

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

December 19, 2023
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:00 to 10:24 A.M.

MINUTES

The 360th meeting of the BRTB was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. D'Andrea Walker

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the November BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Walker. A motion was made by Mr. Sam Snead to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Bruce Gartner. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one who wished to address the BRTB.

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported on the following public engagement activities:

- BMC recently held a public comment period from October 18 through December 5 on the Guinness to Southwest Area Park segment of the Patapsco Regional Greenway. Approximately 40 people attended a community meeting on November 1st and nearly 100 people shared comments by email, text, or on the project webpage. An additional 30 took a survey and 12 added comments on the story map. The project team is currently reviewing and responding to comments. Responses are being posted on the project page. Visit publicinput.com/PRG to learn more.
- Looking ahead to 2024, on behalf of the BRTB, the BMC will be conducting public engagement on a range of projects, including: Vision for a Regional Bicycle Network; PRG: Stoney Run segment; A review of transportation Fares, Fees, and Fines; and Federal

certification review of the BRTB's transportation planning process. Stay tuned to baltometro.org for details.

- BMC publishes a monthly newsletter called Bmore Involved, which features articles about how the public can be engaged at the regional, state and local level. Ms. Haines Benkhedda asked BRTB members to share upcoming public meetings and engagement opportunities with her to include in future issues of the e-newsletter. To sign up to receive the Bmore Involved e-newsletter, visit publicinput.com/Portal/J5348.

Handout: Public Involvement Report for December 2023]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Dan Janousek reported the following from the December Technical Committee meeting:

- BMC staff presented Resolution #24-8 for the benefit of Annapolis to add the Annapolis Electric Ferry Pilot Program project the TIP. This project will consist of a fixed-route ferry service for passengers and bicycles. All components of this project are expected to be complete in FY 2024 with service beginning in FY 2025.
- BMC staff presented Resolution #24-9 for the benefit of Baltimore City to add the Baltimore Ferry Service Improvements project. The project will improve ADA access between existing ferry landing decks and to replace two existing light-duty ferry boats, which have reached the end of their useful life, with new hybrid-electric powered ferry boats. The Technical Committee recommended both requests move to the BRTB for consideration.
- MDOT SHA provided an update on the status of the 2020 Census Urban Area Boundary Adjustment process. The need to do this is fourfold: 1) Align with existing planning boundaries, 2) Address irregularities in Census Urban Areas, 3) Maintain consistency with highway functional classification system, and 4) Impacts funding for Federal-Aid Highway System. MDOT SHA will submit the boundaries to FHWA for review by December 27, 2023 and then begin process to review functional classification of roadways.
- BMC staff provided an update on 2022 crash data and shared a preview of the five regional safety performance targets. In 2022, traffic crashes-related fatalities, serious injuries, and non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries decreased in the Baltimore region while the state saw increases in fatalities. Staff shared the anticipated targets for 2020-2024 average and goal for 2030 for members to review and digest. Those figures will be shared again at the January meeting with a Resolution.
- BMC staff reviewed the schedule for the FY 2025 UPWP Addendum and noted the Technical Committee will review the tasks and budget at the February meeting and indicate if staff can begin a 30-day comment period.

TC members ranked a list of proposed topics. In addition to those tasks, members were able to write in other suggestions. Based on TC feedback, staff will bring a suggested focus area program for FY 2025 based on the rankings and suggested topics.

- MDOT shared information regarding federal and state grant programs. Of note there were several recent awards, including: 1) a Maritime Administration grant under the Port Infrastructure Development program for \$47 million awarded to establish a major offshore

wind logistics and manufacturing hub at the TradePoint Atlantic site, and 2) a series of Federal Railroad Administration grants under the Intercity Passenger Rail program:

- \$4.7B toward the B&P Tunnel Replacement
- \$2.1B for three major Amtrak bridge replacements (Bush River Bridge, Gunpowder River Bridge and Susquehanna River Bridge)
- \$108M for the Baltimore Penn Station
- \$21.6M for the NEC South End Renewal and Speed Improvement Planning Study.
- A number of other important awards were also named.

5. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-8

Mr. Keith Kucharek presented Resolution #24-8. The City of Annapolis has requested to amend the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add one new project, the Annapolis Electric Ferry Pilot Program project. This amendment was presented to the Technical Committee on December 5 and was recommended to be sent to the BRTB as presented. This project was also presented to the Interagency Consultation Group and determined to be exempt according to the conformity rule. Mr. Kwaku Duah presented the Annapolis Electric Ferry Pilot Program project.

Mr. Duah noted that this project must be included in the FY 2024-2027 TIP in order to obtain NEPA approval. Mr. Duah gave a brief overview of the proposed Annapolis Ferry Service. This program will consist of a fixed-route ferry service for passengers and bicycles. The proposed route is approximately one half mile long and connects Eastport with downtown Annapolis. The City of Annapolis estimates 20,500 annual users.

Funding for this project totals \$3.5 million (\$2.975 million federal and \$525,000 local) and is utilizing Section 5307 Passenger Ferry Grant Discretionary Program funds. The \$3.5 million is further broken down to \$1.8 million for purchase of Ferry Vessels, \$1.5 million for landing improvements and \$200,000 for charging station infrastructure.

