

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

September 22, 2020
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:02 to 10:17 A.M.

MINUTES

The 323rd meeting was called to order at 9:02 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. Lynda Eisenberg.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2020 BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Eisenberg. A motion was made by Mr. Bruce Gartner to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Ramond Robinson. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

No members of the public wished to speak to the BRTB at this time.

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported there are no public comment periods open at this time. She went on to share highlights of the following regional and local initiatives:

- BMC is hosting Bike to Work Week 2020 from September 21-27, in conjunction with the Love to Ride Cycle September Global Challenge. To keep riders safe this year, the usual rallies and pit stops have been replaced with online networking, encouragement, resources and prizes. Residents are encouraged to participate in the Cycle September Global Bike Challenge which is a fun, friendly and free competition that promotes bike riding all month long. Join the Cycle September Global Challenge by visiting lovetoride.net/centralmd.
- Howard County is hosting two virtual workshops for the public to learn more about [Howard County's Complete Streets initiative and the draft Community Engagement Plan](#) on Wednesday, September 23 at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.
- MDOT MTA has released an updated Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan, a long-term vision for transit in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Harford County, and Howard County. Read the updated RTP at rtp.mta.maryland.gov.

- MDOT MTA is currently developing a Statewide Transit Plan (STP) and is seeking input via a survey through October 25, 2020. mta.maryland.gov/statewide-plan
- The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) released its proposed draft of the Baltimore City Complete Streets Manual for public comment through Friday, October 30 and can be found at transportation.baltimorecity.gov/draft-complete-streets-manual.
- MDOT is hosting Walktober, a month-long series of activities and virtual webinars in October promoting walking. Visit mdot.maryland.gov/walktober to learn more.

[Handout: Public Involvement Report for September 2020]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Terry Freeland reported the following from the September TC meeting:

- MDOT MTA requested to add to the TIP a recent award of \$2.95 million in FTA Section 5339(c) funds to purchase three new electric buses and the associated charging infrastructure.
- Baltimore City and County are requesting to add to the TIP the Phoenix Road Bridge over Gunpowder Falls and the NCR Trail to the 2021-2024 TIP. The project was originally scheduled to advertise for construction in FY 2020. However, delays in right-of-way acquisition related to the COVID-19 pandemic delayed advertisement until FY 2021.
- BMC asked for approval to amend the FY 2021 UPWP to carry over funding for tasks that were not completed in FY 2020 (or earlier).
- Baltimore City is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP for its Citywide Traffic Signals, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and Safety Improvements project. The request is to shift \$4.5 million (\$3.6 million federal STBG/\$900,000 matching) in FY 2021 funds from the construction phase to the planning and engineering phases.
- The Howard County Office of Transportation shared a presentation summarizing the U.S. 1 Safety Study with an overview of the 11-mile corridor, its characteristics, and supporting partners for the study, including MDOT and the BRTB. The process was data-driven using quantitative (crash reports) and qualitative (field observations and public involvement) methods due to an increasing trend in pedestrian and bicycle crashes and fatalities.
- BMC reviewed prior topics and shared progress by the state and BMC to begin the discussion of Focus Areas for FY 2022.

5. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-5

Mr. Zach Kaufman introduced Resolution #21-5. MDOT MTA is requesting to add an FTA Section 5339(c) Low or No Emission Vehicle discretionary grant to the 2021-2024 TIP. The ICG has determined that the project qualifies as exempt and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Ms. Lara Bachman, MDOT MTA, summarized the project. MDOT MTA was awarded \$2.95 million in FTA Section 5339(c) funds to purchase three new electric buses and the associated charging infrastructure. In addition to the federal money, MDOT MTA is contributing \$2.95 million in state matching funds. There is a goal for Maryland's bus fleet to be 50% zero-emission by 2030. The purchase of the three electric buses is the first step in transitioning the MDOT MTA fleet to low or zero emission vehicles. This grant funding provides the opportunity to purchase, test and evaluate zero-emission technology. The buses are anticipated to be in service by December of 2022.

Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then asked for a motion. Ms. Sally Nash made a motion to move Resolution #21-5 and Mr. Theo Ngongang seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-5 was passed unanimously.

