

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

March 23, 2021
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:02 to 10:43 A.M.

MINUTES

The 329th 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 February 23, 2021 BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Eisenberg. A motion was made by Ms. Sally Nash to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Steve Cohoon. 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. Haines Benkhedda shared the following highlights:

- The BRTB welcomed comments on its draft Work Program & Budget for Fiscal Years 2022-2023 through Thursday, March 11. The Work Program & Budget is also known as the Unified Planning Work Program - or UPWP - and it details projects, studies and other activities to be completed by BRTB members and staff of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Comments were received from 7 individuals and organizations. Staff have shared these comments with the BRTB, who expects to release a response to comments in early April. To learn more about the UPWP or view public comments received, please visit www.baltometro.org.
- BMC staff are working to organize events in the coming months such as Bike to Work Week, Love to Ride monthly challenges, and Cycle September. To accomplish this, sponsors are needed from across the region. If you know of any local employers or companies who would consider becoming a Bike Central Maryland program sponsor, please reach out to Nicole Hebert at nhebert@baltometro.org.

[Presentation: Public Involvement Report for March 2021]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. David Cookson reported the following from the March TC meeting:

- The TC heard and considered four resolutions covering four successful competitive grants by MDOT MTA. The new projects to be added to the TIP include: FTA Grants for 1) Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE), 2) Light Rail LiDAR Track Surveys, and 3) Metro Subway Track Intrusion System. The fourth grant is through FHWA and is to set up an Areawide project for TA funds flexed to MDOT MTA. Funding for three projects include: Belair Road Transit Priority Initiative, The Garrison Boulevard Transit Priority Initiative, and Patapsco Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection. These were recommended for BRTB approval.
- BMC staff shared highlights of publicinput.com - a new public engagement software platform BMC has invested in.
- BMC staff reviewed key aspects of the proposed budget which totals \$9M for FY 2022. Then the TC discussed focus areas for the coming year. Members were reminded that the comment period for the FY 2022-2023 UPWP began on February 9 and ended on March 11.
- In a Closed Session after the meeting TC members discussed and approved a task to be released for consultant support.

5. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-20

Mr. Keith Kucharek introduced Resolution #21-20. MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP to add a new Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) discretionary grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), necessitating the inclusion of the project in the 2021-2024 TIP.

The Interagency Consultation Group has determined that this project is exempt according to the conformity rule, and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

The amendment adds \$225,000 Federal and \$25,000 matching in engineering funds. Ms. Lara Bachman, MDOT MTA presented the details of the project.

This project, called “Building Blocks: Inclusive Transportation Planning”, will use a human-centered design approach that relies on stakeholders’ perspective for project direction. Stakeholders’ day-to-day experiences will help determine where the agency should focus its attention. HOPE supports planning, engineering and technical studies or financial planning to improve transit services in areas experiencing long-term economic distress. It will also support coordinated human service transportation planning to improve transit service or provide new services such as rides to opioid abuse recovery and treatment.

Funding received will be used for a community-based planning study of a mobility hub in Baltimore City, including potential passenger amenities such as public art, shelters, ticket vending machines, and real-time signage. The study will build upon community-led efforts that

have successfully implemented transit stop enhancements through inclusive transportation planning in collaboration with people with disabilities and older adults.

The anticipated schedule includes major milestones at 30%, 85%, and 100% design. MDOT MTA is anticipating completion by April 1, 2023.

The benefits of this project will include open-ended discussions directly with community members at bus stops, substance abuse facilities, and subsidized housing facilities to determine what types of bus stop amenities the community wants. Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the design process and culminate with the creation of actionable stop enhancements at locations within the community.

Mr. Theo Ngongang made a motion to move Resolution #21-20 and Mr. Bruce Gartner seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then from the audience. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-20 was passed unanimously.

6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #21-21

Mr. Kucharek introduced Resolution #21-21. MDOT MTA is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP to add a new Section 5312 Public Transportation Innovation Program discretionary grant from the FTA, necessitating the inclusion of the project in the 2021-2024 TIP. This funding will be used to identify the most critical and vulnerable areas along the Light Rail transit system using LiDAR technology.

The Interagency Consultation Group has determined that this project is exempt according to the conformity rule, and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Ms. Bachman presented the details of the project. MDOT MTA will receive funding to initiate an electronic inventory of its light rail system to monitor, detect, and identify track deficiencies. The \$150,000 federal grant will be matched with \$150,000 from MDOT MTA.

The anticipated schedule includes five tasks (Project Management, Mobile LiDAR survey, updating MDOT MTA data, Optram integration, and development of a final report). Anticipated completion of this grant is December 2021.

The benefit of this award will be that MDOT MTA will be able to utilize real-time conditions data to improve safety throughout the system. MDOT MTA will also establish the data needed to effectively use Optram to manage linear assets and apply available resources to best address asset needs resulting in improved State of Good Repair (SGR) by combining innovative technologies of LiDAR and Optram. This will also allow for an opportunity to analyze historical trends at precise locations along the guideway and determine the root cause of track-related problems.

