

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

Jack Broderick
Peter Bradley
Barbara Hitchings
Jim Moran
Will Pines
Sean Powell
Donald Schloss
Tracy Schulz
Tim Smith
Pat Lynch
Steve Wilson

Staff in Attendance

Samantha Biddle
Melissa Bogdan
Kellie Boulware
Jason Dicembre
Brandan Glorioso
Hillary Gonzales
Jim Harkness
Richard Jaramillo
Charles Kenny
Jonathan McCoy
Kim Millender

Others in Attendance

Delegate Heather Bagnall, District 33
Todd Mohn, County Administrator, Queen Anne's County
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County
George Harvey, QACTV
Michelle Greenberg
Terry Lehman
Brian U
Jen Rohrer
Tim Ryan
Rob Shreeve
Dennis Simpson

Members Not in Attendance

Nicholas Deoudes
Kurt Riegel

Mary O'Keeffe
Scott Pomento
Robert Rager
Mike Rice
Brad Ryon
Joseph Sagal
John Sales
Kimberly Tran
Jamie Turner
Melissa Williams

At 6:00p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Approval – Minutes of July 6, 2022 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the July 6, 2022 meeting that were distributed to members with none being put forward.

Member Wilson motioned to approve the minutes of the April 6 meeting with second from Member Bradley. The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

Report – Quarterly Group Activities and Recommendations

Chair Schulz stated that per House Bill 56, the BBRAG must report on the group’s activities since the last meeting and provide any recommendations they have based on those activities.

Chair Schulz reminded BBRAG members to submit their quarterly activity report to Melissa Bogdan for tracking and use in next year’s annual report.

Member Schulz stated he attended the BCS Tier II open house on Kent Island and noted how well attended the meetings were.

Member Broderick stated that as he attended various community meetings, the biggest concern he noted is the identified Bay Crossing Study corridor followed by emergency services issues. He added that the communications from MDTA and MDOT SHA have been very helpful, and he encourages people to know the conditions of the roads before they travel. Member Pines added that MDTA updates Twitter regularly and the state’s 511 service also updates on incidents.

MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided the BBRAG a status update on the nine active projects at the Bay Bridge in the Capital Program. Mr. Harkness reported that the major work on installing the deck panels for the Eastbound Deck Rehabilitation would begin after the Summer 2023 travel season.

Bay Bridge Capital Projects - October 2022 Update

Pin	Contract No.	Description	AD	NTP	Budget (Thousands \$)	Anticipated Completion	Percent Complete (Construction)	Design (D), Procurement (P), or Construction (C) Phase
2329	BB-2757R	Replace 5KV Feeder on EB Span & Redundant Cable	4/16/19	10/15/19	50,229	Fall 2022	90	C
2369	BB-2819	Deck Rehabilitation and Miscellaneous Modifications	3/6/19	9/9/19	33,248	Fall 2022	94	C
2476	BB-3008	Bay Bridge Crossover Automated Lane Closure System	5/24/19	2/3/20	18,249	Fall 2022	90	C
2516	BB-3014	Bay Bridge Emergency All Electronic Toll (AET) Conversion	9/25/20	1/11/21	51,456	Fall 2022	88	C
2501	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	8/16/21	14,638	Summer 2024	37	C
2504	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	2,045	Spring 2023	25	C
2317	BB-2726	Rehabilitate Decks of Eastbound Span - Phase I Deck Widening and Replacement of Deck Truss Spans (Eng. Only)	9/26/19	7/12/21	12,050	Fall 2022 (CMAR) Design Phase 1	N/A	P
2470	BB-3004	Construct Project Management Office and Maintenance Equipment Storage Building	9/27/22	3/21/23	9,600	Spring 2025	N/A	P

Responding to a question from Member Wilson, Mr. Harkness stated that the 5KV feeder cable receives power from sources on both shores and will also include other improvements to the reliability and robustness of the bridge’s electrical systems. Responding to a question from Member Wilson, MDTA Chief Operating Officer Joey Sagal stated that the automated lane

closure system gates are controlled from the Area Operations Center South but can, in an emergency, be manually implemented by crews. Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo added that the redundancy systems are in place to permit the gates to be controlled from either shore. Member Lynch inquired about the number of contractors present on on-call contracts. Mr. Harkness responded that as long as contractors are eligible to work in the state and can accomplish the work MDTA requires, they are able to bid on contracts. Member Pines stated that MDTA sets qualifications for contractors to meet before they can bid. Mr. Harkness stated that low-bidders who are not known to the MDTA are further researched for their ability to undertake the contract.

Member Smith stated that MDOT SHA will be resurfacing the ramp at EB US 50 to SB MD 8 and acceleration lane from MD 552 this fall. Work on WB US 50 between Oceanic Dr and MD 450 will be completed this month depending on weather. Working on resurfacing SB MD 2 to US 50. Eastbound US 50 resurfacing is scheduled for next fall. From Jan 1 to Sept. 30, 819 motorists assists and over 1400 incident responses during that time.

Report – Bay Crossing Study Update

Melissa Williams, MDTA Director, Division of Planning & Program Development provided an update presentation on the recent public open houses that were held in September.

Member Broderick stated that the meeting in Romancoake was quite informative and the subject matter experts did more listening than talking. How will they interface with the historical, environmental aspects, etc. over the next year? Ms. Williams responded that MDTA is currently collecting the public comments that were submitted and will develop strategies to respond.