[PowerPoint: 2021-2024 TIP Amendment - MDOT MTA Low or No Emission Bus Program]

6. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-6

Mr. Kaufman introduced Resolution #21-6. Baltimore County is requesting to add the Phoenix Road Bridge over Gunpowder Falls and the NCR Trail to the 2021-2024 TIP. The bridge is located in Baltimore County, but it is owned and maintained by Baltimore City as it is located within the Loch Raven Reservoir. The construction phase is funded with federal funds originally intended for Baltimore County. Both Baltimore City and Baltimore County are contributing matching funds. The ICG has determined that the project qualifies as exempt and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Mr. Christopher Brown, BCDOT, presented details on the project. The project was originally scheduled to advertise for construction in FY 2020. However, delays in right-of-way acquisition related to the COVID-19 pandemic delayed advertisement until FY 2021, necessitating inclusion of the project in the 2021-2024 TIP. Construction funding includes \$9.6 million in federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds along with \$2.4 million in local matching funds. The bridge, originally built in 1922 and rehabilitated in 1982, is rated as poor. The bridge was converted to one-way controlled by traffic signals after a 2010 inspection noted severe corrosion and deterioration to floor beams. The bridge replacement project will advertise upon BRTB approval of the TIP amendment, with project completion anticipated in 2023.

Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then asked for a motion. Mr. Ngongang made a motion to move Resolution #21-6 and Ms. D'Andrea Walker seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-6 was passed unanimously.

[PowerPoint: 2021-2024 TIP Amendment - Phoenix Road Bridge over Gunpowder Falls & NCR Trail]

7. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-7

Mr. Todd Lang introduced resolution #21-7. This action is needed in order to amend the FY 2021 UPWP to carry over funding for tasks that were not completed in FY 2020. This applies to consultant or subarea tasks that were not completed so that the remaining funds will appear in the FY 2021 UPWP in order for reimbursement to occur.

Invoices are required to reflect activities in the current work program. Therefore, any incomplete activities must be identified at the close of any given fiscal year and be amended into the new work program.

Ms. Eisenberg asked for a motion regarding resolution #21-7. Mr. Ramond Robinson made a motion to approve Resolution #21-7 and Ms. Heather Murphy seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked for questions/comments from the members and then the audience. The vote passed with support of all members.

[PowerPoint: FY 2020 Carryover into FY 2021]

8. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-8

Mr. Kaufman introduced Resolution #21-8. Baltimore City is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP for its Citywide Traffic Signals, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and Safety Improvements project. Baltimore City is requesting to shift \$4.5 million (\$3.6 million federal STBG/\$900,000 matching) in FY 2021 funds from the construction phase to the planning and engineering phases. These funds will be used for the traffic signal timing optimization project. FHWA requested this change prior to authorization of the project as the scope of work involves planning and engineering rather than construction. The ICG has determined that the project qualifies as exempt and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Mr. Raj Sharma summarized the project. The project will involve the optimization of signal timing at over 1,100 intersections throughout the city. Signal timing optimization will focus on the AM and PM peaks, mid-day, weekends, overnight, and special events such as Orioles and Ravens games. The project scope includes data collection, an inventory of assets, development of citywide simulation models to optimize signal timing, implementation of the optimized signal timing, performance monitoring and field observation, and staff training. A Notice to Proceed is anticipated in early 2021, with project completion at the end of 2023.

Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members. Ms. Nash asked for details regarding the adaptive control signals on Russell Street and the software they use. Mr. Sharma said that adaptive signals are used on Russell Street because traffic at this location is more unpredictable. These signals utilize InSync software and are not part of the traffic signal timing optimization project. Ms. Kate Sylvester asked for clarification regarding the signal timing on a north-south corridor near downtown Baltimore. Mr. Sharma agreed to get back to her with an answer. In addition, Mr. Gartner asked if toll credits are available for projects like this given the benefits to the region and to MDOT MTA. Ms. Heather Murphy responded that

she would have to look into it further, but that toll credits have been used in the past for similar projects.

Ms. Eisenberg asked for a motion. Ms. Walker made a motion to move Resolution #21-8 and Ms. Nash seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-8 was passed unanimously.