An Environmental Impact assessment is currently underway. The City is developing three separate RFP's for the ferry vessels, landing improvements and charging stations. All components of this project are expected to be complete in FY 2024 with service beginning in FY 2025.

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

[PowerPoint: Annapolis Electric Ferry Grant]

6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-9

Mr. Kucharek presented Resolution #24-9. MDOT MTA has requested to amend the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add one new project. The Baltimore Ferry Service Improvements project. This amendment was presented to the Technical Committee on December 5 and was recommended to be sent to the BRTB as presented. This project was also presented to the

Interagency Consultation Group and determined to be exempt according to the conformity rule. Ms. Erika Falk presented the Baltimore Ferry Service Improvements project.

MDOT MTA was awarded funds to improve ADA access between existing ferry landing decks and to replace two existing light-duty ferry boats, which have reached the end of their useful life, with new hybrid-electric powered ferry boats. Ferry vessel specifications were developed in coordination with the US Coast Guard. ADA access will be improved by matching ferry landing heights with ferry decks and constructing landings that have unimpeded access for wheelchairs and persons with mobility devices. Five existing Ferry landings will be replaced.

Funding for this project totals \$9.376 million (\$8.061 million federal and \$1.315 million local) and is utilizing Section 5307 Passenger Ferry Grant Discretionary Program funds. The ADA improvements are expected to be complete in FY 2024 with the purchase of new ferries anticipated in FY 2025.

Ms. Walker recommended approval of the resolution and Mr. Chris Jakubiak seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: Baltimore Ferry Service Improvements]

8. PRESENTATION: BRIEFING ON TRAFFIC TRENDS AND FORECASTS ON MDTA

Ms. Kelly Morrison of CDM Smith gave the presentation and was supported by Ms. Chantelle Green of MDTA. The presentation began with Historical Trends. To provide a baseline, VMT from FHWA is used to allow for Maryland versus nationwide comparisons.

MDTA toll transactions were a stable measure, but changes to rules and the shift to all-electronic tolling has influenced those trends, MDTA now uses in-lane data as the best data source for volumes. The northeast crossings and three harbor crossings showed an increase in traffic from 2022 to 2023. MDTA also looks at non-MDTA locations near their own as a check on highway growth.

Traffic & Revenue Forecasts: MDTA performed an econometric modeling update in 2022 for each facility using variables such as GDP, population, retail sales, etc. Construction impacts were also considered. Ending backlog of unpaid transactions so no longer assumed in forecast. The forecast does not assume any further recovery from COVID-19 on commuting trends. Revenue forecasted to decline as backlog transactions taper. The forecast growth is around 0.6% - 0.7% per year, excluding construction impacts.

Ms. Morrison was asked if growth from TradePoint Atlantic was considered in the modeling – and it was considered. Another member asked if toll increases were part of the forecast – none were considered. Finally, a member inquired about the timeframe for the forecast – it is a 10-year projection.

[PowerPoint: MDTA FY 2024 Annual Forecast Update]

9. DISCUSSION: FISCAL YEAR 2024-2029 CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (CTP)

Ms. Heather Murphy began by stating that MDOT has never before gone out with a draft document that did not have sufficient funding to support the projects that were included.

There is an explanation of how we got to this place. Information was shared on how the budget deficit occurred. Several factors contributed, including: the last revenue increase was 10 years ago. That has been impacted by inflation, COVID and construction costs. In addition, the operating budget is growing faster than revenue, leaving a gap of \$3.3B in the draft CTP.

Ms. Murphy then laid out what is proposed to solve the gap, what was kept in the program and what the reductions include. Ms. Murphy identified key Baltimore region projects/programs that are in the program and then laid out the operating and capital reductions.

Members asked about the status of commuter bus cuts and a possible study to look at express bus. Members asked about the 40% cut to the LOTS when all other modes had to deal with 8%. Were there any fixed route cuts? No fixed route service was cut. Why didn't the 8% cut apply to WMATA? That is complicated by a compact involving 3 states and numerous municipalities.

[PowerPoint: Final FY 2024-2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) Overview]

10. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. The meeting ended at 10:24 am.

Members

Jasmine Champion, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division

Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works

Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation

Elizabeth Gordon, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)

Christopher Jakubiak, City of Annapolis Planning

Corren Johnson, Baltimore City Department of Transportation

Mary Lane, Carroll County Department of Planning

Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning

Jason Quan, RTA of Central Maryland

Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment

Sam Snead, Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation

D'Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T)

Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Charles Baber, BMC
Cindy Burch, BMC
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Angie Daniel, Baltimore County DPW&T
Kwaku Duah, City of Annapolis DOT
Erika Falk, MDOT MTA
Chantelle Green, Maryland Transportation Authority
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Victor Henry, BMC
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Mike Kelly, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Anna Marshall, BMC
Kelly Morrison, CDM Smith
Deborah Price, Baltimore County DPW&T
Michael Scepaniak, Strong Towns Baltimore
Jacob Took, BMC

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board