

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

June 27, 2023
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:00 to 10:11 A.M.

MINUTES

The 346th meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by the Chair, Mr. Sam Snead.

Mr. Snead welcomed Ms. Corren Johnson, representing Baltimore City, and Ms. Mary Lane, representing Carroll County.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2023 BRTB meeting was made by Mr. Snead. A motion was made by Mr. Steve Cohoon to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Eric Leshinsky. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one who wished to address the BRTB.

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Jacob Took described the closed comment period for Resilience 2050, the 2024-2027 TIP, and the associated air quality Conformity Determination. Paid promotion of the comment period included the expenditure of \$10,315 across 13 print, radio and digital outlets in the region, including Spanish-language print and digital ads. The digital ads alone earned a minimum of 166,000 impressions. A social media campaign across BMC's Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn earned 9,200 impressions. Earned media included coverage from WBAL, WYPR's *On The Record*, *Maryland Matters* and other outlets, as well as a *Baltimore Sun* op-ed.

Most feedback was received through the PublicInput project page, which netted over 4,800 views. Nearly 170 participants, including individuals representing wider organizations or

coalitions, shared 125 comments. We also hosted a virtual meeting as well as in-person meetings in Westminster, Bel Air, Glen Burnie, Towson, Stevensville, Baltimore and Ellicott City to discuss the plans in more depth, answer questions and engage in discussion on the drafts.

Analysis of the comments reflects positive sentiment toward investments in transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and negative sentiment toward investments in roadways. Another significant object of negative sentiment is air quality and climate change, often connected directly to implications of roadway expenditure. Few if any comments reflect positive sentiment toward roadway spending, or negative sentiment toward transit.

Handout: Public Involvement Report for June 2023]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Joel Gallihue reported the following from the June 2023 TC meeting:

- BMC staff discussed the Limited English Proficiency Plan and what updates were made from the previous plan 4 years ago. The Technical Committee members voted unanimously to send the resolution to the BRTB.
- BMC staff gave a brief update on the Safe System Approach project from the UPWP. The presentation quickly reviewed traffic crash fatality trends in the region and the Safe System Approach components. Then outlined the project, which included several workshops with local Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) teams and the development of Best Practices, Case Studies and Guidelines. She then shared summary outcomes from each workshop, the three selected case studies, and the outline of the Guidelines document.
- Update on *Resilience 2050*: BMC staff provided updates on the public comment period for *Resilience 2050*, the 2024-2027 TIP and the associated Air Quality Conformity Determination. Staff held a virtual public meeting on May 24 as had started in-person meetings.
- Maryland Travel Survey: Travel by Taxi and Private Car in the Baltimore Region: BMC staff discussed results from the 2018-2019 Maryland Travel Survey (MTS), in particular a study of Travel by Taxi and Private Car in the Baltimore region.

Age: The largest shares of taxi and private car riders are those 45-64 years old and the smallest share by teenagers 13-15 years old.

Income: The largest share of taxi and private car riders are those with the lowest household incomes, less than \$15,000 and the smallest share of riders earning \$75,000 to \$99,999.

Race and Ethnicity: The largest share of taxi and private car riders are "African Americans, Blacks" (67.9%) and the smallest share of taxi and private car riders are Asian (1.4%).

Purpose: The largest share of taxi and private car trips are for personal business and other tasks (42.5%), and the smallest share of taxi and private car trips are for social/recreation (5.4%) purposes.

- **Report from Nominating Committee:** The slate nominated for FY 2024 consists of MDOT for Chair and Baltimore County for Vice Chair. The slate will be open for nominations from the floor in July to be followed by a vote. The new officers will then assume their roles at the July meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #23-23

Ms. Regina Aris explained the purpose and origin of a language assistance program and who the program is intended to assist. Limited English Proficiency is a term used to describe individuals whose primary language is not English *and* are not proficient in the English language. The key to creating or updating the LEP is taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services the BRTB provides. To do this a four-factor process is considered. The factors include: 1) the number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area; 2) the frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the program; 3) the importance of the service provided by the program; and 4) the resources available to the recipient.

