

Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)
Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Members Present

Jack Broderick
Nick Deoudes
Delores Green
Barbara Hitchings
Pat Lynch
Tracy Schulz
Barbara Obert
Nancy Wright

MDTA & MDOT SHA Staff

Michele Gross
Melissa Williams
Teri Moss
Richard Jaramillo
Mike Rice
Kim Millender, Esq.
Cpt. David Greene
Bob Rager (SHA)
Ashley Ross (SHA)
Hilary Gonzales (SHA)

Other Attendees

Steve Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner
Mike Waal, Representative for Kent County Commissioners
Steve Calhoun, Queen Anne's County Government
Dick Ladd, Former Anne Arundel County Commissioner

Media

N/A

Handouts

- Agenda
- Traffic Relief Plan
- Chesapeake Bay Tier 1 NEPA Study sheet
- Traffic Counts

Welcome and Review of Meeting Minutes – 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Broderick began the meeting at 6:08 p.m. He stated that the meeting is being held at this alternative location due to renovation at the Bay Bridge headquarters and welcomed BBRAG members and other attendees. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

July's meeting's minutes were reviewed and adopted with the exception of the spelling of Member Obert's name. Copies of the minutes will be available to guests and posted online.

BBRAG Organization – 6:14 p.m.

Mr. Broderick discussed the new approach to the BBRAG format. After the last several meetings, many members expressed concern about their reluctance to engage in discussion. He emphasized the importance of the Members, the need to receive information and the need to be respectful and allow questions and comments from guests, especially elected officials. We are looking to have more structure at these meetings and hope that everyone can support this effort.

Mr. Broderick also thanked Queen Anne’s County for the use of the facility.

Ms. Williams reiterated that we will try to keep on time so that we are not rushing the last agenda item. She emphasized that we need to do our best to answer questions and be respectful of everyone’s input and address concerns if we can’t tonight.

Ms. Obert asked regarding the new format, are BBRAG members only to leave questions to the end, or ask with each item? Response – questions can be asked after each item.

Open Meetings Act Compliance – 6:20 p.m.

Ms. Millender discussed the new law amending the Open Meetings Act required training. Specifically, under the 2017 legislation, at least one member of the public body must take the training in order for the public body to be able to hold “closed” sessions under the Act in the future. She indicated that the training can be done online at the Office of the Attorney General website. A certificate is issued to those who complete training, which should be forwarded to Ms. Gross or Ms. Williams to keep as evidence of compliance with the new requirement.

Mr. Broderick volunteered to be official designee for the public body and requested that everyone take the training so all are knowledgeable. Ms. Gross will email information on how to take the training. Ms. Millender indicated that under the new law, if the public body holds a closed session, it is anticipated that at least one of the trained BBRAG Members will be in attendance; otherwise, BBRAG will have to complete a new Compliance Checklist which must be kept with the meeting minutes for any closed sessions.

Ms. Hitchings asked if there is difference between open meetings and public meetings. Ms. Millender indicated that an open meeting under the Act is one in which people can observe, and a “public meeting” is typically thought of as one in which there is opportunity to participate and give comments or otherwise interact directly with staff.

Ms. Lynch stated that she has attended meetings that were “by invitation only”. She was told there can’t be “invitation only” meetings – it must be open to the public.

Ms. Millender answered that an “open meeting” under the Act involving a public body must comply with the law including advertising the meeting and posting an agenda. The public body must give “reasonable notice” regarding the meeting announcement and agenda. She indicated that the public body may have a specific agenda that does not offer the public the opportunity to speak.

Ms. Millender also offered to do a general presentation at the next BBAG meeting regarding the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Broderick agreed, and it will be included on the agenda for the January Meeting.

Traffic Relief Plan – 6:27 p.m.

Ms. Williams began by going back to the meeting format change and provided staff updates: Tim Cooke has left MDTA, Teri Moss is taking minutes tonight, and Melissa Bogden will be starting in the Customer Relations position on November 8.

The group wished Mr. Cooke well.

Ms. Williams reviewed the Traffic Relief Plan. On September 21, Governor Hogan announced the \$9 billion plan that will seek Public-Private Partnership (P3) input and includes:

1. Adding capacity on I-495 between American Legion Bridge and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (SHA project)
2. Adding lanes on I-270 between I-495 and I-70 (SHA project). Will include adding express toll lanes.
3. Transferring ownership of MD 295 and adding capacity between the Capital Beltway and Baltimore (MDTA project). Would add express toll lanes and keep ‘free’ general-purpose lanes. MDTA would add ramps, signage and shoulders to bring the roadway up to standard. MDTA is working with the Department of Interior and requesting park service to transfer ownership of the BW Parkway.

