

## BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

February 27, 2024  
Baltimore Metropolitan Council  
9:02 to 11:02 A.M.

### MINUTES

The 362<sup>nd</sup> meeting was called to order at 9:02 A.M. by the Chair, Ms. D'Andrea Walker.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the January BRTB meeting was made by Ms. Walker. A motion was made by Ms. Corren Johnson to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Sam Snead. 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 shared the following highlights of public engagement activities:

- Transportation Planning Budget Open for Comment – Currently, we are welcoming comments on nearly \$10.6 million in federal funding for regional projects and collaborative work. Visit [publicinput.com/BRTBbudget](https://publicinput.com/BRTBbudget) to learn more or check out the full budget. Comments are welcome through March 11, 2024.
- Patapsco Regional Greenway: Stoney Run (Phase 1) – We recently launched a process to design a part of the Patapsco Regional Greenway that will connect to the BWI Trail in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties. Around 40 people turned out to a community meeting at the Elkridge Branch of the Howard County Library System on Tuesday, February 6.

Overall, comments from the community were positive and in support of this project. We reached nearly 1,000 people with the project page and even more on social media. We also had over 150 people participating on the PI page. Visit [publicinput.com/prg](https://publicinput.com/prg) to see the comments.

- Baltimore Regional Transit Commission Launched - For those who are interested in the future of transit funding and governance, check out the newly launched Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC). The next BRTC meeting will be held on Friday, March 8 and it is open to the public. Learn more at [baltometro.org/transportation/about-brtc](https://baltometro.org/transportation/about-brtc).
- Federal Certification - In April we will launch a comment period on how the BRTB is doing as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Our partners from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be visiting on May 1, when we will hold a public meeting to hear from the community.

***Handout: Public Involvement Report for February***

#### **4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Mr. Dan Janousek reported the following from the February Tech Committee meeting:

- First, MDTA presented information on the Bay Crossing study to support the Purpose & Need statement, which revolved around the need to improve mobility, travel reliability and safety at the existing Bay Bridge. There was a fair amount of discussion and questions about this regionally significant project. At the end of the discussion, the Tech Committee recommended the resolution move forward.
- Next, staff presented the Title VI program update, which is based on the Civil Rights Act and aims to both combat discrimination and ensure equal participation in programs and policies. Members reviewed the policy statement, assurances, and the Title VI notice, as well as an update of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The members voted to move this resolution forward.
- Last of the action items, staff introduced a request to amend the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development Station Square Project. Ms. Grover detailed the existing logistics of the Aberdeen Train Station. The presentation covered the proposed improvements. The members unanimously approved the proposed TIP Amendment.
- Staff discussed the draft addendum to the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 Unified Planning Work Program. The Tech Committee agreed on a 30-day public review of the draft, with a total budget of approximately \$10.6 million dollars. The committee also reviewed staff resources and local share for different regional planning activities.

#### **5. REPORT FROM THE INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION GROUP**

Ms. Anna Marshall reported the following from the February ICG meeting:

- ICG discussed the draft methodology and assumptions letter and the revisions made from the January ICG meeting. ICG voted to approve the methodology letter and it was sent to our federal partners on February 12.
- BMC staff presented a proposed 2024-2027 TIP amendment. ICG members agreed with the staff recommendation of it being exempt from air quality conformity requirements.

- An MDOT consultant presented the GHG performance measure, where there is a new requirement for State DOTs and MPOs to set declining 4 year targets for tailpipe CO2 emissions on the National Highway System. The methodology and coordination timeline was discussed. More information is forthcoming as staff continue coordination with MDOT and neighboring MPOs.
- MDE provided an overview about Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, which outlines 42 policies that, if fully implemented, will help the state reach its goal to reduce GHG emissions 60% by 2031.

