

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

April 16, 2021
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:35 to 10:24 A.M.

MINUTES

The 330th meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M. by the Chair, Commissioner Stephen Wantz.

1. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #21-24

Mr. Todd Lang introduced the resolution to adopt the FY 2022-2023 UPWP. Mr. Lang reviewed the amount of funding available, what the source of funding is, and where the dollars are going (BMC, local jurisdictions, or focus areas). Mr. Lang also described the range of focus areas.

Mr. Lang described the 30-day comment period and stated several individuals and organizations submitted comments. A response from BRTB members was prepared and sent.

Commissioner Wantz asked for a motion to approve resolution #21-24. Commissioner Jim Moran moved to adopt the UPWP with Mayor Brandon Scott seconded the motion. Commissioner Wantz asked the members if there was further discussion, there was none. A voice vote approved the resolution unanimously.

[PowerPoint: April BRTB Action Items]

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #20-25

Mr. Lang shared that the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Goal is set in conjunction with each UPWP. The goal adopted by the BRTB is based on a methodology developed by MDOT. The BRTB piggybacks the MDOT methodology since it is based on being located in the same or a substantially similar market. The FY 2022 DBE goal is proposed for 31.7 percent. Mr. Lang noted that in the previous six months this goal was met.

Commissioner Wantz asked for a motion from the committee. Mayor Scott moved to adopt the DBE goal with Commissioner Moran seconding the motion. Commissioner Wantz asked the members if there was further discussion, there was none. A voice vote approved the resolution unanimously.

[PowerPoint: April BRTB Action Items]

3. PRESENTATION: TRANSIT GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Ms. Bethany Whitaker, project manager, introduced herself and Ms. Amy Pettine, both of Nelson Nygaard, and Mr. Blair Trame of KPMG as members of the consultant team making the presentation today. She stated that this is the fifth in a series of meetings with the BRTB looking at project overview, history, current structure and organization, the way funding flows through the system, and decision-making. Today they will be speaking about peer reviews and some of the lessons learned and information gleaned from examining peer agencies. They will be back in May to talk about revenues and ways to raise money for public transportation and finally in June presenting options for the Board to consider for different governance and funding organization models. Ms. Whitaker briefly updated the Board on the current model for transit in the region. Maryland has a statewide model, transportation funds are collected and distributed at the state level, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly appoints a Secretary who directs funding and investment across the state. The state public transportation system is operated and run by MDOT MTA, in contrast with the LOTS (locally operated transit systems). LOTS are funded in part by local and state funds and operated by local operators. Decisions are made by the local government and operators and, ultimately by highest elected officials at the local level.

Mr. Blair Trame from KPMG's Infrastructure Advisory Group was introduced and walked the Board through the Peer Review. The review considered four peer agencies and a mention of other reviews done by a recent project led by the ENO Transportation Center. KPMG chose four additional peers from that study to provide a wide range of diversity to compare. The CATS system in Charlotte North Carolina was first. CATS is the provider for the Charlotte metro region and is a department housed inside Charlotte's City government. He discussed the general structure of CATS which sits under a Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC), the governing body of transit in the region. He discussed structure and voting and non-voting memberships of the MTC. MTC provides general oversight to CATS. An enabler for CATS has been that it is embedded as a City department which has allowed them unique access and ability to coordinate with other agencies. Also the contribution of the City as well as Mecklenburg County is substantial, using a 1/2 cent sales tax to fund transit in the region. This arrangement has worked well but expansion into the future isn't possible without an increase, although operations will be covered. CATS is currently considering options to raise more revenue for expansion and other members who contribute may become voting members in the future.

Mr. Trame spoke about the St Louis Bi-State Development Authority (BSD), who do more than just operate the public transit agency for the region. It was created over 50 years ago and its membership is half from Missouri, with members appointed from the Governor, and half from Illinois, appointed by County leadership of the two counties in the East St. Louis area. Because of the size of BSD's portfolio, and the states not substantially contributing to transit (primarily locally funded) the transit system is managed by local governments.

Mr. Trame discussed Salt Lake City's Utah Transit Authority (UTA). It has a Board of Trustees with 3 members, much smaller and who are full-time, salaried positions. This allows them to focus of the system. The Trustee's are appointed by the Governor with approval from local

government. There is an Advisory Board that provides advice to the Trustees who are all locally appointed. UTA receives direct appropriations from the State for operations but because most of the State population resides in the region there is a lot of support for transit across State and local government, so reliance on State appropriations are less problematic. For capital funding, UTA has been funded primarily by local government through a variety of revenue sources.

Mr. Trame spoke about SEPTA in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. Their fifteen member board has five members who are state appointed and the other ten are appointed from Philadelphia and the four collar counties. State appointments include one member who is appointed by the Governor with terms that match the Governor's, and House and Senate leaders appoint two members. SEPTA's Board has been led by the same individual for the past twenty-one years. This has allowed consistency and stable vision for the system for the past two decades, focused on maintenance and operations. The State provide half of the operating and capital budgets for SEPTA. They have recently gotten dedicated operating money, and have had some money dedicated for capital funding that is set to sunset soon.

