

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

March 25, 2025
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
9:00 to 10:20 A.M.

MINUTES

The 372nd meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by the Chair, Mr. Tony Russell.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A request for a motion to approve the minutes of the February BRTB meeting was made by Mr. Russell. A motion was made by Mr. Geoff Anderson to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Alex Rawls. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

There was no one who wished to address the BRTB.

3. REPORT ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda shared Engagement Highlights for February and March.

- **Online Engagement:** BMC rebranded the link to the BMC engagement hub as YourRegionYourVoice.org. In February, there were 2,335 visitors, 45 participants, 52 comments, and 66 new subscribers. Over 9,300 emails and 100 text messages were sent with a 77% email open rate.
- **Closed Comment Period:** UPWP, or Transportation Planning Budget, on the upcoming budget for July 2025 - June 2027 wrapped up on March 9. This year, there were 28 participants sharing over 25 comments. This is a 440% increase in engagement since 2024 when staff began using plain language and rebranded this document, officially known as the UPWP, to the "transportation planning budget."

All comments have been shared with the BRTB and staff for review and response. Budget priorities from the public include: Fund more sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit, Spend

less on consultants and make budgets clearer, and Support transit projects like the Red Line instead of expanding highways.

For future projects, the public asked members to consider: Use the same time standard to measure transit and driving accessibility, Focus more on building projects instead of just planning, and Be transparent about how money is spent and rely less on consultants.

- **Current Community Outreach Initiatives:**

- "Getting There" Survey - This project is focused on finding out the transportation needs and challenges of residents around the region. The survey is open through April 13, with incentives (a chance to win gift cards or participate in paid focus groups). Find out more at yourregionyourvoice.org/GettingThere
- PRG: Cherry Hill Trail – Staff are reaching out to the community to find out what would make this trail great for the community and what we need to keep in mind when choosing the location before the design process gets started. The first community meeting was on March 24 at Cherry Hill Library. An online survey is open until April 14. Get more info at yourregionyourvoice.org/CherryHillPRG.
- Bike to Work Week - is May 12-18 with event registration opening on April 1. Sign up at BikeToWorkMD.com

- **Community & Professional Engagement**

- CAPSITE Showcase: BMC partnered with the Chesapeake and Potomac Section of ITE on March 13 at BMC. Around 40 CAPSITE members joined staff for a showcase of BRTB related work, featuring travel demand modeling, safety planning, emergency response coordination, and community engagement. Feedback was very positive and many members asked to get a copy of the presentations, remarking they were impressed with how extensive regional transportation planning is.
- Community meetings: Staff also participated in community meetings like the Southwest Partnership: Walkable Streets Committee; Howard County Multimodal Transportation Board; Anne Arundel Transportation Commission & Disability Issues Commission; Transit Choices Meeting & MD Strategic Highway Safety Plan Public Meeting.

[PowerPoint: Public Involvement Report for March 2025]

4. REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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

- The Technical Committee considered three action items at the March meeting. Significantly, MDTA presented the Alternates Retained for Detailed Study for the Bay Crossing Study. They will have a comprehensive presentation for Board members today. Following that presentation there were five projects being considered for amendments to the TIP. TC members had a number of questions which were addressed and then voted to move the 3 resolutions to the BRTB for consideration.
- For an informational item, a presentation was given on a UPWP consultant task. Foursquare ITP presented a summary of the Microtransit Solutions project. The purpose of the project was to develop best practices for implementing, operating, promoting, and funding

microtransit in the Baltimore region. The four reports resulting from this project are available on the BMC website.

5. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #25-22

Ms. Heather Lowe began the presentation on the Bay Crossing (NEPA Tier 2) Study. Ms. Lowe first described activities leading up to the recommendations for today. The BRTB approved the Purpose and Need statement in February 2024, with Open Houses to gain public feedback in December 2024. By late March the Cooperating and Participating agencies will sign off on the Alternates Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS). In Fall 2025 MDTA will publish a draft Notice of Environmental Impact Statement and hold public meetings.

