to address this issue at the December 2nd elected officials' BRTB meeting.

REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Mr. Drinkwater, Chair, said that the Technical Committee (TC) met on November 3rd and one resolution (#09-10) was presented to the TC which was approved for submission to the BRTB. A progress report was given on the 2035 Plan Amendment, results of the 2008 Baltimore Regional Travel Behavior Survey were presented, and the future direction of TP+ and the Citilabs software renewal was discussed. Additionally, the University of Maryland presented on the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS). Mr. Drinkwater also noted that there would be no December Technical Committee meeting.

REPORT FROM THE INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION GROUP: An ICG meeting was not held in November.

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2009 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM: Mr. Bloom introduced Resolution 09-10 that seeks to reallocate \$50,000 in FY 09 UPWP funds. The proposed changes include the deferral of the development of an income module and redirecting \$50,000 of the allocated funds toward two safety activities and the

completion of the regional external survey. Mr. Balsler sought clarification on the reason for not pursuing an income module to which Mr. Dunbar Brooks replied that responses to an RFP were significantly beyond funds programmed and not in keeping with the value of the product in the modeling process. Staff has developed an alternate approach to incorporating income variables utilizing Claritas data. Also, in response to a comment from Mr. Harvey Gold on the accessibility of safety data, Mr. Bala Akundi noted that steps will be taken to restrict the access of data to state and local representatives involved in safety efforts. Mr. Balsler asked for a motion to approve Resolution #09-10. Mr. Hines made a motion for approval that was seconded by Mr. Johnson. Resolution #09-10 was unanimously approved.

[Handout: Memo from Dunbar Brooks to Harvey Bloom & Regina Aris dated 11/25/08 re: Reprogramming of Income Model Consultant Funds]

PRESENTATION ON REGIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY: Mr. Russ Ulrich reported on the results of the recent Travel Behavior Survey, which was conducted to assess how last summer's historically-high gasoline prices have affected both residents and businesses in our region. During September, WB&A Market Research interviewed 400 residents and 100 businesses throughout the region. Among the survey's key findings:

- 72 % of residents reported some change in their travel behavior
 - 41% combine trips/errands
 - 31% reduced vacations and other pleasure trips
- 30% of those changing behavior said they did so once gasoline began selling at \$3.00 per gallon
- 36% of commuters stated that they would or had reduced the number of days they commute, and 27% had or are considering teleworking
- 33% of all respondents have or are considering purchasing a more fuel efficient vehicle and 21% may use public transportation in the future
- 58% of businesses stated that they have or will pass cost increase onto customers
- 41% of businesses have or will refrain from hiring
- 35% have or will downsize their workforce
- 7% said they are considering closing some or all of their locations

Interviewers also asked two questions concerning awareness of, and attitudes toward, climate change and found that 12% of residents are familiar with climate change, believe it is real, that human activity is a primary cause, and are willing to change their behavior. About 11% of businesses gave similar responses. The complete report is available online at www.baltometro.org under Featured Links. Mr. Bloom asked Ms. Diane Franks about MDEs experience from the public regarding greenhouse gases and climate change. She noted that there are a number of businesses appearing "green" yet it takes a lot of time and effort to incorporate "green" business practices into day-to-day functions.

UPDATE ON THE AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION OUTLOOK 2035: Mr. Balsler noted that a public meeting would be held at 1 p.m. to take comment of the proposed scenarios. He said that the Board would also discuss the funding levels proposed for consideration. Mr. Balsler said preliminary consensus on both a funding threshold and a

proposed scenario would provide empowered Board members a direction to discuss with their respective local leadership. Mr. Bloom noted that the approved Plan amendment schedule indicated a preferred alternative would be published on December 16th, followed by a 30-day public comment period, a discussion at the January meeting and, hopefully, an endorsement at the February meeting. Mr. Bloom suggested either December 8th or 9th for a work session, open to the public be scheduled to finalize a draft plan amendment. It was agreed that the work session would be held on December 8th at 9 A.M. Mr. Bloom noted that if any jurisdiction is unable to attend the meeting, they should provide their comments prior to the meeting. He noted that the product of the meeting would be a “preferred alternative.”