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-14**

Ms. Heather Lowe introduced this project which began in 2017 and is following a tiered NEPA process. The Bay Crossing Study's goal is to improve mobility, travel, reliability, and safety at the existing bay bridge. Tier 1 is complete with a consideration of 14 corridors. Corridor 7 was identified as the selected corridor alternative to be studied in greater detail during Tier 2. The draft purpose was discussed as described in the resolution with the needs spelled out as well.

Next, Mr. Eric Almquist of RK&K, identified capacity constraints and mobility issues at the current Bay Bridge, emphasizing the need for future maintenance and equity considerations. Also mentioned was the importance of stakeholder input and the financial viability of the project. Congestion on the Bay Bridge and its approaches limits the mobility of people and goods across the Chesapeake Bay and has spillover effects on local roadways and adjacent communities. Additionally, the existing bridge does not meet current standards for design or traffic operations because of conditions such as narrow lanes and lack of shoulders. Due to the age of the existing Bay Bridge, extensive, costly and ongoing maintenance causes additional congestion that will get worse in the future. The existing Bay Bridge is a key limitation on the height of ships that travel the Chesapeake Bay, including to the Port of Baltimore. Two additional considerations / objectives include: 1) the MDTA will consider equity in both the study process and outcomes for all stakeholders, including traditionally underserved communities. Project alternatives will be developed to avoid and minimize impacts to communities and sensitive environmental resources and provide appropriate mitigation for unavoidable impacts and, 2) cost and financial viability will be considered in the study, including but not limited to life-cycle cost analysis and toll revenues.

Current study activities include ongoing traffic analysis, environmental field work and development of conceptual alternatives. Next steps include obtain concurrence from agencies on purpose and need, continuing environmental studies, notice of intent for the environmental impact statement, and continued public and stakeholder engagement.

The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

***[PowerPoint: Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study – Tier 2 NEPA]***

## **7. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-15**

Ms. Regina Aris introduced the Title VI Program update. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 addresses discrimination in diverse contexts, ranging from discriminatory voter registration practices to segregation in business establishments and public schools. There are 11 titles that vary substantially, including the actions they prohibit, how they are enforced, the entities subject to a title's requirements, and the remedies for different statutory violations.

The Civil Rights Act protections are based on race, color or national origin in order to prevent exclusion from participation in, denied the benefits of or otherwise discriminated against when receiving federal financial assistance.

Title VI Policy is a statement that reflects on how the BMC operates in a manner that fully acknowledges and follows a process that is guided by the protections spelled out in the Act. Central to the Title VI Program is the policy statement and assurances. Also of importance are the Notice and complaint form.

The notice is included on all agendas and documents and is displayed in several key locations in the office and online. Likewise, the complaint form is available at the front desk of the BMC office and available online.

Related key items to Title VI are the PPP, LEP, DBE program and ADA – these documents are standalone as well as incorporated with the Title VI program. All docs located at the front desk.

Training for staff is a component as well as BMC practices regarding its employees and relationships with contractors.

The updates made to the Program include: Chapter 1 – Roles which remained much the same, Chapter 2 – Administration was updated for the new Title VI officer and the organization charts, Chapter 3 – General requirements had some minor refresh but remain largely intact. Of note, there have been no complaints, investigations or lawsuits, and Chapter 4 – MPO specific requirements including the demographic profile and work based on analysis in the TIP and LRTP. All updated based on work completed last year for the 2024 TIP and Resilience 2050.

Also updated is the American with Disabilities Act Self Evaluation, which looked at three key sections: an evaluation of BMC's policies and practices, an evaluation of the premises and a review of the BMC website. The website does need a few updates that will be accomplished through a major redesign process.

Section 508 results from a 1998 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that is a federal law requiring agencies to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to electronic information and data comparable to those who do not have disabilities.

Mr. Snead recommended approval of the resolution, and Mr. Alex Rawls seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

***[PowerPoint: Title VI Program Update]***

## **8. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #24-16**

Mr. Keith Kucharek introduced Resolution #24-16. Harford County, on behalf of the City of Aberdeen, requested to amend the FY 2024-2027 TIP to add one new project; the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development Station Square Project. The Interagency Consultation Group determined this project to be exempt according to the conformity rule at its February 7, 2024 meeting. Ms. Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development City of Aberdeen, presented the project.

