

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Regular Meeting
OPEN SESSION
Tracy Schulz, Chair

Members in Attendance

David Arthur
Jack Broderick
Peter Bradley
Nicholas Deoudes
Lyn Farrow
John Foster
David Gable
Bruce Gartner
Pat Lynch
Tracy Schulz
Will Pines

Staff in Attendance

Huriyyah Ahmad
Melissa Bogdan
Billy Clough
Amy Daniel
Jim Harkness
Richard Jaramillo
James Kittleman
Charles Kenny
Kim Millender

Others in Attendance

Todd Mohn, Queen Anne's County
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County
Daniel Allen

Members Not in Attendance

Jim Moran
Donald Schloss

Mary O'Keeffe
Robert Rager
Mike Rice
Tim Ryan
John Sales
Teri Soos
Brianna McEachern
James Turner
Melissa Williams

At 6:03p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Approval – Minutes of January 8, 2025 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting that were distributed to the members with none being put forward.

Member Gable motioned to approve the minutes of the January 8 meeting with a second from Member Broderick. 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 Deoudes commented on recent wind events and their impact on bridge traffic. He also attended various meetings where the concern most often raised is the age of the existing bridge structures. Member Deoudes also noted that there is a 'chatter' noise on the eastbound span to which Member Gartner responded that the issue is being addressed. Member Deoudes also requested that more lane use control signage be installed with Member Gartner responding in the affirmative.

Member Broderick stated that the wind warnings issued for the bridge instills confidence in the public that safety is a critical issue for the MDTA; adding that he has not received any complaints but rather that people are grateful that officials care about safety of the crossing. Regarding the implications of the Key Bridge safety issues, he is anxious to hear of the direction moving forward. Member Broderick closed by conveying positive support for the ramp closure programs during the summer.

Member Bradley stated that the concern most often raised with him is about the ramp closure programs during the summer.

Member Arthur shared updates from the Annapolis Planning and Zoning Commission, stating that there is construction taking place at the old seafood market and there are community concerns about the development of a gas station.

Member Lynch stated that her community continues to be concerned about the ramp closure program and the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA study.

Member Foster stated that he would like to know which communications are best for travelers to use when Bridge closures occur and to stay informed. Ms. Melissa Bogdan responded that travelers can go to BayBridge.com to sign up to receive alerts.

Member Gartner provided an update to the BBRAG on the NTSB report on the Key Bridge issued on March 20, 2025. He stated that the MDTA will be responding to the NTSB within the 30-day timeframe requested with what actions will be taken. Member Broderick encouraged

maximum participation from the MDTA in the upcoming Kent Island Day. Member Lynch asked if there were ways to control operation of ever larger container ships with Member Gartner responding that coordination with the US Coastguard is necessary and the MDTA is waiting on recommendations on what can be done. Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness stated that the size of vessels transiting the Bay is dictated by the ability of ports to accommodate them.

Report – MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness provided an overview of ongoing projects at the Bay Bridge.

Member Gable inquired about the timeframe for all phases of the eastbound deck replacement project with Mr. Harkness responding that there are a total of five phases of construction lasting approximately two years each for a total of 10 years. He added that ongoing condition inspections determine the priority and schedule of the project phases.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Mr. Harkness stated that the gantry replacements are full structural replacement with a different design.

Mr. Harkness stated that lane use control signage is in the process of being installed with two signs in each direction: one on the outside shoulder and another on the inside shoulder. Mr. Harkness stated that the inside sign is dependent on the available space in the median and the presence of utilities, which present an additional concern. The MDTA therefore elected to install the ground mounted signs on the outside shoulder first with gantry mounted signs on the inner (left) side. Mr. Harkness stated that the ground mounted signs can also be fabricated and installed sooner with the gantry signs to be installed by June. Member Gable inquired about using the variable message signs (VMS) for a lane use message. Mr. Harkness responded that there are competing messages for the VMS boards and static signs are better suited to a regularly role. He added that priority messages on VMS boards must comply with federal rules on what can be shown.

MDOT SHA Deputy Administrator/Chief Engineer of Operations Terri Soos stated that Queen Anne's County is holding a meeting on April 23rd where SHA will have display boards and requesting comments on the upcoming ramp closure program that is planned to start on May 18th and continuing through Labor Day.

