

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

November 22, 2022
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:01 to 10:20 A.M.

MINUTES

The 347th meeting was called to order at 9:01 A.M. by the Chair, Mr. Sam Snead.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2022 BRTB meeting was made by Mr. Sam Snead. A motion was made by Mr. Bruce Gartner to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Alex Rawls. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

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

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda shared the following highlights of public comment periods:

- Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), in partnership with Harford County, is developing a concept plan for bicycle and pedestrian improvements along a stretch of US 40 in Harford County. As part of the process to develop this concept plan, three potential options have been developed and members of the public can comment on the three proposed options through this Sunday, November 27. Comments will be reviewed by BMC staff and a stakeholder advisory committee, and will help shape the final concept plan which will be released for comment in 2023. Learn more at publicinput.com/us40bikeped
- BMC is also working with Howard and Baltimore counties to conduct a multimodal transportation study for Ellicott City and Oella to address parking, wayfinding, and multimodal access. The public is invited to help shape the future of transportation in historic Ellicott City and Oella at an open house on Thursday, December 8 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Roger Carter Center in Ellicott City. As part of the process to develop this study,

the project team has developed an existing conditions and analysis report as well as initial recommendations. Learn more at the public meeting or online at publicinput.com/historictowncenters.

- The 45-day comment period on the draft 2022 Public Participation Plan (PPP) closed on Friday, October 7. Feedback was received from 65 participants who shared 29 comments. In our survey, there is general support for the proposed changes, including a move to virtual/hybrid meetings and updating the accessibility statement. Concerns were raised regarding sufficient time to comment and if the BRTB is meaningfully considering or incorporating public comments into documents such as the TIP. Based on public feedback, staff are developing a set of recommended changes which will be shared with the Technical Committee and Board in December. Comments can be viewed on the project website at publicinput.com/2022PPP.

Ms. Haines Benkhedda went on to share some updates on public engagement initiatives:

- In October the Transportation CORE focused on generating ideas for the FY 2024 UPWP. CORE members submitted over a dozen ideas on topics such as: electric vehicle infrastructure; bus stop accessibility; streamlining the project development process; exploring local processes for identifying and making pedestrian improvements; identifying measures for providing free or low cost transit access for area college students; a study to develop creative ways to decrease peak hour traffic; and gathering and analyzing data to determine trends in the various modes of transportation.
- Another initiative staff are promoting is a series of educational white papers and surveys as part of the process to develop Resilience 2050. The eighth white paper has been released on socioeconomic forecasts. Another white paper on demographic forecasts is due out in December. To date, we have had over 2,800 visitors to the project page and 41 participants have shared over 50 comments.

Ms. Haines Benkhedda shared highlights of one public comment from Abraham D. who commented on the traffic safety white paper survey. Recently he witnessed the aftermath of a cyclist that was hit outside the Halethorpe MARC Station on US 1. Despite the cyclist using the painted bike lanes they were still struck. Abraham emphasizes that there is no buffering space to protect cyclists and recommends that the cars should be the buffer for the cyclists rather than the cyclists being a buffer for the cars.

Stay tuned for additional papers on Financial Forecast; and Planning for Resilient Infrastructure and Climate Change! Learn more or read the white papers at Resilience2050.com.

[Handout: Public Involvement Report for November]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Joel Gallihue reported the following from the November TC meeting:

- MDOT SHA presented a request to amend the TIP to provide additional funding to the MD 24: South of Stirrup Run Culvert to Deer Creek Bridge, Section G project. The scope of the

project includes reconstruction of the roadway within the current alignment, slope stabilization on both sides of MD 24, shifting Rock Creek approximately 25 feet east of its current location and planting native trees and brush. A vote was taken on Resolution #23-8, with unanimous support from the members.

- BMC shared results as part of a series of findings from the 2018-2019 Maryland Travel Survey (MTS). These findings focused on an “Analysis of Making The Transit Connection in the Baltimore Region”. The analysis used regional rather than jurisdictional data. It was noted that many persons in the Baltimore region do not access various transit modes from home on their own. Instead they rely on their spouse or a service such as a Taxi, Uber, or Lyft to do so. In general, rail transit riders are more likely than bus transit riders to need help accessing transit from home.
- Public Participation Plan Comments –Comments from the 45-day comment period were distributed to the members and feedback is welcome as the feedback is examined. Staff are working on responses to the comments which will brought to the TC and BRTB as an action item at the December meetings.
- Update on Resilience 2050 – BMC released a white paper in October on active transportation. This is the 7th white paper related to LRTP topics. November’s white paper will focus on the Round 10 socioeconomic forecasts. It was noted that cost estimation is complete for candidate LRTP projects. Project scoring and the financial forecast are also almost complete. BMC staff will share the policy and technical spreadsheet in the near future.
- Intro to Data Dashboards – BMC staff introduced development of the UPWP task for the Tableau dashboard, which has a goal to create interactive and engaging dashboards allowing users to download, save and print analysis. The consultant team has developed four draft dashboards and two dashboard user/maintenance guides. Additional dashboards and user/maintenance guides are under development in December. There was a live dashboard demonstration providing basic instructions on the dashboard navigation.
- Topics of Interest from the AMPO Conference – BMC staff distributed a list of Focus Area topics that has been started for the 2024 UPWP. Members were asked to review the list and add send any additional ideas to BMC.

5. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #23-8

Mr. Keith Kucharek introduced the resolution. In Resolution #23-8, MDOT SHA requested to amend the FY 2023-2026 TIP. MDOT SHA is requesting to add \$6.036 million of STBG funds in engineering, right-of-way, and construction to the MD 24: South of Stirrup Run Culvert to Deer Creek Bridge, Section G project. The Technical Committee recommended at the November 1, 2022 meeting, sending the resolution to the BRTB as presented.

Ms. Lisa Minnick presented the details of the project. \$67,000 in engineering funds and \$165,000 in right of way funds will be added to FY 2023. Additionally, \$5,804,000 in construction funds will be added in FY 2023-2026.

The project, which will be advertised for construction in December 2022, extends approximately 0.25 miles along MD 24 in Harford County from 900 feet south of Sharon Road to 1,700 feet north of Ferncliff Lane.

The scope of the project includes reconstruction of the roadway within the current alignment, slope stabilization on both sides of MD 24, shifting Rock Creek approximately 25 feet east of its current location and planting native trees and brush.

The current project schedule includes advertisement for construction on December 19, 2022, Notice to Proceed in April of 2023 and Open to traffic in fall of 2025.

In response to a question by Joel Gallihue at the Technical Committee meeting regarding accommodations for pedestrians, Ms. Minnick indicated that pedestrian access was looked at during the early stages of design. No pedestrian facilities will be included with this project for several reasons. Pedestrian facilities are not included in the Harford County Master Plan, there are no existing facilities on either end of the construction to tie into, and adding pedestrian facilities would require additional shifting of Rock Creek which would create instability. Currently there are shared road markings and signage that will continue once construction is complete.

Mr. Snead asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Gartner asked if there was any local opposition to not including any pedestrian facilities. Ms. Minnick indicated that there were some questions early in the development phases but they were addressed. There is some interest in providing those accommodations, but for the reasons previously stated, they will not be included with this project.

Mr. Snead requested a vote on Resolution #23-8. Mr. Alex Rawls moved to approve Resolution #23-8 and Ms. D'Andrea Walker seconded the motion. The resolution passed unanimously.

[Presentation: MD 24 (Rocks Road) TIP Amendment]

6. PRESENTATION: BAY CROSSING STUDY

Ms. Melissa Williams, Director, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Department of Planning and Program Development, and Ms. Heather Lowe, Project Manager, briefed the BRTB on the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 NEPA (Tier 2 Study). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires any project receiving federal funding or approval to assess a project's potential impacts to the human environment before taking action. MDTA and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), are following a two-tiered NEPA process for the Bay Crossing Study.

MDTA completed the Tier 1 NEPA Study in April 2022, when FHWA issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD). The purpose of the Tier 1 Study was to evaluate corridor alternatives for providing additional capacity and access across the Chesapeake Bay to improve mobility, travel reliability and safety at the existing Bay Bridge.

As part of this study, 14 two-mile-wide corridor alternatives were evaluated for their ability to address the Tier 1 Purpose and Need (P&N). Analysis of traffic, engineering, cost and environmental considerations indicated that Corridors 6, 7 and 8 best met the Tier 1 P&N. The FEIS/ROD identified Corridor 7, the corridor containing the existing Bay Bridge, as the Selected Corridor Alternative.

In June 2022, the MDTA launched the four- to five-year Tier 2 Study. This study will evaluate the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of a range of alternative alignments and transportation issues from the Severn River Bridge in Anne Arundel County to the U.S. 50/U.S. 301 Split in Queen Anne's County. The range of alternatives includes a No Build alternative and a range of build alternatives including various alignments, crossing types and modal and operational alternatives. The Tier 2 Study will refine the P&N to focus on Corridor 7.

The presenters provided a historic perspective of traffic at the Bay Bridge going back to 1952 when the first span opened with 1.1 million annual crossings up to 2021 with almost 26.6 million crossings. In 2022, monthly traffic volumes approached pre-pandemic levels and on some specific days over the summer, exceeding 2019 volumes on those days by almost 10 percent.