BMC updated the data by using the American Community Survey estimates for 2017-2021 found in table B16001. Based on the current low levels of residents that are limited in their capacity to speak and understand English, translation of all BRTB plans and programs is not required. For instance, the top language in this category is Spanish with 1.61% of the region's population speaking English less than "very well". This was followed by Chinese at 0.41% and Korean at 0.34%. However, to engage the largest group (Spanish speakers) the BRTB commits to translation of several key documents. Additionally, the BMC updated its google translate button to allow web content to be translated into 103 languages. Of the 35 languages identified that are spoken less than "very well" in the region, 34 are included in the google translate capabilities. Additional assistance is available from [google to translate](#) portable document format (pdf) files.

Mr. Bruce Gartner recommended approval of the resolution, and Ms. Corren Johnson seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: Language Assistance Program]

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR FY 2024

Mr. Snead refreshed members on the slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee which was Baltimore County for chair and Howard County for vice chair to serve in FY 2024. Mr. Snead asked if there were any nominations from the floor prior to a formal vote. There were no further nominations. It was also noted that Central Maryland RTA and Mr. Jason Quan are nominated as the voting member for public transportation organizations in the region.

Ms. Heather Murphy recommended approval of the slate of officers, and Mr. Alex Rawls seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the slate. The

voice vote yielded all “aye” votes for the nominated slate. Mr. Snead recognized the FY 2024 officers and expressed appreciation for continued support.

7. PRESENTATION: RESILIENCE 2050

Mr. Zach Kaufman presented an update on the draft LRTP, *Resilience 2050*, and the recent public comment period for *Resilience 2050*, the 2024-2027 TIP and the associated Air Quality Conformity Determination. Mr. Kaufman summarized key steps and resolutions in the planning process for *Resilience 2050* including:

- Goals and Strategies: Approved November 2021 via BRTB Resolution #22-6
- Project Scoring Methodology: Approved November 2021 via BRTB Resolution #22-7
- Round 10 Socioeconomic Forecasts: Approved July 2022 via Resolution #23-1
- Financial Forecast: Approved January 2023 via Resolution #23-13

The draft preferred alternative of major capital expansion and system preservation projects was selected based on project scores, project costs and the revenues anticipated to be available from 2028 to 2050. The draft preferred alternative includes 56 of the 62 candidate roadway projects and all 36 of the candidate transit projects. Of the 92 projects in the draft preferred alternative, 79 are expansion projects and 13 are large-scale system preservation projects.

Of the \$12.062 billion in funding anticipated to be available for system expansion in *Resilience 2050*, \$6.8 billion is allocated to roadway projects and \$4.8 billion is allocated to transit projects. In addition, \$280 million of the expansion funds were set aside for Locally Operated Transit Systems and efforts to improve air quality through Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies, complete streets, emissions reduction strategies and regional active transportation priority projects identified by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group in 2022.

The planning process for *Resilience 2050* also included a series of white papers on a variety of LRTP topics. Eleven papers were released from February 2022 through February 2023 covering topics including project scoring, the financial forecast, socioeconomic forecasting, traffic safety, freight movement, transit, active transportation, air quality, emerging technologies and climate change and resilience.

The BRTB held a comment period for the three documents from May 17 – June 20, including 8 meetings throughout the region (one virtual; seven in person). A website on the PublicInput platform served as a central portal for information on the documents and the comment period. The public comment period was advertised in 13 outlets, including print, radio and digital platforms. BMC communications staff created regional and customized local media kits, which were distributed to each jurisdiction. The BRTB received 125 comments during the comment period.

All comments have been shared with the BRTB and Technical Committee members, and members are collaborating with BMC staff to draft responses to all comments received.

Several themes are consistently expressed in the comments. These include negative sentiment towards the scale of roadway expansion in the draft preferred alternative, both in terms of the number of projects and the amount of expenditures. Many comments also reflect concerns with the implications of roadway expansion for climate change, land use and sprawl, air quality and public health. The comments also reflect positive sentiment towards more transit expansion, increased transit reliability and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

During discussion, Mr. Kwaku Duah asked about the source of comments regarding negative sentiments towards roadway expansion. Mr. Lang said that comments came from nearly 170 participants, including individuals representing wider organizations or coalitions. Many of these comments expressed negative sentiment towards roadway expansion and encouraged further investment in transit. Mr. Lang said that we have seen significant movement towards increased transit, bicycle and pedestrian expenditures, though not as quickly as many commenters would like to see. Mr. Lang highlighted that all 36 transit projects submitted for *Resilience 2050* are included in the draft preferred alternative. In addition, 21 percent of expansion dollars were dedicated to transit in the last LRTP versus 41 percent in *Resilience 2050*. *Resilience 2050* is also a living document that can be amended should additional transit projects be allocated funding prior to the adoption of the next LRTP.

