

FREIGHT MOVEMENT TASK FORCE

June 25, 2020
Online

SUMMARY

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Dave Thomas, chair of the Freight Movement Task Force, kicked off the meeting with a round of introductions. Following introductions, he provided an update on MPA operations under the present circumstances – both cargo (auto and container) and cruise operations have been severely impacted as a result of the pandemic. Cruise operations are not expected to resume until late September or October. There are however positive signs based on early indicators for July – the big three auto manufacturers opened up in the beginning of May and global economies are opening back up. He said they are cautiously optimistic that things will return to normal.

Mr. Tom Madrecki noted that the resiliency of the food and beverage industry has been tested but they are adapting and rebounding and looking at investments to plan for future on the private sector side. Some of the policy discussions taking place – should some manufacturing come back, what should the new transportation bill look like, etc. All of these pieces fit together – transportation policy, labor, and environment and there is a clear need for greater collaboration among public and private sector – and how he is so happy to have three big companies join the conversation today.

2. AMERICAN SUGAR REFINING, INC./DOMINO SUGAR

Mr. Bob Worrel, Senior Planning Manager, provided an overview of this landmark Baltimore business. The refinery was built in 1922 – it's coming up on their 100-year anniversary and they are very excited to celebrate with a large community event. On average 42 vessels a year deliver raw sugar from all across the world. They can store up to 85 million pounds of raw sugar. One major advantage they have is the proximity to major highways I-95, I-83, etc. They move 33,000 trucks of product each year. Trains also aid in transportation to soft drink manufacturers and the food industry. They employ about 500 people – about 320 are union, local food and commercial workers.

They process about 6.2 million pounds of raw sugar on a daily basis - 4 million pounds of that goes into packages that end up on grocery shelves. About 1.2 million gets transported by bulk trucks to industrial customers and about 1 million pounds goes into liquid form for larger industrial customers. They have 25 packaging lines – packets, boxes, bags, pouches etc.

With regards to Covid-19 and how they had to adapt he said there was a lot of uncertainty at the beginning – whether consumers will stock up, how long will it continue, what kind of government restrictions will be placed, will they be allowed to operate as an essential service, etc. They saw increased demand in March – up to 40 percent more. They adjusted their operations to maximize consumer output. Another big challenge – labor constraints – external providers, transportation, operational challenges. At the refinery – mandatory temperature checks for everyone. Truck drivers stay inside vehicle during loading. Stop production on lower volume lines – eliminated some long term demand to increase short term output. Expanded transportation base. Preparing for second wave. Industrial customers faced closures – made it difficult to run at full capacity – 50 percent of the output. Overall adapted well – not too many challenges. Have tentative dates for resuming normal operations.

Fall is the beginning of baking season – running on 12/2 scheduled – 12 consecutive days and shut down for 2 days – will continue through the end of December.

3. FLOOR AND DÉCOR AT TRADEPOINT ATLANTIC

Mr. Steven S. Phillips, General Manager, Floor and Décor Baltimore, gave an overview of operations at their 1.6 million square foot facility at Tradepoint Atlantic. They are currently operating 250 loads/week inbound and outbound. At the beginning of the pandemic, operations dropped to 50 percent capacity but they were able to maintain all of their permanent employees. Transportation was a little bit of struggle early on but adjusted quickly and were able to function at optimum level. They use their own dedicated carrier for transportation.

They are expecting an increase in July due to a huge uptick on international inbound shipments and are adding more staff. He expressed concern that staffing is going to be a challenge with two more DC's being built at TPA for other companies and Amazon expanding. However, they have a good management team – skilled operations managers, good transportation teams.

They have a great relationship with the port and ability to support 80 stores. Right now they are supporting 34 stores and at 52 percent capacity in the warehouse. They only have one store in Maryland – in Gaithersburg – but plan to open several more.

4. MCCORMICK & COMPANY, INC.

Mr. Scott Simmons, VP SC Global Strategic Operations, talked about how Covid-19 has impacted this 135-year old Baltimore business located in the Hunt Valley area. While most people may only be familiar with the red cap spice bottles in grocery stores, they are much

more diverse and include supplying flavor solutions and seasonings to food manufactures, restaurants and other business.

Similar to Domino Sugar, their biggest challenge immediately following the March shutdown was a tremendous spike in people cooking at home and a huge increase in demand which has not subsided – it is a good problem to have but also challenging. They shifted focus to core items, working with customers and adjusting peak demand. On the labor front, absenteeism and adjusting shift schedules were a tough learning curve at the three facilities in the Cockeysville area – and the large DC in Belcamp.

