

**BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF THE 197<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**DECEMBER 2, 2008  
5:00 P.M.**

**MEMBER**

The Honorable David R. Craig  
Harford County Executive

Jamie Kendrick (for The Honorable Sheila Dixon)  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Harvey Gold (for The Honorable John R. Leopold)  
Anne Arundel County Executive

David Whitaker (for The Honorable Richard E. Hall)  
Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning

The Honorable Dean L. Minnich (Vice Chair)  
Carroll County Board of Commissioners

The Honorable Ellen O. Moyer  
Mayor, City of Annapolis

The Honorable John D. Porcari  
Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation

The Honorable James T. Smith, Jr.  
Baltimore County Executive

The Honorable Ken Ulman (Chair)  
Howard County Executive

The Honorable Shari T. Wilson  
Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Jon Arason, City of Annapolis Department of Planning & Zoning  
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Carl Balser, Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning  
Michael J. Berry, Making Choices for Independent Living  
Harvey S. Bloom, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
Dunbar Brooks, Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
George Cardwell, Anne Arundel Department of Planning & Zoning  
Art Cohen, b'more mobile  
Edward Cohen, Transit Riders Action Council  
Christopher T. Field, TRAC  
Diane Franks, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Elaine Garvin, Baltimore City Mayor's Office  
Don Halligan, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Robert Hellauer, Greater Baltimore Committee  
Emery Hines, Baltimore County Department of Public Works  
Lenny Howard, Maryland Transit Administration  
Frank Johnson, Carroll County Department of Planning  
Tony McClune, Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning  
Theo Ngongang, MDOT  
Foster Nichols, Citizens Advisory Committee  
Mike Nixon, MDOT  
Brian O'Malley, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance  
Albert Pietrolungo, Central Maryland Council of the Blind  
Steve Powell, Carroll County Board of County Commissioners  
Frank Principe, Baltimore County Executive Office  
Kevin Racine, Citizen  
Diane Ratcliff, MTA  
Michelle Rosenberg, CAC  
Ted Rosenberg, Citizen  
Ron Spalding, Citizen  
Simon Taylor, MTA  
Saul Wilson, Transit Riders Action Council  
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning

**WELCOME:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 P.M. by the Chair, The Honorable Ken Ulman, Howard County, who welcomed those in attendance. He thanked the public, staff agencies and staff of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) for working together during these tough economic times on difficult transportation issues and challenges. County Executive Ulman said that progress is being made and assured those in attendance that the BRTB is listening to their concerns.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY:**

Mr. Kevin Racine, citizen, said that a few months ago, he wrote a letter to the Administrator of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) saying that he has been in every county even though he is a handicapped individual. He said that he has learned how to use transit and

has gained more access to activities, rather than just staying in his own back yard. He mentioned that he is part of the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and is also working with WILMAPCO, advising them of his travel behavior. Mr. Racine also mentioned that BRAC is a very big part of our region and he has been working with others in Harford County on transit services in response to this new opportunity. Mr. Racine challenged anyone to take a trip with him and he will show that person how the region's transit system works. According to Mr. Racine, this will probably be one of the last evening meetings that he will be able to attend due to the proposed cut-backs in transit service.

Mr. Art Cohen, b'more mobile, said that he agrees with Chairman Ulman's remarks that there has been "responsiveness" during the last year. He noted that in August 2008, the BMC issued the latest cooperative forecast for the region, predicting growth in population and employment away from the central Baltimore City/County dense population core out into the other 4 counties by 2035. According to Mr. Cohen, what is missing is a long-term regional vision of what we want the Baltimore region to look like in terms of a full set of transportation alternatives and a variety of land uses in the years to come. Mr. Cohen urged the BRTB, working with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), to set in motion a visioning process that is open, inviting, and accessible by all. He said that this can be accomplished by working with the public involvement subcommittee of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and other groups working for the good of the community.

Mr. Edward Cohen, speaking as a concerned citizen, noted that there is a problem at the BRTB with regard to process on "Action Items." He said that the public is allowed to participate and offer an opinion on an "Action Item" while the empowered representative already has the elected official's input. He said that although citizens are allowed to offer input, there is no impact and the Board needs to address this issue. Mr. Cohen also noted that he attended all the hearings on the Red Line and he noted that the business community is strongly behind Alternative 4C. Communities within the Red Line corridor are opposed to 4C where it would run at surface level. Regarding the proposed bus cuts, Mr. Cohen noted that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) passed a resolution last week which was sent to the Administrator of the MTA concerning the prioritization of funding. The CAC said that existing service must be maintained at an adequate level as the highest priority and the lowest priority was for capital funding for systems that do not yet exist.

Mr. Saul Wilson, citizen, commented on the BRTB process and said there has been a marked improvement. He said that he has been very impressed that the Board decided to dedicate all of the additional money from the state revenue increases to transit as well as the BRTB's decision to consult with the public prior to preparing an alternative. Mr. Wilson also stated that he was very pleased that the Board put together a series of alternative allocations of \$340 million in additional funding and is supportive of Plan Scenario 4A. He is also pleased that the Board has decided to hold public voting sessions to decide the "Preferred Alternative" for allocating money in the long range plan. Again, all of these actions are a substantial improvement over the process in the previous plan. Mr. Wilson's one concern is that the Board has chosen to have only one meeting a year with elected officials and cabinet secretaries whereas previously it was four meetings a year. He said that it doesn't provide the public with an opportunity to interact with the elected officials and the public would appreciate if there were more meetings with the elected officials. Mr. Wilson noted that transportation in

the Baltimore region is not, at the present time, as good as it could or should be, with traffic congestion, bus overcrowding, and much less access than what is needed.

