

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 24, 2020
via GoToMeeting
5:35 to 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

1. WELCOME

Mr. Eric Norton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and thanked everyone for taking time to join the virtual PAC meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Norton asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Sharon Smith made a motion to approve and Mr. Paul Verchinski motioned second. The PAC voted by roll call to approve the May 2020 minutes.

3. PRESENTATION: 2021-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AND AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY DETERMINATION

Mr. Zach Kaufman provided a detailed overview of the draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the associated Air Quality Conformity determination, open for comment from June 16 through July 17. 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.

Mr. Kaufman provided details on the TIP including highlights of the performance measures and targets, a detailed funding analysis, and project highlights. Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda shared highlights of the Air Quality Conformity report and details of how to comment.

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. or visit baltometro.org.

[Presentation: [Draft 2021-2024 TIP and Air Quality Conformity Determination](#)]

4. PRESENTATION: NEXT REGIONAL LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ms. Haines Benkhedda provided members with an overview of key steps staff have outlined in the development of the next long-range transportation plan. These steps include:

- Create branding scheme, communications plan, and a public involvement plan
- Review progress on previous goals, consider new federal themes, adjust as needed
- Consider future trends and issues
- Review federally required performance measures and targets
- Develop revenue forecasts and cost estimate methodology
- Issue a call for projects from BRTB members and prioritize submitted projects
- Conduct assessments for air quality, travel demand, environmental justice, etc.
- Release draft plan for a minimum 30-day comment period

Mr. Eric Norton raised concerns that the BRTB was already discussing goals for the next long-range transportation plan without (1) having a public participation plan in place and (2) without first reviewing the progress toward achieving the goals and strategies of the previous plan, and considering the current state of affairs and transportation challenges the BRTB seeks to solve.

Mr. Norton shared a draft resolution on these matters and members discussed. Ms. Sharon Smith shared her perspective that with a lot of money at stake, it's essential to first look back at what worked, what didn't, what has changed, and what potential challenges lie ahead. Ms. Bari Klein shared the need to consider public health in relation to transportation, especially in light of COVID which has changed transportation access. Shifting away from highway widening's to fund bike and pedestrian infrastructure offers essential and affordable transportation alternatives for many people, help mitigate poor air quality in the region.

Ms. Tafadzwa Gwitira emphasized, especially in light of the global pandemic and extraordinary racial unrest, it is essential that the BRTB conduct widespread public engagement before any review of the goals so that public input informs the creation of goals and strategies to address the transportation needs of people throughout the region.

Several other members offered support for the resolution and the need to reconsider the process as outlined by BMC staff. After discussion, PAC members voted to approve PAC Resolution #2020-02.

[Presentation: [Long-Range Transportation Plan Process](#), PAC Resolution #2020-02]

5. UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECT UPDATES, AND OTHER BUSINESS

- The June 23 BRTB meeting featured approval of BRTB Resolution #20-15 accepting the Title VI Annual Report, Election of Carroll County as the FY 2021 BRTB Chair, and presentations by Transportation Association of Maryland and Mr. Todd Lang who offered an update on the proposed Invest in America Act.

- MDOT MTA closed a comment period on June 18, 2020 on the draft Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan. Visit rtp.mta.maryland.gov for details.
- Ms. Monica Haines Benkhedda also reported that BMC has partnered with an organization called Love to Ride to help boost engagement, ridership, and business participation beyond a single day Bike to Work Day event. Anyone who lives or works in the Baltimore region has access to Love to Ride Central MD's bicycling encouragement programs from June through September 2020, including the month-long global workplace or group challenge, Cycle September. Learn more or sign up at lovetoride.net/CentralMD.
- BMC staff are developing a comment period for the Patapsco Regional Greenway: ElkrIDGE to the Guinness segment. Three trail alternatives are being considered and the BRTB will invite the public to weigh in on these three trail alignments and help to select the final design. The comment period will launch in early July. Contact Sheila Mahoney at smahoney@baltometro.org to join the Patapsco Regional Greenway mailing list.
- Given the COVID-19 public health emergency staff have determined that it's unlikely that Every Voice Counts Transportation Academy could be held in Fall 2020. Staff are currently considering virtual options for the fall. Ms. Sharon Smith asked if staff have considered postponing the training until the Spring or even Fall 2021 so that participants can get the full experience of an in-person event. Ms. Haines Benkhedda reported that staff are open to considering a range of options and welcome the PAC's ideas.
- Ms. Haines Benkhedda reported that the consultant team from WSP/PRR are currently in the process of completing its overall assessment of the BRTB's public involvement activities. Once the consultants deliver their final reports, staff will work with the BRTB to review the recommendations and make decisions on how to proceed with the PAC and other public involvement activities.

In light of this, the PAC will not meet in July or August. Staff will continue to be in touch with the PAC members about opportunities for comment and will let the PAC know what the BRTB decides.

BRTB Chair, Ms. Lynda Eisenberg, thanked the PAC members for their great work and essential feedback over the years. Mr. Norton also thanked the PAC for their hard work and efforts to improve the planning process in the region. BMC staff look forward to reconnecting with PAC members in the fall to review next steps.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Celeste Chavis – Morgan State University

Michael Davis – Resident, Carroll County

David Drasin – Member, Howard County Multimodal Transportation Advisory Board

Kira Gardner-Marshall – Neighborhood Housing Services Baltimore

Benjamin Groff – Resident, Baltimore City

Tafadzwa Gwitira – Resident, Baltimore City

Yvette Hicks – Resident, Baltimore County

Bari Klein – Healthy Harford

Mark Lotz – Resident, Harford County
Ian Moller-Knudsen – Howard County Sierra Club
Eric Norton – Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Sharon Smith – Partners in Care
Michael Thompson – Turner Station Conservation Teams
Paul Verchinski – Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Monica Haines Benkhedda – BMC
Zach Kaufman – BMC
Todd Lang – BMC