The Tier 2 Study will include detailed environmental studies covering the following eight areas: 1) Environmental Justice, 2) Natural Resources, 3) Historic Resources, 4) Noise, 5) Air Quality, 6) Socioeconomic and Land Use, 7) Indirect and Cumulative Effects, and 8) Hazardous Materials.

The Tier 2 Study is currently in the agency coordination/open house phase. Between spring 2023 and summer 2025, P&N, traffic, alternatives and environmental analyses will be conducted. The study is expected to be completed by the fall of 2026. The schedule is preliminary and subject to change. Should a Build Alternative be selected, subsequent phases will include engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction. More information can be found at baycrossingstudy.com.

Members asked several questions: 1) is there consideration of bike/pedestrian accommodations? MDTA said there is some work underway but it has not been completed at this time. 2) will tolling options would be considered under the Tier 2 study? The member was interested in whether a toll increase due to the new span would be spread over all of MDTA's toll facilities. MDTA said tolling options will be included in the study but this work has not begun. 3) It was mentioned that the Annapolis Visitors Bureau has initiated a ferry study – results will be shared with the MDTA team.

[PowerPoint: Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 2 NEPA]

7. PRESENTATION: HOUSING INITIATIVES IN THE BALTIMORE REGION

BMC housing policy coordinator Mr. Dan Pontious presented an overview of BMC's housing program, which centers on helping the larger BMC/BRTB local member jurisdictions carry out their fair housing responsibilities. The context for those responsibilities is that, between the

great depression and the 1960s, the federal government promoted residential racial segregation, generally restricting its new deal, subsidized, wealth-building homeownership programs to white people and communities while funding mainly public housing in communities of color. Because of that, the 1968 fair housing act requires the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other federal agencies to affirmatively further the goals of the law in their programs related to housing and urban development. The law essentially requires them to work to undo the damage of those previous pro-segregation policies, and HUD passes that duty on to its state and local grantees, such as those BMC/BRTB members.

Mr. Pontious shared that, since 2012, BMC has assisted the five largest jurisdictions in the region and the City of Annapolis -- all of whom receive their federal housing funds directly from HUD -- in voluntarily cooperating regionally to carry out this duty. As part of that work, BMC also worked with those jurisdictions' public housing authorities to create a regional project-based voucher program. Created with a HUD seed grant in 2015, that program has now awarded 113 housing vouchers to eleven affordable housing developments in five jurisdictions. So far 34 low-income families are now living in affordable homes in safe communities with good public schools for their kids because of this innovative regional program.

Mr. Pontious also described how, due to a 2020 regional fair housing analysis that BMC helped local governments conduct, a new regional action step is to address large, persistent racial homeownership gaps that are a legacy of those new deal and post-World War II federal policies. Homeownership counselors from around the region have shared that, because of skyrocketing home values and, now, rising interest rates, first-time homebuyers of color are having an extremely difficult time finding homes in decent condition that they can afford. At the same time, rents are also rising quickly. The jurisdictions and BMC staff are exploring the possibility that there is an overall shortage of habitable housing in the Baltimore region, working with BMC's Shawn Kimberly and consulting with relevant policy organizations and real estate experts. BMC's December 1 Housing Committee meeting will be devoted to the topic, and exploring this jobs/housing balance could also be a topic to work with BRTB on through a FY 2024 UPWP item.

[PowerPoint: BMC's Regional Fair Housing Coordination]

8. OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting of the BRTB will be virtual on December 20, 2022.

Mr. Todd Lang took the opportunity to share a plaque recognizing the years of service where Dr. Kwame Arhin served as the FHWA liaison from the Maryland Division to the BRTB. Dr. Arhin will be retiring by the end of the year, therefore this opportunity allowed the BRTB to thank him for many years of support and insight regarding issues related to FHWA.

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 A.M.

Members

Kwame Arhin, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
Tyson Byrne (for Heather Murphy), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
D'Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Graham Young (for Theo Ngongang), Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Mary Lane (for Lynda Eisenberg), Carroll County Department of Planning
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Eric Leshinsky, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Sam Snead, Anne Arundel County, Office of Transportation
Ken Choi (for Bihui Xu), Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Staff and Guests

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Regina Aris, BMC
Cindy Burch, BMC
Yvette C, guest
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Blake Fisher, BMC
Joel Gallihue, Harford County
Monica Haines-Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Collin Hodges, guest
Petronella James, Morgan State University
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Lisa Kelly, guest
Shawn Kimberly, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Heather Lowe, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)
Sheila Mahoney, BMC
Charlene Mingus, BMC
Lisa Minnick, MDOT SHA
Catrina P, guest
Dan Pontious, BMC
Shane Sarver, BMC
Eileen Singleton, BMC

Desiree V, guest
Melissa Williams, MDTA
Nick, guest

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board