Mr. Christopher Field, President of TRAC, thanked the BRTB for conducting recent business in an open forum. This method gives people confidence in the outcome. He spoke of the Red Line planning process and said that some people felt they were shut out of the process. Mr. Field noted that members of the public had ideas to present to the original Red Line Advisory Committee but presentation of their ideas for committee consideration was never permitted. In 2003, the MTA's CAC approved a report that recommended an alignment for the Red Line that was completely grade separated and about 50% surface. This alignment was acceptable to every community through which it went yet the MTA never publicly acknowledged the report and did not address the recommendation in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Mr. Field urges the BRTB to take the recently approved recommendations of the Red Line CAC and ask the Governor to consider the results of that study before selecting a locally preferred alternative. He also urged the BRTB to consider a supplemental MARC study in the I-95/MD-295 corridor and keep MARC funded to reduce highway congestion and improve air quality.

Mr. Albert Pietrolungo, Central Maryland Council of the Blind, said that when cuts in transit take place by the MTA, more of the burden is put on the disabled community. He noted that on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 5,000 disabled riders of Taxi Access received letters from MTA indicating that the benefit available in that program will be cut from a potential maximum of \$188 a day to a potential maximum of \$34 a day. Mr. Pietrolungo noted that the only indication of why that cut was justified was a statement that said that the current level of benefit cannot be sustained under current budget conditions. He said that in his view, that is not a justification. Mr. Pietrolungo said that his organization will be sending a letter to MTA, asking some tough questions. Since he believes a response from MTA will not be provided, he is asking the BRTB to follow up and get answers to their questions.

### **CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES / LEGISLATIVE AGENDA – PRESENTATIONS**

County Executive Ulman, hearing the comments, reflected that *Transportation Outlook 2035* had financial constraints and other limitations that precluded the inclusion of broader transportation needs. County Executive Jim Smith interjected that consistent with testimony heard during the public participation component of this meeting as well as last August, and subsequent discussions between the member jurisdictions and state agencies, the need for a comprehensive planning process from which smart decisions on transportation investments can be derived is evident. With this in mind, County Executive Smith made a motion for the BRTB to initiate a local government / state agencies partnership to develop an overall transportation "vision" to serve as a guide for future transportation investments that support economic, environmental, and mobility priorities in the Baltimore region. This process must include an opportunity for public input. Mayor Ellen Moyer of Annapolis seconded the motion. The BRTB unanimously approved the motion.

### **PRESENTATION FROM THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Mr. John D. Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation, thanked County Executive Smith for the motion, and stated the BRTB was on the right track. A regional vision

is very important to guide the financially constrained plan. Now is the time, in a challenging economic environment, more than ever to develop a comprehensive vision. Regarding the state's 6-year transportation program, there are severe conditions that led to a \$1.1 billion dollar reduction in available funds. Additional cuts may be necessary if economic conditions continue over the coming months. At this time, system preservation remains as the Department's top priority. MDOT is currently working with Maryland's Congressional delegation on projects that could be included in an economic stimulus package.

**PRESENTATION FROM THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT:** Shari T. Wilson, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment, opened with an overview of the pollutants of concern in Maryland, including ozone, particulate matter and greenhouse gases. Overall, progress has been made with a 40 percent decrease in ozone since 1990. However, the standards for ozone are being revised and will be tighter. The reduction in fine particulate matter is very important due to the health implications associated with exposure to that pollutant. To help in this area, Maryland passed the Healthy Air Act that will provide significant reductions from power plants. Regarding greenhouse gases (GHG), there are a range of strategies such as telework, flex schedules and transit oriented development that can assist in the mitigation of greenhouse gases. A recent report to the Governor and General Assembly from Maryland's Commission on Climate Change listed 42 options to reduce GHG that could result in a net economic benefit to the state by 2020.

County Executive Ulman commented on the recent creation of a Baltimore regional sustainability committee that could dovetail in common areas with climate change activities. Mayor Moyer spoke of an education curriculum that the City of Annapolis has developed and that could be used by other jurisdictions. County Executive Smith mentioned the Growing Home program the county initiated to encourage tree plantings.

**PRESENTATION FROM THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING:** Mr. Richard Hall could not be present.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

County Executive Ulman thanked all of the speakers for their testimony and presentations. Elaine Garvin, representing Mayor Dixon, felt the vision planning process held tremendous opportunity. Mr. Jamie Kendrick, Baltimore City BRTB, thanked the elected officials for supporting a grant to Baltimore City for the Red Line Summit sponsored by the Mayor earlier in the year. The Summit led to a Community Compact that holds promise for opportunities in employment, housing and community benefits. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Harvey S. Bloom, Secretary  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board