At this point the speaker switched to Mr. Eric Almquist of RK&K. Of note, the ARDS considers seven key elements: existing bridges, structure type, alignments relative to existing US 50/301, number of lanes, structure location, transit/TSM/TDM, and shared use paths. Considering these elements, an engineering analysis utilized updated traffic counts, land use data, and preliminary cost and impact assessments.

There are multiple options for each of the key elements:

- Existing bridges: remove both existing bridge spans or keep one or both existing bridge spans.
- Structure type: full bridge, full tunnel, bridge-tunnel combination, or double decker bridge.
- Alignments relative to existing US 50/301: on existing approach alignment or off existing approach alignment.
- Number of lane combinations: 6-6-6, 6-8-6, 8-8-8, 8-10-8, 10-10-10, or more than 10.
- Structure location: north bridge location, south bridge location, fully in between location, or far south bridge location.
- Transit: ferry, high-capacity transit: rail, high-capacity transit: BRT, or bus service improvements.
- TSM/TDM: ramp metering, interchange consolidation, park-and-ride, part-time shoulder use, express-local lanes, or priced managed lanes.
- Shared use path: shared use pedestrian-bicycle on bridge or no shared use pedestrian-bicycle on bridge.

Mr. Almquist then walked through issues considered for each of the seven elements that leads to the draft ARDS. The presentation transitioned back to Ms. Lowe who said the draft ARDS are largely the same as what was included in the Notice of Intent, although two changes were made: 1) in terms of structure location, the “all north” and “all south locations are not recommended in the ARDS, and 2) there will not be any interchange consolidations in order to maintain current access.

Public involvement will continue as the team moves toward development of the draft EIS.

Mr. Sam Snead recommended approval of the resolution, and Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The chair asked for questions/comments from the members. Mr. Chris Jakubiak asked why MDTA is considering part-time shoulder use. Ms. Lowe explained that this would be considered if there was a lane blocked and possibly during times when volume was high. Mr. Steve Cohoon heard that interchange consolidation would not be pursued based on public comment. He wanted to know what/how MDTA planned to limit through traffic from diverting to local roadways during heavy volumes with backups. Ms. Lowe stated that MDTA would continue to work closely with Queen Anne's County on that topic. And related, the County should continue to work with SHA to manage exits on SHA sections of the road beyond the purview of MDTA.

The chair asked if any members of the public has comments, they did not. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 2 NEPA]

6. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #25-23

Mr. Todd Lang introduced the details of four proposed transit-related amendments to the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program from Anne Arundel County, the City of Annapolis, and MDOT MTA.

Mr. Brian Ulrich presented the details of the Anne Arundel County Ferry project, a new project added to the FY 2025-2028 TIP. The project would create a new passenger ferry service connecting the City of Annapolis with the City of Baltimore and Queen Anne's Counties. The funding for the project will apply to electric ferry purchases, landing improvements, and charging infrastructure. Anne Arundel County received a \$3.895 million 5307(h) federal passenger ferry grant to support the project, which the amendment programs alongside \$974,000 in local matching funds.

Ms. Jamie Richardson presented the details of the Rural Transit Systems – Capital Assistance and the Urban Transit Systems – Capital Assistance projects. The Rural Transit Systems – Capital Assistance project will be added to the FY 2025-2028 TIP as a new project, but has previously appeared in older iterations of the TIP. This request supports preventive maintenance in Carroll County and the procurement of four medium-duty buses in Baltimore County. The amendment obligates \$4 million in 5311 funds and \$1 million in local and state matching funds. The Urban Transit Systems – Capital Assistance project assists urban transit systems with capital funding. The amendment will obligate \$1.4 million in 5311 funds and \$265,000 in matching funds in FY 2025, reflecting a FY 2021 Bus and Bus Facilities grant awarded to Harford County for vehicle purchases.

Mr. Kwaku Duah presented the details of the Annapolis Electric Ferry Pilot Program. The project will create a new fixed route ferry service for passengers and bicycles. The proposed route is approximately half a mile long, connecting Eastport to Downtown Annapolis. This service will complement the existing on-demand water taxi service. The City of Annapolis estimates an annual ridership of 20,500. The amendment obligates \$2.975 million in 5307

Passenger Ferry Grant funds and \$525,000 in local match to FY 2025, the anticipated year of obligation. These grants only apply to capital funds and purchases, and the City of Annapolis has not received a federal grant for operations.

