

# Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

## MEETING MINUTES

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Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Regular Meeting  
OPEN SESSION  
Tracy Schulz, Chair

### **Members in Attendance**

David Arthur  
Jack Broderick  
Peter Bradley  
Nicholas Deoudes  
Barbara Hitchings  
Lynn Farrow  
Pat Lynch  
Jim Moran  
Will Pines  
Donald Schloss  
Tracy Schulz  
Steve Wilson

### **Staff in Attendance**

Melissa Bogdan  
Jason DiCembre  
Richard Jaramillo  
James Kittleman  
Charles Kenny  
LTC Cory McKenzie  
Kim Millender

### **Others in Attendance**

Todd Mohn, Queen Anne's County  
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County  
Tim Ryan, AECOM  
Rosalyn Fountain  
Daniel Allen

### **Members Not in Attendance**

Tim Smith\*

\*Member Smith was represented at the meeting by MDOT SHA Acting Deputy Administrator / Chief Engineer of Operations Teri Soos.

Jason Pulliam  
Robert Rager  
Bradley Ryon  
John Sales  
Cedric Ward  
Melissa Williams

At 6:00p.m. Chair Tracy Schulz called the meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG) to order.

Chair Schulz welcomed Lyn Farrow as the permanent Secretary of Transportation designee to the BBRAG and David Arthur as an Anne Arundel County appointee replacing Kurt Riegel. Chair Schulz thanked Member Riegel for his service to the BBRAG.

## Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Outgoing BBRAG Chair Schulz stated that per the BBRAG By-Laws, the BBRAG must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

Member Hitchings motioned to nominate Member Schulz for re-election with a second from Member Deoudes. Member Schulz was elected Chair with a unanimous vote.

Member Schulz motioned to nominate Member Hitchings for re-election with a second from Members Deoudes. Member Hitchings was elected Vice-Chair with a unanimous vote.

## Approval – Minutes of April 5, 2023 Meeting

Chair Schulz asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes of the April 5, 2023 meeting that were distributed to the members with none being put forward.

Member Hitchings motioned to approve the minutes of the April 5 meeting with a second from Member Broderick. The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

## 2023 Annual Report

Chair Schulz stated the report is being finalized and will be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly shortly. Melissa Bogdan stated that the report was submitted that afternoon.

## 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 said that people travelling under the red lane control signals is the issue he hears about the most. Member Hitchings stated that she has heard similarly from her community adding that people don't see any enforcement.

Member Broderick stated there was a great outreach opportunity at Kent Island Day that was well-attended by the MDTA with the MDTA Police Color Guard leading the parade. He extended thanks to the MDTA for their attendance. Member Broderick stated that a friend who sustained car damage from an errant construction barrel and who was informed that redress was a matter for the contractor and not the MDTA. Member Pines stated that any claim for damage allegedly occurring on MDTA property as a result of MDTA activities must be submitted to the State Treasurer's Office for review. If the Treasurer's Office determines that damage was because of contractor actions, then the contractor's insurance would be responsible for redress.

Member Lynch stated that she has received several comments on the ramp closures.

## MDTA & MDOT SHA Updates

MDTA Chief Engineer, Jim Harkness, provided the BBRAG a status update on the seven active projects at the Bay Bridge in the Capital Program.

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

Pin	Contract No.	Description	AD	NTP	Budget (Thousands \$)	Anticipated Completion	Percent Complete (Construction)	Design (D), Procurement (P), or Construction (C) Phase
2501	BB-3013R	On-Call Structural Repairs and Miscellaneous Modifications for Bay Bridge	1/28/21	8/15/21	18,415	Summer 2024	77	C
2504	BB-3012	Queue Detection System	N/A	N/A	1,216	Summer 2023	95	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)	13	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	3/1/24	8/1/24	20,000	Summer 2027	N/A	D

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

On Tuesday, June 27th the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 2 Team hosted an online Public Meeting from 6:30-7:45pm. The meeting was a transit, bicycle and pedestrian listening meeting. MDTA gave a brief presentation on existing and planned transit service and bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area. For transit, this included services provided by MTA, Annapolis Transit, Anne Arundel County, and Queen Anne’s County. For Bike/Ped, this included a discussion of trails and routes in Anne Arundel County and Queen Anne’s County. Transit and Bike/ped partners from MTA, TSO, Queen Anne’s County and Anne Arundel County coordinated with MDTA to prepare this listening meeting and attended the meeting virtually.

Following the presentation, a live poll was conducted to gather feedback from attendees on their use of and opinions towards existing and potential transit and bike/ped services in the study area. Following the polling, attendees had the opportunity to provide verbal comments expressing their thoughts. Overall, many commenters were interested in using a new crossing for recreational purposes, and a few others expressed their desire for transit options and considerations. A recording of the meeting is available online at [www.BayCrossingStudy.com](http://www.BayCrossingStudy.com).

The stats of the meeting were as follows:

- Over 40 comments received in the Q&A
- 22 comments received in the public speaking session
- 172 unique attendees, approximately ~140 attendees at the meeting’s peak
- A little more than 100 attendees participated in the live polling
- 76 people have completed the transit survey online and 85 have completed the bike/ped survey online to date. The comment period and opportunity to complete these surveys ends on July 11<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Williams added that polls were kept open for two weeks after the meeting and that the results are being compiled before being made publicly available. She added that the poll and input received will help inform decisions regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities on any potential future Chesapeake Bay crossing.