Mr. Broderick asked if trucks would be allowed on MD 295. Ms. Williams answered that we can’t assume that at this time, we are focused on working on transfer of ownership. She also stressed that these would be P3s and no taxpayer money would be used to build the roadways. Additionally, this does not interfere with funding for the Bay Crossing Study.

Ms. Lynch asked who will contribute to the MD 295 project and what office would manage it. Ms. Williams responded that the P3 partners from the other two projects would contribute an influx of money to the State that would go to the MDTA. We are

looking at all the projects at the same time. MDTA would be responsible for planning, but maintenance is unknown.

She also pointed out that transferring MD295 will take an act of Congress; everyone benefits from express toll lanes, even those who don't chose to use them.

It was asked if construction will be above or below ground? Response – it is too early to know those details.

Mr. Waal asked about the schedule, would it be 2 years, 5 years? Ms. Williams stated that per the Governor, we are looking to move forward quickly.

Bay Crossing Tier 1 NEPA Update – 6:42 p.m.

Ms. Williams discussed the online meeting that will be held on November 15, 2017 at 7 p.m. We are seeking input on the project scope and Purpose and Need. It will be a recorded presentation that will go live at 7 p.m. For those without internet access, there will be six locations available to view the presentation. Staff will only be available to show the presentation, sign in attendees, and take comments; not to answer questions. We believe the best way to reach the largest audience is through the online presentation.

We will be taking comments from November 15 – December 15, 2017 as part of the scoping record. Individuals may log on any time after November 15 to watch the presentation and provide comments. Log on to baycrossingstudy.com website.

Ms. Lynch asked if BBRAG will be able to read comments. Response – a summary will be provided in the Environmental Documentation.

Ms. Obert stated that this is more of an online information session, not a meeting. The key for BBRAG is to communicate this information to public. She asked about the initial comment period.

Ms. Hitchings asked if there are six locations under consideration. Melissa clarified the six locations mentioned are for those without access to computers to view the presentation. Tier 1 EIS is looking at the entire Bay.

There was a discussion about information being in the paper and on the radio. Ms. Gross advised the notice went to E-ZPass customers who used the Bridge since April.

Ms. Wright asked if prior suggestions are available in order to incorporate into comments. Ms. Williams can send out the Executive Summary for the report under Governor Ehrlich. Ms. Gross stated previous studies are on the MDTA website.

Mr. Waal stated that this is an infomercial and his concern is that the internet won't handle the number of comments. Ms. Williams assured the group it can.

Mr. Waal expressed concern that while MDTA ran the advertisement in the Baltimore Sun, it wasn't distributed on the Eastern Shore. He indicated he felt this was a little unfair and recommended that it should be advertised in the Star Democrat and Kent County News. BBRAG recommended the advertisement be placed in every local paper. Ms. Wright suggested the Severna Park Village Voice.

Motioned to reaffirm seeking advertisement at various locations.

Across the Bay 10k Update – 6:58 p.m.

Mr. Jaramillo briefed the group on the event taking place Sunday, November 5, 2017.

- MDTA is closing the eastbound bridge at midnight.
- Buses depart every 15 minutes between 6:00 and 8:30 a.m.
- There will be 12 waves of runners, beginning at 6:45 a.m. and every 15 minutes thereafter. The last wave will start at 9:30 a.m.
- The last runners will clear the Bridge at noon.
- 18,000 people signed up. This is slightly less than in the past.

Mr. Broderick asked if there have been major changes because of the new organizers, Iron Man. Mr. Jaramillo responded this is essentially the same model.

There was a call with NOAA today. There is a 20 % chance of rain and possible problematic wind gusts. No rain date this year.

Ms. Obert asked when a cancellation announcement will be made if the event is canceled. Response – Sunday at 5:00 a.m. Other points: encourage people to be on time; people can catch the next wave if they are late; and there are measures to pick up stragglers at the end.

Mr. Calhoon asked about parameters for wind canceling the event, anticipated backups. Mr. Jaramillo responded that we expect things to go well as in the past thanks to everyone's participation and cooperation. We use the same wind parameters as we use for contraflow – 30 mph consistent winds or gusts.