The project completed its NEPA review in July of 2024 and is moving forward. Additional funds support the purchase of two electric ferries, landing improvements, and charging infrastructure. The City of Annapolis is about to award a contract for ferry vessels with integrated charging infrastructure. A request for proposals for landing improvements is currently in development and set to release in March 2025. Ferry service is anticipated to begin in FY 2026.

Mr. Snead recommended approval of the resolution, and Mr. Trey Dickerson seconded the motion. The chair asked if members of the BRTB had questions about any of the projects. He then asked if members of the public had any questions. There were no questions on these projects. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: 2025-2028 Transit-related TIP Amendments: Anne Arundel County Ferry Project, Urban and Rural Transit Systems – Capital Assistance, Annapolis Electric Ferry Pilot]

7. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #25-24

Mr. Carl Chamberlin presented the details of the Curtis Creek Drawbridge Deck Rehabilitation and Resiliency project, a requested amendment to the FY 2025-2028 TIP. The project has been a project of the Maryland Transportation Authority for several years, yet is new to the TIP after receiving an INFRA grant. This project is located near the Francis Scott Key Bridge and after the bridge collapse, MDTA moved to receive grant funding and move forward with projects to reduce strain on the system. The system preservation project will replace portions of the concrete decks and parapets, repair and strengthen the steel cantilever girders, and remove and replace lower-level lights and traffic signals across the bridge. This project will be advertised in spring 2025 with anticipated construction beginning in Fall 2025. The amendment programs \$7.5 million in INFRA funds and \$11.448 million in MDTA toll revenue funds for construction in FYs 2025-2028.

Mr. Trey Dickerson recommended approval of the resolution, and Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The chair asked if members of the BRTB had questions about any of the projects. He then asked if members of the public had any questions. There were no questions on these projects. The board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the resolution.

[PowerPoint: 2025-2028 TIP Amendment: Curtis Creek Drawbridge Rehabilitation and Resiliency Project]

8. PRESENTATION: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Matthew Mickler, MDOT Director of Government Affairs, came to discuss cross-over bills that are moving forward. He described bills in three categories, one that crossed both houses, two that crossed one house and those that did not get out of either house. Of interest, three

bills passed both houses with MDOT testifying on one bill. SB 266 may be of interest and we should work with MDP if there is significant interest. There were eight bills that left one house, all of which originated with the House. One bill of interest is HB 80 relating to TOD. HB 84 and HB 517 may be of interest, depending on possible amendments. Finally there was one bill of interest that did not pass either house. This bill related to the proposed CTP prioritization process, this bill will need more work before moving.

Relating to recent budget decisions, there is sufficient funding to cover what is included in the CTP and match all anticipated federal funds. MDOT thanked the MOVE Maryland Coalition for their work to support the transportation budget submitted by the Moore/Miller administration.

[PowerPoint: Legislative Update to the BRTB]

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. The meeting ended at 10:20 am.

Members

Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Jasmine Champion, Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Trey Dickerson, Howard County Office of Transportation
Elizabeth Gordon, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration
Chris Jakubiak, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Mary Lane, Carroll County Department of Planning
Veronica McBeth, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Jason Quan, RTA of Central Maryland
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Tony Russell, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation
Julianne Hilton (for Catherine Salarano), Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
Sam Snead, Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation
Bihui Xu, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)

Staff and Guests

Eric Almquist, RKK - MDTA support
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Cindy Burch, BMC
Carl Chamberlin, MDTA
Rebecca Deibel, BMC
Kwaku Duah, BMC
Ndemazea Fonkem, BMC
Louisa Glazunova, BMC
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Matt Hancock, BMC

Dan Janousek, MDOT
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC
Todd Lang, BMC
Heather Lowe, MDTA
Anna Marshall, BMC
Charlene Mingus, BMC
Jamie Richardson, BMC
Marium Sultan, BMC
Tayo Taivo, University of Maryland College Park
Brian Ulrich, BMC

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board