They put in place social distancing measures, produced their own hand sanitizers, temperature monitoring and thermal imaging, and significant increase in cleaning – wipe down doors, surfaces, etc. Aggressive track and trace for anyone testing positive – shut down facility and followed protocols from WHO and CDC. They are hiring aggressively and preparing for Q3 and Q4. Moved most facilities to 6-7 days a week.

Majority of raw material comes in through the port – vital partner. Rail and trucking are also vital to operations.

5. COVID-19 TRAFFIC VOLUME IMPACTS IN MARYLAND

Dr. Mark Franz, Assistant Research Engineer, University of Maryland, CATT Laboratory, provided an overview of the trends and methodology that are being used to monitor traffic volume impacts due to Covid-19.

Here are some of the key observations from their analysis:

- Volumes generally **decreased by 19%** between typical travel days (3/9-3/11) and after implementing Covid-19 travel restriction days (3/16-3/18)
- 45 out of 46 ATR stations showed **decreased volumes**
- Heavy commercial vehicle volumes **increased by 14%**
- Travel times consistently **decreased** on freeways and arterials
- User delay cost **decreased by 43%**
- CHART Events/Incidents **decreased by 49%**

The attached PDF shows detailed charts and graphs documenting the variations in traffic volumes over the analysis timeframes.

Mr. Franz also shared information about a data platform that the CATT lab has been working on to monitor impacts across the US. Here is the link to the platform:

<https://data.covid.umd.edu/>

[PowerPoint: Impacts of Covid-19 in Maryland]

6. LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN: GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Mr. Terry Freeland of BMC presented information on the goals and strategies for the next regional long-range transportation plan, scheduled to be adopted in July 2023. Goals are the general high-level principles that provide a basic framework for decision making. Strategies are the more specific policy statements or kinds of actions that agencies can take to help advance the goals. As a first step in the development of the next plan, BMC staff has reviewed the current regional goals and strategies.

Mr. Freeland explained that a team of two to three BMC staff members had reviewed each of the nine goals and had come up with a series of recommendations either to keep the language as is, to revise it, or to add new strategies where advisable. He went through the recommended changes for each of the goals.

[PowerPoint: Regional Transportation Goals]

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR 2021-2024 TIP AND CONFORMITY DETERMINATION

Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda reported that a comment period on the draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) & Air Quality Conformity launched June 16 and will run through July 17, 2020. The draft 2021-2024 TIP includes \$4.26 billion in proposed federal, state and local money for 140 highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects during the next four years. New this year, is an interactive project map, where the public can both view projects and offer comments, and a storymap that provides an interactive overview of the projects and funding. Those interested in learning more may do so during a virtual public meeting on Thursday, July 9 at 6 p.m. or Tuesday, July 14 at 12:30 p.m. Details about the TIP and how to comment are online at www.baltometro.org.

[PowerPoint: Overview of TIP and Air Quality Comment Period]

ATTENDANCE:

Members and Guests:

Aaron Tomarchio, TradePoint Atlantic
Andrew Meese, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG)
Armand Patella, Preferred Service, LLC
Bob Worrel, American Sugar Refining, Domino Sugar
Bradley Smith, MDOT Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA)
Candice Ottley-Francois, JMT
Claudia Freeland Jolin, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore
Dave Thomas, MDOT MPA
Dominic Scurti, MDOT MPA
Donovan Murray, MPA
Jocelyn Jones, Federal Highway Division
Joe Greco, Ports America
Jon Scherman, MWCOCG
Keith Kucharek, AECOM
Larry Collins, Baltimore Development Corporation
L'Kiesha Markley, MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)
Louis Campion, Maryland Motor Truck Association
Mark Franz, University of Maryland CATT Lab
Marlee Baucom, Norfolk Southern
Michele Nickoles, MDOT MPA
Nicole Katsikides, Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)
Nick Porter, MDOT MPA
Parto Mazdeyasni, MDOT MPA
Patrick Zilliacus, MWCOCG
Phillip Thomas, U.S. DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
Rick Johnson, Baltimore County Economic Development
Roxane Mukai, MDOT Maryland Transportation Authority (MDOT MDTA)
Russell Walto, MDOT MDTA
Scott Simmons, McCormick Inc.
Steven S. Phillips, Floor and Décor Baltimore DC
Summer Bowman, U.S. DOT FMCSA
Tom Madrecki, Consumer Brands Association
Valorie LaCour, Baltimore City Department of Transportation

BMC Staff:

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Blake Fisher, BMC
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Regina Aris, BMC
Terry Freeland, BMC
Zach Kaufman, BMC