Ms. Grover detailed the existing logistics of the Aberdeen train station. The Northeast corridor right-of-way is utilized by Amtrak, MARC, Norfolk Southern and CSX. Amtrak owns the Aberdeen train station and the tunnels. MDOT SHA owns the pedestrian and vehicular overpasses, and MDOT MTA manages the train station, tunnel, security, and owns several parking lots. Amtrak has a monthly ridership of about 1,500 monthly riders and MARC averages about 200 daily riders. Pre-pandemic, 7,500 riders per month boarded Harford LINK buses at the train station.

The Aberdeen Station Square TOD was designated in June 2010 and included in the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan in 2012. In 2022, the Aberdeen TOD Station Square concept gained Maryland Sustainable Community designation.

The existing concrete overpass was constructed by MDOT SHA in 1982. This created both physical and economic barriers separating City residents from US 40 and downtown Aberdeen. The pedestrian overpass is not ADA compliant by today's standards, creating challenges for residents, commuters and visitors.

Proposed improvements include removal of the existing overpass, construction of a new underpass with amenities such as greenscaping, and development of terraced plazas connecting the east and west sides of the station.

The total cost of the project is \$55 million. This amendment includes \$5.0 million (\$4.0 million in FTA Community Project Funding/\$1.0 million City of Aberdeen matching funds). Funding will be used for preliminary engineering, geotechnical exploration, environmental studies and NEPA development.

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

***[PowerPoint: 2024-2027 TIP Amendment: Aberdeen Train Station Transit Oriented Development & Station Square Improvements]***

## **9. PRESENTATION: MARYLAND STATE OF THE ECONOMY REPORT**

Ms. Dani Dipietro, Policy Research Director at the Office of the Comptroller, introduced the 2023 State of the Economy report. Maryland has a robust and resilient economy that leads the nation in key economic indicators such as high educational attainment, a high median income and low unemployment. However, recent fluctuations in Maryland's economic environment,

including slowing growth rates and a sluggish recovery from the pandemic, serve as flashing yellow lights for the state's fiscal health. This prompted the first ever Comptroller of Maryland's State of the Economy report in an effort to better understand economic trends as well as identify key opportunities and challenges.

The Comptroller's Bureau of Revenue Estimates team and Policy Divisions worked together in 2023 to gather data, including government economic data and input from Maryland business, economic and community leaders. They also conducted a series of roundtables throughout the state as well as nearly 40 interviews and stakeholder meetings.

One key takeaway from the report is that economic growth is slowing in Maryland. Labor force participation that has not recovered since the Covid-19 pandemic is a primary driver of slowing economic growth. Population decline compounds this issue, and is attributable to both a decline in the natural increase of the population as well as domestic out-migration due to Maryland's high cost-of-living. The high cost of housing in Maryland is a leading driver of the state's high cost-of-living.

Mr. Ben Siegel, Deputy Comptroller for Policy, continued with a deeper dive into economic trends. Maryland has the lowest unemployment rate and highest median income in the U.S., but is lagging by several key growth metrics including GDP, employment, personal income and real wages. Maryland's GDP growth from 2016 to 2023 was 1.6%, compared with 6.6% in Pennsylvania, 11.2% in Virginia and 13.9% nationally. Employment growth (1.0%) also lagged neighboring states and the nation.

Population and migration trends show that Maryland's population declined in 2021 for the first time since WWII. This is attributable to both increased domestic outmigration and a long-term decline in natural population growth (births and deaths). Maryland's population also declined in 2022, but 2023 data shows a small increase due to increases in international migration. In general, Maryland is gaining middle-income residents of prime working age and losing both younger and older people as well as lower and higher-income individuals. Nationally, migration patterns show movement from high cost-of-living areas to low cost-of-living areas. Reflecting this trend, state-to-state migration flows show people moving to Maryland from high cost-of-living areas such as D.C., New York and New Jersey. People are leaving Maryland for lower cost-of-living states including Pennsylvania, the Carolinas and Texas.