Ms. Soos stated that the MD 18 PEL study report is expected to be completed this summer.

Ms. Soos stated that SHA will present at the Broadneck Council of Communities meeting on April 24th on details of the upcoming western shore ramp closure program and to receive comments. SHA is also reaching out to local businesses for comments. The schedule is the same as for the Eastern Shore. Responding to a question from Member Lynch, Ms. Soos stated that compared to 2022, there was less delay and lower volume on access roads. She notes that 2023 had good weather with plenty of 2-way operation on the Bay Bridge in contrast to 2024, which had far fewer days for 2-way operation on the bridge. She added that details should be finalized by the BCCC meeting. Member Pines: Feedback for last year was positive without a lot of

criticism from businesses; the closures are an expensive operation for SHA and SHA would like to get labor costs down via gates, etc. as interest in long-term implementation; and there are lots of competing needs.

Member Gable stated that traffic flowed better when all ramps were closed, noting that in 2023, one ramp was not closed which made a difference. He inquired if it is too early to know what ramps will be closed and when. Ms. Soos responded that it is currently too early but that is why SHA is seeking public comments.

Ms. Soos stated that the traffic signal at MD 179 Old Bottom Rd was shining into a house at the intersection, so SHA removed the lights from the entrance and are making adjustments to timing along with other improvements. Member Schulz added that the MD 8 flashing beacon has been getting backed up due to a possible timing issue. Ms. Soos stated she will investigate.

Report – Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA Study

MDTA Director of Planning and Program Development, Melissa Williams, provided an update for the Bay Crossing Tier 2 NEPA study.

Approximately 1,100 comments were submitted during the November 12th to January 13th public scoping comment period. All comments will be posted to the website

The following is a high-level summary of the public survey question responses:

- A substantial number of people either favored or understood the need to remove and replace the existing bridges.
- Many respondents expressed concerns over potential Sandy Point State Park impacts.
- Transit:
 - A substantial number of respondents expressed support for transit and expressed interest in enhanced bus service and dedicated bus lanes.
 - Over 50% of respondents answered that they wouldn't be more likely to use transit should bus service enhancements be made.
 - Some doubted that transit would be used, or didn't support dedicated lanes.
 - The MDTA nonetheless sees the responses as being positive and indicating a starting point for further discussion and study of transit services across the Bay.
- A shared use path (SUP) received the most responses with a substantial number of respondents supporting a SUP. The MDTA has plans to connect networks on both sides of the Bay.
- The Bay Bridge corridor had the majority of survey respondents.
- Other Marylanders responded along with surrounding states including Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, and Washington DC. This is indicative that responses came from both travelers and commuters.

Ms. Williams stated that from April through November 2025, the Project Team will be attending over 20 corridor wide events and festivals. Attendance will be announced on baycrossingstudy.com and social media. The MDTA wants to hear all comments and ensure that people have the opportunity to comment on the project.

The Project team is developing the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which will include the impacts of developed alternatives. The document will identify impacts and how those impacts can be minimized or avoided. This will take some months to complete and is an iterative process so impacts should be going down.

There will be public hearings in December 2025 that will identify a preferred alternative and subsequent comment period. Comments will be incorporated into the final EIS.

The final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) that will identify a selected alternative will be completed by December 2026.

The study team will be attending along with SHA at the Queen Anne's County meeting on April 23rd and the BCCC meeting on the 24th for BCCC. If BBRAG members know of any events the team should attend, please let us know. The team can also help with informational materials such as flyers, posters, etc.

Member Broderick stated that he has heard fewer concerns since the team has narrowed the study alignment from the broad corridor of earlier in the study. Ms. Williams stated that this helps people focus and provide more detailed comments.

Unfinished Business

Chair Schulz stated that there was no unfinished business from the January 8 meeting and none was brought forward.

New Business

Annual Report

Chair Schulz stated that the report must be submitted by July 1st. A draft circulated for members' review once it has been prepared.

Member Broderick stated that the report should continue in the same format as used in previous years.

Public Comments

No comments were received.

After discussion, it was decided to move the next meeting to Wednesday, July 9 2025, at 6:00p.m.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Foster at 7:09p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: [none]