[PowerPoint: 2021-2024 TIP Amendment - Baltimore Citywide Traffic Signals, Intelligent Transportation System and Safety Improvements]

9. PRESENTATION: CARROLL COUNTY TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS & SUBAREA ANALYSIS

Mr. Jamie Kendrick with Mead & Hunt provided an overview of the FY 2020 UPWP-funded study to look at plans and projects that will improve mobility and safety within Carroll County over the next 20 years based on objective standards and to identify most promising potential improvements in the context of fiscal realities and project delivery constraints. A steering committee made of county staff, MDOT SHA, and BMC guided the study.

The project approach involved the following steps: key corridors and subareas, growth patterns, existing and future traffic congestion, economic development plans, traffic issues & challenges, local access/mobility, corridor capacity, operational /bottlenecks, possible approaches, bypass/major road expansion, intersection improvements, local street grid, municipal plan inputs, most promising potential improvements, congestion improvement, cost, right-of-way, and environmental.

In identifying corridors and developing subarea profiles, the study team looked at 2040 land use and demographic factors, travel flows, traffic projections and recent and committee projects. The following performance measures were used in selecting the targeted areas: study area status (if it has been previously studied and/or included in the county priority letter), congestion reduction (bottlenecks during peak hours), crash reduction (crash numbers), and responsible growth and economic development (PFA, targeted economic development zone, etc.)

The screening process resulted in the following six subareas: 1. Eldersburg/Sykesville, 2. Finksburg, 3. Hampstead/Manchester, 4. Mt. Airy, 5. Taneytown, and 6. Westminster.

For the purposes of this presentation, Mr. Kendrick only focused on the Eldersburg/Sykesville and Westminster subareas. For each of these areas, he outlined key issues and most promising potential improvements. The final report includes details on the improvements and estimated costs. Mr. Kendrick also outlined some additional policy recommendations such as subscription-based commuter bus service, traffic impact fees, corridor level access management planning and developing a right-of-way preservation strategy.

In conclusion, he noted that the county will have moderate growth in population, employment and traffic through 2040 and road capacity is generally adequate with some hotspots. Major,

capital intensive project are no longer the order of the day and advocating for practical design projects will likely have greater success in getting approval and funding.

[PowerPoint: Carroll County Transportation Corridors & Subarea Analysis]

10. PRESENTATION: PRIORITY LETTER/CTP SURVEY RESULTS

Mr. Dan Janousek reported on a UPWP focus area that MDOT coordinated with BMC. A survey was developed to inquire about a range of topics related to the development of the annual priority letter and tour meeting. MDOT delivered the survey questions to all jurisdictions in the state. In the BRTB region, five of seven local governments responded. Questions related to the initial process starts, what is included and who approves, and then who is invited to the Tour meeting and is the meeting open. It is intended that information about the process will enhance the process.

[PowerPoint: MDOT Priority Letter / CTP Survey Results]

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- Ms. Nash if any of the members had resumed traffic impact studies in their jurisdictions. Several members shared where they are with that process and some of the changes, such as applying growth factors, due to decreased traffic from the pandemic.
- Mr. Lang shared that the previously approved RFPs for Transit Governance and the Climate Change Toolkit have been released. Several additional RFPs will be released shortly.

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 A.M.

ATTENDANCE

Members:

Kwame Arhin, FHWA – MD Division
Gary Blazinsky, Harford Transit
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne’s County Department of Public Works
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation (OOT)
Lynda Eisenberg, Carroll County Department of Planning
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Sally Nash, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Theo Ngongang, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Ramond Robinson, Anne Arundel County, Department of Planning & Zoning
Kate Sylvester, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)
D’Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works (DPW)

Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning

Staff and Guests:

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Regina Aris, BMC
Lara Bachman, MDOT MTA
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Christopher Brown, Baltimore City DOT
Cindy Burch, BMC
Greg Carski, Baltimore County DPW
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Blake Fisher, BMC
Terry Freeland, BMC
Monica Haines-Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Victor Henry, BMC
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Mike Kelly, BMC
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Jamie Kendrick, Mead Hunt
Todd Lang, BMC
Eric Norton, CMTA
Raj Sharma, Baltimore City DOT
Lisa Sirota, MDOT SHA
Kevin Sabolcik, Baltimore County
Gina Stewart, BWI Business Partnership, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board