Mr. Trame emphasized some key points: CATS voting representation is tied to its funding structure but growth will be dependent upon bringing in new revenue streams. BSD's large portfolio and lack of state funding requires a lot of local responsibilities to operate and fund transit in the region. UTA's unique Board (3 Trustees) and broad support for transit is a benefit, with funding coming both from state and local governments. SEPTA's large board with state and local appointees led by a long-running chairman, has provided consistency and stability for the organization.

Ms. Whitaker then compared MDOT MTA, the LOTS agencies in the region and WMATA. She walked through next steps of the project, a public forum with an expert panel, revenue sources and development of options for the region. She then asked it members if they had any questions of comments.

Chairman Wantz opened it up for discussion and County Executive Steuart Pittman, Mayor Scott, and County Executive John Olszewski all thanked the team for their presentation and work.

Delegate Tony Bridges asked how it was that SEPTA had a Chair for so long (21 years) and if that position was appointed. Mr. Trame responded that yes, it is amazing that the Chairman of SEPTA's board was able to stay in that position for so long and that he is elected by the other board members annually to serve in that capacity. He agreed that SEPTA benefits from the consistent vision but there was some recognition that consistency can also create some obstacles.

Deputy Secretary Earl Lewis of MDOT stated that Secretary Slater regrets he could not make the meeting and asked the consultant team if any agencies they examined have direct authority to raise taxes. Mr. Trame responded that all had to go through local governments that would then exercise that power. He also mentioned that the team examined a fifth example in SE Michigan (SMART) that did not provide a good example where each partner exercised that power and they had to vote every two to four years to keep the budget funded.

At CATS there is no sunset on their tax source and this has allowed them the resources to budget and plan.

MDOT MTA Administrator Kevin Quinn asked if the team reviewed any funding models that are more stable during COVID and if they've seen any that are more stable during emergencies, if so which were best? State or local? Ms. Whitaker stated that there are two kinds of stability, one comes from how you raise funds, property taxes and other more stable than sales or consumption based taxes. When you look at State versus local funds, state funds come from a broader source and locals from a smaller source, the State can add a lot of stability to any funding model.

[PowerPoint: Peer Review Results]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

No one from the public wished to address the Board.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Wantz recognized several members who had joined after the original meeting had started, he welcomed Mr. Tom Sadowski and Mr. Robert McCord. Ms. Terry Garcia Crews, Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration, Region III, shared that she found the meeting had great content. County Executive Pittman asked the Board members if they were interested in taking a stand on the proposed MAGLEV project. Mr. Todd Lang did say that a presentation on this project had been in front of the BRTB at the February meeting. Mr. Lang will work with the Empowered BRTB members to develop a joint response.

Commissioner Wantz closed the meeting with praise for how all parties worked well together during the pandemic and also thanked Ms. Lynda Eisenberg for her leadership as chair of the BRTB.

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 A.M.

Members

Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive
Alexandra Brun, Maryland Department of Environment – Planner
Gavin Buckley, City of Annapolis – Mayor
Terry Garcia Crews, Federal Transit Administration – Region 3 Administrator
Kwaku Duah, Annapolis Transit, Representative of Public Transit
Barry Glassman, Harford County Executive
Earl Lewis, Maryland Department of Transportation – Deputy Secretary
Rob McCord, Maryland Department of Planning – Secretary
Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Commissioner
Greg Murrill, Federal Highway Administration – MD Administrator

Johnny Olszewski, Baltimore County Executive
Steuart Pittman, Anne Arundel County Executive
Kevin Quinn, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration – Administrator
Brandon Scott, Baltimore City Mayor
Steve Wantz, Carroll County Commissioner

Staff and Guests

Kwame Arhin, Federal Highway Administration
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Charles Baber, BMC
Ciara Blue, BMC
Tony Bridges, Maryland State Delegate
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Jeramie Calandro, BMC
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne’s County Department of Public Works
Lynda Eisenberg, Carroll County Department of Planning
Fred Fravel, KFH Group
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Don Halligan, BMC
Tamar Henkin, Tamar Henkin Strategic Advisors
John Hillegass, Greater Washington Partnership
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Evan Johnson, Baltimore City, Special Assistant to the Mayor
Mara Kaminowitz, BMC
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Mike Kelly, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Charlene Mingus, BMC
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Sally Nash, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Theo Ngongang, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Ines Nizeye, Tindale Oliver
Samantha O’Neil, Baltimore County, Senior Advisor
Amy Pettine, Nelson Nygaard
Matt Power, Anne Arundel County, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning & Zoning
Kathy Renzi, BMC
Larry Richardson, Staff Auditor at the Office of Legislative Audits
Ramond Robinson, Anne Arundel County, Office of Transportation
Tom Sadowski, University System of Maryland - Vice Chancellor for Economic Development
Sam Sidh, Howard County Chief of Staff
Brian ten Siethoff, Principal Consultant at AMCL
Lisa Sirota, MDOT SHA
Kate Sylvester, Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)

Blair Trame, Manager at KPMG
D'Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Ingrid Waung, KPMG
Bethany Whitaker, Nelson Nygaard
Guy Wilkinson, KPMG
Roberta Windham, Carroll County Administrator
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board