Ms. Obert stated that it's good to know the timing, some sports teams have canceled events knowing they fall within time frame of the run. This is helpful for next year.

Bay Bridge System Preservation Updates – 7:06 p.m.

Mr. Jaramillo provided the following system preservation updates.

Cleaning & Painting PH IV

- Painting of Through Truss and three (3) welded girder spans (east of through truss) and bridge rail post and gantry cleaning & painting
- 2 year project
- Work above the roadway of the through truss will not begin until spring 2018
- Cleaning & Painting of Gantries may occur this fall

Cable Wrapping & Dehumidification

- Project Complete – Maintenance & Monitoring of the system until June 2019

Bay Bridge Structural Repairs Project

- Continue repairs that were identified during the annual inspections
- This project is a limited lane closure project. Work to be performed from the water via barges.
- Working day and night shifts
- Project 93% complete - 3 months remain

BB 2754 – Westbound Suspension Span Cables Rehabilitation

- Project Duration: 2 years
- Scope: Installation of two (2) - 3 ½ inch cable strands (2 per side) on the outboard side of the existing main cables
- Work will be performed both day and night
- Majority of the work will be access via boat and a stair tower from the water

Bay Bridge Structural Repairs

- Crack Arrest
- Deck Patching
- Performing Repairs on both Eastbound and Westbound

Ms. Lynch asked about the fair rating on the westbound span. Are there steps being taken to update it to satisfactory? Is what you are doing those steps? Is there a report?

Mr. Jaramillo responded that all our efforts are to enhance and improve the structure. There are inspection reports.

Ms. Obert asked when the next rating will be done. Response – bridge inspections are performed annually. It's important to understand while you are working on one portion, there is constant wear and tear on other portions.

Ms. Williams stated that there are annual inspections done on the Bridge and from those a priority projects list is generated. It's an ongoing process - inspections, reporting, and maintenance. MDTA's engineers and contractors do the inspections.

Mr. Jaramillo stated that it's not realistic to expect a good rating every year.

Mr. Broderick stated that he believes Bridge users appreciate how the MDTA juggles maintaining the Bridge considering the traffic demands, especially on the west side.

Commissioner Wilson raised questions about traffic numbers and the State needing funding for traffic counts. He has not had discussion with MDTA.

Mr. Broderick responded that MDTA provided traffic counts over the last year and a half. This is useful. Traffic numbers are what they are. I think all of us appreciate having these numbers and the number that Queen Anne's County proposed to generate will be helpful.

Mr. Calhoon stated that he asked for more specific information several times. We need an hourly count – it's how cars bunch up that creates back-ups. Specificity of numbers would be helpful with better data. He is also interested in Delaware business – what impact the Delaware toll will have. He hopes the state looks at congestion pricing and other schemes.

Mr. Broderick stated it's tough to get a handle on this. The Middletown bypass will come on line after a year. It's hard to quantify.

Ms. Williams stated that when the documents were completed, they showed very little impact to Maryland roads. SHA will continue to take counts.

Mr. Calhoon stated that the problem is that it takes very few cars to jam the line.

Mr. Broderick responded that the key is the long haul truckers. Will they opt to go around the Baltimore corridor and get stuck here. No one really knows, but there must be some impact. The study will be helpful.

Ms. Lynch stated she has been looking for monthly traffic reports but hasn't seen them. Response – it went out in an email from Ms. Gross. Mr. Broderick passed around the numbers.

Residents of Galena (Kent County) relayed that truckers are bypassing the weigh station. Mr. Ladd stated that 5000 is the number.

Mr. Schultz asked about bridge inspection reports. Ms. Williams replied that we don't give out that information, but we can discuss the inspection process.

Ms. Gross said the executive summary that goes to bond holders is public information.

Mr. Ladd went back to discussing the Tier 1 NEPA study. This is a tight schedule, the significance is a Record Of Decision (ROD) by summer 2020. Do you have enough money to stay on schedule? If not, there should be political funding.

Ms. Williams responded we don't have a construction schedule. Tier 1 will be completed at end of 2020. Then we can initiate Phase 2 NEPA, which is the detailed assessment. We can't answer beyond that.

Mr. Ladd stated this will be mid-term for the next elected governor. We need to understand and talk to people running for election.

