

Maryland Transportation Authority Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Members Present

Jack Broderick, Chairman
Barbara Hitchings
Nick Deoudes
Nancy Wright
Tracy Schultz
Pat Lynch
Barbara Span-Obert
Bill Nevel
Delores Green

MDTA Staff

Kerry Brandt
Tim Cooke
Ricky DeGraffenreid
Michele Gross
Mike Rice
Dennis Simpson
Kevin Weber

Other Attendees

Bob Rager (SHA)
Hilary Gonzales (SHA)
Lt. Cross (AA County Police)

Sandy Point State Park

The meeting opened with a discussion regarding traffic impacts to the western shore communities adjacent to Sandy Point State Park. Ms. Hitchings sent a letter on June 22 to Mr. Cedric Ward at SHA explaining the situation and the impacts that were being made to East College Parkway, Skidmore, and White Hall.

Fourth of July weekend also was impactful to local residents. Ms. Hitchings talked about people driving on the wrong side of the road to get to the park and the Waze app redirecting people to side streets to get around the back up's on the mainline roads.

Mr. McCoy, a manger from the Maryland Park Service acknowledged weekends are a constant problem throughout the summer. Mr. McCoy spoke about the lines forming at 5 to 5:30 am on weekends and being queued by 6 am.

Mr. McCoy said this problem is a catch 22 because the current administration has lowered prices on all parks and that has directly lead to more people using these facilities. Mr. Nevel asked about a county study on the West College Parkway corridor. Mr. Broderick suggested an ad-hoc working group to try to get some resolution to this situation before the next summer season.

MDTA Construction

Mr. DeGraffenreid provided updates on Bay Bridge system preservation efforts.

- Rehab of the west bound suspension cables has a notice to proceed (NTP) of July 11 where the MDTA will be adding two, 3.5 inch cable strands to each side of the west bound bridge. Ms. Span asked what the driver of this work was and Mr. Simpson responded that it is supplementing existing cables to extend the life of the bridge. Mr. Deoudes asked why this wasn't been occurring on the east bound. Mr. Weber responded that the east bound spans don't have the same needs as the west bound spans right now.

Mr. DeGraffenreid thanked the group for their understanding when it comes to preventive maintenance.

The group asked about traffic data for the last couple of years. Mr. Simpson provided the data:

2007	74,358 (prior to 2009 recession)
2015	71,708 (bi-directional)

Mr. Simpson said that we saw growth in 2014-2015 and attributed it partially to lower gas prices. Mr. Broderick said that Sunday west bound traffic has not been good the last couple of Sunday's. There was a brief discussion about Ocean City rental check in dates affecting traffic patterns. Mr. Deoudes also noted bad weather this summer on Thursday's and Friday's affecting contra flow.

Mr. Nevel asked Mr. Simpson about any peak period trends. Mr. Simpson said that Sunday mornings east bound had seen an uptick in traffic.

Purpose of BBRAG Group

Mr. Simpson discussed the purpose of the BBRAG group which is help with the day-to-day operations of the bridge. Mr. Simpson said he was struggling with the group's role because of a letter that came from BBRAG during the legislative session which took a position that the MDTA was against. Mr. Simpson said the role of an advisory committee is to not have the group represent against the MDTA.

Mr. Simpson told the group that Secretary Rahn and Governor Hogan have met to discuss the next steps but that final decisions haven't been made but he is confident

they will come sooner than later. Mr. Broderick asked if this will occur before the next legislative session. Mr. Simpson said that if the MDTA were to begin NEPA, there will need to be funding for the next stage.

Mr. Schultz asked if the NEPA process would be the same for this as opposed to a crossing in Calvert County. Mr. Nevel said that there are different levels for the Nice Bridge and Bay Bridge. Mr. Broderick asked about the next steps. Mr. Simpson said that one of the unintended consequences of legislature telling the MDTA board how to spend its money would make for an awkward situation. Mr. Broderick asked if the reduced tolls hurt the MDTA's budget. Ms. Gross said the MDTA capped the debt limit before the toll reductions occurred. Mr. Nevel asked if the bonding would go up to \$3 billion? Mr. Simpson said that \$2.3 billion was the limit in terms of the number of years.

Mr. Simpson said a lot of factors are being looked at including the financing and location options. Mr. Broderick said he is encouraged by the news. Mr. Simpson once again expressed that along with MDTA management, they have pushed this process along as far as possible and now it is in the hands of the Secretary and Governor.

SHA Projects Update

Completed work

- MD 179 -St Margaret's Road- Paving & Stripping is complete
- Resurfacing WESTBOUND Route 50 from the Oceanic Drive to Whitehall Road is complete. Nice partnership with MDTA

Work Underway

- Resurfacing of EASTBOUND Route 50 from the Severn River Bridge to Whitehall Road is underway. All of mainline is patched. All of Route 2/MD 450 ramps are patched. We need to finish patching Bay Dale and Cape St Claire ramps. When all patching is done, we will start paving. Night work Sunday thru Thursday 9:00pm to 5:00am.
- A guardrail replacement project will be beginning soon. It project encompasses Route 50 east and westbound from the Severn River Bridge to Oceanic.
- Sewer Rehabilitation Project (AACo) at the intersection of College Parkway/MD 179/ Cape St Claire road.
- MD 213 Chestertown bridge painting has been rescheduled for early fall (9/7 to 10/30) and will now be done using overnight single lane closures (9p-5a) and up to five nights of overnight full closures (9p-5a).
- US 301/MD 304 overpass project is on-schedule. Could see steel beams for the overpass set across US 301 this year.
- MD 404 current dualization phase at MD 309 and Tuckahoe Creek is on schedule. The new westbound 404 bridge deck was poured in June.
- MD 404 next phase - the big one - will start construction by early August. \$105 million contract to dualize the remaining 9.2 miles between US 50 and Denton by the end of 2017.

- US 50 around Salisbury (Salisbury Bypass) project to rehabilitate 11 bridges begins in August with completion in 2018. Contractor will stage work to avoid impacting summer beach traffic.
- US 301 Mainline DelDOT project toll diversion study is available at http://www.deldot.gov/information/projects/us301/us301Archive/pdfs/US301_T_R_Report.pdf.
- MD 213 Chesapeake City bridge painting is underway (US Army Corps of Engineers project). In response to public concerns SHA has installed traffic monitoring cameras on the north side of the bridge. You can find those cameras at <http://www.chart.maryland.gov> under "Live Traffic Cameras" or by following these links, MD 213 at MD 285 and MD 213 at Elk Forest Rd.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm

Next meeting Wednesday, October 5