

BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD

October 11, 2019
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
8:52 to 10:14 A.M.

MINUTES

The 312th meeting was called to order at 8:52 A.M. by the Chair, the Honorable Steuart Pittman.

1. PRESENTATION: THE REGIONAL TRANSIT PLAN FOR CENTRAL MARYLAND

Ms. Holly Arnold, MDOT MTA Deputy Administrator, updated members on progress related to the Regional Transit Plan. Ms. Arnold covered the background and approach being taken to develop the RTP, described transit in the region as it functions today, shared changing demographics, reviewed the three draft goals, identified transit needs and the methodology to uncover those needs, corridors and growth areas that are generating need, and shared public involvement methods and upcoming open houses.

Members questioned her as to if MDOT MTA would focus on correlations between transit need and infrastructure investments, and encouraged MDOT to restore funding for the BRT Study in Howard County as it addresses some of the transit needs illustrated in the slides presented today. Ms. Arnold assured the Board that the intent is to identify corridors with the greatest needs.

[PowerPoint: Connecting Our Future – A Regional Transit Plan for Central Maryland Project Update]

2. PRESENTATION: AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE BAY CROSSING STUDY

Ms. Heather Lowe, Project Manager MdTA, shared progress on the Tier I NEPA Bay Crossing study with colleagues Melissa Williams and traffic consultant Tim Ryan. The presentation began with an overview of the current Open Houses supporting a critical public involvement role followed by an overview of the study schedule. Ms. Lowe shared the types of comments to date and then went into a review of Purpose and Need (P&N) as well as the Alternatives Screening Process. Once an understanding of the possible 14 corridors was laid out, the conversation focused on development of modal and operational alternatives for the three selected corridors that address P&N. The alternatives considered TSM/TDM, ferry service, and transit modes. In assessing effectiveness, the top three considerations are: is there adequate

capacity, does it provide dependable and reliable travel times, and is there flexibility to support maintenance and incident management. Then the discussion provided an overview of the cost and financial considerations and the environmental considerations.

Several of the Board members asked questions and expressed concerns. The MdTA team responded as did MDOT Deputy Secretary Earl Lewis.

[PowerPoint: Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 1 NEPA]

3. MDP WILL DISCUSS CENSUS 2020 OUTREACH

Ms. Audra Harrison, Director of Census 2020 Outreach for the State of Maryland, discussed Census 2020 outreach efforts. Census participation is critical for the state of Maryland. For every person not counted in the 2020 Census, the state will lose over \$18,000 in funding. Unlike previous decades, the Census is going to cut down on the number of canvassers it uses in favor of online self-reporting. This makes grass-roots efforts to encourage individual participation important. Ms. Harrison praised the local jurisdictions for their work in Census outreach and the local jurisdictions praised the state for all of their administrative support. Ms. Harrison notes that new funding for outreach activities is now available. A discussion was held on how to reverse and improve falling participation rates, both in traditionally low participation jurisdictions as well as high participation jurisdictions where rates have been slipping.

[Website: <https://census.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>, Handouts: MD 2020 Census Flyer, Maryland Census Participation Rates 2000-2010, Maryland Census Partner Guide]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

- Ms. Danielle Sweeney, Organizer for The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance shared concerns about the regions underfunded public transportation system and the impacts it has on riders using the service to get to work, take children to childcare, get to medical appointments, etc.

Many constituents are facing regular delays on transit. For example, Ms. Sweeney cited data showing delays and disruptions on MTA Light Rail every weekday in September. Ms. Sweeney also noted that many of MDOT MTA's most popular routes reported less than 60% on-time performance in September, particularly along routes which travel between Baltimore City and the counties.

Despite two years of BaltimoreLink efforts including: a system redesign, adding transit signal priority, providing dedicated bus lanes, installing GPS on every bus, a larger fleet, and other efforts, Ms. Sweeney stated that MDOT MTA is still showing an approximate on-time performance of approximately a high of 50% to a low of 60% for on-time performance.

This level of performance is unacceptable and Ms. Sweeney asked that the BRTB identify ways to: (1) Restore MDOT MTA transit funding; (2) Enforce dedicated bus lanes; and (3) Establish new bus lanes and transit signal priority in Baltimore County.

- Mr. Brian O'Malley shared comments on behalf of Get Maryland Moving – a coalition of diverse stakeholders who believe that stronger public transportation in Maryland is necessary to strengthen the regions communities and economy.

Mr. O'Malley began by sharing an analogy that traffic is like a gas, expanding to fill up all the space it is allowed. He went on to share that despite decades of increasing road capacity, traffic congestion continues to grow, hitting new record highs in 2018 for miles traveled and hours of delay. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions are up 40% since the 1990s in Baltimore.

Mr. O'Malley stated that these conditions are not inevitable, but rather, the BRTB has a control panel of sorts in which you can turn the dials of investment. For example, according to the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the BRTB chose to make an investment of \$1.1 Billion for highway capacity (30% of the total funding), while transit capacity receives 0.1% of total funding (\$2 million) and commuter rail capacity receives 0.0% funding. That's a 500 to 1 investment in more driving – is that really the direction the region needs to go?

Mr. O'Malley shared that the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan represents a critical effort for the region to establish a clear vision that improves the transit system's existing state of good repair, increases the existing transit system's speed, reliability, and connectivity, and greatly enhances rapid transit connections to key activity centers. He noted however the importance of the BRTB and local officials in going beyond the regional transit plan and ensure that transit investments identified find their way into local priority letters and regional funding programs like the TIP.

[Referenced Item: FY 2020-2023 TIP Exhibit 5 – Share of TIP Funding by Project Category]

5. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised by anyone.

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 A.M.

Members

Honorable Calvin Ball, Howard County
Alex Brun (for Secretary Grumbles), Maryland Department of the Environment
Lynda Eisenberg, Carroll County Department of Planning
Honorable Barry Glassman, Harford County
Earl Lewis, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Honorable John A. Olszewski Jr., Baltimore County
Rob McCord, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)
Honorable Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Board of Commissioners
Gregory Murrill, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Sally Nash, City of Annapolis, Department of Planning
Steuart Pittman, Anne Arundel County
Honorable Bernard C. "Jack" Young, Baltimore City

Staff and Guests

Kwame Arhin, FHWA
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Holly Arnold, Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA)
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Greg Carski, Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Jennifer Edwards, Department of General Services
Anna Ellis, GMM
Bruce Gartner, Howard County Office of Transportation
Monica Haines Benkhedda, BMC
Don Halligan, BMC
Audra Harrison, Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Mara Kaminowitz, BMC
Jamie Lake, STV Inc.
Todd Lang, BMC
Ian Maher Knudsen, Howard County Sierra Club
Brian O'Malley, Get Maryland Moving Coalition
Eric Norton, Central Maryland Transportation Alliance (CMTA)
Alex Rawls, Harford County, Department of Planning
Ramond Robinson, Anne Arundel County, Department of Planning & Zoning
Steve Sharkey, Baltimore City Department of Transportation
Lisa Sirota, MDOT SHA
Danielle Sweeney, CMTA

Respectfully submitted,

Todd R. Lang, Secretary
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board