The utilization of this data will significantly reduce track geometry defects and will provide MDOT MTA with track charts, which will provide accurate data moving forward. This process will yield GIS and CAD mapping products which are more accurate, timely and cost-effective.

Mr. Ramond Robinson made a motion to move Resolution #21-21 and Mr. Alex Rawls seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then from the audience. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-21 was passed unanimously.

7. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #21-22

Mr. Kucharek introduced Resolution #21-22. MDOT MTA is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP to add a new Section 5312 Public Transportation Innovation Program discretionary grant from the FTA, necessitating the inclusion of the project in the 2021-2024 TIP. This funding will be used to develop, install, commission and collect information for the effectiveness and lessons learned surrounding a Metro Track Intrusion System.

The Interagency Consultation Group has determined that this project is exempt according to the conformity rule, and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Ms. Bachman presented the details of the project. MDOT MTA will receive funding to expand the track warning and detection pilot program to five additional stations in the Metro SubwayLink system. The \$608,000 federal Section 5312 grant will be matched with \$608,000 from MDOT MTA.

There are numerous phases within the project schedule including research phases, development phases, demonstration phases and development of a final report. The anticipated completion of this grant is April 2023.

The benefits of this grant will provide real-time notification if there is an individual on the tracks or in the right-of-way when a train is approaching. The operator will first receive an audible and visual "Trespass Warning" message displayed on the cab-mounted Protracker RWP unit. This message will alert the train operator to take immediate action to reduce speed, stop the train, and/or call the Operation Control Center to report the detection alert. This real-time notification will help mitigate injuries and fatalities to individuals who are on the tracks or in the right-of-way when a train is approaching. These multiple alerting methods will add significant redundancy to the intrusion and alert system, eliminating single point of failure that relies only on the operator's observation of trespassers or those who intentionally or accidentally place themselves on the right-of-way.

Mr. Cohoon made a motion to move Resolution #21-22 and Mr. Rawls seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then the audience. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-22 was passed unanimously.

8. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #21-23

Mr. Kucharek introduced Resolution #21-23. MDOT MTA is requesting to amend the 2021-2024 TIP. This amendment will add a new Areawide project for MDOT MTA awarded projects through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). When MDOT MTA is awarded TAP funding, those funds will be flexed to Section 5307. This amendment is for three TA awards.

The Interagency Consultation Group has determined that this project is exempt according to the conformity rule, and the Technical Committee recommended sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

The amendment adds \$2.384 federal Section 5307 Flex and \$596,000 matching in engineering funds. Ms. Bachman presented the details of the project.

This is an ongoing program that includes funds associated with MDOT MTA sponsored projects receiving awards through the TAP. TAP is a set-aside of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program.

The TAP awards currently funded under this project include:

- Belair Road Transit Priority Initiative: This project will complete final design for improvements such as bus bulb curb extensions at high ridership bus stops and bus stop accessibility and safety improvements along the 2.4 mile corridor.
- The Garrison Boulevard Transit Priority Initiative. This project will complete final design for improvements along the 3.7-mile segment of Garrison Boulevard from Wabash Avenue to Edmondson Avenue.
- Patapsco Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection: This project creates a safe crossing over Patapsco Avenue from the Light Rail station platform and connect to a planned bicycle and pedestrian facility.

Design is expected to be complete for the Belair Road and Garrison Boulevard projects in November 2022. Design is also anticipated to be complete for the Patapsco Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection in November of 2022.

Ms. Nash made a motion to move Resolution #21-23 and Mr. Rick Gordon seconded the motion. Ms. Eisenberg asked if there were any questions from the members and then asked for questions from the audience. Ms. Eisenberg asked for a vote and Resolution #21-23 was passed unanimously.

[PowerPoint: March TIP Amendments, Resolutions #21-20 through #21-23]

9. PRESENTATION: TRANSIT GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Ms. Bethany Whitaker, project manager for Nelson Nygaard, introduced herself, Ms. Amy Pettine and Ms. Tamar Henkin, of Tamar Henkin Strategies and Mr. Blair Trame of KPMG as members of the consultant team making the presentation today.

Ms. Henkin, provided a high-level presentation and discussion off technical memo #3, a financial review of the transit agencies in the region that is intended to create a baseline and foundation for use in evaluating alternative funding and financial reviews. Ms. Henkin then outlined and contrasted MDOT MTA and LOTS, structure and authority, responsibilities, decision-making processes and baseline performance metrics.