PRESENTATION ON PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITIES: Mr. Steve King, State Highway Administration (SHA), gave background history of the park-and-ride facilities in Maryland. He noted that the first SHA ridesharing facility was built in 1976 in Harford County and was the result of the 1970 Federal Clean Air Act which required the development of a State Implementation Plan (SIP) for reducing air pollution. According to Mr. King, there are about 100 lots that have been built throughout the state. Mr. King noted the prime objectives of the Ridesharing program and provided information on the location of each lot by county with available spaces and year opened. He said that the largest number of lots is in Harford County; the most spaces are in Howard County; the most patrons are in Anne Arundel County; and, Calvert County has the highest percentage of use. The Baltimore region has 43 lots with 6,183 spaces versus 98 statewide lots and 11,741 spaces. Mr. King also showed a comparison of Spring 2008 users versus Fall 2008 users. It was noted that as the price of gasoline goes up, so does the use of the park-and-ride lots. It was pointed out that the average savings per user was \$2,500 a year and 2008 annual vehicle miles of travel (VMT) were reduced from Maryland highways through the use of park-and-ride lots. The SHA Ridesharing web site is www.marylandroads.com.

[Handout: Maryland State Highway Ridesharing Program]

PRESENTATION ON CTC TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT II: Ms. Becky Mangus, Chairperson of the Board, Corridor Transportation Corporation (CTC), referenced the “Moving Mid-MD” Summit held on November 13. This was the second summit held with the first conducted in the Spring of 2007. Ms. Mangus noted that the theme of the conference was “regionalism” and the value of transportation in the promotion of this concept. Mr. Ray Ambrose, CTC Administrator, noted the complement of speakers which included MTA Administrator Paul Wiedefeld and Anne Arundel County State Senator James DeGrange. Mr. Balser commented that the event offered good information as well as the opportunity to network with other transportation professionals. Mr. Bloom said that he attended the morning session and noted that he was impressed with the sessions and thought that the presentations were informative and on target.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Bloom announced that the BRTB and the TC will hold a joint retreat at the Benjamin Banneker Museum on Wednesday, January 14, 2009. Mr. Bloom mentioned that an invitation will be extended to Mr. Nelson Castellanos and Mr. Kwame Arhin of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FY 2010 UPWP will be on the agenda along with the next long-range plan which is due out in 2012.

Ms. Franks mentioned that MDE has learned that the U.S. EPA will likely request a “bump-up” in the Baltimore region’s 8-hour ozone nonattainment status under the 1997 ozone standard from “moderate” to “severe.” If MDE does not agree to the bump up, EPA will disapprove the 8-hour ozone state implementation plan. An EPA notice of the pending disapproval will be sent in January, 2009. After a public comment period, there could be a final action of disapproval in an April 2009 timeframe. While a bump-up in nonattainment status would push back the attainment year for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard in the Baltimore region, a disapproval of the SIP would have a different effect. It could mean certain sanctions related to transportation projects would apply. Ms. Franks noted a Press Release from MDE Secretary Wilson that was put on MDE’s web site regarding what the agency is doing. Mr. Bloom asked about the implications to conformity under the lapse period if EPA sends a letter that says the SIP is disapproved. Ms. Franks replied that if the SIP is disapproved, a conformity freeze would be in place and only exempt projects could continue. Mr. Bloom asked if MDOT had a position on this issue. Mr. Nixon replied that MDOT is working with MDE on this situation. Mr. Bloom also asked if the BRTB would have an opportunity to enter into a conversation as to what recommendation or strategy MDE would employ in an attempt to dispute this potential action. Ms. Franks said that she believes it will be discussed at the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) first. Mr. Balsler commented that it sounds like MDE has the situation in hand and asked that MDE let the Board know if they need input. Ms. Franks concluded by saying that MDE will keep in touch with Mr. Bloom regarding timelines.

[Handout: Press Release from Maryland Department of the Environment dated November 17, 2008]

Ms. Aris mentioned that five applications for the FY 2009 BRTB CMAQ Competitive Selection Process were received by the November 4 deadline. A handout showing a table of these applications was distributed. One million dollars worth of CMAQ funding is available through the BRTB program and \$1,149,655.07 was requested for this round of funding. Ms. Aris also mentioned that the technical review of the CMAQ applications is scheduled for December 9th and the policy group will meet sometime in January.

[Handout: FY 2009 CMAQ Applications]

Mr. Nixon again referenced the proposed reductions to the commuter bus routes discussed earlier in the meeting, and noted that the public comment period closes on December 26th and decisions made by January 1st. Service cuts, if they do occur, would be made in mid-January.

Mr. Balsler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Drinkwater made a motion to adjourn with Mr. Tony McClune seconding the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:11 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Harvey S. Bloom, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board