Member Pines stated that the traffic models that are mentioned are required by the federal government and are created using land use and development data obtained from local government. Ms. Williams added that it means projected conditions are derived from actual anticipated changes.

Chair Schulz asked if the study would extend to I-97 on the western shore and MD 404 on the eastern shore. Ms. Williams indicated that MDTA and MDOT SHA will work together to use the traffic models to determine the specific limits of improvements. Member Pines noted that similar discussions were raised at CTP meetings and the study limits are set within the area that is directly germane to the traffic at the bridge. The study limits must be reasonable to maintain the planned study schedule. Member Lynch requested to ensure that Sandy Point Park traffic is evaluated as part of the study.

Member Powell commended Member Moran for working to get resolutions from various counties in support of the Tier II study.

Unfinished Business

Community Inquiries and Requests

Status	Requests	Requestor	Outcomes
	Attorney general office presentation on legalities of roadway closures	Member Schulz	PENDING
	MDOT SHA to share results of Broadneck community survey	BBRAG	COMPLETE – Results posted to MDOT SHA website: MDOT SHA US50/301 Broadneck Peninsula Service Roads (arcgis.com)
	Dominion Road acceleration lane pavement condition assessment	Member Moran	COMPLETE - Dominion Road has been paved. The RT 8 ramp is tentatively scheduled for 11/20 -11:23. 9:00. Will be night work from 9:00 pm - 5:00am.
	MDOT SHA to share customer management system web address	Member Hitchings	COMPLETE – Website shared with BBRAG members: https://marylandshaha.secure.force.com/customer-care/request_for_service

Member Pines stated that BBRAG members would be provided with an update to the Attorney General request under new business. Member Smith stated that BBRAG members have been provided with the results of the community survey and the link to MDOT SHA’s customer management system. He added that the Dominion Road pavement is being addressed at the end of the month.

New Business

Temporary Ramp Management / Legalities

Member Smith stated that the pilot project mentioned at the July meeting was undertaken and that MDOT SHA is analyzing the data that was collected from various locations which occurred before and after Labor Day. Staff took photos and videos and obtained data from services such as Waze. He stated that conditions varied significantly from day to day with long periods of congestion and long periods of no congestion. Traveler diversions were related to whether contra-flow was in operation or not and weather and incidents also contributed to congestion. Member Smith stated that conditions were observed to be more variable on Friday and Saturday while Sunday was more consistent on account of contra-flow not being in effect. Travelers who were diverted to side roads saw initial ten-minute savings before side roads got congested. Average travel time from Rowe Blvd to the Bay Bridge was 24 minutes but varied anywhere from

10 to 70 minutes. The traffic signal improved travel times on US 50 on first weekend by an average of two minutes but the second weekend resulted in longer travel times. Alternate routes saw improved travel times.

Member Moran stated that two weekends aren't enough to fully evaluate but that the traffic signal accomplished the goal of keeping traffic on US 50. Member Smith stated that the study produced some promising results but weather issues and looking at only one location limited the usefulness of the data.

Member Powell stated that Secretary Ports reached out to FHWA who responded on Sept. 20 confirming the federal safety formula funding for roadways would be jeopardized if access is restricted to federally funded roads, including by ramp closures, except in explicitly outlined conditions. Member Powell shared the letter with members.

Bay Bridge Traffic Volumes: 2022 vs. previous years

Mr. Harkness presented a comparison of traffic volumes over the previous eight years from 2015 to 2022. Member Wilson asked how volumes compared from the first quarter of 2020. Mr. Harkness stated that April 2020 featured the week with the lowest volumes at 54% lower than normal but that volumes rebounded very quickly.

Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo provided an overview of the revised criteria used to implement contra-flow over the last summer. Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Jaramillo stated that contra-flow is implemented multiple times throughout the day depending on conditions and that new lane closure system which includes gates, signs, and lighting will permit a slight time saving over the current manual process. Member Pines added that driver behavior will be an important factor in determining how fast contra-flow can be implemented.

Bayspan Call Volumes

MDTA Deputy Director of Communications John Sales provided an overview of the summer travel campaign that was shared with the BBRAG at the April meeting. He added that there are 130,000 subscribers to the GovDelivery system for alerts from the MDTA. Over the summer, over 520 emails/texts were sent to 43 million MDTA customers. MDTA's tweets over the summer made over 3 million impressions. August was the busiest month for impressions at around 800,000. Summer campaign reached 60 million people between radio, TV advertising.

Mr. Sales stated that the media receive a weekly update on forthcoming traffic conditions to help keep people informed. He added that the MDTA puts out special announcements for times such as holiday weekends.

Member Moran asked whether the Bayspan number could be added to the DMS signs when there is congestion. Mr. Sagal responded that there are concerns from a regulatory standpoint on what can be displayed on DMS signs which would have to be addressed.

Member Powell stated that the GovDelivery is also proactive in its messaging.

Bay Bridge Run

Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo stated that 14,600 participants have already signed up which is near the 16,000 capacity limit which should be reached as they are receiving 500 entries per week. The event will take place on Sunday, Nov 13 and will start at 7:00am with 15-minute releases of runners until 9am with the last runner finishing around noon.

Governor Letter

Chair Schulz stated that members were sent a draft of the letter. Member Lynch motioned to accept the letter as drafted and sent to the Governor with a second from Member Moran. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Moran at 8:15p.m.

The next meeting will be held on January 4, 2023, at 6:00p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: Traffic Volume Comparison presentation, Contra-flow criteria update presentation, Federal Highway letter, BBRAG letter to Governor Hogan