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LPR) is very much connected to population and migration trends. LPR represents the percentage of workers either working or actively looking for work as a share of the working age population. Maryland's LPR has historically been higher than the U.S. and most other states. While this is still true, the gap has narrowed since the pandemic. Maryland's LPR has dropped from 69% to 65% since 2020 and has not recovered, unlike neighboring states and the U.S. More concerning is that the greatest declines in LPR since the Great Recession have been for workers of prime working age (25-44). In addition, women left Maryland's labor force at higher rates during the pandemic, due in part to Maryland's high childcare costs. Getting these prime age workers back into the labor force is vital for Maryland's economy, economic growth and revenues.

Mr. Siegel highlighted Maryland's flattening jobs forecast, emphasizing the connection between the jobs forecast and Maryland's LPR and population trends. Housing prices and inventory also play a role, as high housing costs make it difficult for people to move to and within Maryland. Median home prices in Maryland increased by 27% from 2019 to 2022, while housing inventory decreased by 57% over the same period. Maryland's productivity, economic growth and revenues will continue to be negatively impacted unless we can change some of these structural issues.

Mr. Siegel closed by saying that the Comptroller's Office will be releasing a series of briefings drilling into key topics from the State of the Economy report, including immigration, cost-of-living and LPR.

***[PowerPoint: State of the Economy Report Briefing]***

**10. PRESENTATION: MDOT STATE REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION**

Ms. Michelle Martin, MDOT, began her presentation by explaining that the State Report on Transportation is legislatively required, submitted each year on the third Wednesday in January to the Maryland General Assembly and contains three documents: 1) 2050 Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP), 2) Final FY 2024 - FY 2029 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), and 3) 2024 Annual Attainment Report (AR) on Transportation System Performance.

Ms. Martin then described the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) which outlines the State's transportation policies and priorities; helps guide statewide investment decisions for all modes of transportation, and is revised every 4-5 years through a public participation process to address current and future challenges. The 2050 MTP is an integrated, performance-based long-range plan. The MTP contains over 75 strategies to guide and strategically align MDOT's modal plans, projects and programs. Ms. Martin emphasized the importance of collaborating and coordinating with partners such as peer states, the public, federal agencies and the MPOs. Ms. Martin outlined the guiding principles and goals of the plan. She went on to mention a few "Game Changing" programs such as the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Implementation, the Transit Oriented Development Program and EV Charging Infrastructure. Ms. Martin announced that MDOT is creating an "Action Plan" to implement the strategies outlined in the MTP. The implementation plan actions include but are not limited to project development, process improvement, relationship building, and research.

Next was a description of the Annual Attainment Report (AR). The AR provides an overview of the Maryland transportation system performance, system investment, mobility, and accessibility. Through the AR, MDOT assesses progress toward achieving its overarching strategic goals and objectives. MDOT assembled the Attainment Report Advisory Committee (ARAC) that reviews and provides advice and recommendations on goals, indicators and benchmarks. After updating the BRTB with what was new in the AR, Ms. Martin went over how the 2050 MTP aligned with the Federal Transportation System Performance Report in areas such as Safety, Infrastructure Condition, Congestion Reduction, and System Reliability.

She went on to describe several goals and the performance measures that the ARAC has identified to track the progress of those goals. These include Maryland's goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries. The performance measures for the goal to Enhance Safety and Security included the annual number of fatalities/serious injuries on all Maryland public roads and annual number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities/serious injuries on all Maryland public roads and annual number of fatalities and serious injuries on all Maryland public roads in transportation disadvantaged communities. Ms. Martin said that these metrics are headed in the wrong direction and expressed the need to work together to support local grants for programs such as Safe Streets and Roads for All as one way to change that.

