

## BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

August 27, 2019  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
9:05 to 10:59 A.M.

### MINUTES

The 311<sup>th</sup> meeting was called to order at 9:05 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. Lynda Eisenberg. Ms. Eisenberg began by thanking everyone for attending and to MDOT for offering space in their building.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2019 BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Eisenberg. A motion was made by Mr. Gary Blazinsky to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Greg Carski. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one from the public who wished to address the BRTB.

#### 3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported there are no BRTB comment opportunities this month. However, there are many opportunities for the public to get involved with these local BRTB member initiatives:

- Howard County public meeting about proposed Ducketts Lane bike lane on August 29
- 2019 Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan - Carroll County Planning & Zoning Commission will accept comments on Tuesday, September 17
- Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (RTP) Commission meeting on September 20
- Annapolis Ahead 2020 Comprehensive Plan – Survey to gather public priorities for the next 20 years in the City of Annapolis: [forms.gle/uYdq7sCX2ihF96dq8](https://forms.gle/uYdq7sCX2ihF96dq8)

Ms. Haines Benkhedda encouraged members to share additional public meetings with BMC staff to share via social media and other outreach channels.

***[Handout: Public Involvement Report for August 2019]***

#### **4. REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Eric Norton reported that the July and August PAC meetings were focused on the role of the PAC in the BRTB's planning process and how the members can be more effective and serve as a more valuable public involvement resource for the BRTB. Mr. Norton explained that these discussions were born of some members expressing frustration over the process, confusion over roles, and in some cases members resigning or no longer attending meetings.

A survey of current and former members found a lot people liked about the PAC:

- The diversity of backgrounds and experiences of members
- The exchange of ideas
- The presentations and knowledge sharing on transportation plans and projects

The survey also demonstrated frustrations among PAC members that their individual talents and group wisdom weren't being utilized by the BRTB, with 62% of current and 78% of former members who felt their service on the PAC had little to no impact.

Mr. Norton asked, "What is the incentive to serve on the PAC if volunteers give their time and energy and yet still feel as if they aren't having an impact?"

He also explained that members also discussed a disconnect in what the PAC is asked to do in terms of providing input into a process where decision- making happens primarily at the state and local levels in Maryland, not at the BRTB.

Mr. Norton acknowledged that the PAC doesn't need to exist – it is a tool the BRTB has established in an effort to get public input and feedback from a diverse representation of members from around the region. Given this, he asked the BRTB, "Is the PAC useful and valuable to you? Are we giving you the kind of input you're looking for? Are there other tools and strategies for gathering public input that could be more useful than the PAC?"

Mr. Norton shared that he understands this may be a lot for members to take in at the moment, and asked the BRTB if they would be open to having a dialogue with the BRTB about these questions. A number of members had comments which they offered and discussed to some extent with Mr. Norton.

The BRTB thanked Mr. Norton for bringing these concerns to light and shared some of their immediate thoughts. Highlights include:

- Mr. Gary Blazinsky recommended the PAC may want to focus on several key areas.  
Mr. Norton suggested that greater clarification from the BRTB as to what they would like to see from the PAC what would be valuable and help guide their work.
- Ms. Eisenberg noted that more robust discussion tends to happen at the Technical Committee earlier in the month, two weeks before the BRTB votes. Having the PAC provide input prior to the Technical Committee hopefully will allow more time for it to be more effectively incorporated into the BRTB's process.

- Ms. Eisenberg suggested that it would be good if BRTB members could rotate their attendance at PAC meetings so that members can hear directly from the PAC and have a chance to dialogue, ask questions, share information, offer feedback, etc.
- Mr. Bruce Gardner also shared that he found it very valuable having a PAC member from his jurisdiction who also serves on a transportation board in Howard County. He appreciates this person as a resource who can bring a regional perspective and knowledge because of their participation on the PAC.
- Members also discussed the pros and cons of having members appointed or selection via application. Members acknowledged the challenges of having a volunteer board and finding people who are willing to give their time and energy come here each month.
- There was a brief discussion about balancing the obligations to elected officials and the general public with input received from the PAC, which is a fraction of the overall population of the region.

Ms. Eisenberg recommended staff take some time to put together a report about the PAC's concerns and an evaluation of the current process, information on what other MPOs are doing, and recommendations and a work plan moving forward to address concerns and incorporate recommended changes.

***[HANDOUT: Summary of PAC Retreat]***

## **5. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

There was no Technical Committee meeting held in August, however Mr. David Cookson noted that the Technical Committee members had engaged in discussions about potential tasks for the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This activity will be discussed under a subsequent agenda item.

## **6. BRIEFING ON THE REGIONAL TRANSIT PLAN FOR CENTRAL MARYLAND**

Ms. Kate Sylvester, MDOT MTA, updated members on progress related to the Regional Transit Plan. Ms. Sylvester covered the background and approach being taken to develop the RTP, described transit in the region as it functions today, shared changing demographics, reviewed the three draft goals, identified transit needs and the methodology to uncover those needs, and shared public involvement methods and upcoming open houses.

Members had questions on whether future funding would be discussed, about the Cornerstone Plans, and with changing demographics what is a solution as nonprofits are unable to serve clients that end up at the doors of the LOTS agencies. These conversations will continue as the RTP process moves forward.

***[PowerPoint: Connecting Our Future: A Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland, Project Update]***

## **7. DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL TOPICS FOR FY 2021 UPWP**

Mr. Cookson reported that the Technical Committee had held a GoToMeeting on August 12 to discuss potential tasks for the FY 2021 UPWP. Following up on these discussions, BMC staff developed an augmented list of potential tasks and asked the Technical Committee members to rank these tasks and add any other potential tasks they'd like to pursue. BMC staff entered the resulting rankings into a spreadsheet and calculated average rankings for each potential task.

Mr. Lang distributed a list of the average rankings and presented a PowerPoint with supplemental information on each task. BRTB members gave comments on each of the highest ranking potential tasks. Some of these tasks might be folded into work already being undertaken by MDOT or work being conducted by BMC staff and consultants under current UPWP tasks.

Discussions will continue on these topics over the next few months, with continued input from Technical Committee and BRTB members. The eventual product will be a list of preferred tasks for the FY 2021 UPWP. This will enable the TC/BRTB retreat to serve as a budgeting session on upcoming, well defined tasks.

***[PowerPoint: FY 2021 UPWP Potential Project Ideas]***

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

- Mr. Lang reminded members that the AMPO conference will be held in Baltimore this year and he needs the name of up to two staff (BRTB, TC) that will attend.
- Mr. Lang also updated members on the status of the office renovations. We have just entered Phase II and the work appears to be on schedule. The September 3 TC meeting is scheduled to be in the new conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 A.M.

***Members***

Gary Blazinsky, Harford Transit  
Greg Carski, Baltimore County Department of Public Works  
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works  
Lynda Eisenberg, Carroll County Department of Planning  
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation  
Valorie LaCour, (for Steve Sharkey) Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)  
Sally Nash, City of Annapolis Department of Planning  
Alex Rawls, Harford County Department of Planning  
Ramond Robinson, Anne Arundel County Department of Planning & Zoning  
Kate Sylvester, Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)

***Staff and Guests***

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)  
Tyson Byrne, MDOT  
David Cookson, Howard County, TC Chair  
Terry Freeland, BMC  
Monica Haines-Benkhedda, BMC  
Don Halligan, BMC  
Dan Janousek, MDOT  
Todd Lang, BMC  
Eric Norton, PAC Chair

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board