Ms. Pettine briefed the members on some implications of the current structure and services and how these will help shape the alternatives funding, organizational models and forecasting for 5, 10, 20 and 25 year horizons. This tech memo will look at data by agency, cost type (both operating and capital levels) by mode and, through a cost allocation methodology, by jurisdiction. She noted the particular challenge of allocating costs by jurisdiction and region when looking at statewide figures, and stated that a methodology to allocate these costs by jurisdiction is useful but may not be exact. Ms. Henkin discussed near- and long-term vulnerabilities of transit funding from the MDOT Transportation Trust Fund, noting that MDOT's forecast predicts funding to begin to return to "normal" post FY 2023. She stated that the LOTS (locally operated transit systems) often overmatch the state funding made available to local jurisdictions and that MDOT MTA has no prescribed formula for allocations but tries to keep funding levels consistent year-to-year when capital requests are not fulfilled. Ms. Henkin informed the Board that MDOT MTA and the LOTS made a combined investment in FY 2019 of \$1.1B in the region (this number included commuter bus and MARC). She noted that future operating costs are likely to grow in the region from the ~\$700M annual costs and that capital needs face a ten-year State of Good Repair (SoGR) gap that is sizeable.

Ms. Pettine discussed the implications for developing alternatives to address the identified goals of the study. Of particular note is that coordination, funding and defining roles and responsibilities clearly across stakeholders will be critical.

Mr. Trame discussed Peer selection. The peers identified include, UTA (Salt Lake City, UT), CATS (Charlotte, NC), SMART (SE, MI), SEPTA (Philadelphia, PA), Metro Transit (St. Louis, MO) and WMATA as comparisons. He briefly discussed the desktop review and interview process he is conducting and mentioned the interviews were ongoing.

The Chair thanked the team for their efforts and found the technical memo very interesting. Mr. Lang fielded questions that arose in the chat box from members. A clarification on the total amount of SoGR for the LOTS was asked and Ms. Henkin stated it was estimated at \$112M. Mr. Fred Fravel responded to another question to clarify the LOTS distribution formula from MDOT MTA. He again stated there was no specific formula and that MDOT MTA relies upon prior awards and requests as a guide as the LOTS program funding is cobbled from a variety of sources that constrain eligibility statewide. There was a question about the way in which costs were allocated in the per capita and revenue miles (slide 17) and were other allocation methods done or considered. Ms. Henkin told the group that, yes, costs are based on revenue miles but total dollars were broken down by population (slide 17). Other distributions were examined, by ridership, by population and by jurisdiction.

[PowerPoint: Transit Governance: Financial Review]

10. PRESENTATION: BAY CROSSING STUDY

Ms. Heather Murphy introduced the topic and then asked that a video be played describing the project status. This was done since the project is in an open comment period and the project sponsors are not taking questions.

The presentation covered the process to date for the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study. Undertaken by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) and the Federal Highway Administration, this study seeks to consider corridors for providing additional capacity and access across the Chesapeake Bay in order to improve mobility, travel reliability, and safety at the existing Bay Bridge.

The current study is part of Tier 1 NEPA process to establish the purpose and need, evaluate a range of alternatives, include public involvement and comment, resulting in the identification of a selected corridor alternative. Public meetings have included:

- September 2017: Scoping
- May 2018: Purpose and need, existing traffic and environmental conditions
- Sept/Oct 2019: Range of corridor alternatives and preliminary corridor alternatives retained for analysis (CARA)
- Feb/April 2021: Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and MDTA-recommended preferred corridor alternative

Initially 14 corridors were considered, which have now been reduced to three corridors numbered 6 through 8 retained for analysis.

During the presentation various topics were covered: traffic analysis (average daily traffic, level of service, back-ups and delays, and flexibility during maintenance and incident management), environmental analysis (natural resources, land use, parks, and historic sites, indirect and cumulative effects) and project length and cost.

MDTA and FHWA will receive comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and the MDTA-recommended preferred corridor alternative through May 10, 2021.

Following the comment period, a combined Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) will be available that:

- Takes into consideration all comments received through the Public Hearing period
- Summarize and respond to public and agency comments
- Identify the selected two-mile-wide corridor alternative

The Tier 1 FEIS/ROD is the last formal step in the Tier 1 NEPA process and is expected to be completed in Winter 2021/2022. Completion of the Tier 1 study does not presume the initiation of a Tier 2 NEPA study, since no funding has been identified.

[PowerPoint: Bay Crossing Study Summary]

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. Ms. Eisenberg noted that the April meeting will be held on Friday, April 16, beginning at 9:45 A.M.

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 A.M.

Members

Kwame Arhin, Federal Highway Administration
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Lynda Eisenberg, Carroll County Department of Planning
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Rick Gordon, Annapolis Transit
Ryan Long, Federal Transit Administration
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, Office of Transportation
Kate Sylvester, Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)
Greg Carski (for D'Andrea Walker), Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Ken Choi (for Bihui Xu), Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Lara Bachman, MDOT MTA
Ciara Blue, BMC
Cindy Burch, BMC
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
David Cookson, Howard County OOT
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Jacqueline Djomo, MDOT
Fred Fravel, KFH Group
Monica Haines-Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Tamar Henkin, Tamar Henkin Strategic Advisors
Victor Henry, BMC
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Mike Kelly, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC

Todd Lang, BMC
Amy Pettine, Nelson Nygaard
Jonathan Sacks
Lisa Sirota, MDOT SHA
Adrea Turner, Baltimore City DOT
Blair Trame, KPMG
Bethany Whitaker, Nelson Nygaard

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board