Performance measures for the goal to Deliver System Quality included truck hours of delay and truck reliability on Maryland public roads and annual person hours of delay and travel time reliability on Maryland public roads. She explained these metrics were increasing as well and mentioned transportation demand management strategies such as teleworking as a way to work together with partner agencies to address the trend.

Ms. Martin briefly described the performance measure; Percent of CTP that is funded with Federal Dollars which calculates how well MDOT leverages state dollars by how much of the CTP is funded using federal dollars. For FY 2023, the state received 40% of funding from Federal sources. Then she mentioned the Unfunded State of Good Repair Backlog performance measure. Which is the annual assessment of its critical assets that are in need of updating to a state of good repair. In FY 2023, there were \$3.14 billion in projects still unfunded from the state of good repair.

Next, was the Percent of Lane-Miles/Fixed Guideway Transit-Miles Susceptible to Flooding and Storm Surge. In 2023, 6.5% of lane miles/fixed guideway transit-miles were susceptible to storm surge. She identified the need to work together to support opportunities to continue research and support actions to mitigate hazards.

The next performance measure discussed was Percent of All MDOT Transit Service Provided On Time (On Time Performance). In 2022, there was an increase in On Time Performance across all transit modes with substantial improvements for Mobility Paratransit and Taxi Access, from 76% in 2021 to 94% in 2023.

Ms. Martin went on to quickly mentioned some of the 11 performance measures to address the goal to Promote Environmental Stewardship and some of the 21 performance measures that address the goal to Serve Communities and Support the Economy.

She closed the presentations by summarizing the strategies to improve trends. Working together on Promotion, Research and Development, Partnerships, Grant Support, Outreach, Education and Engagement.

***[PowerPoint: 2024 State Report on Transportation]***



## **11. UPDATE ON THE CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM GRANT PROCESS**

Mr. Lang provided background on the IIJA/BIL carbon reduction program. Of note, MDOT has completed a carbon reduction strategy within the two-year timeframe with input from the state's MPOs. A list of thirteen eligible activities was reviewed as well as how these funds are sub-allocated throughout the state. Next Mr. Lang explained that MDOT applied CRP funds to an MTA project in order to allow Maryland to obligate funds in the August 2023 redistribution process.

The presentation shifted to a focus on CRP project selection and programming. A basic timeline was shared that will commence in mid-March. As additional information is made available from MDOT it will be shared with BRTB members.

***[PowerPoint: Carbon Reduction Opportunities]***

## **12. UPDATE ON LOCAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

This update was postponed due to the time.

## **13. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business. The meeting ended at 11:02 am.

### ***Members***

Jasmine Champion, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division  
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works  
Trey Dickerson, Howard County Office of Transportation  
Patrick McMahon (for Elizabeth Gordon), MDOT Maryland Transit Administration  
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  
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Sam Snead, Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation (OOT)  
D'Andrea Walker, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation  
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

### ***Staff and Guests***

Eric Almquist, RK&K  
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)  
Charles Baber, BMC  
Cindy Burch, BMC

David Cookson, Howard County  
Angie Daniel, Baltimore County DPW&T  
Michael Davis, Transportation CORE  
Rebecca Deibel, BMC  
Phyllis Grover, Aberdeen  
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC  
Victor Henry, BMC  
Sandy Hertz, MDOT  
Dan Janousek, MDOT  
Jessica, guest  
Zach Kaufman, BMC  
Mike Kelly, BMC  
Shawn Kimberly, BMC  
Keith Kucharek, BMC  
Todd Lang, BMC  
Heather Lowe, MDTA  
Sheila Mahoney, BMC  
Anna Marshall, BMC  
Michelle Martin, MDOT  
Charlene Mingus, BMC  
Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance  
Dan Pontious, BMC  
Deborah Price, Baltimore County DPW&T  
Md. Mohklesur Rahman, BMC  
Andrea Sherman, HDR  
Brian Ulrich, Anne Arundel County OOT

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board