Ms. Lynch asked if the \$5 million study isn't an official NEPA study that counts toward EPA requirements. Response – this is a two-tiered study. In Tier 1, we will determine the appropriate location crossing (band – ½ mile, ¼ mile) and financing mechanism. Tier 2 uses all information and will have extremely detailed analysis. This will tell you exactly where the crossing will go. Tiering is logical, reasonable, and uses funding responsibly. If we jumped into whole NEPA, we would have to spend money on evaluating the entire bay.

Mr. Waal stated this is where statute, Transportation Article, Section 4-407 comes into play. You need to have buy-in from the effected counties. If a consensus from 8-9 entities is needed, wouldn't it make sense to get buy-in from those first? It would shorten the parameters. No answer was provided to the question.

Ms. Lynch stated "we need to overturn that Statute."

Mr. Broderick stated it is important to express concerns.

Ms. Lynch asked if MDTA will introduce legislation to get agreement.

Ms. Williams responded she is unable to answer.

Mr. Ladd asked how long will Phase 2 be.

Ms. Williams responded she is unable to answer.

Ms. Obert thanked Ms. Williams for addressing the difficult questions and Mr. Jaramillo for providing the updates.

MDOT SHA System Preservation Updates – 7:37 p.m.

Ms. Ross and Mr. Rager provided updates:

MDOT SHA District 5 Updates

The two main projects between the Severn River Bridge and the Bay Bridge are the guardrail contract and the Severn River Bridge restriping.

Guardrail Contract

- The guard rail contract is set to begin this week (11/6) with night work and shoulder, and occasional single lane, closures. The project is set to be completed in March 2018.
- The guard rails from Route 2 to oceanic Drive are being replaced eastbound, westbound, and in the median.

Severn River Bridge

- The Severn River Bridge restriping began last week (11/2) with lanes being restriped to 11 feet.
- The Severn River Bridge work will only be on top of the bridge at night, with single and sometimes double lane closures.
- Equipment is being moved as work is now being done in the median.
- The project is set to be completed by Memorial Day weekend of 2018.

MDOT SHA District 2 Updates

US 50/MD 8 Park-N-Ride in Stevensville

- SHA tried to pave the weekend of Oct. 27 but was unsuccessful due to vehicles remaining on the lot.
- New dates for this work are Nov. 14-19.
- SHA will close the lot Tuesday Nov. 14 at 9 p.m. to allow time for vehicle removal and for towing if necessary in time for a Friday work start. All work will be done in time for regular Monday morning (Nov. 20) MTA commuter bus runs.

US 301/MD 304 Overpass

- Fully open and operational; Bramble did a good job.
- Currently paving 301 and that will take another week.

MD 404

- All lanes of the 9.2 mile project from US 50 to Denton will be open in next 2-3 weeks. MDOT SHA will make the November 21 goal.

- Not all work will be done, but all lanes and intersections will be operational.
- Maps of 12 reconfigured 404 intersections are available at www.md404project.com.

Salisbury Bypass 11-Bridge Rehabilitation Project

- The last major shift was just completed.
- All traffic is running on the northbound side.
- Work will be done by May in time for beach traffic.

Rolling Bridge Rd. Median Crossover

- This is part of the MD 304 overpass project.
- Mr. Rager will meet with the Queen Anne's County Fire & EMS Commission to discuss why MDOT SHA cannot leave a median break here for emergency vehicles.
- There is no way to create a safe emergency-vehicle-only break here because it's at an intersection. The general public would try to use it on a regular basis, increasing the possibility of crashes.

Questions from BBRAG Members – 7:48 p.m.

Mr. Broderick opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Lynch provided an update on Sandy Point State Park. DNR agreed to open another toll booth and another driveway. Anne Arundel County Police volunteered every weekend and received paid overtime. Good news is that Sandy Point State Park was managed. Bad news is WAZE directed all traffic from Bridge to service road. Police have contacted WAZE and they won't do anything.

Mr. Broderick commended Ms. Lynch and Ms. Hitchings on work they've done.

The tentative date for the next meeting is January 10.

Ms. Hitchens asked MDTA to distribute minutes more timely.

Mr. Schultz asked if maintenance to the Bay Bridge building will be done by January 10.

Mr. Jaramillo stated he will have a better idea in the next few weeks.

Mr. Waal restated we should put notice in local papers ASAP so people can comment by Dec. 15.

Mr. Broderick thanked the group on a successful meeting / format. He is open to suggestions but appreciates everyone following the structure.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:54 p.m.