

# Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

## MEETING MINUTES

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Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Regular Meeting  
OPEN SESSION  
Tracy Schulz, Chair

### **Members in Attendance**

Jack Broderick  
Peter Bradley  
Barbara Hitchings  
Pat Lynch  
Jim Moran  
Will Pines  
Kurt Riegel  
Tracy Schulz  
Tim Smith  
Steve Wilson

### **Members Not in Attendance**

Samantha Biddle\*  
Nicholas Deoudes  
Donald Schloss

\*Member Biddle was represented by MDOT  
Director of External Relations, Ms. Lynn  
Farrow

### **Staff in Attendance**

Tekeste Amare  
Melissa Bogdan  
Richard Jaramillo  
James Kittleman  
Kim Millender  
Charles Kenny

Mike Rice  
Brad Ryon  
Joseph Sagal  
John Sales  
Teri Soos  
James Turner  
Melissa Williams

### **Others in Attendance**

Todd Mohn, Queen Anne's County  
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County  
Spencer Dixon, representing Senator Dawn Gile, District 33  
Tim Ryan, AECOM

At 6:04p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Chair Schulz introduced MDOT Director of External Relations, Lynn Farrow who was standing in for MDOT Deputy Secretary, Samantha Biddle during this meeting off the BBRAG. Ms. Farrow introduced herself, followed by introductions from each of the BBRAG members present.

### Approval – Minutes of January 4, 2023 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the January 4, 2023 meeting that were distributed to the members with none being put forward.

Member Hitchings motioned to approve the minutes of the January 4 meeting with a second from Member Moran. 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 Broderick stated that the public notice posted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the use of Love Point State Park for the Bay Bridge eastbound deck replacement project was shared with BBRAG members. The DNR eventually decided not to use the site. Member Broderick stated his appreciation for the ability to make use of the BBRAG as a conduit for community concerns and thanked MDTA staff for collaborating on this.

Member Lynch stated that a property is being developed on Skidmore Drive to the west of the McDonalds and she has made inquiries on a traffic study being undertaken for the development. Member Lynch also stated that she has worked with the Anne Arundel County Executive to provide clarification regarding the use of Holly Beach Farm.

Member Wilson stated that Queen Anne's County holds a commissioner roundtable every two weeks and updates are shared with the public.

### MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDTA Deputy Director of Engineering, Tekeste Amare, provided the BBRAG a status update on the seven active projects at the Bay Bridge in the Capital Program.

**Bay Bridge Capital Projects - April 2023 Update**

Pin	Contract No.	Description	AD	NTP	Budget (Thousands \$)	Anticipated Completion	Percent Complete (Construction)	Design (D), Procurement (P), or Construction (C) Phase
2476	BB-3008	Bay Bridge Crossover Automated Lane Closure System	5/24/19	2/3/20	15,762	Winter 2022/2023	99	C
2516	BB-3014	Bay Bridge Emergency All Electronic Toll (AET) Conversion	9/25/20	1/11/21	43,378	Winter 2022/2023	99	C
2501	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	8/15/21	18,415	Summer 2024	54	C
2504	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	1,216	Summer 2023	80	C
2317	BB-3017	Eastbound Bay Bridge Deck Replacement - Phase 1—Package 1	N/A	1/9/23	140,000	Winter 2025/2026 (Phase 1)	6	C
2470	BB-3004	Construct Project Management Office and Maintenance Equipment Storage Building	1/13/23	10/9/23	9,660	Summer 2025	N/A	P
New	New	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	Fall 2023	3/1/24	20,000	Spring 2027	N/A	D

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

The team is working hard behind the scenes developing the study review process with the interagency coordination group, which includes NEPA cooperating and participating agencies, developing the agency coordination plan, preparing for field work, and working on the traffic model.

New to the web site: under public involvement, under the September 2022 Open Houses, is the “September 2022 Open Houses Summary” document. This is the information Ms. Williams shared with the members at the last BBRAG meeting, put into a formalized report format.

Most recently, MDTA met with the MTA and the Queen Anne’s and Anne Arundel County local transit operators to learn more about transit use within the counties as well as across the Bay Bridge. MDTA is working on developing an online meeting to hear what stakeholders have to say about transit near and across the Bay Bridge> Stay tuned for additional details from Ms. Williams.

For this meeting, the study team is developing grassroots outreach efforts to reach study area stakeholders and communities. The team is developing strategies to reach these communities to create awareness of the project and promote upcoming public engagement opportunities.

As representatives of BBRAG, the MDTA invites your input regarding recommending events in highly frequented community locations such as the following:

- community events such as craft shows, carnivals, car shows, and flea markets where MDTA can connect with people in their communities;
- community locations of importance such as community centers, retail establishments, or religious organizations;
- events reaching historically underserved and disadvantaged communities; and
- local organizations such as active homeowner’s associations, community advocacy groups, or civic organizations.

If BBRAG members know of opportunities for MDTA to talk to people about the Bay Crossing Study, please let Ms. Williams know by email.

Responding to a question from Member Lynch, Ms. Williams stated that staff is hoping to start outreach efforts in early June. Ms. Lynch stated that the Broadneck Council of Communities meets the fourth Thursday of every month and the MDTA is welcome any time. Member Broderick stated that Kent Island Day will be held on May 20th. Ms. Williams stated that the MDTA will be attending.

MDOT SHA Administrator Tim Smith introduced Deputy Director of Operations Teri Soos who provided an update on local projects. Delmarva power is conducting transmission line upgrades along eastbound US 50 in Kent Narrows. On the western shore, MD 2 is being repaved from South River bridge and MD 214 with completion in summer 2023. Upcoming work includes resurfacing on I-97 from MD 450 to MD 178 in the spring and summer of 2023. This section was previously patched and is now being repaved. The US 50 Severn River Bridge repairs were completed at the end of March. The traffic signal at MD 179 at Pleasant Plains Road and Old Mill Bottom Road is scheduled to start this summer. CHART patrols have assisted 373 motorists and responded to 396 incidents since January 1, 2023. Eastern shore operations enhanced patrols begin on Thursday, May 4 at noon. The schedule for enhanced patrols is from Thursday and Fridays from noon until delays clear, Saturdays from 9am until delays clear, and on Sundays from 2pm until delays clear.

Member Smith provided a review of the survey conducted last year with Broadneck community members, the temporary traffic signal installed at Oceanic Drive in August 2022, and what data and results were obtained.

Member Smith stated that MDOT SHA is working with the Federal Highway Administration to look at options to managing traffic along a segment of US 50 between exits 30 and 32. There are three options being considered for implementation. All three options propose to close Exit 31 for vehicles entering or exiting US 50.

1. Temporary ramp signalization at Exit 30 and Exit 32
  - This would have a similar feature at Exit 32 and add a signal at Exit 30
  - All current movements would be maintained, with the exception of Exit 31 as previously mentioned
2. One-way operations on the service roads
  - The service road north of US 50 would carry eastbound traffic
  - The service road south of US 50 would carry westbound traffic
  - Interchange/ramp access would be maintained for Exits 30 and 32; however, vehicles exiting US 50 would have to travel in the appropriate direction
3. Temporary closure of entrance ramps to US 50 EB at Exit 30 and Exit 32
  - With the closure of Exit 31, during certain days of the week, the only access to eastbound US 50 from the service road will be Exit 29.
  - Vehicles may exit US 50 at any location (other than Exit 31) for services or local destinations

Member Smith noted that implementing one of the options is necessary in order to gather data as it is difficult to analyze the options with the tools available currently. He added that MDOT SHA is working on a similar study for the eastern shore.

Member Pines relayed some traffic information from MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness that current volumes on the crossing are the highest on record; particularly in the westbound direction in the afternoon. All indications are that volumes during the forthcoming summer season will be very heavy.

## Unfinished Business

Chair Schulz stated that there was no unfinished business outstanding and opened the floor to the group. Member Pines stated that the BayBridge.com website now includes information for all ongoing projects related to the bridge as requested by Member Moran.

## New Business

### **Eastbound Deck Replacement Project**

Tekeste Amare, MDTA Deputy Director of Engineering presented an overview of the project and how it will be undertaken.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Amare stated that the size of the panels is limited by the capabilities of the cranes being used and the distance between floor beams.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Amare stated that the existing deck is 8 inches thick, and the new deck will match that thickness. Panels will have a link slab poured between them that is 5 inches thick and will have a temporary joint in place until those link slabs can be installed. The temporary joint will minimize the impact for motorists.

Responding to a question from Member Lynch, Member Pines responded that stormwater management is included as part of the project due to the widened deck sections being installed and due to requirements to update existing facilities to comply with current regulations.

Responding to a question from Member Broderick, Mr. Amare stated that the bridge barrier walls will have a temporary transition barrier placed between adjacent panels until the permanent joint is installed with between new sections.

Responding to a question from Member Broderick, Mr. Amare stated that the panels are being prefabricated at the contractor's facility in Baltimore.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Amare stated that the number of temporary joints until closed with pours is intended to be as few as possible; adding that the detailed schedule for closures pours has not yet been finalized.

At 7:30pm, Member Riegel left the meeting.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Member Pines stated that due to a number of factors, it is not possible to estimate potential delays at this time.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Mr. Amare stated that the existing deck sections are intended to be used to create an artificial reef; the exact location of which has not yet been determined. Member Pines stated that any mention of Love Point as a potential site for an artificial reef is in reference to the Love Point bar; a location further to the north near the lighthouse and not Love Point State Park on Kent Island.

Ms. Melissa Bogdan provided an overview of the project website including resources for BBRAG members to share with their communities.

Chair Schulz stated that the Kent Island and Anne Arundel County Fire Departments met with the contractor to discuss procedures during emergency events and the needs of EMS personnel.

### **Annual Report**

Member Schulz stated that a draft is being prepared and will be distributed to BBRAG members for their review once it is complete. Members Broderick and Moran said the format is working and last year's report was well done.

### **Chesapeake National Recreation Area**

Member Hitchings stated that Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Sarbanes will be putting before Congress later this year, a proposal for a National Park at Whitehall around the Whitehall Mansion. She stated that the house is currently vacant and that current owners are looking for ways to maintain the property and that Broadneck residents' concerns are how much traffic will be generated by the designation. She added that according to Congressman Sarbanes' Office, no traffic studies will be conducted until after the legislation has passed. Member Smith described the process for traffic studies and stated that MDOT SHA can only require measures to mitigate detrimental impacts to road operations and cannot veto development based on potential traffic impacts. Member Pines stated that the legislative process contains a procedure allowing for public input on proposed legislation.

Member Hitchings inquired about the operation of the new automated lane closure system (ALCS). Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo stated that the system is meeting expectations and there have been no significant issues or concerns. He has received no feedback from the public. Member Pines stated that the MDTA Police has stepped up enforcement of compliance with the overhead lane use signals.

### **Public Comments**

No comments were received.

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It was decided that the next meeting will be moved from the first Monday in July and will instead be held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at 6:00p.m.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting of the BBRAG was made by Member Moran at 8:00p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: Eastbound Deck Replacement Project presentation