At the end of the meeting, a member of the public, Mr. Michael Scepanik asked Mr. Lang about the transit and roadway expenditure numbers in a recent Baltimore Sun Op-Ed focused on *Resilience 2050* from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball and Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman. Mr. Lang offered to discuss the numbers in more detail after the meeting.

[PowerPoint: LRTP Update and Public Comment Period for Resilience 2050]

8. PRESENTATION: MDOT MTA WILL SHARE INFORMATION ON MARC EXPANSION PROJECTS

Mr. Sibtay Haider, WSP, reported on work he is doing for MDOT MTA regarding MARC expansion projects. To begin, Mr. Haider shared trends in ridership across all transit modes with ridership up to 70% of pre-pandemic numbers. Average weekday MARC ridership has passed 13,500. The single highest day was a Sunday corresponding to a peak cherry blossom day.

Mr. Haider moved on to closing the gap between MARC and SEPTA. At this time an MOU with Delaware Transit Corporation has been finalized which defines the roles and responsibilities for a pilot service. MDOT MTA is also looking at investments at Martin State Airport to increase train storage and support the additional service. Currently there is coordination with WILMAPCO, DVRPV, BMC, DelDOT and SEPTA, and other key stakeholders. One item is the Newark Regional Transit Center.

The other gap that MDOT MTA is looking to address is to the south with run-through service to Virginia. The goal is to extend MARC service from Union Station in DC to Alexandria in Virginia. An MOU with VRPA has been finalized which covers roles and responsibilities for a pilot service. There are infrastructure requirements, including a Union Station sub-basement,

L'Enfant 4th track and Long Bridge. MDOT MTA is working on cross-honoring and an improved schedule alignment with VRE. These activities require coordination with Amtrak, VRPA, VRE, CSX, and other key stakeholders.

Both expansion programs to the north and south are supported by an update to the MARC Cornerstone Plan. The Plan is underway and will include vision and goals, equity assessment, service objectives, modeling, and 5-year capital investment program a vision that reflects current travel patterns, critical needs, and available federal funding opportunities.

There are also several infill stations required by the MD General Assembly. Of note is 30% design at Bayview. Design at Bayview is considering future multi-modal transit integration, including options in the East-West corridor study, coordinating details of maintenance tracks, platform lengths and locations, parking areas, etc.

Several members had questions/comments for Mr. Haider. Mr. Snead asked if the team gauged transit usage based on the surrounding communities, or only at Park and Rides? Also, did the study look at feeder systems? They are integral. Mr. Haider agrees. Definitely looking at this for Bayview, current and future service. Mr. Gartner supports this work and planning connections. He asked that MTA share this work with the MTA LOTS program so that it is disbursed to the LOTS. Ms. Xu asked about the schedule. The schedule is a function of stakeholders. Cornerstone Study is launching in the next few months. Ms. Xu also asked if stakeholder discussion be on the website? Mr. Rawls stated Harford County is working on their TDP so would like a copy of this presentation and speak to Harford Transit.

[PowerPoint: MARC Expansion Projects]

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lang thanked Mr. Snead for his two years of service chairing the BRTB. Members joined in to extend their appreciation as well.

Members

Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Kwaku Duah, Annapolis Transit
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Fred Lippert (for Elizabeth Gordon), MDOT Maryland Transit Administration
Corren Johnson, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Mary Lane, Carroll County Department of Planning
Eric Leshinsky, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Sam Snead, Anne Arundel County Department of Transportation
D'Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation

Lamin Williams, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
David Cookson, Howard County
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Joel Gallihue, Harford County
Sibtay Haider, WSP
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Anna Marshall, BMC
Stephen Miller, WRA/MDOT MTA
Charlene Mingus, BMC
Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transit Alliance
Michael Scepaniak, Strong Towns Baltimore
Jacob Took, BMC

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board