Ms. Williams stated that preparations are being made for public events in the fall to present the screening criteria used to analyze developed alternatives. She added that traffic data has also been acquired and will be shared at these events. Ms. Williams stated that the dates of the forthcoming meetings will be shared when they have been determined. Melissa Bogdan stated that all events are posted on BayCrossingStudy.com.

Member Broderick stated the biggest concern he continues to hear is how the crossing will be routed over Kent Island.

MDOT SHA Acting Deputy Administrator / Chief Engineer of Operations Terri Soos who was representing MDTA SHA Administrator Tim Smith provided an update on local projects. She stated that the pilot study conducted last summer demonstrated that summer congestion is a function of the whole roadway along US 50 and not just certain areas. The key lesson from last year's pilot was that altering driver behavior is needed since local drivers use the side roads to bypass congestion and not long-distance travelers. Ms. Soos provided an overview of the options considered and that were presented to the BBRAG and the Broadneck Council of Communities (BCCC). Ms. Soos stated that a survey was created for feedback on the three options considered. Now looking at pilot study for the other two. Overwhelming preference for option 3 (ramp closures at exits 30 and 32). She stated that exit 31 was permanently closed on June 28. The temporary closures at the other exits begin tomorrow (July 13<sup>th</sup>).

Member Lynch inquired if consideration was given to staggering the ramp closures over two weeks instead of a single weekend and whether consideration was given to vehicles performing U-turns? Ms. Soos responded that the message signs conveying the closures are already in place.

Responding to a question from Member Bradley, MDOT SHA Director of Operations and Mobility Jason Decembres stated that Google, Waze, and other online mapping services were notified in advance of the permanent closure of Exit 31 and the temporary closures and they have implemented the change in their systems.

Responding to a question from Member Deoudes, Ms. Soos stated that local businesses understand the challenges with access and that MDOT SHA will continue to monitor local traffic. She added that the pilot study will continue through Labor Day weekend four days a week from Thursday to Sunday.

Responding to a question from Member Schulz, Ms. Soos stated that discussions are being held with SHA District 2 on similar measures in Queen Anne's County.

Responding to a question from Member Moran, Ms. Soos stated that the traffic data for the side roads is obtained via the University of Maryland who contract with third party companies. She

added that origin-destination data for the Bay Bridge itself would have to be purchased separately. Member Pines added that origin-destination data for the Bay Bridge is included in the Bay Crossing Tier 1 NEPA Study.

Member Moran stated that he believes the biggest issue is the lane control signals and why enforcement is apparently absent. Member Pines responded that the MDTA has received requests for automated camera enforcement of lane use, but that MDTA does not have the statutory authority to install and operate such cameras. He added that the MDTA is open to working with legislators regarding the issue. Member Pines stated that there are workplace safety considerations that must be accommodated regarding proposals to stationing law enforcement within lanes at red X lane signals. Responding to a question from Member Moran, Member Pines stated that the MDTA does have a memorandum of understanding with Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office regarding shared enforcement on the Queen Anne's County side of the bridge. Member Pines introduced MDTA Police Lt. Col. McKenzie who stated that over a thousand traffic stops have been performed so far this year for red X enforcement and that problematic driver behavior continues to be an issue.

Member Farrow asked if an informational campaign was being conducted to educate drivers. Member Pines responded that a video was created to inform drivers of the meaning of the lane use signals.

BBRAG members were shown the information video and accompanying information contained at: [https://mdta.maryland.gov/Capital\\_Projects/BayBridgeALCS](https://mdta.maryland.gov/Capital_Projects/BayBridgeALCS)

Responding to a question from Member Moran, MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness stated that adding lights to the lane closure gates would amount to a modification of design and would vacate their certified approval for use. He added that of the few vehicle strikes that have occurred, only one was outside of daylight hours.

Responding to a question from Member Moran about contraflow operations on recent weekends, Bay Bridge Administrator Richard Jaramillo stated that the same triggers are used on any given day and that travel lanes are constantly monitored for volumes. He added that occasionally traffic volumes in one direction may be large enough to dictate contraflow operation but may not necessarily mean there are backups in that direction. Member Moran asked what can be done to inform the public and Member Pines stated that the presentation to the BBRAG in October 2022 is an appropriate source for information. He added that MDTA continues to follow the practices presented.

Member Moran requested that should a pilot traffic management program be implemented on Kent Island, he would like a temporary traffic signal at the MD 18 ramp and that the ramps at Nesbitt, Winchester and Kent Narrows be considered also. Ms. Soos stated that MDOT SHA will work with Queen Anne's County on a potential pilot program.

## Unfinished Business

Chair Schulz stated that there was no unfinished business outstanding and opened the floor to the group.

## New Business

### Copyright

MDTA Principal Counsel, Kim Millender, stated that any materials or presentations that BBRAG members want to share or present to the Advisory Group, particularly photos or artwork, must have the appropriate permissions for use in place. Members can contact Melissa if they have any questions.

### MD 18 PEL Study

Member Schulz brought before the BBRAG new business concerning the MD 18 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study and asked if public outreach events would be held. Ms. Soos stated that MDOT SHA will work to set up an event.

Member Broderick stated that exit 39A is not included in PEL study.

## Public Comments

No comments were received.

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The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 4, 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 7:33p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: